



PhD thesis

The role of parents and community in the education of their children in Episcopal Church schools in Yei County in the context of a 'post-independent conflict' South Sudan (2011-2022) with an emphasis on the issues of role, context, and policy
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**The Role of Parents and Community in the Education of their Children in
Episcopal Church schools in Yei County in the Context of a ‘Post-Independent Conflict’
South Sudan (2011-2022) with an emphasis on
the issues of Role, Context, and Policy**

by

Lubari Stephen Elioba

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)**

at

Middlesex University, London

Oxford Centre for Mission Studies

17th November, 2023

Abstract

The role of parents and community in the education of their children in Episcopal Church schools in Yei County in the context of a ‘post-independent conflict’ South Sudan (2011-2022) with an emphasis on the issues of role, context, and policy

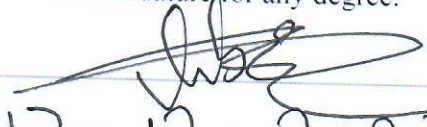
**Lubari Stephen Elioba
OCMS, November, 2023**

Education in South Sudan operates in a context where the government is unable to sustain schools. This research explores the role of parents and community in the education of their children in Episcopal church schools in Yei County in the context of a ‘post-independent conflict’ South Sudan (2011-2022). South Sudanese communities including the churches operate schools in an environment that has faced over twenty years of conflict and continued unrest. Government educational procedures support and structures are largely dysfunctional. Qualitative findings through observations, interviews, thick description and use of documents as a source of data show that the role of parents has emerged as critical, but it is a role not given formal recognition. The use of role and modernization theories and a bottom-up approach in this research reveals that the support of parents, from 1980s to date, are the key to the strong resilience that holds the parents and communities together and enables the education system to function under significantly reduced government spending. Community and church initiatives have led to the emergence and strengthening of grass-roots educational ‘communities of practice’. The research shows that church initiatives in promoting peace for the twenty-one years of conflict forged a learning space for the emergence of these communities in the Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs) that have proved vital in sustaining education. The thesis further argues that the Episcopal Church should be recognised for its efforts in building local democracy and decentralisation. It shows that local communities are negotiating the changes between the strong communalism of traditional societies and the individualism characteristic of modern societies. This shift is visible in the discussions with the parents in PTAs concerning whether they can sustain the roles expected of them, given their lack of professional skills in governance, financial accountability, and bureaucratic procedures. The thesis argues that building an education system in a ‘post-independent conflict’ context requires both ‘bottom-up’ and ‘top-down’ approaches because local and national or international expertise and experiences are relevant but require a clearer recognition of the respective roles of parents, community and the government. The thesis proposes a redefinition of the government role in education at national, state and county levels, along with the crucial roles of the churches, Parent Teacher Associations, headteachers, and other community members for more effective learning in the current situation.

DECLARATIONS

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Date 17-12-2023

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote.

Other sources are acknowledged by midnotes or footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

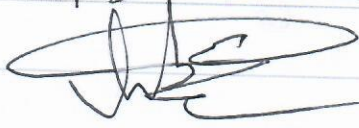
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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my children Lucy Poni, Elioba Robe, Janet Akiyo, Margret Aba and my wife Santana Ropan who missed my fatherly care during the course of this research. Secondly, I dedicate this work to my late father Elioba Robe and my mother Esther Kide who made education a priority despite of their own low level of education and amidst the difficult situation of the continuing conflict. Thirdly I dedicate this work to our elder brother James Malish Elioba and our uncle late Patrick Lasu Gworo, who stood together with our mother in taking parental role in my upbringing and supporting my education in the absence of our father.

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To my respondents (parents, teachers, learners, education authorities and individuals) and the primary schools I visited in this research - thank you for making this thesis possible. Without your information I would have little or nothing to write as primary data. To the Episcopal Diocese of Yei, especially the Retired Bishop Hilary Luate Adeba, the incumbent Bishop Levi Marandulu, Diocesan and Immanuel Cathedral staff I extend my warm thanks for availing primary documents, a venue for meetings, transport and moral support.

I am very grateful to individuals and friends who in one way or another contributed for the success of this study. Thanks to Juan Magret, the Yei County Education Director, Rev. Taban Francis - COED Programme Coordinator, Wani Justin - ECSS Yei Diocesan Education Coordinator, Luete Charles - incumbent Diocesan Secretary and Luete David - Outgoing Diocesan Secretary, John Spens (Brickworks), Robin Watson - former ECSS Provincial Education Coordinator, Charlie Goldsmith, John Foster, Ian Pinder, Ingo Mueller, Michael Duku Aggrey and his wife Seida Jane Michael, Michael Mowat for providing me with accommodation in Oxford and lastly Rev. Canon Uriah Zakayo.

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Acronyms

AAA	Abyei Administrative Area
AES	Alternative Education Systems
AIC	African Inland Church
AR	Assessment Reform
CES	Central Equatoria State
ECSS	Episcopal Church of South Sudan
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GESP	General Education Sector Plan
ICRC	International Committee of Red Cross
IEQ	Improving Educational Quality
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IMU	Instructional Materials Unit (IMU)
MFEP	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MoGEI	Ministry of General Education and Instruction
MoGSWRA	Ministry of Gender Social Welfare & Religious Affairs
MU	Mothers Union
NCRC	National Constitutional Review Commission
UNESCO	United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
OOSC	Out of School Children
POCs	Protection of Civilian Sites
PTA	Parent Teacher Association

R-ARCSS	Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan
RSS	Republic of South Sudan
SSDP	South Sudan Development Plan
SSEC	South Sudan Education Cluster
TDMS	Teacher Development and Management System
TTIs	Teacher Training Institutes
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Associations

Introduction

During the 21 years of conflict in pre-independent South Sudan parental participation in schools was both high and essential for the continuation of education. This was because government was involved in a political struggle for the independence of South Sudan from dominating Arab Islamic rule from north Sudan. When the conflict came to an end and national independence was celebrated in 2011, I was expecting that the extent of parental participation both monetary and in kind would decline because of higher government support to social services including education, and that the expected findings of my research would be relevant to improve policy development and key parental practices in school development. With this context in mind my initial research idea was to examine the role of parental participation during the pre-independence conflict. It soon became clear, however, that the role of parental participation in education after 2011 rather than declining had increased and that government and educational theorists (policy makers and planners) needed to take this into account. This changed the research focus to exploring the role of parents and community in the education of their children in Episcopal Church schools in Yei County in the context of post-independent conflict South Sudan with an emphasis on the issues of role, context and policy. I seek to examine how the role of parents and community is influenced by the contextual and cultural factors and what relevant policy developments are needed to enable education to function amidst the on-going conflict situation. The term ‘post-conflict’ for contemporary South Sudan is a misnomer. It is post-peace agreement but civil conflict has continued and has changed dramatically the direction of my thesis.

This thesis is divided into ten chapters. Chapter one is the background and rationale of the research and the political contexts of education in South Sudan. Chapter two explores the present state of education in South Sudan with a particular focus on Yei, church, parental and community participation and international and post-independence education perspectives.

Chapter three investigates culture, context and policy in understanding the role of parents, community and church participation in education. Chapter four presents the methodology. Chapters' five to eight present the findings according to the research questions. Chapter five explores the contextual and cultural factors that shape the roles, limitations and opportunities for parental and community participation in the schooling of their learners in Episcopal Church schools. Chapter six investigates the parental, community and the Episcopal Church interpretations of what constitutes participation in education. Chapter seven presents the findings on the parental participation in improving education in the face of continuing challenges. Chapter eight focuses on the policy implications for improved parental, community and church participation in education. Chapter nine is discussion based on the findings, methodology, and the theoretical concepts presented in chapter one to three. Chapter ten offers the conclusion and key policy recommendations.

Chapter One: The Background and Rationale of the Research and Political Contexts of Education in South Sudan

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the background, rationale, research questions and the significance of the study. It explores the South Sudan geographical and historical contexts and its resources and the utilization of government revenue.

1.1 Background and Rationale of the Research

1.1.1 Study background

South Sudan is one of the newest countries in the world. After twenty one years of civil war (1983-2005) it finally gained its independence on July 9 2011 with the formation of ten states¹ and seventy nine counties with an estimated population of twelve million (Ashworth 2014). During the civil war many communities were displaced, many lives were lost and at least 2.2 million school-aged children, especially girls, were out of school (United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2018). The systems for social services delivery had been severely damaged or even destroyed, making the start of the new nation a difficult work (United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan 2014b). In 2015, the ten states of South Sudan which had been established at independence in 2011 were further divided into 28 new states, which were then further subdivided in 2017 into 32 states plus one contested administrative area, the Abyei Administrative Area (AAA) (African Development Bank Group 2018). Due to continued post-independence conflict in the country and as a condition for peace, President Salva Kiir (February 15, 2020) issued a landmark decision that returned the country to the 10 states arrangement with three administrative areas (Abyei,

¹ South Sudan administrative structures are organized from states to counties to payams and to bomas. The state is an equivalent of a province and is composed of a number of counties and similar arrangements apply for the counties, payams and bomas.

Ruweng & Pibor) and the creation of many ministries leaving the country vulnerable² with very limited resources for social services provision including education (Mayai & Tiitmamer 2020).

Prior to independence, South Sudan was dominated by Arab and British (including missionary) influence, and the political and military struggles for independence (details in chapter two: 2.1). After South Sudan gained independence in 2011, the demand for education was huge and there was a shift in the education system from that of old Sudan (Sudan today) to New Sudan (South Sudan today). The government declared free education but was unable to move fast enough to meet the immense need. It failed to provide the necessary resources and as a result the provision of education services remained inadequate. Therefore, investment in education was opened up to all stakeholders with the land, financial and human resources to meet the requirements and standards set by the education policy. The General Education Act of 2012 allowed the provision of education by churches, communities and individuals as a strategy to increase access (Republic of South Sudan, Juba 2012) and to improve the efficiency of education delivery alongside the government (Ministry of General Education and Instruction 2012)³. However, to date the government, through the National Ministry of Education, has maintained its authority over curriculum and examinations and controls quality and standards through school inspections. Therefore, while the government acknowledges its inadequate resources, it continues to control curriculum, assessments and policy.

² Most of the resources are re-directed to provide luxury services to the ministers and senior government offices; for example, purchase of expensive vehicles, house rent, etc.

³ The revised 2017 education policy adapted the establishment and management of private schools. It stipulated policies which include rules and regulations to govern registration, inspection and the operation of private schools and application of national school curriculum and syllabi except International and Diplomatic Schools.

The General Education Sector Plan (GESP) of 2012 promotes non-governmental educational activities and ownership of educational institutions⁴. This was a move to modern education suitable to the needs of the learners and the communities because education was considered as a ticket to prosperity (e.g. employment, job creation).

Schools are categorized into four major categories:

1. Government owned schools, which are government-run and owned;
2. Community schools initiated, supported and managed by the community in which the school is established;
3. Private schools established by individuals or a group of people with the aim of profit making;
4. Faith based schools which are church or other faith founded and managed schools.

The Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECSS) is the church with the largest number of schools. The Catholic Church, African Inland Church, Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church, Seventh Day Adventists and the Muslims are also involved in the setting up of educational institutions. However, the other churches are mainly centred in towns, run only a limited number of schools and cover only a small geographical area. For example, in Yei County (central) there are thirty primary schools, and out of these five are ECSS⁵ schools, the highest number of non-government schools.

Unfortunately, on December 15, 2013, South Sudan experienced the outbreak of a new internal leadership conflict⁶ which displaced more than 866,000 school aged children, mainly to areas with limited access to constructed learning spaces. Education resources in the host

⁴ In the new South Sudan education policy (2017-2027) the government refers to two main types of schools that include government and private schools. The church, community and commercial schools are recognized under the private status.

⁵ In this study I will use “Church schools” to refer to the schools under the Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECSS), Catholic Church, and African Inland, Evangelical Presbyterian, Methodist, Seventh Day Adventists Churches and the Muslim schools. Where there is a specific reference, the name of the church will be mentioned.

⁶ The December 15, 2013 conflict was an internal conflict within the South Sudan government leadership – it is referred to as “South South Sudan conflict”

communities became over-stretched under the influx of the additional children (UNESCO 2015). Then, on July 8, 2016, the country experienced further turmoil which severely impacted the civilian population. Over two hundred people were killed, and more than one million were displaced, many of them seeking refuge in neighbouring countries⁷. This paralyzed the education activities further and led to over 519,962 learners having no access to education or moving to internally displaced camps and Protection of Civilian Sites (POCs)⁸ that receive minimal education support from partners (UNICEF 2017). At the time of writing, the population remains very scared and there are many unanswered questions about the intentions of the leadership in South Sudan and about what will happen next (UNMISS 2016 & Breidlid 2019).

1.1.2 Rationale of the study

South Sudan faces the challenge of building a quality education system that provides equal access for all children. Everywhere parents and community play important roles in supporting schools, in mobilizing children, and in educating parents on how to create a conducive atmosphere for learning at home. For example, in the neighbouring country of Uganda, community and parental participation is promoted as a means of strengthening communities' decision-making in the provision of social services including education (Chikati 2011). The Ugandan context, however, differs in terms of cultural practices and has enjoyed more than twenty years' peace and stability in contrast to South Sudan. In the South Sudan context, the church is an important agent for mobilizing and organizing parents and community and

⁷ South Sudanese refugees are in Uganda (950,000), Kenya (114,432), Ethiopia (251,000), Democratic Republic of Congo (93,000), and Sudan (803,634) among others with Uganda hosting the highest number. (<https://humanity-inclusion.org.uk/en/news/1-million-south-sudanese-refugees-in-uganda>), August 17, 2017.

⁸ Protection of Civilian Sites (POCs) are internally displaced camps under UN security protection.

particularly for their participation in education. Parental and community participation in schooling is not focused only on the school context but goes beyond.

In this thesis, we look at the learners both in school and at home. We examine how parental and community participation in education through the church schools is defined and understood and how in the absence of adequate support from government it contributes to better access to and better quality of education, and how the roles of the various actors are defined, and the tensions managed. Finally, we explore what key insights can be drawn for the improvement of education in the context of South Sudan and how the roles of parents, Episcopal Church, community and government can be strengthened.

1.1.3 Research questions

The main research question is: ‘What is the role of the parents and community in the education of their children in Episcopal Church schools in Yei County in the context of the post-independence conflict situation of South Sudan?’

Subsidiary research questions

1. What are the contextual and cultural factors that shape the role, limitations and opportunities for parental and community participation in schooling of their learners in Episcopal Church schools?
2. How do parents, community and the Episcopal Church interpret participation in education?
3. What is the parental participation in improving education in the face of continuing challenges?
4. What are the policy implications for improved parental, community and church participation in education in South Sudan?

1.1.4 Significance of the study

The role of parents in schooling in South Sudan is in a context where the government is unable to sustain schools and the burden of education is shifted to the parents. South Sudanese society including the churches operates schools in an environment that has faced over twenty years of conflict and continued unrest. In this situation, in which government educational procedures, support and structures are largely dysfunctional, the role of parents has emerged as critical, but is not properly understood. The current structures, largely inherited from the past or imported from outside, are not sufficiently sensitive in understanding this role, and consequently fail to recognize the significance of the parental contribution, or to support it appropriately. This research is significant in describing the actual role of parents and community as it is on the ground, and proposes appropriate policies to strengthen and reconcile emerging conflicts and tensions in roles.

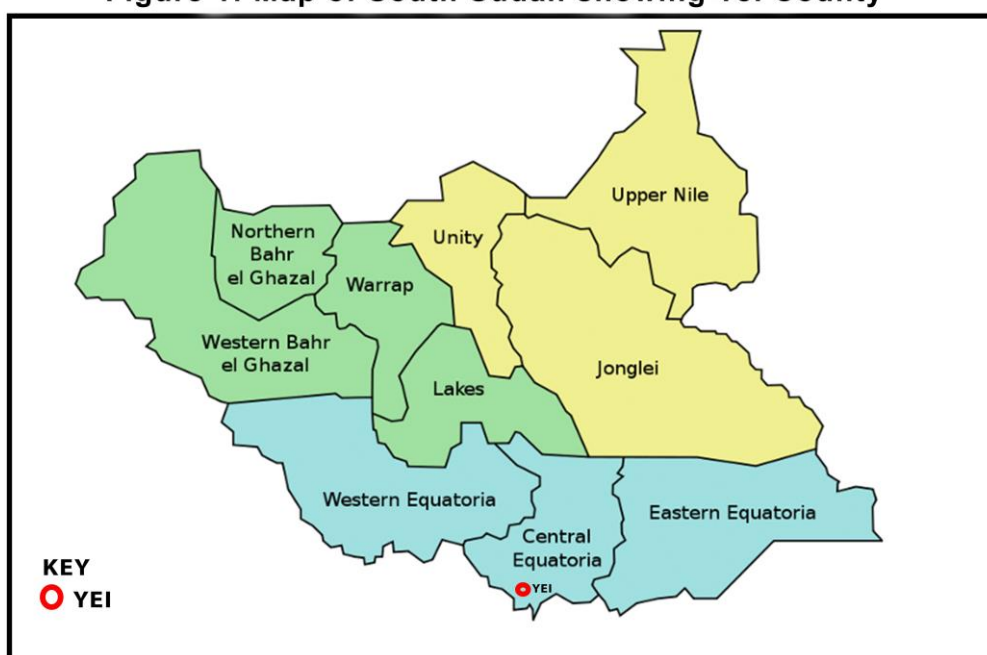
Kamba conducted a study of educational decentralization in Southern Sudan before independence focusing on community participation and democratic leadership in two primary schools in Central Equatoria State (Kamba 2010). However, research on parental and church participation in sustaining education in the conflict is lacking. This research addresses parental and community involvement in education, explores what parents' and community participation in education means and how roles, policy and contexts enhance parents' and community participation in education. Secondly, it will improve the understanding of the Episcopal Church and of the Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) concerning their modern roles in school governance and management; and finally, this study will be a resource for training PTAs and creating awareness among parents in the communities about the traditional and modern role of parents in the education of their children in school and at home. The role of the PTA is understood as a bottom up approach that is relevant in sustaining schools for

countries emerging from conflict but it can't stand alone and requires top down support for policy issues.

The findings and significance of this study will not be generalized for the whole of South Sudan because the scope is focused on Episcopal Church schools in Yei County (see location of Yei in 1.2) of Central Equatoria State in South Sudan. But it will certainly have wider implications, for example, the local contribution and resilience of parents to schooling during conflicts.

1.2 Historical, Socio-Economic and Political Contexts of Education in South Sudan

Figure 1: Map of South Sudan showing Yei County



1.2.1 South Sudan Geographical and Historical Contexts

South Sudan is a land-locked country covering a total land area of 619,745 square kilometres. The territory of South Sudan comprises the three former Southern Provinces of the former united Sudan of Bahr el Ghazal, Equatoria and Upper Nile. South Sudan is bordered by six countries: Sudan in the North, Ethiopia in the East, Kenya and Uganda in the South, the

Democratic Republic of Congo in the Southwest, and the Central African Republic in the West (Tadesse 2012).

It has a hot climate with two main seasons, wet and dry. Many parts of the country are impassible for nearly six months of the year due to flooding during the wet season especially in the Greater Upper Nile and Greater Bahr El Ghazal regions with some parts of the greater Equatoria region (UNESCO 2018a). This limits the parental and community economic activities and access of learners to schooling.

The South Sudan population⁹ was estimated to be 12.3 million people in 2018 with a population density of 20 people per square kilometre. According to the United Nations' Population Fund (UNFPA, 2017 cited from UNESCO 2018a), South Sudan is ranked as having the second highest annual population growth rate in the East African Community region with a 3.2% annual population growth, following Uganda with 3.3%. The South Sudanese population increased by 27% from 2010 to 2018 and it is projected that the country will reach over 17.2 million people by 2030. 20.2% of the South Sudanese population is currently estimated to be living in urban areas (2,675,717). The median age is about 18.7 years (Worldometers 2019).

South Sudan is governed on the basis of a decentralized system and is an all-embracing homeland for its people. It is created as a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-racial society. The country's heterogeneity, cultural and social diversity reflects complex histories of migration and cultures (Rolandsen and Kindersley 2017). South Sudan is inhabited by about sixty four different ethnic groups living in different

⁹ The 2008 Sudan census was disputed because it underestimated the South Sudan statistics. Details of South Sudan population can be found on: Population Pyramid (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.populationpyramid.net/population-density/south-sudan/2017/>: This is the most recent estimate.

geographical territories of bomas, payams, counties and states¹⁰. The ethnic groups are organized into quasi-states, some with their own traditional leadership and management while others live in more egalitarian systems. The population of these different ethnic groups may be broadly categorized into pastoralists and nomads, agro-pastoralists and subsistence agricultural communities (Ojway 2002: 20).

The political struggle for independence of South Sudan can be traced as far back as the 1821 Turco-Egyptian conquest of Sudan, and then through the 1885 Mahdist rule, the 1898 Anglo-Egyptian conquest and 1899 Condominium rule (British and Egyptian governance of Sudan) that continued until the independence of Sudan in 1956. In the 1970s the inefficient administration in the united Sudan (before separation into Sudan and South Sudan)¹¹ forced the Southerners to demand regional autonomy and greater political representation at the national, regional and district levels (African Development Bank Group 2018). Following twenty one years of civil war (1983-2004) the Republic of South Sudan became an independent territory from Sudan through the 2011 referendum which led to an overwhelming vote (over 90%) for South Sudanese independence (Thomas 2015). The South Sudan Referendum Commission made the results of the referendum public in Khartoum on February 7, 2011¹². The referendum was conducted in fulfilment of the requirement of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (Carter 2011: 23). Based on the referendum the two governments of North and South Sudan started a dialogue on the process of disengaging national institutions to form two separate and independent countries and to look at the

¹⁰ The administrative structures of South Sudan, listed in order of size, are: national to states to counties to payams to boma and to village. . The village is headed by a local chief, the boma and payam by administrators, the county by the commissioner, the state by the governor and the president at the national level.

¹¹ The Mahdist state leadership in Khartoum in the north Sudan subjected the South Sudan, the Nuba Mountains and the Southern Blue Nile into a condition of extreme slavery and plunder. The situation and context of underdevelopment in terms of roads, schools, and other social service and infrastructures and the government abuse of the people sparked the 1955 Anya-Nya I rebellion.

¹² “Sudanese, casting ballots in all 25 states of Sudan and eight other countries, voted nearly unanimously for separation in the referendum for the self-determination of Southern Sudan mandated by the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)” (Carter 2011: 1)

challenges that lay ahead of the two new states in their management and governance (Tadesse 2012: 6). The context of this study is relevant because government has not prioritized education and parents have to take a major role in provision of education for their children.

1.2.2 Government Revenue

South Sudan lies within the tropical rain forest.¹³ The population mainly practices agriculture and pastoralism. The country is endowed with rich natural resources which include oil, ivory¹⁴, gold, timber, and hides among others (Ministry of Environment 2016). In Central Equatoria, Western Equatoria and some parts of Eastern Equatoria subsistence farming is practiced on a small scale. while in greater Upper Nile and Greater Bahr El Ghazal the people are nomadic and pastoralists with limited agricultural activities (Kamba 2010). For the communities of the cattle keepers, land and pasture are two critical sources of competition and inter-communal conflicts. The access to these resources has often been tied to ethnicity and political power and exacerbates the country's instability (Institute for Peace and Security Studies 2018).

Despite the abundant and fertile land and other resources, over 90% of the state's revenue depends on oil. However, the country lacks the necessary modern infrastructure to refine, transport and ship the oil. It relies on the existing infrastructure in (north) Sudan which was formerly its enemy (USAID 2016). According to the African Development Bank South Sudan earned \$1.4 billion in gross oil revenues in 2019. The \$1.1 billion was a direct income transferred to the country and \$148 million was paid to neighbouring Sudan as cost for processing, transportation and transit fees. It further recorded \$14.2 million as non-oil revenues collected from personal income tax, tariffs, fees, etc. (Chahed 2019). The major financial records of the government of South Sudan scarcely offer any expenditure details of

¹³ An area with thick natural forest that receives heavy rainfall in most months of the year.

¹⁴ Ivory is a natural resource which is traded illegally.

non-oil and oil revenues from 2008 (National Audit Chamber 2012:7) and continue to inadequately capture records of expenditures (2011-2020) for both oil and non-oil revenues (Wondu 2021).

Regardless of the existence of oil and other natural resources, most of the country's population remains poor. This is attributed to the protracted conflict and apparent lack of transparency and accountability over the equitable distribution of oil resources. The distribution of the national budget does not prioritize social services including education, and as a result parental contribution towards schooling remains a key role to learning.

Additionally, there is a lack of political will from the South Sudanese leaders for good governance, transparency, justice and economic management. The policy framework that defines the economic management and budget allocation remains blurred. Security spending consumes a large share of the budget (44%) with significantly less allotted to infrastructural development and the provision of social services. Oil revenues are misappropriated, either used to fund the consumption of imported products, or embezzled by government officials (Institute for Peace and Security Studies 2018: 3). The army operates with impunity; a situation that has continued to post-independence with the army perpetrating human rights abuses. The army lacks professionalism and operates mainly as groups of different militias. This makes the troops more difficult to control and contributes to gross human rights violations (Ibid).

According to the African Development Bank Group 2018 the socio-economic situation of South Sudan can be summarized under six main characteristics:

1. Overwhelming opportunities in the non-oil sector remain untapped due to political and civil insecurity.

2. High dependence on oil which accounts for about 90% of government revenue.
3. Political and security challenges drain government resources and constrain foreign and domestic direct investments, making a large contribution to macroeconomic instability.
4. Poor economic and social infrastructure limits economic productivity and diversification.
5. Programmes of development partners have been diverted to support mainly humanitarian crises since the 2013 conflict.
6. Challenges to governance and the limited political will and capacity to implement the necessary institutional reforms (African Development Bank Group 2018: 1).

1.3 Conclusion

In consequence, reliance on public resources only to support social services including education will not enable all learners to access education. Currently students experience a poor quality of learning conditions due to irregular payment of teachers' salaries, poor classroom conditions and sanitary facilities, and an unattractive learning environment with a lack of libraries to encourage the culture of reading. There is little political will to provide adequate budgetary allocations to education and the on-going political and ethnic violence in the country leads to most reforms remaining on paper. The burden of schooling continues to rely on the parents, communities and churches. The inadequate government support to education contributes to the unsatisfactory state of national education.

Chapter Two: The Present State of Education in South Sudan with a Particular Focus on Yei

2.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the present state of education in South Sudan. During the pre-independent and post-independence conflict much of the educational burden has shifted to parents, communities and non-government actors like the Churches. We will explore the situation and draw lessons from Kenya and Uganda in the mobilizing of populations for building up education and from the experiences of other African countries in operating education in post-conflict situations.

2.1 Post-Independence Policies and Practice in Education

After the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 and again during the Independence celebrations in 2011 the government committed itself to ‘taking the towns to the villages’ as a significant step towards modernity. Education was emphasized as a core element of the peace premium. Demand for modern education by parents, learners and the communities was high and rising (UNESCO 2011). Millions of parents wanted their children to have opportunities for quality education that would be a ticket (through employment or job creation) to building a better future for themselves and their country. For South Sudan’s young people, education was referred to as ‘a passport to employment’ (Brown 2012). The new country’s founding father, Dr John Garang, constantly emphasized that ‘it is through modern education that people and countries build the skills needed to strengthen self-reliance, expand choices, and create shared prosperity’ (UNESCO 2011). This subsection presents the development of education policy and strategy, the situation of education in 2018, the education policy for South Sudan 2017 – 2027 and education budget allocations and community and church contributions.

2.1.1 Development of Education Policy and Strategy

South Sudanese enthusiasm for the new status of nationhood led to the development of a long-term vision in the Republic of South Sudan Development Plan's (SSDP) Vision 2040, 'To build an educated and informed nation by 2040' (Government of South Sudan 2011b). The mission focuses on reforms to improve quality of, access to and funding for general education, tackling the issue of illiteracy in the country, and enhancing low institutional and human capacity in the general education sub-sector with the following five strategic goals:

1. to improve the quality of general education;
2. to increase access to general education and promote equity,
3. to promote adult literacy and to significantly reduce adult illiteracy in the country;
4. to build institutional and human capacity at the three levels of the government to facilitate implementation of education reforms;
5. and to increase funding for general education to support the implementation of the General Education Strategic Plan, 2012-2017 (Republic of South Sudan 2011).

The General Education Strategic Plan 2012-2017 was adopted as a basis for the development of the education sector for the period up to 2016 (Government of South Sudan 2011). The strategy is founded on international educational goals and principles. For example, the universal human right to education and Education for All (EFA) were adopted and these rights were embedded into the South Sudan Transitional Constitution of 2011.

According to the General Education Act of 2012, 'primary education shall be free and accessible to all citizens in South Sudan, without discrimination on the basis of sex, race, and ethnicity, health status, including HIV/AIDS, gender or disability' (Ministry of General Education and Instruction 2012). Secondary education is to be accessible, free, compulsory, equitable and of good quality (MoGEI 2017: 23). Tertiary education is not a priority in terms

of government spending. This assertion is incorrect because: 1) after secondary education all learners continue to their next level of education; 2) there are both government and private universities under the control of Ministry of Higher Education; 3) in the national budget there is an allocation of funds to Ministry of Higher Education. In fact, all levels of education are relevant for national development. The education policies in the strategy plan and in the Education Act show significant strides towards modernity; however, overall, there is a low funding for education and human resource capacity.

The provision of social services to the overwhelmingly rural population soon became a mirage. The South Sudan Development Plan (SSDP) had no economic base to move national development. Its implementation was not feasible due to poor budgetary allocations to education, and the 2013 and 2016 conflicts worsened the situation (UNESCO 2018a). These conflicts together with continuous inter-communal clashes and cattle raiding distracted the government from engaging in social services and education in a systematic manner. Even some of the examinations and certification remained that of the North and of Uganda.¹⁵ This demonstrates a tension between the needs of the people and the government because of its failure to fulfil the agenda of free education. This will be discussed further later.

2.1.2 The Situation of Education in 2018

The context of persistent fragility and conflict led to a situation in 2018 when at least 2.2 million school-aged children were estimated to be out of school, with thousands more at risk of dropping out. The number of out-of-school children (OOSC) in South Sudan had increased since 2014, and this trend was projected to continue and affect a total of over 2.4 million children in the years ahead (2019 and beyond) unless appropriate decisions were made and

¹⁵ Until today some schools in Eastern Equatoria examine their candidates using the Ugandan examination board; some schools in Warrap, Upper Nile and Unity States continue to have their examinations from North Sudan and attend South Sudan examination as well.

implemented (UNESCO 2018a). Additionally, children performing child labour, children with disabilities and street children were not prioritized and this contributed to low enrolment (Koepl 2017). Episcopal Church education reports (2017) gathered from Yei Education Conference showed that South Sudan's schoolgirls faced special disadvantages. Only 6 % of all 13-year-old girls completed primary school. Over 75% of primary-aged girls were not in school especially in the rural areas, a situation worsened by cultural practices¹⁶ and further exacerbated by displacement due to the country's conflict and resource limitations (Koepl 2017).

Teachers

It was estimated that at independence 60% of the teachers including in Yei were untrained (Brown 2012). In 2018, South Sudan had an estimated 30,000 teachers (MoEST 2018)¹⁷; out of this number about 70% were untrained and close to 46% were primary school dropouts themselves. The number of female teachers was very low (both trained and untrained constitute less than 20%). There was no clear national accreditation and certification system based on agreed national standards for teacher training. Each of the existing and operating teacher training institutes (TTI)¹⁸ set their own examinations and certificates were accredited by the University of Juba. The current TTI entry requirements mostly prevent applicants who have not graduated from secondary school from enrolling. In consequence, the majority of teachers, who are unqualified, untrained and without secondary school certificate qualification, cannot access teacher training (Masua and Riak 2018). However, the

¹⁶ For example, a girl of more than 20 years will be regarded as old, and the parents will allocate less support for her. Secondly resources are directed to a boy's education because a girl will be married away, and the boy is considered the future homeowner and will inherit the family leadership after the father dies.

¹⁷ The insecurity affected the data collection for several years, but the national ministry of education statistics department is compiling new data which might be out late this year (2023) or next year. For now, each state is trying to build its own data system, which is why I was able to get data at least for 2021 for Central Equatoria State (CES).

¹⁸ Details and a list of all National Teacher Training Institutes, state or other teacher training institutes and teacher training centres are documented by the National Department of Teacher Education and Training and - found on: Ministry of Education & Science and Technology and Government of South Sudan 2018

educational system was sustained for several years by a majority of unqualified teachers, and their contribution should be recognized through further training or service benefits. In Central Equatorial State¹⁹ 2011-2021 statistics including Yei County show that the total number of teachers increased from 2005 to 2021 by 64% from 3972 to 6525, and the share of untrained teachers dropped from 71% to 49%.

Statistics of Teachers in Central Equatoria State

Year	Total number of Teachers	Trained	Untrained
2005	3972	1160	2812 (71%)
2011	3,919	1260	2659 (68%)
2012	4311	1561	2750 (64%)
2013	4594	2004	2590 (56%)
2015	5835	2715	3120 (53%)
2021	6525 (female 2000)	3360 (female 800)	3165 (49%)

Source: EMIS (CES) 2005, 2011, 2012, 201, 2015 & 2021

However, many of the teachers in the rural areas were not recorded. If their data were included it would show that many more were still untrained and that the number of female teachers was still low for both trained and untrained teachers. The conflicts of 2013 and 2016 worsened the situation, because many teachers escaped to refugee camps in the neighbouring countries – something which is not reflected in the statistics as access to rural areas is difficult

¹⁹ Central Equatoria State has six counties- Yei, Morobo, Lainya, Juba, Kajokeji and Terekeka

Languages and Teaching Materials

South Sudan has 64 national languages and out of these five (Dinka, Nuer, Murle, Bari and Zande) are considered major languages.²⁰ The major languages are used in primary one to primary three, since children learn better if they are taught in their mother tongue. Then they switch to English as language of instruction for higher grades (MoGEI 2017b). For example, Bari is used in the whole of CES including Yei County, and Dinka in the whole of Dinka land. Arabic is taught in schools for commercial and other official purposes, as a lingua franca for use in community and political meetings. However, there is a lack of teaching materials in national languages and a lack of teaching capacity. In Yei County there are few Bari teaching and learning materials. The Bari teachers are limited and those few in schools have not got the professional teaching skills. Yei County is similar to the rest of the counties in South Sudan, characterised by poverty and under-served by the government (2.2.2). The resources (coffee, animals, teak trees, etc.) were destroyed by the conflict. Most of the teachers in northern states of the country are from an Arabic language background and have received very little instruction in English (MoGEI 2018). Textbooks are in short supply and poorly allocated to schools, especially in risk-prone areas. For instance, there is one textbook for every three pupils for English and mathematics in upper primary and one English text book for every 5-8 pupils because of short supply (International Institute for Educational Planning 2017). Such inadequate resources create tensions or learning gaps and indicate the need for parental participation in improving access and schooling.

Teaching Methods

Instruction is primarily teacher-centred although the new South Sudanese curriculum emphasizes the importance of active learner participation. The persistence of traditional

²⁰ The major languages are used in writing the curriculum of the lower primary (p1-p3) and used for instruction as well alongside English language.

teaching methods can be attributed to large classes and poor teacher training. Most of the teachers lack basic pedagogical skills and training opportunities. In spite of the poor teaching methods in schools, children demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, but fear punishment in class if they do not give the correct answer required by the teacher (Masua and Riak 2018).

Remuneration and motivation of teachers

The remuneration of teachers is poor. According to the latest South Sudan General Annual Review Report of 2018 (there is no further update until new school data are collected and published), all the ten states pronounced that the salary structure is unattractive for teachers and no salary improvement has been made since 2015 when the country experienced hyperinflation. In consequence lower grade teachers earn about \$2 a month (MoGEI 2018). The national cabinet under the leadership of President Salva Kiir endorsed an increment of teachers' salary by 100% (Acuil 2022) in the meantime. In practice the new salary scale could not meet the increased cost of living because of the hyperinflation.

The Education Act states that teachers are entitled to salaries and to receive subsidies, such as the chalk allowance,²¹ or the provision of top-up salaries as recommended for work done (Ministry of General Education and Instruction 2012). New salary and other remunerations structures are proposed in the new Education Strategy Plan (2017) (Haider 2021) but to date this has not been implemented. The failure of the government to meet its obligation in not providing the stipulated grants shifts the burden to the parents. This study investigates how the parents and community work towards managing the schools' annual development plans including those for motivating the teachers.

²¹ Other subsidies to teachers according to South Sudan education bill include housing allowance, clothing allowance, medical allowance and transport allowance.

Physical facilities

South Sudanese educational delivery is further challenged by a lack of physical facilities, especially classrooms, and particularly in towns and open-air schools. Many schools lack basic facilities such as water, playgrounds, fences and learning equipment. Limited ICT facilities in state and county education offices make communication difficult (Masua and Riak 2018). Additionally, violent attacks on schools occurred throughout the conflict and have worsened following the renewal of hostilities in 2013 and 2016 (see photos: 1 & 2, pg. 198). It is estimated that 10% of schools have been damaged following years of conflict (Lasseko 2022). Further, there is school occupation by both army and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The South Sudan Education Sector Analysis in 2016 on Planning for Resilience in November 2015 showed that 38 schools were occupied by the army and 55 by IDPs, compromising the schooling of an estimated 67,700 children. The latest report from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2022) indicated there are still attacks on schools and over 30 schools are still under military use. This denies almost 21,750 learners access to school.

Advocacy for the vacation of the schools is the responsibility of the national, state and payam education authorities with cooperation from community leaders and parents (International Institute for Educational Planning 2017). An important aspect of this study will be to investigate the role of parents, community and school management in such advocacy. The objective is to enable rehabilitation and for the school to serve again as a learning institution.

School inspection

Due to the poor remuneration of teachers, 19% of primary schools and 16% of secondary schools operate for less than the required ten months each year. Losing a month per year means that over eight years of primary education a student will lose almost an entire school

year (Masua and Riak 2018). There is a high rate of absenteeism among teachers,²² especially in the government schools because they opt for other jobs as part-time teachers in private schools or engage in private businesses in the market or gardening. This irregularity is not monitored and reported due to an inefficient inspection and supervision mechanism. In the General Education Strategic Plan, South Sudan established a system for school inspection and supervision to be performed by county and payam officials in accordance with national guidelines (MoGEI 2017a). In practice inspection and supervision²³ is not carried out according to these standards due to economic constraints, difficulties with transport, lack of competent personnel and, in some areas, insecurity preventing access to schools (UNESCO 2018a).

2.1.3 Education Policy for South Sudan 2017 – 2027 and Modernization Agenda

The new National General Education Policy 2017-2027 (MoGEI 2017b) and the Ministry of General Education Annual Review in 2017 (MoGEI 2018) both recognize that the education sector faces numerous challenges ranging from limited budgets, a lack in human resource capacity, continuing conflicts, and the poor quality of education. It sets a new agenda by refocusing South Sudanese education on the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, 2011, and the South Sudan 2040 vision as the legal framework for policy development, specifically article 29 on the right to education, and article 38 on education, art and science. The Constitution stipulates that education will be promoted at all levels of government and free and compulsory education at primary level will be provided alongside free illiteracy eradication programs (National Constitutional Review Commission 2011). It

²² The objective of the South Sudan teacher education strategy is to ensure that sufficient numbers of well-motivated teachers with appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes are supplied to deliver quality education to all the society's children according to the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the individual children. Details at Ministry of Education & Science and Technology and Government of South Sudan 2018.

²³ See photo 8, pg. 195, Joint church-government inspection of church schools to promote quality & relations. It is a church initiative supported.

also adopted the AU Agenda 2063 and the AU Continental Education Strategy for Africa, 2016-2025. The strategy assumes that the General Education Act 2012 and the Child Act 2008 (Government of South Sudan 2009)²⁴ provide the broad legal framework for the general education system and child protection²⁵ and these are based largely on Western educational models. The National Ministry, the State Ministries, County Education Departments and the other stakeholders are legally bound to implement these laws and promote quality education for the benefit of all the children youth and adults in the Republic of South Sudan (MoGEI 2011).

2.1.4 Education Budget Allocations and Community and Church Contribution

The share of education in the national budget and spending has remained low at around 4% of recurrent expenditures, far from the national benchmark of 15% (UNESCO 2018a). Education was also not a priority in the humanitarian aid budget where it accounted for less than 2% of emergency aid because food, medicine and shelter were the immediate focus. Children and parents were left to struggle for themselves (Brown 2012). Since then, the continuing low level of budgetary allocation to education has contributed to difficult conditions in the schools (Masua and Riak 2018). According to the assessment done by the Education Cluster²⁶ more than 20% of schools were community-run, apart from those church initiated and managed schools in Greater Equatoria and Greater Upper Nile (Koepl 2017). With these difficult and poor learning conditions in the schools due to the constrained economic situation, most schools depend on contributions from parents and their communities.

²⁴ The Right to Education and Well-Being focuses on: (1) Every child has the right to free education at primarily level which shall be compulsory. (2) Every child has the right to education regardless of the type or severity of the disability he or she may have.

²⁵ The foundation was from goal 4, Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; and are stated at section 4.1 to 4.C cited from sustainable development goals sustainabledevelopment.un.org

²⁶ The Education Cluster is a joint team of Ministry of Education and Partners in Education meant for sharing information and provide advice in channelling education resources.

This situation calls for the intervention of the parents and communities if their children are to have access to quality and sustainable education. This has become the driving and motivational factor for this study.

2.1.5 The Church and Parental and Community Participation in Education in Yei

Governmental incapacity and the lack of funding have meant that at the grassroots, the involvement and support of other local actors has become essential. This section explores the historical and cultural background to such local participation in Yei.

2.1.5.1 Missionary Education

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries many African countries including Sudan²⁷ witnessed an explosion of Christian missionary activities, influence and the introduction of Western education (Nathan 2010). Culturally and emotionally the missionaries were often in alliance with colonial officials and colonial policy, but their political interests were not always identical (Sanderson and Sanderson 1981).

In Sudan, which included the territories of present-day Sudan and South Sudan, the dual colonial government of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium (1899–1956) was in place under the British administration. In 1947, the predominantly Islamic and Arabic-speaking North (present Sudan) was separated from the multireligious and multilingual South (present South Sudan). The British developed an educational policy and system for the north and handed over responsibility of educational matters to the Christian missionaries in the South (Seri-Hersch 2017). Education policy in the South can be separated into two periods: from 1900 to 1926 educational affairs in the south were under the control of Christian missionaries and after 1926 to 1948 education fell under the Sudan government directives. In 1927 an

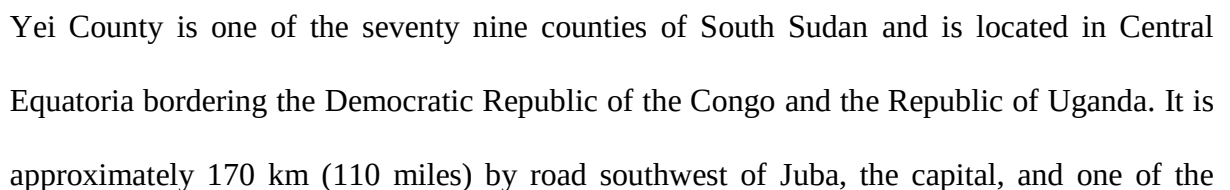
²⁷ Sudan refers to north and south Sudan before separation. In this work, North means the current republic of Sudan and South refers to the present South Sudan.

ordinance on inspection on non-government schools was adopted requiring periodic inspection of schools, restrictions on the opening of new schools, and a regulation that the only teachers permitted to enter into classrooms were to be those approved by the education director. The school head teachers were not mandated to recruit or allow volunteer teachers (Seri-Hersch 2017). The teaching of religious studies was controlled and parents were to be consulted by the school authorities if their children were to attend. Secondly, the headteachers had to submit the list of children who were to attend religious lessons and they could not start classes without approval of the education department (Ruay 1994 cited in Seri-Hersch 2017). In 1947 the government introduced a grant-in-aid system to mission schools as a policy of collaboration. There was parental involvement in education, but it was on the level of information and not participation in decision making.

The missionaries founded several forms of educational institutions in the South, ranging from village schools (sometimes called ‘bush schools’), elementary schools, intermediate schools, and trade schools. The curricula and teaching methods varied from one school to another and the medium of instruction was mainly the local vernacular languages in village schools and English in elementary and intermediate schools. Muslim schools were operational alongside other schools. Boys were given more educational opportunities because they were to be local administrators and clerks, while girls’ education was limited to village and elementary schools and their learning was focused on hygiene and domestic science as they were meant to become housewives (Seri-Hersch 2017). Both the elementary and intermediate schools followed the practice of modern education despite absence of consultation with the parents about the type of education required for their children.

Parental and community participation in schools in Yei is shaped by the historical, socio-economic and political context. This section investigates the role of the Episcopal Church and parental and community participation in education with a focus on Yei County. First, it presents the cultural, political and socio-economic background for Yei. Then I examine missionary education and the missionary strategy in Yei 1917-1946, and the subsequent development of the Episcopal Church's strategy in education, and its roles in the provision of education.²⁸

Figure 2: Map of South Sudan showing Yei County and Neighbouring countries



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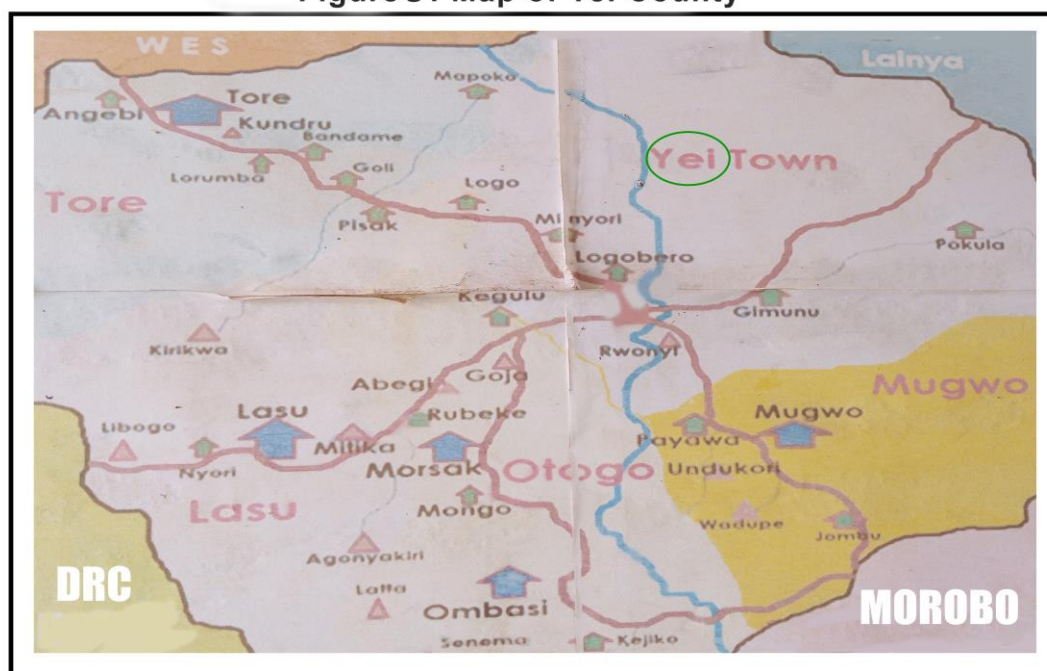
largest cities in South Sudan. The location of Yei near the borders of Uganda and DRC has made it a centre of commerce between the three neighbouring countries. Yei falls within the tropical region and receives rain throughout the year. The people are predominately agricultural communities or engaged in small businesses. They grow both food and cash crops, for example, coffee and tea which are sold to the Arab market (Kamba 2010). Yei attracted many Arab traders from Khartoum and from the capital Juba, and civil servants and other Juba residents would flock to Yei on weekends to participate in the exchange of goods and services offered in the bars, shops and hotels. This made Yei to be known as ‘Small London’ because of its cosmopolitan nature in the earlier years before the conflicts (2013, 2016).

The population of Yei was estimated at 260,720 in 2014 (South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission 2014). Yei people were portrayed as ‘civilized’ by the early missionaries because of their welcoming social and religious behaviour (Gibson 1917). Yei County has been traditionally inhabited by the Kakwa ethnic group and other ethnicities of the Bari, the Pojolu, the Baka, the Mundu, the Adio, and the Avukaya. The dominant ethnic group, the Kakwa, are spread across the three countries of Uganda (in Koboko district), South Sudan (in Yei and Morobo counties) and DRC (in Aba and Igbokolo towns) (Michael Modi 1986, cited in Waller 2016). However, the three national groups continue to work together because of their common cultural and traditional relationships, which are referred to as ‘Salia Musala’, or tripartite relationship. The Kakwa lived in co-existence with one another and other smaller ethnicities without conflict for many years until recently especially in the 1990s (Ashworth et al. 2014). These struggles for power and influence have caused the people from different ethnicities in Yei to become rivals from time to time (Rostad 2015).

After the signing of the Comprehensive Peace agreement in 2005, Yei was chosen as the most peaceful town to which the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) relocated their head office from Nairobi, Kenya (World Bank and International Bank for Reconstruction 2017). It attracted South Sudanese returnees, displaced people and business people from Uganda and Congo. It further resettled a lot of armies (SPLA/M) from different ethnicities. Additionally, when the Government of Southern Sudan in 2005 approved voluntary repatriation, many South Sudanese returnees from different ethnicities chose Yei County as their home town or village.

The long history of parents and community participation in education of their children in Yei County made it a relevant choice for this study. According to the education census conducted in Yei on March 2017, there are thirty primary schools (Yei County Education Department 2017). Out of these six are Episcopal Church founded and managed schools, four are government run and owned schools, two are private individual schools and the rest are owned by other churches together with one Muslim-run school.

Figure 3: Map of Yei County



Key: ○ Yei Town

2.2.2 The Missionary Strategy and influence in Yei 1917-1946

Missionary education work was started by establishing a boys' boarding school in Yei town. The District Commissioner informed the chiefs in Yei district²⁹ that a missionary had arrived, and some boys needed to be sent to school. As a rule, the chief sent a boy who was dependent upon him and whom he was glad to pass on to the missionary to look after. Some older people, remembering the slave trading days when boys were sent to Khartoum, thought they would never see these boys again. Others, especially some of their mothers, thought that the missionary would eat the boys. The school had students from many villages and tribes. The plan of missionary Gibson was to train boys in the boarding school in Yei to be native teachers and evangelists and then send them out to start village schools throughout the district³⁰ taking the Gospel and education with them, and in this way came the introduction of Western education. At the departure of Gibson in 1930, there were twelve such 'out-schools'³¹ with pupils numbering from seventy to two hundred in each school. Each out-school had classes of girls and women, many coming to school with babies on their backs. Parents were asked to raise local contributions to support the church ministry and pay school salaries for teachers with a little help from friends in England. Accountability for the use of the offerings were kept from the parents who had no space to participate in decision making. Nevertheless, it was a small but significant beginning of recognizing the parental role in modern education which this study explores.

The equipping of leaders was a priority for Gibson and he made sure that those who were to lead village schools and congregations were trained not only as effective teachers but also in evangelism, pastoral work and farming. Gibson emphasized that each church and school

²⁹ In the colonial and missionary era, the local structures were Area Councils, Districts and Regions and today (South Sudan government structure) are referred to Payam, County and State respectively.

³⁰ Present day greater Yei covering the areas of Yei, Panyana in Morobo, Kajokeji, Lainya and 71 miles of the Maridi road.

³¹ Out-school or village schools mean the same as 'bush school'.

should, as far as possible, be financed through the community and parents. In 1930 Gibson told the teachers and the villagers that teachers would no longer receive a salary from external sources and that the villagers had to take the responsibility for teachers' welfare (Waller 2016 & Adeba 2017). Gibson prioritized a form of education to prepare students for government work and for working in trades. Perhaps this explains why the church and the community in Yei participate strongly in education until today. Women and girls were given opportunity by Gibson to gain an education, a policy which led to the establishment of Yei girls' school in the 1940s (Waller 2016) and this indicated a shift from tradition to modernity. The present literate members of the Mothers Union and evangelists commented that Gibson had priority for girls' education. He provided accommodation, educational materials and local sanitary pads to girls above 16 years to promote their retention, emphasizing that they should learn both academic and domestic skills. This perhaps explains why the church in Yei today puts a high priority on educating women.

The nationalization of mission schools and the expulsion of missionaries from the South in 1964 had a negative impact because students' conditions of health and their feeding deteriorated because of low support from the government. The disciplinary measures applied to pupils were unnecessarily harsh and the school administration allowed bullying of young learners by adult pupils (Ruay 1994).

2.2.3 The Episcopal Church Strategy and Policy in Education after Independence

South Sudan, like other post conflict countries, has considered education to be a core element of the peace process (Eade and John 2011). The churches in South Sudan are perceived by agencies and the government of South Sudan as having a role to play in future modern educational provision as evidenced by their inclusion in a document: "Building a Better Future for Education: Education for an Independent South Sudan" (UNESCO 2011).

In 1995 during the war the Episcopal Church and Southern Sudan government had made the rehabilitation and reconstruction of social structures and institutions a priority, especially schools and health care. It was believed that peace would come to the country through development and communities should not be denied social services (Freeman 2014). The Episcopal Church initiated a number of primary health care units and schools because it was the demand of the people and communities.

But in 2014 there were still unresolved political and tribal conflicts in the country, many communities were displaced and social services delivery was interrupted. Many schools were damaged or destroyed (United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan 2014a). The Episcopal Church became a key player in the peace process through speaking for the voiceless and vulnerable, and making people to understand their rights and the rights of others. The church raised the voices of the people and encouraged them to engage in civic education to improve the standards of civil society (De Garang et al. 2016). The South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC), in which the Episcopal Church is a member, stated:

We reach out to all leaders without seeking popularity or favor, acting to remind them of their duties to protect life. We seek to pursue a vision that will bring our people out of the desert of this violence to an oasis of peace where all the fragmented people of South Sudan will seek a vibrant and cohesive nation that is ONE PEOPLE, ONE NATION and ONE SOUTH SUDAN (South Sudan Council of Churches 2018).

This intervention attracted communities to put their trust and hopes in the church. This was because the church had kept on providing modern social services and facilities, and disseminating information to the people in government areas, rebel-controlled areas and to remote and unreached populations. There were both national and international humanitarian agencies in this period providing services but with limited access to remote locations due to their operating mandates.

Following the independence of the Republic of South Sudan on July 9, 2011, the Episcopal Church emphasized local church ownership in the provision of both spiritual and temporal development for its members. Many dioceses³² today contribute to the construction of their own schools and health units and organize training of personnel to provide these services. However, most of the dioceses have limited resources and capacity to meet the modern education and health facilities needed.

2.2.4 Episcopal Church Five Year Strategic Plan 2018-2022

The strategy aims to provide modern education and make it attractive to learners in local communities and to improve the quality of education (Education and Training 2018: 8)³³. Currently the Episcopal Church manages over 150 early childhood development centres, over 80 primary schools, more than 10 secondary schools, 1 teacher college, 1 launched university apart from vocational and other training centres (Bilal 2016). This falls within the top priorities of the national Ministry of Education strategic plan for 2018 to 2022 of improving the quality of teaching in order to improve overall educational quality and learning outcomes (MoGEI 2017a). However, the Episcopal Church is also conscious of its traditional role of promoting moral development (instilling good behaviour) of learners and building the discipline of teachers through the church-school ethos.

Following the immense demand for social services including education from the parents and communities the Episcopal Church drew up a five year strategic plan 2018-2022 (Education and Training 2018). It emphasizes a mission to protect and enhance the rights and welfare of

³² The Episcopal Church of South Sudan to date has sixty-one dioceses, eight internal provinces and one independent diocese under the leadership of the Archbishop and Primate. The one independent diocese (Juba diocese) is meant for the Archbishop to practice his duties as a member of the clergy.

³³ The rationale for the strategic plan is to realize and prioritise its goals and plans to invest in education. It aims to ensure that education activities are harmonized and coordinated. There is rampant lack of access and weak enforcement of existing education laws and policies, as well as widespread ignorance on the importance of education among communities. This strategy aims to strengthen awareness to the current thousands of South Sudanese Children who are out of school (Education and Training 2018).

children, women and the vulnerable through providing quality inclusive education and socio-economic empowerment by working together with government departments, civil society organisations, disabled people organisations, schools and individuals (Ibid 13). It is a clear agenda of providing modern education with moral values despite its shortfall in financial and human resources.

The strategic plan focuses on the following key interventions. Teacher training for both preschools and primary schools through a pre-service and in-service teacher programme (Education and Training 2018) is a priority for early childhood development. Literacy training for teachers from an Arabic background and for adults who missed regular education needs special attention. The intervention aims to improve teaching skills for Arabic language teachers in preschool and primary education and subsequently improve on the teaching methodology and quality of education. Literacy is to be promoted and implemented within church premises, schools and centres for all regardless of religion, gender and all other affiliations. The curriculum focuses on Maths and English literacy, life skills (general health education, family life, AIDS education, mine awareness education³⁴, functional numeracy (e.g. with an emphasis on small business), Christian living, peace building and conflict resolution, business and micro enterprise skills, and basic vocational training. It aims to balance academic and recreational activities (Education Cluster South Sudan, 2012: 19).

The Episcopal Church has a periodical training course for its schools' managers and the PTAs to remind them of their modern roles and give them updates on education policies and developments in the country. The PTA members have different education levels and languages and many of them, especially women, have not gone to school. The Ministry of Education and other education providers could learn much from this course.

³⁴ Mine awareness is a civic education given to learners and communities about remnants of unexploded land mines which were left during the war. So that any suspected land mines or dangerous weapons are reported to local authorities for appropriate removal action to void risk.

‘Education in emergency’³⁵ and ‘community-based rehabilitation’ are other strategies adopted in Episcopal Church schools. They focus on building the resilience of local communities for peaceful co-existence, and on enabling parents and local communities to support the education of their children through the provision of learning materials and contributing to the construction of temporary learning spaces.

The strategic plan 2018-2022 (Education and Training, 2018) aims at increasing the school enrolment of learners with disabilities and improving access to rehabilitation services for children and adults with disabilities. According to a survey conducted by the South Sudan Education Cluster (SSEC), children with disabilities have very limited access to any educational opportunities. Efforts are being made by the government and other actors to foster inclusive education but without much success. Many children with disabilities prefer to go to church or privately managed schools because there greater attention is given to them than in government schools (SSEC 2014).

Improvement of learning spaces is also a strategy in Episcopal Church schools and it is based on two approaches. One is to rehabilitate existing schools or classrooms where the population lives or where they have settled as refugees or internally displaced people. This includes renovating school buildings when their life span is over and they are unhealthy or unsafe. The second approach is to add classrooms to existing schools because of overcrowding or the influx of many new students; or if there is a newly established population and children have no classroom for lessons to take place. The Episcopal Church (2021) has over 165 primary schools in the whole of South Sudan, out of which 22 were destroyed, 148 are in good shape, and out of which 83 are accessible (urban) and 60 are not accessible due to insecurity especially in rural areas. Out of the operational 83 schools, 7 received renovations and 3

³⁵ Education support given to learners or teachers in during crisis, for example, returnees, internally displaced persons who, among others, are affected by conflict or natural disasters like floods.

schools got additional classrooms buildings but many still need improvements. In the Episcopal Church, parents are considered the pillars and cornerstones of planning school construction and renovation works. The breakdown of communication between the national ministry of education and the states' education departments sometimes leads to contractors being sent directly by the national ministry without consulting the state, county authorities or the local community. This results in the construction of schools where there is no existing or adequate population to use the facility (MoGEI 2018). This also reflects a lack of space for parental participation in decision making.

The educational policy of the Episcopal Church is based on the principle of partnership, core values and rights for the children and people of South Sudan. It expresses South Sudan perspectives to establish strong education systems that reflect common cultural practices. This principle of partnership refers to the modern role of the church in implementing the Education Policy alongside the education ministry in accordance with the South Sudan Education Act 2012. It seeks to collaborate with other churches, government departments, civil society organisations, disabled people organisations, schools, individuals, partner organizations, parents and stakeholders not mentioned here (Education and Training 2018). In practice the Episcopal Church education officers coordinate with government education offices in implementing the curriculum, the conduct of examinations, promoting sports and carrying out inspections.

The Episcopal Church policy emphasizes the provision of services for all learners regardless of race, gender or religion in its schools or institutions. It provides equal opportunities for learners of other faiths to achieve their academic potential without discrimination (Education and Training 2018) although priority is given to the children of the church leaders. This indicates an element of discrimination. In Yei urban area the Episcopal Church schools admit

learners from all faiths and nationalities. Secondly South Sudan has over sixty tribes and other nationals from neighbouring countries and refugees from Uganda and Congo. In Yei more than 30 of these tribes live together with families from Congo and Uganda and their children are enrolled in Yei urban schools. The admission criterion to Episcopal Church schools is defined as: 55% learners from Episcopal Church, 25% from other Christian faith and 20% for Muslims learners and other nationalities (Uganda, Congo, etc.) and categories). The criterion is set in a way not to deviate from the focus or the strategy of the Episcopal Church. It is not an equal opportunity policy, but Episcopal Church schools offer admission and support through learning materials or small grants to vulnerable children, such as learners with disabilities or girls who cannot continue their education because they are neglected by their parents. The Episcopal Church also plans to offer higher education through a university (the Episcopal Church University (TEU)) in 2023 (Bilal 2016: 3). The Episcopal Church Education Policy clearly shows a shift from tradition to modernity because of its characteristics of equal access, rights and the call for quality modern education while maintaining its traditional role of moral development. The shift of Episcopal Church Education Policy from tradition to modern practices demonstrates the need to revise its policies to fit the current context.

2.2.5 The Role of Parents and Community in Education in South Sudan

Promoting the role of parents in education today has been taken by the Episcopal Church as key for schools and institutions to enable children to receive the level, quality and type of education desired by the parents. The parents' role was also recognized in the Handicapped Children Act of 1975 in USA, adapted by the Organization of African Union (OAU) as the Individuals with Disabilities Act in 1990, legalized in 1997, and adopted as the Individuals

with Disabilities Educational Improvement Act of 2004 in Sudan as an OAU³⁶ member state. The assumption was that parents and community understand the condition of their children with special needs and they have a duty to inform the school (Tekin 2004). This is specifically for disabled children following the general principles for parental participation. Additionally, parents are considered to be the most important primary role models in their children's immediate surroundings and are behind their children's academic achievement and success in the school through the collaboration of the parent, child and the teacher in family and school relationships (Ibid). African traditional education also recognizes the role of parents and community as central in preparing the child for family and community roles and in spiritual development (Agbemabiese 2007). However, many Episcopal Church school teachers argued that some parents have low capacity which hinders them from supporting their children with school homework. Secondly, child development and early learning at home with parents is lacking today because parents are too much engaged with office and garden work or personal issues due to ongoing conflicts and as a result children choose their own lifestyle.

According to the South Sudan National Ministry of General Education Policy 2017-2027 (MoGEI) 2017b), the role of parents in education is limited to: (1) the provision of education needs of the learners; (2) ensuring their children are enrolled and attend school when they attain the age of 5 years (in an urban setting) or 6 years (in a rural setting); (3) informing the Head-teacher of any medical or other conditions peculiar to their children upon enrolment in schools or as soon as parents become aware of such medical conditions.

In contrast, the Episcopal Church elaborates the role of parents in education at community level and at the individual parental level. At the community level the role of parents is both

³⁶ South Sudan subsequently developed its own disability policy and is a member of OAU, now the African Union.

traditional and modern, with the responsibility of mobilizing learners (not just their own children) to join the school; and to contribute ideas, time and energy towards the improvement of the school. Additionally, parents are expected to contribute positively in disciplining the learner (instilling good behaviour) within and outside the school, and in protecting the school facilities. Their role is also to mobilize resources/funds for school development projects and provide local materials for school construction. Furthermore, they should participate in monitoring and evaluation by acting as resource persons for effective learning and in practice by visiting the learners in order to know the learning context of the school. In addition, they should work together to provide land for school development, for example, by offering land for building classrooms, sports grounds, teachers' quarters, school farms and other school activities. In addition, parents provide contributions in kind such as bricks in villages and money as fees in both urban and rural settings. They promote awareness about education and report cases of neglect of children to the relevant authorities for action. Finally parents should demand accountability for use of the school funds and participate in formulating by-laws and guidelines for good of the school (Episcopal Church of South Sudan, Diocese of Yei 2014: 12). This study aims, in part, to explore how this policy has been implemented in practice and how the associated tensions are managed.

At the individual parental level, their role is practiced in three layers: traditional, transitional and modern; and the parents are engaged to send their children to school and provide them with school materials, uniforms, fees, food, stationery, shelter and medical care. They should support the development of the school by contributing local materials and participate in repair and maintenance of school property and buildings. The parents participate in school visits as a monitoring process to motivate the teachers, school management and the learners. The parents have to allow enough time at home for children to study and do their homework (especially the girls) by lessening the amount of household chores given to them. In addition,

parents should monitor the attendance and progress of their children's learning both at home and in school and ensure discipline, and provide guidance and direction for positive child growth and development. Parents must demand accountability of the use of school resources or funds in order to encourage parents to participate in the cost sharing arrangements laid down by the school governing body in which parents are included through the PTA. This enhances positive relations with the school management and teachers for improvement of learners' performance. Parents act as resource persons for school activities by helping teachers in making and collecting teaching and learning resources and ensuring the payment of school dues on time and acknowledging their good work. Finally, they are expected to attend school meetings and participate in discussions, and to promote accurate and appropriate decision-making, formulating rules and regulations for how the schools can be governed and performance in the school can be improved (Episcopal Church of South Sudan, Diocese of Yei 2014: 13). However, the majority of parents lack the knowledge and skills to participate in meetings and interactions in schools and are hardly able to perform the modern role that is expected of them.

The role of parents and community in education is practiced and understood differently by stakeholders and from one country to another depending on existing policies, contexts, cultures, norms and structures of particular communities, individuals and schools (Pino-Pasternak & Whitebread 2010). In South Sudan the role is understood in terms of support to learners, resource mobilization, attendance at PTA meetings and their roles, and awareness creation among others. The role of parents is acknowledged to be both at community and individual levels with critical concern for their family role which prepares the learner for schooling. However, some of the parents are not aware especially of their modern roles. The parents in Episcopal Church, government and other schools have different expectations of participation because each school has its own traditions and cultures depending on the

background of the learners. The returnee parents from neighbouring countries manifest additional parental roles in education in comparison to the host communities and this will be explored in this study.

2.3 International post-conflict educational perspectives on parental and community roles

First, I briefly explore the experiences with parental and community participation in education in two other East African countries. I consider the case of Harambee schools in post-Independence Kenya, and the rather later introduction of universal primary education (UPE) in Uganda and my own experiences as a volunteer refugee teacher and a member of the examination committee at county level in Uganda at the time of UPE. Second, I examine the experiences of education in post-conflict countries such as Rwanda, South Africa, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

2.3.1 Harambee Schools Experience in Kenya

After Kenya's political independence in 1963, the government introduced the concept of the 'Harambee' movement, which involved the participation of all Kenyans in the development of service sectors (Harambee is a Kiswahili word meaning 'pulling together') (Noreh 1988). This was a strategy to rapidly promote the development of modern secondary education to meet the interest of learners and communities after the departure of the colonial regime.

'Harambee' was conceived by the government as an alternative financing method for schools and other projects, allowing the central government to direct its resources to other development programmes. In education, the Harambee movement focused on secondary schools. It was based on the reality that community self-help schemes for schools through 'Harambee' perform best with coordination between government departments and the community leaders. In practice, however, there was no clear definition of the respective roles

between the government and local communities in planning and decision making. It led local communities to accept or reject government involvement at the community level depending on their own interests. The Government commitment to 'Harambee' schools was often more symbolic than tangible and this made planning in this area even weaker than for rural development projects where government representatives had a certain amount of input potential (Keller 1973: 1-2). However, in education many schools were constructed, and large sums of money were collected to send young Kenyans to colleges outside and within the country. The Harambee local committees also initiated health centres, cattle dips, dams, roads, community buildings, fishponds, bridges and youth centres in addition to the better known Harambee secondary schools. This popular movement has been described as the major force behind the explosive expansion of the country's secondary education system during the 1960s (Godfrey & Mutiso 1974: 85).

The Harambee movement took into consideration the nature of economic planning, resource allocation and development, political realities and ideological cues, social organizations, shared values, and the norms and cultures of the local communities (Mbithi & Rasmusson 1977:16). It was largely a 'bottom up' movement whose major actors were mostly the rural poor, the marginalised groups, and political leaders displaced from the centre. The Harambee movement was given a national image through top level legitimization and support by the president of Kenya in his formal declaration in 1963. This led to locally owned leadership, for example, project initiators, project committee members and work group leaders who were the actual contributors of labour, money, materials and other donations. Other players incorporated include national and local politicians, civil servants, businessmen, and foreign agencies that supported the local committees as patrons in Harambee projects (Ibid 42).

Two factors explained Kenya's interest in a rapid expansion of educational opportunities. The colonial regime had greatly limited educational opportunities for Africans. Secondly, the departure of the main colonial administrators and growth of the urban sector created employment opportunities for Africans possessing formal educational credentials. This led to an immediate and obvious benefit that could be obtained from secondary education, and thus to massive support for the Harambee movement. In the early post-independence days, the Harambee movement was strongly influenced by local religious bodies, whose members were hungry for formal education for their children and who often organized the initial fund-raising meetings and invited local dignitaries to attend and pledge their financial support for the local communities. Subsequently, in the late 1960s the Harambee school movement took on a stronger political character as local politicians sought to ingratiate themselves with their constituencies and play a principal role in the establishment of new schools and support for existing ones (Mwiria 1990).

The management of most Harambee schools was largely in the hands of local leaders such as chiefs, primary school teachers and clergy. They formed the local committees whose role was to organize fund-raising, the recruitment of teachers, and other school related functions. The day-to-day school activities were managed by the head teacher whose authority was sometimes challenged. The heavy dependence on local fund-raising made it difficult for most Harambee schools to meet their recurrent costs and restricted them to the cheaper academic curriculum. (For example, it was rare for rural Harambee secondary schools to have science laboratories, although science education was an educational priority.) This forced Harambee schools to seek assistance from local authorities, individuals, and firms to meet their financial obligations. Lillis argued that despite opening up access to secondary education to a high percentage of the school age population, there remained fundamental questions associated both with the quality and equity of systems associated with community financing (Lillis

1987). The government was aware of these issues. In 1964, during the official opening of Harambee secondary schools, the president told those in attendance that:

Self-help schemes must not be regarded as being in competition with that the government is trying to do. The people of this country must accept the guidance and advice given by officials of the ministry of education. Unless this is done, then the country's education might be in jeopardy. I would like to stress at this point, the need for the planning and control of our education expansion. The vast majority of our people are working constantly to ensure an education for their children. This is good, but if these children go to bad schools, without adequate facilities and without good teachers, the kind of education they receive may not help much in after life (Mwiria 1990: 353).

Harambee was particularly responsible for the establishment of the colleges of science and technology. These colleges are found in each region of Kenya's main administrative regions, many subsequently elevated to university status. Jomo Kenyatta stated: 'We must work harder to fight our enemies, that is, ignorance, sickness and poverty..... Let us work harder together for our country Kenya' (Ibid: 350). This slogan stresses the need for modern services and a process to modernization.

Harambee schools mushroomed after Kenya attained independence. The nationwide expansion of the schools was unplanned and uncontrolled, because each community demanded education for their children. In practice, learners were provided with qualifications that were often not consistent with the needs of the economy (Mwiria 1990). The government tended to be critical of the Harambee school movement, basing their main criticism on the substandard qualifications obtained due to poor teaching and inadequate facilities. Secondly, Harambee schools had crowded classes and took away the best primary school teachers and their buildings (Harambee schools initially started in primary school compounds). This frustrated the development plans of most local communities with an unbearable resource burden (Mbithi & Rasmusson 1977). Initially, the government undertook to take over a limited number of the most successful Harambee schools, and incorporate them into the government sector. When even this became financially impracticable, the government instituted a scheme of aid to Harambee schools in 1975, known as the secondary schools

Harambee package programme. It aimed to support 50 Harambee schools per year through trained and qualified teachers and correspondence courses to benefit those preparing for the Kenya Junior Certificate Examination (KJSE). This was challenged due to inadequate resources and an increasing number of schools (Lelei & Weidman 2012).

2.3.2 Universal primary education in Uganda

Formal education in Uganda was introduced by Christian missionaries in the 1880s, a time when Uganda had just become a British Protectorate. The school system was intended for a smaller population, meant to serve the children of the chiefs, to provide functionaries for the British colonial government. Due to the demand of education by Ugandans, in the 1920s, the government decided to take over responsibility for education by providing financial support to the missionary schools and establishing new public schools in regions where needs were not being met by the missions (Ssekamwa & Lugumba 2001: 1). Thereafter, the education system underwent several modifications in which universal primary education (UPE) is one of the most significant (Moulton, 2002 cited in Tikly & Barrett 2013).

The president of Uganda declared the implementation of UPE in January 1997 and it was followed by sensitization seminars conducted at national and district levels with political, administrative and religious leaders and personnel. A nation-wide enumeration exercise was carried out to register four children per family sponsored by the government (Ministry of Education and Sports 1999). There was a breakthrough with UPE because the objectives were clearly spelt out. These included making basic education accessible to the learners and relevant to their needs in meeting national goals; making education equitable in order to eliminate disparities and inequalities; providing and maintaining quality education as the basis for promoting the human resource development; initiating a fundamental positive transformation of society in the social, economic and political fields; and ensuring education

was affordable by the majority of Ugandans by providing the minimum necessary facilities and resources to enable every child to enter and remain in school until the completion of the primary education cycle (Ibid: 1-10).

The Government of Uganda committed itself to providing tuition fees for four children per family at the rate of (U) Shs. 5,000/= (USD 1.3) per pupil per annum for classes P1 to P3 and Shs. 8,100/= (USD 2.2) per pupil per annum for classes P4 to P7; the provision of textbooks; and the construction of physical facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries and teachers' houses. The government provided iron sheets, cement, timber and nails while the local authorities and communities were given the responsibility of providing additional input in terms of labour and food for workers during construction. Teachers' training and their salaries were covered as well (Ministry of Education and Sports 1999). The UPE program was managed as part of the package of the entire process of education reform (Bategeka & Okurut 2006).

In my experience as a volunteer teacher in Uganda the limit of four children per family created tensions. The children who were not covered by UPE were left to the parents to pay for, and if the parents could not afford the fees, these children were effectively denied access to schooling. The fee contributed by the government was small and did not meet the running costs of the school. To fill the gap the parents had to raise the additional amount to meet the school budget. The labour cost that was left in the hands of the local authorities and community for the construction of buildings was a huge burden to the parents. In practice the labour cost was 25% of the material cost besides the food required to feed the workers.

UPE was a success, however, because people valued education. Despite the difficult political and economic situation from the 1970s through to the 1990s, parents continued to send their children to school; education was demand-driven and there was a tradition of strong

community support for schools. This was illustrated when communities registered 5.3 million children for UPE in January 1997, 55% more than in previous years. However, some communities were left behind, because education was not their priority, and they valued their livelihoods, e.g. fishing, cattle keeping and other productive labour, higher than going to school. For example, in Karamoja district, pastoralism is dominant and the increase in enrolment for UPE was only 21% compared to a national average of 55%. This disparity contributed to the ethnic rivalry and resentment that continues today.

The government both showed the necessary political will and had the authority to make vital decisions in education. There was strong presidential and ministerial (education) leadership and backing for UPE by declaration of its compulsory nature, accompanied by subsidies for the entire primary education. Moreover, preparation and support began four years before UPE was formally launched. The government set in place new initiatives which included (a) the Teacher Development and Management System (TDMS), (b) the Instructional Materials Unit (IMU), (c) Assessment Reform (AR) that involved conducting a National Assessment of Progress in Education and (d) the Improving Educational Quality (IEQ) research project. Finally, public financing in education was given a priority. Public financing of the education sector in the period 1989 to 1993 was less than 15% of public expenditure. From 1993/94 to 1999, the budget allocation of public expenditure steadily increased to about 25%.

UPE was not for all, as not all the children were sponsored by UPE. Parents tended to pay for boys first. It was a cultural expectation that the girls would be married away to another family. Children whose parents had died and lived with relatives, who first considered their own children, were only given a chance if there was space. Further, the government commitment in subsidies to a certain extent remained on paper. In the school where I was teaching, the school received less than 40% of the amount allocated. The preparation and

public financing for UPE and education service delivery was inadequate. For instance, the 25% national budgetary allocation to education in reality was only 18% and the actual grants designated for quality assurance initiatives of TDMS, IMU, AR & IEQ were at a lower percentage still.

Educational research in two districts of Iganga and Mayuge in Uganda on parental participation in children's schooling showed that academic achievements of the children depended on the time and resource commitment of the parents. Parents' attention at home and regular communication with school increased learners' academic performance (transitional roles). This research suggests that parental participation plays a pivotal role in motivating children to improve their academic grades. Children's learning is not the outcome of the learner-teacher relationship alone but should involve active parental participation (Mahuro and Hungi 2016: 1). A similar study showed that low performing schools in Mayuge experienced a lack of cooperation between parents and schools (interdependence). Illiteracy and the poverty of parents were the two major obstacles that hindered parental involvement in the Ugandan context (Berg and Noort 2011: 3).

The experiences of Uganda and Kenya were examples of parents and communities being given the responsibility to mobilize resources and take responsibility for the education of their children. There was political willingness at the central government. In Kenya, the programme was energized through mass awareness raising at the local level, and in Uganda through sensitization seminars reinforced by a commitment to provide financial resources disbursed to schools to meet certain costs of education. The definition of roles between central government and local communities was unclear. In contrast, South Sudan declared education for all (EFA) without the clear involvement of parents and not backed by adequate financial resources.

2.3.3 Experiences of education in post-conflict countries

This section explores the experiences of post-conflict countries in Africa, specifically Rwanda, South Africa, Liberia and Sierra Leone, that considered education as a vital tool in the post-conflict process. Secondly, I reflect on some of the strategies that post-conflict countries have implemented that contributed to nation building.

Countries that have experienced prolonged conflicts have had their political, socio-economic cultural, systems and structures destroyed. The conflicts have affected the lives of learners, young people, survivors, parents, teachers, and local communities, curricula, quality of education, infrastructures, cultural values and technical skills (Bentrovato et al. 2016). South Africa and Rwanda experienced conflicts based on racial discrimination and political violence, that led in the latter case to the death of many teachers, learners and education officials that affected the entire system and left lasting trauma (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children 2006 & World Bank 2007 cited in Barrios-Tao et al. 2016: 8). Experience has shown that damage caused by violent conflict on an education system takes longer to put right than the actual period of the conflict itself (UNESCO 2011). This subsection analyses the reconstruction process, curriculum reform and the education quality.

2.3.3.1 The reconstruction process

Vargas-Barón and Bernal argue that post-conflict education should consider nation building in the light of advocating for political and structural systems; encouraging people and communities to feel a sense of citizenship and belonging through contributing to their own country. Post-conflict education can build a positive citizenship that helps to achieve more equitable socioeconomic development and social justice, promote cultural maintenance and growth, intercultural understanding, respect and tolerance, and self-directed growth for all

groups within a nation (Vargas-Barón and Bernal cited in Barrios-Tao et al. 2016: 5). Davies argues that education should promote resilience and advocate for improved security and peace for appropriate development. Davies also argued that since every conflict has its own distinctive history, in planning the rebuilding process each nation has to consider critically its psychological, political, social and cultural differences and the root causes of the conflict. This would make possible the building of a culture of peace through focusing on issues of peace education, justice, tolerance, and respect for human rights - all of which have a place in the education curriculum, for example, in the training of teachers to tackle controversial issues (power, culture, etc.). Secondly, the schools and teacher training colleges should be free from violence of any nature whether structural, physical, or symbolic (including the use of threatening language), because learners are the future flag bearers of peace both individually and as a group (Davies 2015). This should be mainly the role of the government because huge investment is needed and political commitment.

Barrios-Tao also considers that education for reconstruction should consider in depth the roots, consequences and resolutions of conflict, develop skills necessary to rebuild damaged relationships and to resolve the differences that continue to exist (Barrios-Tao et al. 2016). In a study conducted in South Sudan, Kim argues that post-conflict education needs to recognize both formal and non-formal education systems, particularly in contexts where the education system is strongly divided along social classes and political lines. Countries should prepare to provide education to very large numbers of learners due to the rapid influx of new students, and an alternative education system should be considered to enable children and young adults who were previously deprived of education to acquire the skills they need to earn a living. For example, Liberia in 1997 had to cope with large numbers of children and youth who had missed out formal education under the conflict. The government committed itself to integrating those of school-age into appropriate grades in the regular school system and also

introduced an Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) for this youth group to keep them in school, reduce the risk of their recruitment as combatants, and facilitate their reintegration into society (Longden 2013).³⁷ Last, a huge investment by donors was urgently needed (Kim et al. 2011). However, the government has to demonstrate its role in the peace process and be accountable and transparent in managing resources.

2.3.3.2 Curriculum reform

According to research by the World Bank, curriculum and textbook development is key to reform processes in post-conflict contexts. It has to be cautiously and sequentially approached, because it is the heart of education that rebuilds a new generation into the wider society. It can be a strategy to build a common culture in dealing with identity struggles that might contribute to further conflict (World Bank 2005: 52). Tawil and Harley argue that curriculum reform in a post-conflict society is crucial to improving the overall quality of education and should consciously avoid reproducing content that contributes to further conflict (Tawil and Harley 2004 cited in Barrios-Tao et al. 2016). For example, in South Africa and Rwanda the education curricula in the post-conflict period targeted the teaching of specific life skills, and learning to live together to reinforce positive attitudes for one another. However, Breidlid has argued that the South Sudan curriculum is unstable because it continues to borrow examples from Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Sudan making it alien to learners and weak at building citizenship. The ministry of education in South Sudan has referred to the new curriculum, launched under the theme: ‘Harmonised Education Service Delivery for Nation Building, Peaceful Co-existence and Lifelong Learning for All’ as ‘a complete, harmonized, and recognized curriculum in line with regional and international education standards’. In reality, however, the education system has collapsed and cannot be

³⁷ Accelerated Learning Program is designed to enable children who missed out schooling at the right time. It aims at speed-reading and provision of quicker study skills so that learners can complete primary schooling in two to three years or enroll back into right class and continue in the regular system. It offers deeper and effective more learning so that the same children finish the curriculum in less time than in the formal system.

compared to that of neighbouring countries (Breidlid 2019: 130). A comparative study on South Sudan and South Africa showed that South Sudan is characterized by poverty, lack of services, a rapid population growth, weak institutions, limited human resource capacity and continued instability as a result of ethnic and political tensions. The reform process should therefore take into account the principle of local ownership and community involvement determined by its own capacity and should consider a gradual development process with focus on strengthening peace architecture and gender equality (Hendricks and Lucey 2013). However, there are still political tensions that the church and peace architects are tentatively managing as further peace negotiations continue to save lives and create windows for learners to be in the classrooms.

2.3.3.3 Education quality

Sierra Leone (1991-2002) and Liberia (1989-1997) emerged from brutal civil wars with destroyed social, economic, and physical infrastructures, in the education system as elsewhere. They also faced frequent disruptions of schooling, disorientation and psychological trauma among children, poor learning outcomes, a weakened institutional capacity to manage the education system, and a serious lack of information and data to plan service provision. In a post-conflict context educational transformation needs to focus on all these problems. Liberia introduced a ‘back-to-school’ campaign with an objective for learners to ‘stay-in-school’ a role led by government (Barrios-Tao et al. 2016) .

South Sudan experienced a longer conflict (1983-2011) and political violence and continued ethnic inter-communal clashes that claimed thousands of lives and destruction of property. The education sector collapsed and children and youth missed schooling (UNICEF 2019). After independence the reform process focused on a curriculum with parallel routes: academic, technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Information and

Communication Technology (ICT) was emphasized as an essential tool for teaching and learning as well as a tool for management. ICT competency will be one of the qualifications for admission to the pre-service teacher training institutions. The policy reform further considered quality standards and national goals of general education to meet the needs and aspirations of the people of South Sudan (MoGEI) 2017: 11). However, education remains a low priority sector with insufficient government funding.

2.4 Conclusion

The present state of education in South Sudan is weak and characterized by low funding, high dropout rates and unclear roles of government, communities and parents. The conditions of teachers remain desperate, with most qualified teachers deserting the profession because of poor remuneration and seeking jobs in other sectors, leaving the schools to volunteer and untrained teachers. The faith-based schools endeavour to deliver some standard (fair quality) education as compared to the government, but they charge high fees to meet the running costs which most parents cannot afford to pay. Access to education is paramount for countries emerging from conflict like South Sudan in order to meet the huge demand of school age children and those who missed education. However, without quality the goal of education will not be achieved and many learners will be discouraged and drop out.

South Sudan developed education policy legislation and a curriculum immediately after Independence. However, the curriculum still borrows examples from other countries, which makes it weak in building citizenship. South Sudan should learn from other countries that emerged from conflict to tackle the root causes of conflict, conduct curriculum reform and provide education quality in order to make learning attractive. Parental participation is crucial because effective learning of the child requires parent-teacher partnership. However, parents have limited resources and capacity to adequately support the learning of the child at home.

Learning of the child therefore requires the role of the parent, community and the government. The next chapter looks at the theoretical background that concerns culture, context and policy in understanding the role of parents, community and church participation in education. This will be discussed through the lenses of bottom-up approach, role theory, modernization theory and communities of practice theory.

Chapter Three: Culture, Context and Policy in understanding the role of Parents, Community and Church Participation in Education

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the literature on parents, community and church participation in education. In the first section, I look at culture, context and policy. I explore the role and influence of culture in education. Under context, the focus is on economic, political, religious and social issues and policy looks into education policy and reforms in schools. Then I clarify the key terms community, participation and community participation. I then examine the literature on community participation and what it looks like in the context of education. Finally, I then discuss the bottom up approach, role theory, modernization theory and communities of practice theory that will be used in the empirical analysis of the data, and specifically how the various categories of schools particularly the Episcopal Church practice parental and community participation in education.

3.1 Understanding the concepts of culture, context and policy

The schools in Yei County of South Sudan receive children from different parts of the country who are from different cultures, traditions, religious affiliations and beliefs, all of which can affect the perceptions of the roles of parents, community and Church in education.

3.1.1 Culture

Bullivant (1981) argues that there is increasing recognition of the important role culture plays in the framing and delivery of education and development. Stephens argues in support of Bullivant that the heart of successful educational development is recognition of the importance of culture in the context of school development. Culture is:

a 'patterned system of knowledge and conception embodied in symbolic and non-symbolic communication modes which a society has evolved from the past, and progressively modified and

augments to give meaning to and cope with the present and anticipated future problems of its existence' (Bullivant 1981: 27 cited in Stephens 2007).

Eagleton argues that:

Culture exists on both an individual and social level, being concerned with what particular individuals think, learn and do and also with what a society considers important or meaningful. Culture as a concept has to relate to both the desirable e.g. ideas of *kultur* and 'civilisation'. This made culture referred to both a descriptive and evaluative term because of its 'value free' interactions in the societies (Eagleton 2000 cited, from Stephens 2007).

In South Sudan with over sixty tribes with different cultural practices, people interact with their children in different ways in education and schooling. For many, school education is the responsibility of the government, church or other agencies and they do not perceive any personal role in it. For parents of the cattle keeping communities schooling is of less interest as for them education is provided through the community in the context of their traditions, customs and rites and classroom education can be even perceived to be a distraction (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation 2008). In the traditional African context, a relevant education is one that meets the needs of the community, and both builds on and critiques the cultural heritage of the extended family, the clan and the tribe. Mazonde argues:

Culture is promoted and carried on by members of the community to the new generation to enable them to adapt to their physical environment and teach them how to control and use it; and to explain to them their own future, and that of their community. It builds on the understanding and perpetuation of the institutions, laws, language and values inherited from the past (Mazonde 2001: 3).

In analysing culture four categories can be differentiated: First, the cerebral and cognitive category of culture is concerned with the goals or aspirations of an individual and the relationship between cognition and 'meaning making'. Second, the embodied and collective category of culture relates to the intellectual and moral development of society, for example, one society might be more developed and cultured in a particular areas than the other (Eagleton 2000 cited from Stephens 2019). The third is the descriptive and concrete category of culture that refers to the artistic and intellectual realms with connotations of elitism and what became known as 'high or low culture'. Fourth is the social category of culture that accounts for the whole way of life of a people and emphasises the plurality of cultures and

democratisation. And the Episcopal Church has a culture or ethos that guides the management of its schools.

In this study I stress the social category because it describes the beliefs, experiences and behaviour of individuals and societies. It explores what people think and do and how they describe and evaluate their actions. In a local Episcopal Church school, the parents and the community have different cultures, ideas, norms and beliefs but together seek to forge a common culture for the school. Such cultural differences are considered when drawing up guidelines for the development of the parent teacher associations. For example, these guidelines include female representation, and schedules for planning meetings among others.

In this context culture is concerned with:

Knowledge and ideas that give meaning to the beliefs and actions of individuals and societies; and as an ideational tool which can be used to describe and evaluate those beliefs and actions (Stephens 2019: 15)

The varying perceptions of different cultures offer scope in explaining ‘meaningful action’. Culture is a system of ‘shared ideas, concepts, rules and meaning that underlie and are expressed in the ways that people live’ (Alasuutari 1995: 2 & Keesing 1981 cited in Stephens 2019: 16). This echoes Ali Mazrui’s (1980) perspective of culture as a lens of perception, standard of evaluation, a medium of communication and a basis of stratification. Furthermore, culture conditions and defines identity (Ibid). It is what people do in their daily lives in actions and in what they express through language. Culture is humanly made structures of both authority and participation. In schools, culture is everywhere manifested in ‘what goes on in classrooms, from what you see on the walls to what you cannot see going on inside children’s heads’. Therefore, culture is both about what people think and do and how we describe and evaluate that action’ (Stephens 2019: 2).

3.1.2 Context

Context takes into account economic, political, religious and social issues which are different at rural or urban levels (Dilley 2002). The concept of context can be understood in three levels: the macro level reflects the global and international domains; the meso level reflects the national landscape in which policies around education and development are located; and the micro level focuses on the contexts of community, school and families which provide meaningful foregrounds for the beliefs, behaviours and experiences of individual teachers, learners and parents (Stephens 2019: 17). This means context can be found at the micro-level of the village, as well as at the wider level of the whole society, the nation-state or the ‘world system’ (Dilley 2002). Context is made up of experiences, training and language that represents our social reality through the meaningful interpretation of situations (Stephens 2009). Dohn argues that learning is context-dependent because in each location where there is a school the nature of classrooms and existing facilities like library, museums, classrooms or learning environment differs. Dohn suggests that the local context and the composition of parents in a local school require a common view or opinion, for example, in making parental decisions for school plans. The role of context in relation to learning is a determinant factor because it considers the learning needs, the role of parents and the local school situation (Dohn et al. 2018: 1).

This study considers the diversity of cultures among the people of South Sudan, as well as the huge challenges and tensions of building a nation and delivering social services in the midst of the current political crisis, the deteriorating economic situation as well as the social and tribal clashes that are being experienced in South Sudan. Among the Episcopal Church schools within Yei County (both rural and urban), there exist various learning situations and forms of parental participation.

3.1.3 Policy

Haddad & Demsky define policy as ‘explicit or implicit single decisions or group of decisions which may set out directives for guiding future decisions, initiate or retard action, or guide implementation of previous decisions’ (Haddad and Demsky 1995). Stephens refers to a policy as ‘a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by an organization or individual’ (Stephens 2016: 5).

Ball argues that education policy and reforms of the school system need to develop a productive relationship between schools and their communities in order to strengthen democracy, governance and relevant management structures, like parent-school management planning (Chapter 6.1.1.2). Schools should be able to take responsibility for developing the capabilities and strengths of parents, learners, teachers, and other local stakeholders. Schools need policies for spaces in which parents can participate and create an environment to discuss, to challenge and to critique each other for better school performance (Ball 2013: 4). Following Wildervsky, policy is both a process and a product because it is systematic, goal oriented, temporal and time bound in its development process (Wildervsky 1978, cited from Ball 2013).

According to Ball ‘we have to reconnect education to democracy and work towards an educative relationship between schools and their communities. We should recognize education as central to larger projects of democracy and community building’ (Ball 2013) and these are practices in modern education. Policy is both a text and an action, in text there are guidelines and in action are the practices in the school. Stephens argues that policy can be examined from three perspectives: international and national perspective, school and professional perspectives; and the research perspective.

Policy development takes into account four stages and these include: problem identification and agenda setting, policy formulation, policy implementation and policy monitoring and evaluation based on the context and culture of each country (Zaei cited in Perkin et al. 2005). Policy in education looks at leadership, human resource management, external relations and marketing, learning and teaching and accountability and quality. It recognizes that educational leadership is shaped by its wider environment and power relations. The school environment considers multiple factors and ranges from local ‘context’ conditions to the impact of the macro-policy environment (Bell and Stevenson 2006).

Policy is about who defines and who decides education policies and practices in a school (Stephens 2007). In South Sudan, education policies are defined by government (MoGEI 2012) and decisions on implementation in schools are taken by the school owners. In the case of the church schools decisions are taken jointly by the parents and communities following the Parent Teacher Education Guidelines (MoE 2015), as well as the cultures and traditions of the school where it is located. In this study policy normally means parents in a local school participate in the development of school guiding rules to enable decision making in implementation of a school plan. Therefore, this study explores the role of parents and community participation in church schools in Yei County of South Sudan as shaped by issues of culture, context and policy.

3.2 Clarification of Terms: Community, Participation and Community Participation

3.2.1 Community

The term ‘community’ is a sociological term that has not been given a fixed meaning. According to Samah, ‘it refers to a social unit whose members recognize as common a sufficiency of interest to allow interactivities of common life out of which association and

systems of relations' arise (Samah & Aref 2011: 187). For Nishimura 'a community is characterized by common values and interests and defined by geographical boundaries, social boundaries, economic and political boundaries. It functions within a particular social structure and exhibits and creates norms, values and intuitions for long term benefits' (Nishimura 2017:2). According Hamdi and Goethert 'community is a group of people coming together to achieve a common objective, even if they have differences'. This definition was based on the principle that 'unity is strength' and 'united we stand' (Hamdi and Goethert 1997a). In Yei County there are more than eight different ethnic groups with different interests and backgrounds. When it comes to a school activity the parents and the communities are guided by the school constitution and development plan and their cultural differences are melded, for example, when agreeing on a common school development plan (Chapter 5.1.1). This promotes common interactions and values for the common objective of improving the learning of their children in a particular context (Chikati 2011 and Odira 2012).

Building on the works of Samah, Nishimura and Nabeel and Reinhard, I use the term 'community' in this study to explain two aspects. First, community refers to a group of parents who share a common interest (Samah) and a common objective (Nabeel & Reinhard) of contributing to their children's education in a particular local church school in South Sudan (Nishimura). These parents with their children live in the neighbourhood of the school and are from different religious affiliations, economic and cultural backgrounds. Second, community is a representation of traditional leadership, for example, of local chiefs and land owners living within a particular geographical boundary. These local chiefs have traditional roles, for example, in allocation of land in agreement with landowners, and the disciplining of parents who do not fulfil their community roles (for example, failure to turn up for school community work). The term 'community is used in development and political discourse to

refer to the practice of traditional (usually ethnic) leadership in representing the interests of the population of a particular geographic constituency', such as a town, a county or a payam (Nishimura 2017 & Hamdi and Goethert 1997).

3.2.2 Participation

Participation³⁸ has different meanings depending on its application and interpretation. According to Asiimwe, 'participation' in the field of development studies is the process of providing cheaper labour to a project, it's a cost sharing strategy, and a form of project management and decision making (Asiimwe and Kwemara 2007). For Habraken, 'participation' is the assigning of roles to people who share in decision making responsibilities with the professionals (Dietz and Whaley 2005). And according to Hamdi & Goethert, 'participation' refers to the process by which professionals, families, community groups, government officials, and others get together to work something out, preferably in a formal or informal partnership' (Hamdi and Goethert 1997). In my professional work I have observed that parents and communities need to have a shared understanding and agreement in decision making, assigning roles, and offering labour in school activities such as school construction and making financial contributions to achieve the school development plan. One of the purposes of my research is to investigate whether parents do indeed share a common interpretation of participation. I approached this task through Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings or individual or informal consultations with the school. This research describes and critically evaluates these activities and how to manage the associated tensions.

In this study participation is interpreted as a cost-effective strategy (Asiimwe) and careful allocation of duties to parents and communities (Habraken) through a formal structure

³⁸ I am aware that participation can either be positive or negative, for example, by promoting others to join in an activity or to block others from participating. It also considers whether the individual or the group participates together with others, or through an intermediary process or even none.

(Hamdi & Goethert). Having clear roles for the parents and communities in school needs to be based on context and culture for any likelihood of sustainability. ‘Participation’ in this study will mean the involvement of parents in taking responsibility for the education of their children in a local context of the school. Optimal participation of the parents in planning and ownership is highly desirable for the school to have effective delivery of education activities, for example, in resource mobilization (details in Chapter 5.2.2). My assumption was that this could improve the learning outcomes for the children, which is the ultimate goal of participation in education.

3.2.3 Community Participation and Education

The term ‘community participation’ has been used differently in different contexts. For example, in international development projects it is frequently used by funding agencies to describe how the beneficiaries are engaged in supporting the implementation of their programmes with their expertise (Kendall et al. 2015). According to Riffkin, the term ‘community participation’ refers to ‘a social process whereby specific groups with shared needs living in a defined geographical area, actively pursue identification of their needs, make decisions and establish mechanisms to meet these needs’ (Riffkin et al. 1988: 933 cited from Chitambo et al. 2002). Samuel refers to ‘community participation’ as ‘a process by which beneficiaries influence all aspects of development projects, rather than merely passively receiving benefits’. For Bamberger, ‘community participation’ serves to promote project sustainability, and social acceptability (Bamberger 1991). French and Dee define ‘community participation’ as ‘people’s need to know themselves through information, consultation, involvement, collaboration and empowering’ (French and Dee 2008). This highlights the building of local democracy through a bottom up approach (Lessing et al. 2012a) with details to come in chapter 3 section 3.4.1.

Building on Riffkin, Samuel, and Bamberger, ‘community participation’ in this study means that parents and community with common interests define their roles and use their knowledge and competencies (French & Dee) for activities towards better quality and sustainability in education.

The education of children requires the involvement of parents, community and the learners themselves. The school aims at providing necessary skills to the learner, and it operates as part of the community in which the school is located (Uemura 1999: 2). Different authors have put forward different perspectives about community participation in education, for example, Gyanendra Kumar in India, Laila El Baradei in Egypt and Amaliah in Indonesia. Uemura demonstrates that in sub-Saharan Africa ‘community participation in education’ means participation in research and data collection, dialogue with policymakers, school management, curriculum design, development of learning materials and school construction (Uemura 1999: 3). We will explore some of these issues in this research. Nishimura (2017) argues that ‘community participation in education’ means provision of alternatives to an existing education system, for example, when the public education system is unable to meet the diverse demands of parents for cognitive, religious, and linguistic aspects of education for their children. Another scenario is when the quality of public education is not attractive enough to retain pupils from different socio-economic backgrounds and there is demand for an alternative to public schooling. Further when initiatives are taken by cultural communities³⁹ to operate and run non-formal schools for children and adults who missed the opportunity of schooling at the right time and age - for instance, the learners who due to poverty, war, conflicts, child labour, or early marriage missed out and are now taking alternative pedagogical approaches (Nishimura 2017).

³⁹ According to Theunynck 2009 a school can be planted into any locality where its demand driven, following the cultural norms, resources available and there are personnel to implement it for the need of a particular community regardless of tribe, race or any other associated characteristics.

According to Abie Ntekane (2018) involving parents in learning improves learners' performance, reduces absenteeism and restores parents' confidence in their children's education. Learners with parents or caregivers who enact roles in their learners' education earn higher grades, have better social skills and show improved behaviour. The role of parents is demonstrated in their engagement with the school and teachers, and in ensuring that the learner is assisted in the process of learning. Furthermore, parents who serve on school boards are more concerned about their children's academic performance, and avail themselves during parents' meetings to gain a better understanding of their children's performance. One role of parents is to follow up with their children's class and subject teachers to identify areas where the children are facing challenges. To improve children's areas of weakness and failure, parents have to contact their teachers, thus building and strengthening the teacher and parent relationship (Clinton & Hattie, 2013:324, cited in Abie Ntekane 2018:2). Such active parent-teacher partnerships (UNESCO 2016) contribute positively to children's education (Abie Ntekane 2018). The finding of Abie from South Africa applies also to South Sudan. However, unlike South Africa, the context of South Sudan is still characterized by conflicts and low government priority given to education.

In African traditional education the concern is to develop the total human being, making him or her a responsible member of the community who contributes to the conservation and development of the specific traditions of the community, and this is very much the role of parents. Today also parents know what they want for their children and therefore should be involved in the learning process. For example, the curriculum of Nigeria includes physical, mental, spiritual and moral development of the citizens and aims to build trust and moral education for community solidarity (Okoro 2010:2).

Western experiences show that parental and community participation in education enables the building of dialogue with other parents, learners and teachers concerning learning inputs for the child. It improves the performance of learners through promoting free interaction of the learners among themselves, with the teacher and their own parents (Pino-Pasternak and Whitebread 2010). Klebanov and Travis (2015:7) argued:

What we are as adults is the product of our parental concern and contribution ... The way a society functions is a reflection of the childrearing practices of that society. Today, we reap what we have sown.

The similarity of African and Western perspectives on parental roles is centred on improving learning conditions and learners' performance. School visits are emphasized and lead to parent-teacher partnership. Moral development and the upbringing of the child is both the role of the individual parents and community.

In summary, this study considers 'community participation in education' to mean consultative policy development and decision making practices in schools and the provision of learning materials by parents to enable children to participate in the learning process effectively (Uemura 1999a).

3.3 The significance of community participation, its major principles, and its incentives and disincentives for parents

In this section, I explore the literature on the significance, major principles, incentives and disadvantages of community participation for parents.

3.3.1 Significance of community participation

According to Glassman community participation in education is important for countries emerging from conflict because it enables parents and local communities to participate actively in defining and providing an education that they find appropriate, relevant and affordable (Glassman, Jordan P. Naidoo, et al. 2007: 13). It accelerates the adaptation of the

curriculum by local teachers and could be cost effective. Burns & Joseph argue that the participation of local residents is essential to improve democratic service accountability and promote social cohesion because communities recognize the value of working in partnership with each other. It builds effectiveness as communities bring in their own understanding, knowledge, and experience. It is putting policy into practice and enables efficient resource mobilization (Burns & Joseph 2004:2). This study examines the extent to which parents are part of the planning, monitoring and decision making in local church school (chapters 6.1.1.2 & 6.1.3)

3.3.2 Major principles for community participation

In their analysis of ‘community participation’, defined as people with a common interest pursuing a common objective in a particular location, Burns and Joseph have proposed six principles:

1. Looking at an understanding of the composition, needs, priorities, tensions, strengths and existing networks of communities.
2. Exploring the need for partnership working and resourcing of participation at all stages of the development process.
3. Considering sensitive issues of accountability and representative structures and building effective structures and infrastructures which strengthen communities rather than dividing them.
4. Taking into account the need for a range of wider formal and informal approaches in which people can participate in debate and discussion, creating some local ownership and control.

5. Exploring the need for clarity and recognition of behaviour or character and evidence that communities have been heard and education decisions have been informed by communities.
6. Considering the aspect that people participate from a variety of different starting points and cultural experience and that this has implications for how people learn and contribute (Burns & Joseph 2004: 7).

For South Sudan, a state in continuing conflict, these principles may be appropriate in building relationships, accountability and establishing structures. Principles 1, 3 and 4 will be more significant for this research. They are a challenge because of lack of political will from the government officials who are significant actors in the field of education. High corruption in public offices makes developing accountability procedures and systems difficult. Parents need to have their own local PTA structures and guidelines because this will support their building of community networks and decision making.

3.3.3 Incentives and disincentives for community participation by parents

Community participation in education not only brings people together in community but can also become a means to challenge patterns of governance as it helps people at the grassroots understand how existing power relationships are structured and reproduced (Adhikari 2012a). A country such as South Sudan has weak structures of governance, and various competing cultural and political traditions of governance and authority. Here, it can build social, religious or traditional obligations for mutual help because it encourages people to participate in collective actions, institutional contexts and around issues of cost. Through this, people see a common ground and opportunities to better their own lives and the community (Hartley 2002: 178).

When community participation is considered as a dynamic interactive process, it can enable the voices of disadvantaged people to be heard in societal decision making, promoting equity,

efficiency, empowerment and sustainability (Adhikari 2012a). However, there are reasons why individuals or the community may be reluctant to take part in local projects. For instance, if roles or benefits are unevenly distributed, this creates little sense of ownership (Adhikari 2012a), and cultivates the ideology that the government or the church should be the one to provide services for them. Additionally, the community may be reluctant to participate if the agency treats their members as helpless and too vulnerable to make contributions (Hartley 2002: 178).

Community participation may not be viable if the principle of partnership and the role of cultural and traditional leadership are not taken into account. In 1917 in Yei, missionary Paul Gibson introduced mission education to the population without properly involving local chiefs and community. The local chiefs did not understand the concept of Western education and were reluctant to send their own children to school. In addition they influenced the parents not to send their children to attend schooling due to the fear of slavery (Kayanga and Wheeler 1999). Later Gibson was able to clearly inform the parents that schooling needed the contribution of parents for their children's education and that they had to be part of school management. This was a redefinition of roles. The practice of community participation needs relevant models and theories to enhance relationships and forge a common culture.

3.4 Arguments, theories and models of parental and community participation in education

3.4.1 The bottom-up approach

A 'bottom-up' approach is seen as appropriate for community participation in education because members of the community see themselves as part of a joint group for a common objective and are interested in working together because they expect to get something out of

it (Lessing et al. 2012: 6). The bottom-up model enables ‘programs and policies designed to increase parental and community participation to focus on creating formal structures (such as School Committees or Parent-Teacher Associations) through which parents can play active and regularized roles in the school. Decentralization policies may be implemented to transfer power over school budgets, school personnel, and school planning to parents or local governments’ (Kendall 2007a).

This approach considers community as constituted by ‘being part of one another in doing activities’⁴⁰ and as a basic unit necessary for planning and the decentralization of activities at the local level. It takes into account local population power structures, traditions and cultures. According to my working experience in schools and communities the limitation to this model is the dependence on the available expertise, cultural and contextual factors of parents in the respective community where the school is located. The parents and communities are more likely to be active in roles they are able to do.

3.4.2 Role theory

A theory is a general body or set of principles and guidelines offered to explain a phenomenon. The application of a theoretical concept to a study is intended to express, explain, predict, and understand a research phenomenon (Garner et al. 2009). Application of a theory is sometime problematic because the context in which it was developed might be different to that of the intended research, unless it’s adapted and critiqued to sharpen its relevance. In this thesis I use role theory, modernization theory and communities of practice theory to explore the parental, community and church participation in education. Some of the weaknesses of role, modernization and communities of practice theories will emerge from this study.

⁴⁰ For example, my experience in working with parents in different schools, if there is a common issue of concern, (for example, a school toilet that has collapsed) that needs their support the turn up is positive because they are concerned about the hygiene of their children while in the school.

Role theory developed in order to study social roles, both sociologically and psychologically, in modern societies (B. J. Biddle 1986). It is therefore conceptually rooted in the modernization process, principally as experienced in Western societies. These roles are categorically defined, for example, teacher, manager, and mother. Social roles are considered as a set of rights, duties, expectations, norms, and behaviours that a person has to fulfil. The Western view of role theory further assumes that individual behaviour is specifically contextualized based on social position and influencing factors (social, economic, political). The sociological discourse of role theory was developed through the theoretical works of Mead, Morris, Huebner and Joas, and was based on certain concepts of the mind and the self (Mead et al. 2015). These emphasize individualism and the linguistic behaviour and capacity of the actor. Individualism is presented in the aspect of self that refers to 'I' and 'me' segments and these are individualist descriptions of the social aspect of the person. Thus social behaviour is commonly developed through the individual's experiences and encounters in society (Ibid: 6).

The development of role theory has shown that the study of human behaviour is a unique and challenging concept (Beezer 1974). It has not been limited to psychological descriptions of social behaviour but has gained an increasing importance in the fields of cultural anthropology, social psychology, sociology, and management (Dozier 1984). Its wider application has, to some extent, resulted in disagreement over its meaning. Nevertheless, role theory has been majorly concerned with patterns of behaviour which are accepted by groups of social actors in relation to cognitive and affective phenomena (M. J. Hindin 2007).

Role theory hypothesizes the following propositions about social behaviour. First, the division of labour in the society takes the form of interactions among heterogeneous

specialized positions that are referred to as roles. Second, social roles include ‘appropriate’ and ‘permitted’ forms of behaviour, guided by social norms, which are commonly known and hence determine expectations. Third, roles are occupied by individuals, who are called ‘actors’. Fourth, individuals who are given social roles are considered ‘legitimate’ and they are punishable when they violate the role norms. Finally, the anticipation of rewards and punishments, as well as the satisfaction of behaving in an appropriate manner, account for why agents conform to role requirements (Hindin 2007).

Role theory can be understood at two main levels. The first level emphasises how roles operate within and through a social system, for example, societies or groups which can be in schools, churches, and rather more widely in ethnic communities, etc. The second level concerns how roles influence or are influenced by the actors or those who inhabit them (e.g., in this thesis PTA chairperson, head teacher, manager) (Moreno 1934). The roles at both levels influence each other.

Turner argues that when social roles are not implemented as defined the actor manages by practicing transition and alteration in roles. Role transition refers to the movement from one role to another and how individuals adapt to the transition. On the other hand, role change which can be defined as role alteration is a consensual understanding of changes in behavioural patterns of an established role. Roles therefore are not fixed or static objects but keep on changing and evolving in order to remain relevant to the demands of changing cultural, economic, political and social situations (Turner 1986). Turner argues that there are three essential methods in which roles can change: first, roles can change because of shifting societal priorities or cultural partners (such as gender roles). Second, change in roles can be associated with formal directives and be dictated by authority (a job description from a

supervisor). Third, roles can be changed by the actors or individuals who inhabit the role (redefining the role) to adapt to the context.

Creary and Gordon note that transitioning between one role and another is challenging and can result in role overload, role conflict, role strain and role ambiguity (Creary and Gordon 2016). Role overload occurs when an individual performs multiple roles simultaneously and struggles to meet the demand; for example, pastor performing the duties of a teacher and his or her spiritual role or a learner struggles also to be a baby-sitter. Turner describes this as lack of resources, for example, time and energy needed to fulfil both roles simultaneously (Turner 1986). Role conflict describes the tensions between the expectations of one role and another (e.g. a priest who is a teacher and needed at the same in classroom and church). Edwards explains that role conflict occurs when an actor experiences simultaneous and contradicting expectations and there is a tension to demonstrate affection (Edwards et al. 2002).

The tensions of role overload and role conflict causes the actor to experience difficulties in meeting social expectations. This leads to role stress. Goode (1960) describes role stress as the tension caused when an individual for a number of reasons cannot meet the demands of the social roles. It occurs when the actor has multiple overlapping, incompatible roles and implementing one role interferes with another, resulting in role strain. Role strain is perceived as a normal inevitable consequence of balancing multiple conflicting, overwhelming and ambiguous roles and the actor at this critical situation is tasked with how to navigate and reduce the strain in order to meet the social expectations. Mobily argues that role ambiguity in contrast to role conflict and role overloading is a lack of clear information pertaining role expectations and how to fulfil these expectations (Mobily 1991); for instance, a local chief who is given another role of a PTA chairperson without clear definition of roles subjects him to a confusing situation because he is expected to perform these two roles with expected results.

However, this research from a South Sudanese context gives more value and weight to communal relations and the role expectations of traditional culture than to the so-called ‘autonomous’ individual, although Western education and the impact of globalisation are moving South Sudan towards the Western view. Role theory can be problematic because of its individualist assumptions and focus on specialization as opposed to communally accepted practices in the African context. It does not demonstrate an African understanding of personhood in the traditional and modern contexts. This relates to a tension between western (bureaucratic) roles in the education system, and African communitarian values that often take priority over formal bureaucratic roles. African cultures and philosophies consider social behaviour, human identities and the physical fitness of the person as constituting a community obligation for service in certain roles, for example, choosing a school PTA chairperson requires a committed and influential person irrespective of his or her formal educational level or capacity. Klaasen argues that in a South African context, the distribution and or allocation of social roles are based on parenthood, relationships and how he or she is informed by the community life, cultures, needs and structures (Klaasen 2017: 34). It is a similar situation in South Sudan.

This thesis uses role theory to explore, and redefine the roles of parents, government, learners and other stakeholders specifically engaged in school management in conflict-riven South Sudan (Floyd and Lane 2000). As an example, the distribution of roles for the PTA in a local school is based on the expected social behaviour and status of the person. The western view of role theory stresses the concepts of social and individual behaviour, human identities with a focus on professionalism and ‘how roles develop and are defined’ (Matta et al. 2015). From a non-western perspective in South Sudan, and in the case of PTA committees that are still in tension between traditional values and concepts and the requirements of an education system

profoundly influenced by the west, the concept of role theory becomes useful to assist in the redefinition of PTA roles to better fit the local context.

The immediate role of PTAs in South Sudan is to sustain education through community involvement because of inadequate or no government support. The continued conflict in South Sudan led the government to relinquish its role in education to the parents, focusing on political security in order to manage its tensions. This thesis is concerned with changing roles and the change of roles which are currently not properly defined.

Biddle presented five forms of role theory: functional role theory, symbolic interactionist role theory, structural role theory, organizational role theory and cognitive role theory. In this study functional and structural theories seem useful. Functional role theory focuses on the characteristic behaviour of persons who occupy social positions within a stable social system. Structural role theory is concerned with structured role relationships. Functional role theory assumes a stable society and that relates to characteristics of peaceful countries. In addition, structural role theory emphasizes the pattern of social structures, and this indicates an element of division of labor. Both functional and structural roles theories demonstrate a step towards modernity. The PTA has double roles - one to respect and protect the traditional values of the community and the other to promote formal (classroom) education. In addition, the government of South Sudan emphasizes education for all and child rights. Both PTA and government of South Sudan show a rapid move to modernity while on the other hand the cultural practices are strong and require gradual processing to accept modern practices. This will further be discussed in relation to modernization theory.

In this study, the idea of building common norms within a heterogeneous community is important. The sharing of social roles in school activities is done by agreement and the actor must be willing and take responsibility. Despite role theory being a Western concept its ideas on patterns of social identity and behaviour are useful in building communities of practice among parents of various cultural affiliations as in conflict-riven South Sudan for the common interest in education of their children in a local school. It can do this by uncovering the tensions between traditional and modern roles.

The weakness of role theory is further seen in describing and explaining diverse behaviour of individuals occupying social positions. It is criticized for 'enforcing commonly held prejudices about how people should behave, and present themselves and how others should behave, and views the individual as responsible for fulfilling the expectations of a role rather than for creating a role that they can perform depending on their capacity' (Jackson 1998: 1 & 2). Role theory is challenged for merging roles when in practice two different skills are needed for improved performance, for example, having a chief both as a traditional leader and PTA chairperson. The PTA in South Sudan experiences constant shifting of roles due to the breakdown of traditional roles following the widespread displacement, and the tension between western values, modernization, and traditional values and structures. This makes it difficult to define roles by function alone without paying attention to the constant community struggle to maintain peace and stability by whatever means possible.

Role theory also draws attention to the concepts of consensus, conformity and role taking. Consensus denotes agreement among expectations that are held by various parents in a local school and is a practice of democracy which is a step towards modernity. Conformity implies compliance for some patterns of behaviour and the modelling of others due to social imitation

and that is a process of building specialization. According to Mead (1934, cited in Biddle 1986) participation in social interaction requires that a person ‘taking the role’ needs to have accuracy,⁴¹ general ability and requires capacity. Although the weakness of role theory is attributed to its very broad approach, the fact that it lacks time boundaries, and because it does not take into account the heterogeneity of communities (van der Horst 2016), its strength of consensus, conformity and role taking are potentially useful in this study with its focus on redefining parental and community modern roles in schooling of their children as will be demonstrated in the data chapters.

The PTA, churches, government, parents and I myself as actors in South Sudan constantly experience conflict, overload, strain and ambiguity in roles as we navigate the challenges both of the on-going conflict, and of the underlying tensions between tradition and modernity in order to meet the learning expectations of the children and parents.

3.4.3 Modernization theory

Modernization theory is another Western concept that can be problematic to adapt or adopt to a study in the developing countries because of its colonial perception characterised by the transition from traditional to modernity, rural to urban practices, and a shift from communalism to individualism and capitalism. The concept also lies behind much Western educational theory and practices.

It’s relevant first to consider the term modernity as explained by different authors. According to Friedman, modernity is a local product of a commercial global system, that is, a form of identification and habitus (norms, values, attitudes, and behaviours of a particular social group or social class), that arises in determining local transformation of conditions of existence (Friedman 1994: 212). He argues that the emergence of individuals as autonomous

⁴¹ The concept of accuracy in this study refers to the personality associated with truth, dependability and responsibility and leading a team to achieve planned objectives.

beings represents their own self-organizing and self-motivating, and necessitates the dissolution of previous structures and cultures. Shilliam describes modernity as a condition of social existence that is significantly different to all past forms of human experience (Shilliam 2010: 1), while Durkheim argues that modernity is about population growth and increasing population density; increasing 'moral density' that is characterised by more complex social interactions and increasing specialization in work or the division of labour. He further elaborated that modernity of a society can be achieved through interdependencies among the various segments (Durkheim 2020: 42 & 43).

Therefore, modernization theory is broadly a means of seeking to understand the process and meaning of change from traditional practices to modernity. Perera and Mcleod argued that modernization theory was the main approach to global development in the earlier years of 1950s and 1960s, based on identifying the factors influencing lack of development in 'underdeveloped' countries, for example, the adoption of modern practices and the dismantling of traditional norms vital to progress (Knöbl 2003 cited from Perera and Mcleod 2023). In the same way, Goorha (2017: 1) argues that modernization theory studies the process of social evolution and the development of societies, and Shilliam (2010: 1) refers to modernization as the transitional process of moving from 'traditional' or 'primitive' communities to modern societies. In summary, modernization theory attempts to explain and manage the process of change from traditional to modern practices by dismantling traditional norms – a process that would eventually enhance social evolution and development of societies by taking into account relevant socioeconomic and political factors. Modernization theory is critiqued for not taking into account the existing differences among societies (Ukwandu 2017), and for not considering that societies are not developing along the same path (Tipps 2012). The concept of 'multiple modernities' that emphasizes modern societies'

diversity in cultural contexts and systems or structures (Marsh 2014) has been formulated to account for the plurality of modern societies (Sinai 2020) in the process of modernization.

Marsh, however, doesn't believe that these different forms of modernity really exist.

Modernization and practices

At this point I critically discuss the ideas of modernisation in relation to my research context in South Sudan as it focuses on changes in roles that are necessary to enable education to function within the situation of conflict. According to chapter two (section 2.1.1) of this thesis the South Sudanese vision of education is to 'secure the right to quality and relevant education for all disadvantaged South Sudanese to enable them to acquire skills for a productive and peaceful life and to be able to participate in promoting self and national development'. In addition, South Sudan has agreed and signed to implement the several UN conventions and treaties, for example, respect to human rights and democracy, sustainable development goals with emphasise to universal primary education and gender. These are Western concepts necessarily impacting education. However, the people of South Sudan are left behind because the country has been involved in continued tribal and political conflicts even after independence in 2011, as seen in its high mortality rate, low literacy rate, and its continuing promotion of cultural practices that do not promote human rights (e.g., dislike of children with disability as misfortune) and continues with the formation of militia groups.

South Sudan joined and accepted as a member of East African Community (EAC) on 15th August 2016. The vision of EAC⁴² is to be a 'prosperous, competitive, secure, stable and politically united East Africa'. For it to compete favourably it has to change from some of its traditional practices to modernity. For example, communities need for economic reasons to practice monogamy; learners have to prioritise English as a language of instruction in order to

⁴² <https://www.eac.int/integration-pillars>

cope with modern society and globalisation. De Ruyter and Wolbert argue that the central purpose of education is human flourishing and to create a modernity (De Ruyter and Wolbert 2020). This argument is in line with the sustainable development goals on the rights to life and education in which governments and communities are to play an enabling environment for children to have the chance to lead a happy life.

Despite the critique of modernization theory because of its links with colonialism, capitalism, and its tendency to ignore the role of culture and history in shaping societal development (Webster 1984) its benefits are useful in analyzing the changes in human civilizations in the process of transformation from traditional to modern politics, economies, societies and cultures and the rational protection of the natural environment (He and Lapin 2014). It further describes a process common to the development of different societies (Mazi and Ojukwu 2019). Modernization as a process has opened up education to everyone, irrespective of their caste, religion, culture and economic background (Goorha 2017).

However, South Sudan has to keep a balance with its traditional practices. Ikuenobe argues that common cultural practice in many African communities emphasizes the interconnectedness of people because it values kindness to one another, sharing and generosity as a means of strengthening the community. It promotes moral values and respect to human dignity, rights, and responsibilities. Emphasis on peaceful coexistence can help minimise conflict between individuals and community. People are charged with the role of promoting moral attitude (good behaviour) as part of a fundamental goal of creating and contributing to community well-being as an approach towards facilitating the provision of materials for actualizing individuals' rights and welfare (Ikuenobe 2018b). This presents a tension between traditional communalism and modernity and raises the question whether the two models can successfully partner with one another. In this discourse the role of the local chiefs might represent an appropriate balance in maintaining communalisms while moving

towards modernity. The chiefs' role is to protect the traditional practices and is linked to the activities of local government, for example, protection, provision of services and these are modern (Logan 2008).

This thesis examines how roles could be redefined or how change in roles is relevant to meet the learning conditions and interests of the learners, parents and communities towards adjusting to modernity and how, alongside the church, the emerging grassroots' communities of practices are acting in this process as mediators – conscious or not – of role transition and role conflict.

3.4.4 Communities of Practice

South Sudan today suffers from a weak education system, with various factors that hinder access, a situation similar to other African countries, particularly those emerging from conflict (Lodou and Oladele 2018). The Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) (2016) has emphasised the role of parents as part of a strategy to improve learning, which envisages the binding together of the PTA and teachers in a common goal of promoting the education of learners.

In this thesis, the role of the PTA is seen as similar to that of 'communities of practice'. 'Communities of practice' are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning, in a shared domain of human endeavour, and are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly (Wenger 2015: 1). African values and traditions are expressed in these 'communities of practice' as they engage in implementing a Western education system established on Western rationalism and individualism in terms of developing school constitutions and guidelines that best fit the local context.

The concept of ‘community of practice’ was developed by a group of internal auditors working in the public sector from different countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia⁴³. The reason for coming together was to hear from each other how they were doing in the internal audits in the public sector, create new manuals, circulate new information and publications, and welcome new members. It was also aimed at enhancing the new members’ practice of internal audit in their regions. The theory has since been extended to other fields such as businesses, organizations, government, education, associations, social sector and international development.

The concepts involved in developing communities of practice, such as the passion for learning from each other, the sharing of information and the welcoming of new members to the group; and promoting ideas to the wider community are useful in this research. The PTAs in South Sudan, for example, are motivated in learning from each other when they are provided with food during the meetings in contrast to those in Eastern Europe where you meet your own needs. Secondly PTAs in South Sudan have low literacy but their focus is to support their children and the school for a shared objective of their children’s education. The parental communality enables education to function in the conflict.

A community of practice needs a friendly working environment that is peaceful and with people and institutions that are willing to learn. In South Sudan during PTA training in schools, some of the objectives are building parent-school relationships, encouraging community participation in learning and introducing new members who have been elected or nominated in their schools onto the school PTA committees (MoGEI 2016). Communities of

⁴³ for example, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia in Eastern Europe and Central Asia of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan

practice as used in this thesis are rather ‘weaker’ in form than those of the original communities that were focused on the practice of auditing.

Three characteristics of ‘communities of practice’ are particularly relevant. One is the ‘domain’. The community of practice domain is not merely a network or connections between people but has an identity defined by the shared interest and competence of committed members. This is what distinguishes members from other people. The members value their collective competence and learn from each other, even though few people outside the group may value or even recognize their expertise (Farnsworth et al. 2016 & Wenger 2015). South Sudan has structured education clusters ranging from national, state and county levels to discuss education issues and learning, for example, how education partners and government officials can use particular forms to collect data from schools and learn procedures how to respond to education in emergency contexts. However, these clusters are NGO-driven with relatively little government influence. The second characteristic is the ‘community of practice’, through which members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other, bringing innovations, such as management systems, as they learn from each other (Choi et al. 2020). During PTA training, parents come together from different cultures, learn and critique each other. This strengthens the sharing of information and commitment. Third is the ‘practice’ itself. Members of a ‘community of practice’ are practitioners. They develop a shared repertoire of resources, share experiences, stories, tools and ways of addressing recurring problems (Hoefler and Chigbu 2013). PTA members might be engaged in school planning or physical work in the school, such as the digging of a school toilet, discussing the ethics of school discipline or the activities of the army that interfere with education. It is the combination of these three elements that constitutes a ‘*community of practice*’ such as a PTA (Choi et al. 2020 & Wenger 2015).

‘Communities of practice’ are built on problem solving, growing confidence among members, mapping existing knowledge and identifying gaps of the group’s knowledge, the sharing of experience, and information. Here, community of practices is seen as relevant to schooling, especially in learning how to improve access. In the data analysis the adoption and adaption of communities of practice in South Sudan in PTA is explored through the role of parents and teachers, though in very different political and cultural contexts to those of Eastern Europe. In this thesis, then, the concept of community of practice is used to explore how parents, church, and education and local officials navigate the tensions between the pressures of modernity and the strength of the communal tradition in a situation of conflict in order to provide learning opportunities.

3.5 Conclusion

Culture creates identity and builds a character. This allows people and communities to learn and understand each other’s culture and it enhances the forging of a common culture in a diverse community context. In a conflict state like South Sudan, context takes into account the economic, political, historical, religious and social issues at international (macro), national (meso) and local (micro) levels. The national level investigates the policies of education and development, and the local level focuses on the contexts of community, school and family which provide meaningful foregrounds for the beliefs, behaviours and experiences of individual teachers, learners and the parents. It is at the micro level that the parental and community roles and participation is practiced in education. The argument is that in faith-based schools community participation in modern education involves consultative policy development and decision-making practices and the provision of learning materials by parents to enable children to participate in the learning process effectively. Modernization theory, with its links to colonialism and capitalism, undervalues the role of culture and

history in shaping societal development. Nevertheless, it is relevant in analyzing the changes in human civilizations and the transformation from traditional to modern politics, economies, societies, cultures and the rational protection of the natural environment. In the practice of both church and PTAs the conflicting demands of modernity and tradition are managed and resolved as roles are redefined.

Chapter Four: Methodology

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology for this research. It covers the introduction and research design, research methodology, research methods, field work plan, research ethics and my personal experiences and conclusion.

4.1 Introduction and Research Design

The aim of this study is to explore the roles, context and policy of parents and community participation in church schools in Yei County of South Sudan. The main research question is: ‘What is the role of the parents and the community in the education of their children in Episcopal Church schools in Yei County in the context of the post-independent conflict South Sudan?’

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the contextual and cultural factors that shape the role, limitations and opportunities for parental and community participation in schooling of their learners in Episcopal Church schools?
2. How do parents, community and the Episcopal Church interpret participation in education?
3. What is the parental participation in improving education in the face of continuing challenges?
4. What are the policy implications for improved parental, community and church participation in education in South Sudan?

This chapter explains how the whole process of data collection was initiated, carried out, organized and used in this study. It states explicitly all the steps taken right from the beginning of the idea through the generation of the theme and research topic to the analysis of the findings and presentation. I present the research introduction and objectives, followed by

the research methodology with a focus on qualitative research survey. I then explore the research methods with emphasis on observations, interviews, thick description, document analysis and data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings. Then, I discuss my field work plan, looking at access to the field and contexts, sampling, characteristics of the respondents, issues of validity and reliability and researcher positionality. I next consider the research ethics focusing on informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity of respondents. Lastly is a note on my own personal experience during these years, and chapter conclusion.

4.2 Research Methodology

4.2.1 Qualitative Research Approach

In this study I employed a qualitative approach because the research questions aim to reveal opinions, experiences, narratives or accounts of the respondents (Stopher 2012). Qualitative research in education takes into accounts the contexts and cultures of human behaviour and experiences. It enables the researcher to focus on natural settings that lead to new insights. In qualitative research those who are studied speak for themselves (Kvale & Brinkmann 2015; Sherman & Webb 1988). This approach fits the research questions and objectives because it allows interactions with the parents, learners, teachers and local education authorities as the respondents. These respondents in Yei have different educational backgrounds and some might not be able to write but they can nevertheless express themselves well in qualitative inquiry and in interviews and provide valuable insights based on their experiences and insights.

According to Jane & Jane, qualitative research

... is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices turn the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative research studies things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Jane & Jane 2003: 2)

In qualitative research data collection is often concerned with daily lives (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015), and the beliefs and convictions of the respondents (Chirban 1996). According to Stephens, qualitative research means ‘... a disciplined attempt to address questions or solve problems through the collection and analysis of primary data for the purpose of description, explanation, generalization and prediction’ (Stephens 2009). In this study, qualitative descriptions of the respondents’ views provide the data necessary to understand and explain the current roles and relationships between parents, church and community in church schools.

Qualitative research in its essence upholds the view that we need to search for knowledge using different appropriate methods (Bryman 2008) such as personal experience, subjective and unique viewpoints rather than being objective or positivist as in quantitative research (Yin 2014). It employs interviews, thick descriptions and participatory and non-participatory observations as tools for data collection. Observational methods, for example, school visits, meetings and attending parents teacher association meetings are attractive as they offer the researcher the opportunity to gather live data from live situations (Bryman 2004).

In this study I use qualitative methodology because respondents actively construct their own meanings of social situations through an interpretive process. Data are socially situated, context-related, context-dependent and context-rich. This approach allows researchers to understand the context and examine situations through the eyes of the participants (Cohen et al. 2011: 167). Qualitative research is advantageous as it enables detailed studies of the subject matter as a whole within time bounds. The disadvantage is that a follow up might be needed if the data do not permit clear interpretation during analysis (Sherman & Webb 1988).

4.3 Research Methods

4.3.1 Primary sources

As primary sources, I used observations, interviews with focus on selected thick description, in-depth individual interviews, focus group discussions and unpublished documents.

4.3.1.1 Observation

For observations, I attended parent teachers' association meetings, education conferences, education cluster meetings, education quarterly review meetings, and social gatherings like funeral services and community meetings. I was invited to facilitate education seminars⁴⁴ on education management by head teachers. This reinforced my data inquiries and helped in exploring the plans of the parents and communities for school development and the roles assigned to parents in the education of their children. Observational data, especially that obtained through participant observation, gives the researcher the opportunity to understand the data to an extent not entirely possible using only the insights of others obtained through interviews (Patton, 2002). As I came from the same area where the study was conducted, I played a double role as an outsider and an insider to avoid bias in data collection. Observation is a rich technique because it allows capture of both the oral and visual data. This increases the researcher's opportunities to obtain first-hand information about the social world of the respondents and the question under study. This observation method was used in both rural and urban communities of Yei County. Some of this is also reflected in the three thick descriptions in chapters five and six.

Observational methods avail the researcher with the opportunity to gather live data from live situations. The researcher can use the information the participants provide as evidence about

⁴⁴ Sometimes due to inadequate or low capacity in local government education departments, resource persons are invited from the education partners to facilitate topics in education seminar and conferences. It is a common scenario at national, state, county and payam education levels.

their perspectives, and perhaps about the larger subcultures and cultures to which they belong. The knowledge of these perspectives and cultures from the respondents often forms an important element of the analysis and can assist in the assessment of the validity of the information provided by particular respondents (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995).

4.3.1.2 Interviews

In preparation for in-depth individual interviews (see pp. 94-95), I first identified potential respondents in the study's categories: parents⁴⁵, church leaders, local education authorities and learners. In the case of focus groups discussions (FGDs), I organized people of the same categories, inviting only those who had not participated in the individual interviews. FGDs depend on the respondents' subjective responses to the situations they are involved in in their daily lives (Gray 2014:217). I used FGDs to explore how the same concept, for example, was interpreted in a group or by an individual (Josselson 2013). Focus groups gave the participants and me new insights into their problems and conditions. For example, the parents and communities could express their roles and limitations in the current context of schools in Yei. They also enable interviewees to articulate their experience through language (Seidman 2006: 8).

In the interviews I used mainly Kakwa, the dominant language in Yei, and simple⁴⁶ Arabic (the lingua franca) because these are the common languages of communication in Yei and then made transcriptions in English. I used English when interviewing teachers and education officers, or a mixture of languages to assess their capacity and linguistic competence as well.

⁴⁵ Can be individual parents or members of parent teacher associations.

⁴⁶ In South Sudan the Arabic language is classified into two: classical Arabic mostly for those who learnt it in school or those who have stayed in north Sudan; simple Arabic is the local form mixed with local languages for communication in the market.

The aim of interviewing is to allow the researcher to enter into the respondents' perspectives and context. Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that perspectives of respondents are meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit. The informal conversational interview offers maximum flexibility to pursue information in whatever direction appears to be appropriate, depending on what emerges in a particular setting. This enables the researcher to adjust the flow of the interview questions according to the context, and also creates room for the researcher to go for second or more interviews with the respondents (Patton 2015).

The interview method enables the researcher to have a deeper understanding of the personal characteristics of interviewees. This eventually creates rapport and encourages the interviewee to share values, beliefs and convictions about the data (Kvale 1996: 5). Today in South Sudan, communities and parents are conscious about the sensitivity of sharing information because of the political and tribal differences. Building interpersonal relations ahead of research is important for normal interactions. Through my personal background of working in schools, participation in community activities and as a national speaking the same language, I can understand the long statements clearly for easy transcription and interpretations. I was conscious when transcribing of the need to retain the interviewees' words and meanings. A disadvantage of the interview method is that it generates in-depth data rather than large data sets which you can use for generalization (Cohen et al. 2011).

4.3.1.3 Thick description

This research used mainly interviews, observation and use of documents as methods of primary data collection. I have also included a few 'thick descriptions' from selected learners and parents. Some respondents preferred to give detailed personal stories in answering research questions. This allies with an interpretation of thick description, namely 'descriptive

description'. In writing these up as thick descriptions, I make it easier to interpret complex cultural situations in their lives (Ponterotto et al. 2006). Holloway refers to thick description as the detailed account of field experiences in which the researcher makes explicit the patterns of cultural and social relationships and puts them in context (Holloway 1997). This can be contrasted with thin description, which is a superficial account. Ponterotto argues that thick description involves providing the background information necessary for understanding the relevance, meanings and intentions that underpin the social interactions of the individuals. Ponterotto therefore, defines thick description as 'the researcher's task of both describing and interpreting observed social action or behavior within its particular context' (Ponterotto et al. 2006: 543).. In this way my field work and interactions with the parents, teachers, learners and education authorities placed me in situations to observe and document the narratives and stories of what the respondents had experienced in order to provide a fuller account of their context.

On the other hand, thick description can be easily made up or elaborated, for instance, and the reader is invited to read the description as reality (Schwandt and Schwandt 2001). Secondly there is a potential for researcher bias because two different researchers' might present two different findings on the same context (Geertz 1973). I have tried to avoid the first danger by going back to my detailed field notes. Despite its weakness the technique is useful in this research.

4.3.1.4 Use of documents

For primary data I used unpublished documents as source of information and data (primary sources, pgs. 252) including relevant church education documents. I reviewed minutes of meetings related to parents' and community participation in education in church, government or private schools. I explored and analysed unpublished South Sudan education documents,

for example, the General Education Bill, General Education Action Plan, and others. Ultimately the documents were a silent method of data collection that allowed me to gain insights into not only to voices that were muted, but also allowed me a glimpse into the past for relevant data analysis and appropriate field work.

4.3.2 Secondary sources

In the category of secondary sources, I used published documents as sources of data and information and explored publications on education and relevant articles in newspapers, and published reports by project partners (UNICEF, UNESCO, Plan International, Women for Women, ACROSS, etc.) engaged in education activities, in order to investigate how parents and community are involved in these activities.

4.4 Field work plan

In the field work, interviews, thick descriptions and observations are the primary research methods. They create space for the respondents for in-depth interviews and for the researcher to explore the context for valid and reliable data presentation and analysis.

4.4.1 Access to the field and contexts

The field work for this study was conducted in Yei for a period of just over two years, October 2017 to January 2020. According to Shenton and Hayter one of the most fundamental issues relating to fieldwork for a qualitative research study lies in ‘gaining access’ (Shenton and Hayter 2004: 223). To gain access it is necessary to understand practical issues dependent on the socio-political situation and the nature of the people the researcher has to deal with. In Yei there are political tensions within and between the communities in the rural and urban areas. There is suspicion of individuals who meet groups or individuals and seek information for research or for humanitarian purposes. I have

considered the ethical issues involved (Kvale 1996) as they are key to success or failure. Access required acquiring permission for the research to be conducted in Yei County, despite coming from the same area myself.

Because of my background in the church education department, I shared my plan with the diocesan office of Yei. Secondly, I met with the county authorities, especially the education department and the commissioner. Thereafter, the county education department made further approvals after my introduction of the theme of the study and helped to shed more light on the important areas of the study. The commissioner in turn notified the security personnel of the research area to give me freedom of access to places I wanted to visit and to people I wanted to speak to. These approvals by the education authorities gave weight and positive impact to my presence in the field, especially when it came to requesting documents and meeting different respondents in both the village and the town areas. According to Ritchie and Lewis access to the fieldwork requires flexibility and consideration of the nature of the informants (Ritchie and Lewis 2003: 140). In this study I was sensitive to social factors that might hinder my field work, for example, market and prayer days (Sundays). People in South Sudan, particularly people in Yei, value these days. In rural areas, market days are two or three days a week which they use to buy basic goods (salt, soap) and meet other people from neighbouring villages and also Sunday for worship (prayers are a strong part of social life). In rainy seasons the communities especially in the rural areas are occupied with farm activities and engaging them for meeting requires careful mobilization.

My experience as a teacher and church education resource person working with the communities especially in facilitation of government workshops and seminars enabled good rapport to be established with the authorities, from the macro to micro levels. For instance in Yei, I first met the county education supervisor for a preliminary discussion of my study and

afterwards I met the county education officer prior to my presentation of my research plan. Therefore, I was able to build on these experiences and translate them to my field work from the period of May 2017.

4.4.2 Sampling

The objective was to interview parents, teachers and learners from church, community, government, and private schools. In church schools, the main targets were Episcopal Church schools⁴⁷, but I also reached out to other churches running schools (e.g., the African Inland Church) in order to explore the participation and role of parents and community in those schools. I also interviewed teachers and parents from government and private schools, and I conducted interviews with local educational authorities and church leaders on policies and education practices. I added another category *other informants* and these are respondents working with NGOs, local farmers, carpenters, returnees and IDPs, government officials, parents, teachers, and learners. I met them in funeral places, churches, government and community meetings, markets and tea places to confirm or supplement in detail what other respondents had presented.

Selection of schools

S/N	Category of schools	Town	Village	Total
1	Episcopal Church schools (ECSS)	2	1	3
2	Government schools	2	0	2
3	African Inland Church school (AIC)	1	0	1
4	Private schools	1	0	1
	Total	6	1	7

Selection of respondents for individual interviews, focus groups and observations

S/N	Category	No.	Reason
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⁴⁷ The currently functioning Episcopal Church schools in town are four and for this study I focused on two (I chose the two due to easy access and possibility of meeting parents and learners). In rural areas there are five schools and only one is functional, the other four having been closed due to the conflict.

Individual interviews with teachers, parents and local authorities			
1	Teachers	21	9 from ECSS, 3 from AIC, 6 from government and 3 from private schools. to understand different participation practices in the context
2	Parent Teacher Association Members (PTA)	21	9 from ECSS, 3 from AIC, 6 from government and 3 from private schools. 1-2 parents with disability considered To research roles in different school contexts
3	Church and Local education authorities	6	3 from government (1 County Ed Director, 1 primary inspector, 1 girl child education officer) 3 from ECSS leadership (1 Education coordinator, 1 Mothers Union Leaders & 1 Bishop)
4	Chiefs and elders	10	to explore the experiences of the previous and current parental and community participation
5	other informants	20	Respondents from different backgrounds that provided confidential information to confirm or supplement in detail what other respondents had presented.

Focus group interviews with teachers, learner and parents

S/N	Category	No	Reason
1	Teachers from church schools	1	To explore further opinions in order to clarify or reinforce the individual interviews on the roles & participation of parents in education 6 teachers involved for one and half hours, 2 female and 4 male
2	Teachers from government schools	1	To explore further opinions in order to clarify or reinforce the individual interviews about the roles & participation of parents in education 6 teachers involved for one and half hours, 2 female and 4 male
3	Teachers from private schools	1	To seek further inputs and reinforce individual interviews about roles & participation of parents in education 6 teachers involved for one and half hours, 2 female and 4 male
4	PTA and Parents (individual parents who are not members of PTA)	1	To explore the role of parents and community – for learners and school 7 parents involved, 4 are female and 3 are male. For one and half hours Parents with disabilities are included in the group interviews
5	Learners from ECSS schools	1	To understand the role of parents and community – for learners and school 10 learners were engaged for 40-50 minutes
6	Learners from government	1	To understand the role of parents and community – for learners and school

	schools		10 learners were engaged for 40-50 minutes Learners with disabilities considered
7	Learners from AIC schools	1	To understand the role of parents and community – for learners and school 10 learners were engaged for 40-50 minutes Learners with disabilities considered
8	Learners from private schools	1	To understand the role of parents and community – for learners and school 10 learners were engaged for 40-50 minutes Learners with disabilities considered
Total		8	

Observations in church, private and government run schools

S/N	Category	No	Remark
1	ECSS Church school	1	1 observation to confirm participation of parents & community in private, government and AIC schools and for learners
2	AIC church school	1	1 observation to confirm participation of parents & community in school and for learners. To compare with ECSS, government and private schools
3	Private school	1	1 observation to compare participation of parents & community in church, government and private schools
4	Government school		1 observation to compare participation of parents & community in government school in relation to ECSS, AIC (church) and private schools
Total		4	

In light of the research objectives, I developed draft interview questions (see appendix 1). I chose different schools and groups of people in order to explore the understanding of parents and community participation in different school contexts and their interpretation of participation in education. I further explored the practices of parents and communities in various school contexts that allowed space for parents and community participation in the education of their children. In addition, I involved the learners in exploring the role of their parents and the community in support of their education.

4.4.3 Characteristics of the respondents

The parents involved in this study included committee members of parent teacher associations (PTA) and individual parents who have children in schools or without children but who are engaged in school affairs (an interesting category). I initially considered having both male and female parents together with those living with disabilities in individual or focus group interview and observation. However, due to political conflicts in South Sudan including Yei, communities have shifted from their original homesteads in search of safety. Others changed locations within Yei County or sought refuge elsewhere and for reliable and valid data I therefore included returnees, internally displaced persons and host communities. Interviews with teachers were with trained, untrained and volunteer teachers in lower, middle and upper primary. Pupils were engaged in focus group discussions with an emphasis on those from middle and upper primary levels who were better able to express themselves. I included a balance of boy and girl learners together with some living with disabilities. For education authority representatives, I focused on both church and government education leaders. At government level these were from county and payam levels, while at the church I identified focal education persons at the diocesan level where policies are developed and delivered to schools for implementation. Chiefs and elders and other informants were included to reinforce data quality. Gender and other parental characteristics discussed above were taken into consideration. I aimed to have holism, reliability and validity in the data.

4.4.4 Issues of data validity, reliability and procession, presentation, analysis and discussion

In qualitative study data validity and reliability are addressed using different instruments for data collection. According to Cohen ‘reliability is a necessary but still insufficient condition for validity in research process. Reliability is a necessary precondition of validity, and validity may be a sufficient but not necessary condition for reliability’ (Cohen et al. 2007:

134). Validity in qualitative research is dependent in large part on the nature of research methods used, on the representativeness of the respondents, the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher (Winter 2000 cited from Dimitriadis and Carlson 2003). In this section I explore the ideas of validity and reliability for my data presentation based on the findings for parental participation in church schools in Yei County.

4.4.4.1 Validity

In qualitative data analysis, findings cannot be completely uniform due to gaps from the respondents who might reluctantly give incorrect or inaccurate answers to test the researcher or for other reasons. Nevertheless, validity can be improved through careful sampling, appropriate instruments (research tools/questions) and statistical treatments of the data (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015). Validity is based on context-roundedness and detailed description because data are socially situated, and socially and culturally saturated. The concept requires researchers to see themselves as part of the researched and interpreted world and to understand the views of others (Cohen et al. 2007: 135-136).

Validity is based on inductive analysis of data rather than using a priori categories, and data are presented in terms of the respondents' views and opinions rather than researchers' judgment (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015; Cohen et al. 2007). In my experience of data collection in Yei the expressive language of the women in their own mother tongues represented their role as parents more effectively as compared to that of the education officers. In this context I was conscious of the meaning, intention and accounts of their roles at home and in school in the education of their children, following the argument of Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) that the meaning of the data that respondents give lies in its original context and situation.

Interpretive validity requires catching the meaning, interpretations, terms and intentions of the particular situations and events generated from the respondents. Furthermore, the concept takes into consideration the theoretical constructions that the researcher brings to the research, including those of the researched. Validity assesses generalizability within specific groups or communities, situations or circumstances to specific outsider communities, situations or circumstances. In this study, for example, I looked at the parental participation in church schools in comparison to government schools or the same church schools but in rural and urban settings.

The context and situation in Yei where the research was conducted is characterised by political conflicts and trauma. To avoid invalid data Cohen suggests some conditions for the researcher relevant to this study. For example, I took into account an appropriate time schedule for meeting respondents by selecting an appropriate methodology for answering the research questions. In focus group discussions appropriate sample size and representation is considered, not too small or too large, as well as gender and age aspects (Ibid 144). In in-depth discussions I minimized reactivity effects by managing respondents' behaviour when subjected to scrutiny or being placed in new situations. In this study the question on contextual and cultural factors that shape the role, limitation and opportunities for participation of parents in schooling touches and prompts deeper feelings, for example, how the conflict impacted on their lives and livelihood. I sought to recognize the interests and feelings of the respondents, considering other factors like health, environment, noise, distraction and the respondents' perceived level of threat. For pupils I didn't go beyond break time and avoided having a group discussion where other children are playing because it drew their attention away from the discussion.

4.4.4.2 Reliability

In qualitative research reliability is referred to as a fit between what researchers record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched, with regard to the degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness (Brock-Utne 1996 cited from Cohen et al. 2007: 146). Qualitative research, being holistic, strives to record the multiple interpretations of intention in and meanings given to situations and events. The concept of reliability is construed as dependability. According to Holmarsdottir data reliability depends on appropriate use of data collection techniques such as interviews, direct observation, field notes and analysis of valid documents subject for the study (Holmarsdottir 2005 cited in Kamba 2010: 57). In this study I mostly used field notes⁴⁸ which I typed up immediately or after a short time to avoid losing meaning, and to enable me to fully remember the words expressed by the respondents. With recorded interviews I ensured I transcribed them in as short a time as possible to avoid losing the information recorded due to damage or having material confiscated by security personnel. I further ensured that I presented the views of my respondents as accurately as possible without bias due to my being a researcher from the same origin or work-related environment to ensure relevant data processing, presentation, analysis and discussion.

4.4.4.3 Data processing and presentation, analysis and discussion of findings

Prior to data presentation data processing is done. In this study data collected was transcribed to generate meaningful information for analysis. The purpose of data analysis is to ensure that the narratives from interviews generate sense about the subject under study taking into account the observations and use of documents as other sources of data and information (Kvale 1996: 205). It begins with a critical reading of the data to get a sense of the content

⁴⁸ In start of the research or field work in 2017 I used an audio recorder for making interviews. However, it presented security concerns because journalists also use the same approach to collect information. This made me abandon the recorder and resort to note taking.

and to confirm whether it is in line with the topic under inquiry. I started the analysis as soon as the first round of the data collection was completed, thus following Kvale's advice that data gathering and analysis should be integrated as one way to find the meaning of the interviews.

In qualitative studies data analysis involves a range of processes and procedures of moving from the data that have been collected, to some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situations investigated (Sunday 2013). Qualitative data analysis is based on an interpretative philosophy to explore the meaning of data generated from transcripts of individual interviews, thick descriptions, FGDs, field notes, use of documents as source of data and information, audio and video recordings from observation of certain activities. This study looks at the data from parents, teachers, learners, local education authorities and church education leaders. The data investigated and presented were from respondents' concepts, opinions, values and behaviours of people in the social context of Yei.

Qualitative data analysis involves organizing, accounting for and explaining the data; 'in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities' (Cohen et al. 2007). It enables the researcher to find patterns to generate themes, and to identify relevant issues. It makes it possible for researchers to examine the same issues in different contexts and nuance the writing up of the analysis (Cohen et al. 2007). For example, how parental participation is interpreted in church, government or privately run schools. In this study I used content analysis following a process of coding and categorization, until a theory emerges that explains the phenomena being studied or which can be used for predictive purposes. The research themes were categorized into four: 1) contextual and cultural factors that shape the role, set limits and create opportunities for the participation of parents in schooling; 2) interpretation of participation in

education; 3) parental participation in improving education in the face of continuing challenges; and 4) the policy implications for improved parental, community and church participation in education in South Sudan. In this study the analysis was organized around research questions as it draws together all the relevant data for the exact issues of concern to the researcher, and preserves the coherence of the material (Ibid: 468).

4.4.5 Researcher positionality

My role as an education programme manager in the Episcopal Church was a gateway to the respondents who were parents, teachers, church leaders, local education authorities, local chiefs, elders and other informants. These respondents were mainly male with authority. It helped me trace respondents for further follow up because I knew where these respondents were located. As a South Sudanese (insider)⁴⁹ national and researching in my own community (Yei) I was better able to assess reliability and validity in conducting this study. I did not use my official position to organise interviews or observations without the consent of the respondents. I was careful to keep a distance between my formal employment and my work as a researcher in order to promote free interactions and an environment that allowed the respondents to engage into deeper discussions.

Hammersley and Atkinson argue that for reliability and validity of data a researcher needs to maintain the original voices of the respondents in their social setting without pre-judgment before final analysis of the findings. On several occasions I participated in field state or national assessments⁵⁰ of teachers' performance, girls' education and the role of parents in

⁴⁹ As an insider I refer myself to the respondents as part of them because I had lived in Yei and continue to be part of them. But all the interviews, meetings and observation that brought us together are for research and academic work and I have put my professional role aside.

⁵⁰ I participated in several assessments and some of them include: 1. Needs Assessment for Primary Education in Ibba and Maridi counties in South Sudan, 2021; 2. improving of learning spaces in the post-independent conflict context in South Sudan with focus to WES & LS, 2018; 3. Girls Education in emergency context, Bor-Jonglei State, 2015; 4. The effectiveness of in-service teacher education in seven states of South Sudan (CES, WS, WES, US, LS, NBGS, WBGS, 2013).

schools. These became useful to compare with some of the findings presented by my respondents. As an insider sometimes I was tempted to ignore interpretation of information gathered from other respondents, for example, from learners who pay their own fees ('learner-parents') because they are not parents. However, I remembered my role as a researcher and outsider⁵¹ to reflect the data collected without bias.

In essence, outsider myths assert that only outsiders can conduct valid research on a given group; only outsiders, it is held, possess the needed objectivity and emotional distance. According to outsider myths, insiders invariably present their group in an unrealistically favourable light. Analogously, insider myths assert that only insiders are capable of doing valid research in a particular group and that all outsiders are inherently incapable of appreciating the true character of the group's life.... (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 86).

The arguments for and against outsiders and insiders are motivated by a respect for the validity and reliability of the research findings. During the data collection and field interactions with respondents I narrowed my personal interactions as a researcher to enable me to produce data both valid and reliable.

4.5 Research Ethics

The Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS) ethics committee approved the research ethics guide guidelines. However, I also had to assure my respondents that qualitative research takes into account ethical issues because interviews involved different categories of informants who might be vulnerable (Marshall and Rossman 1989). The qualitative researcher needs to consider ethical issues because this reduces the risk of unanticipated harm and protects the interviewees' information. It further informs the interviewees about the nature of the study and reduces the risk of exploitation (Denzin and Lincoln 2000: 319).

4.5.1 Informed consent

I informed the interviewees about the objectives and context of the study and assured them of confidentiality of the data as well as the intended outcome of the research. Consent is

⁵¹ As an outsider I consider myself a national working outside Yei and focusing on research as independent exercise without bias.

required to display their photos or use real names (Josselson 2013). Some institutions require that consent forms are signed, and the interview proposal is submitted for approval. In South Sudan some of these requirements may be problematic, because signing of forms is related to security concerns. In such situations Josselson encourages strengthening the relationship with informants as a better approach, in order to soften the consent process as much as possible by linking yourself to it while keeping a distance from it at the same time (Josselson 2013: 62).

Formally established authorities, like the education departments at state, county and payam levels were informed as well as the office of the commissioner. The overall purpose and importance of the research, for instance, were made clear to the ministry of education, and community. The research questions were designed to be clear with full information so they could be clearly understood by the informants, enabling the informants to be competent, responsible and mature in their responses. Consent implies voluntarism and thus ensuring that participants freely choose to take part or not in the research and guarantees that exposure to risks is undertaken knowingly and voluntarily (Cohen et al. 2007: 53). Permission was required from the informants if recording or taking of photos was to take place.

4.5.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality means that the names of the participants in the research are undisclosed (Seidman 2006). This is because of the sensitivity of the information given, the setting being observed, and the risk of dissemination of information. For example, in South Sudan information related to corruption in the education system requires such confidentiality of participants' identities. Following Kelly et al. (2008), I used codes for identifying people (to keep the information on individuals separate from access to them), and the use of password to protect files. In practice I was using, for example, P1, P2... for parents interviewed, T1, T2... for teachers interviewed.

4.6 Personal Experiences and Conclusion

After the start of this research in Yei in 2014 my home and family was displaced as refugees from rural Yei to the town and eventually to Uganda due to political conflicts, while my work base remained in Juba, the capital of South Sudan. This situation was very costly in terms of travel and living costs. My family was split into two: my wife and little children (2 & 5 years old) moved to stay with me in Juba and my mother and some dependents, with my firstborn child of eight years moved to Uganda. Furthermore, due to financial difficulties in our workplace most of our time we worked on a voluntary basis. Considering the three key tasks of my divided families' management in Juba and Uganda, my research and my work has often felt strained. Nevertheless, it was my desire to undertake this research to strengthen parental participation in education in Church schools for a better education in South Sudan.

This chapter has considered the methodological approaches and steps required for the data collection to analysis. The study is limited to Yei County and does not seek to generalise the issues of church schools and education in South Sudan. The next four (five to eight) chapters present the findings of this study for discussion.

Chapter Five: Contextual and cultural factors shaping parental and community participation

5.0 Introduction

During the period of data collection, the country continued to suffer a series of conflicts. The findings presented are from respondents who were in one way or another caught up in these continual conflicts. These respondents involved host communities, internally displaced persons and returnees who live in difficult conditions. My position as a researcher and member of the same community was also influenced by the context. The findings therefore are less about an education system returning to normality than one facing the many on-going challenges of a state of continuing conflict.

As earlier mentioned in the methodology chapter (4.4.2), three languages were used in the data collection (chapters five to eight): simple Arabic⁵², English and Kakwa as the main language. The inhabitants⁵³ in the study area of Yei County mostly speak Kakwa as the major language and some quotations in the data are presented in Kakwa and translated into English. Occasionally simple Arabic was used and translated. Yei Town⁵⁴ is divided into more than seven areas in which the schools are located and the respondents are drawn from for this study. An area is commonly known as Hai (in simple Arabic) and I use Hai to name a particular geographical location, for example, Hai Gabat means ‘Gabat area’.

⁵² Simple Arabic is from the original classic Arabic but close to local languages. For example, in Yei the simple Arabic includes some Kakwa words and other ethnicities also mix Arabic with their own languages.

⁵³ The land owners of Yei are Kakwa and they speak Kakwa language. There are thirty four other tribes such as Avokaya, Mundu, Zande, Dinka, Mmoru, Keliko, etc., some of whom speak the Kakwa language, and those who speak their own languages prefer translation into Kakwa so that they can listen and confirm if the translation is done correctly. It also gives them time to think an important matter in interviewing.

⁵⁴ Yei Town refers to the urban centre. Overall in South Sudan there are two residential categories: village and town.

In this chapter I explore the findings on objective one that concerns the contextual and cultural factors that influence the role of the church, community and parental participation in education. The data are drawn from seventy-eight in-depth individual interviews and some selected thick descriptions with parents and learners from three ECSS schools, two government-run schools, a private school, chiefs, elders and other relevant informants (chapter 4.4.2). I have engaged with elders in interviews especially at funerals and on other church occasions. I supported the findings with my own experiences in working with schools in South Sudan and a church school in Uganda. Each subsection contains an initial analytic commentary for further discussion and recommendations will follow in chapters nine and ten. The findings are analysed according to the objectives following the research questions.

According to the findings parental and community participation in education is influenced by two key factors, those related to economics and resources and those related to political security.

5.1 The influence of economic and resource factors

The economic and resource factors are determined by four concerns: increasing hyperinflation and economic collapse, diversion of national expenditure and utilization of local resources, the additional role of women as bread winners; and the influence of economic crisis on parental participation.

5.1.1 Increasing hyperinflation, economic collapse and managing tensions through food for education

In six focus group discussions the concern of hyperinflation and economic difficulty was emphasised.⁵⁵ One teacher explained:

I am a grade four teacher who has experience for more than ten years in a government school. It is the highest and best remunerated grade for a classroom teacher with entitlements like, housing allowance, medical allowance, chalk allowance, transport allowance as stipulated in the South Sudan education policy. Today the pay we receive is less than for a volunteer teacher. For example, my salary is 3000SSP (about 10USD) while a 50kg bag of maize flour for food is 5,800SSP, much higher than what I take home at the end of the month that even comes irregularly.

A parent with a child in an ECSS School stated (in simple Arabic):

Hajat fi suk biga gali asani mafi hahi fi suku je agil, mile, sugari, malsbish ma tannin. Asa muderesin mabigun murtayin, yale nia ta deresa biga mafi. Haja ali fi teru intama ma idara ta mederes de ma muderesin kula hal anina je abuwat ma umahat be saidu fin fi kalam de. Je mederes de tani ali abuwat ma umahat, ma cominiti ma kenisa kalamu de be akederu wonusu. Prices in the market have greatly increased due to lack of supply of basic needs in the country, like food, salt, clothing, etc. The motivation for the teachers might not be as usual but what we do is to have a meeting with them (teachers) and share the school situation and what we can do now as parents and community. This communication and relation happens because the school is ours under the ownership of the parents, community and church administration (PCh 1: 31st May 2018, Hai Gabat).

My visits to two markets in Yei showed that the prices of basic goods in Yei are double or triple the prices in Juba.⁵⁶ In the interviews women in the market expressed the difficulties for wholesalers in transporting goods to Yei. If the roads are closed, prices⁵⁷ can increase rapidly without subsequently falling back even when the supply to Yei improves. Many families are constrained through the hyperinflation with difficulty to have even one meal a day.

According to the Food for Education programme (FFE), for children emerging from conflict and from poor economic backgrounds, education and child health are intertwined:⁵⁸

..... meals served to children in school, as well as take-home rations conditional on a child's school attendance, are a popular means of improving school participation while fostering learning and

⁵⁵ These focus group discussions were three for parents from Church schools (one AIC, two ECSS), two for learners drawn from one ECSS school and one government school. In addition, I conducted three observations (visits to two markets in Yei town) and at one ECSS school, and eighteen individual interviews with parents, teachers, learners, education authorities local chiefs and vulnerable women.

⁵⁶ Dar El Salam & Freedom Square markets, 3rd Feb 2018 & 28th Jan 2019,

⁵⁷ The South Sudan government is not willing to share or publish any national statistics or local statistics available on inflation because it will influence the public to demonstrate.

⁵⁸ Teachers present in the school are also served meals from the learners' food and it is very attractive to them. I witnessed teachers' who do not have lessons tend to come to school in name of lesson preparation. Yet his or her lesson is late in the following day or days ahead, and their real aim is to enjoy the privilege of the food.

supplementing the inadequate diets of school-age children. When the meals provided are well timed, they can reduce short-term hunger and help children concentrate and learn (Adelman et al. 2008)⁵⁹.

In attendance at one education cluster meeting, I observed many schools raised concerns about the hunger of school children. One of the headteachers from a government school remarked:

In sometimes back we have been getting food supplies from World Food Program (WFP) as food for education to motivate learners stay in school. However, this ended long time and children were used to having light meal at school. It encouraged many children to come to school even if he or she slept hungry. Now that WFP stopped its supply to schools, we agreed in a PTA meeting for parents to make additional contribution so that food items are bought and some light meals are prepared for the learners, for example, porridge or beans and bread made out of maize flour. In theory the agreement was reached and in practice many parents expressed nothing to give, and others said they work with government and they have not been paid for many months (TG5: 6th March 2018, Jigomoni).

I observed some ECSS schools (e.g., Immanuel) provide meals (though not sufficient) to their learners and as a result the children are more stable and regular in attendance in the classrooms. The availability of food in schools encourages attendance and retention of learning. The meal at home motivates the learner because he or she feels refreshed and can do their homework and this improves their performance. Nishimura argues that community participation in education depends on the socio-economic backgrounds of the parents (Nishimura 2017). However, as I know from my own childhood experience, commitment to learning from parents is of similar importance.

5.1.2 Diversion of national expenditure on education and utilization of local resources

Issues relating to national expenditure on education and the use of national resources have been critically raised by respondents in both individual and focus group discussions with local government officials, teachers, parents, church leaders and some learners. In an individual interview, one of the local government officers in the Department of Animal Resources and Fisheries remarked:

⁵⁹ FFE programs raise the benefits of school participation, increasing enrolment and attendance (Adelman et al. 2008; WFP 2020) . This may improve learning and educational achievement and strengthens the nutrition and cognitive function of the learners. FFE programs may improve nutrition and health by directly increasing household food availability. The disadvantage is when the family loses income because the child is spending more time in school; and at home, he or she will be frustrated because of a consequent shortage of food. Second if an FFE program is not accompanied by increased school capacity, classrooms may be crowded, negatively affecting learning.

Today I have gone three months and two weeks without being paid and my child has been sent home from school several times (LG: 12th Dec 2018, County office).

Budgetary allocation to social services is extremely low. According to the data shown below the actual percentage received by the education sector⁶⁰ is less than 20%.

Government budgets and spending on education: 2017-2021

Year	National budget	Education Budget Allocation	% of Ed Budget	% of Actual Expenditure
2021/22	287,000,000,000	49,200,000,000	17.1	not revealed
2020/21	218,191,036,717	7,960,474,291	3.6	not revealed
2019/20	208,000,000,000	11,548,155,891	6	not revealed
2018/19	81,600,000,000	7,670,400,000	9.4	not revealed
2017/18	46,000,000,000	962,884,760	2.1	not revealed

(Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning 2021b; Wondu 2021)

In a similar focus group discussion (FGD) one of the parents (a government health worker) reiterated:

We come to work because there's no other option or business; and sometimes to take advantage of free treatment if medicines are occasionally brought. Most of our children today stay at home because the headteachers do not trust us when to make school fees payment. During registration church or private schools hesitate to handle the registration of children whose parents are government employees (HP2: 14th Dec 2018, Yei Civil Hospital).

My experience in visiting schools, talking to several government employees and school headteachers showed that, in practice, civil servants live in worse conditions than many peasants. For example, teachers and health workers are warned to be punctual because a head count will be conducted at any time and if they are absent, their names will be deleted and their arrears will not be paid. The civil servants sacrifice to go regularly to their duties in miserable conditions, and often do not perform their duties. As seen above, many schools are reluctant to register children whose parents are civil servants because they do not pay their

⁶⁰ Most of the educational officials consulted in this research decline to give the actual amount received by the ministry of education. In average all of them say they receive 40-45% of the proposed budget.

fees on time or at all. Their children are more often sent home, making most of their parents unwilling to attend PTA meetings due to shame.

This theme raises four critical issues. The government has well-defined policies without the means to implement them (see defined PTA structure: appendix 3). Secondly, there is a lack of transparency over the cash transfers from central government to county local education authorities and this has led to the mistrust of senior government officers by their civil servants because of apparent misappropriation of resources. Thirdly, the poor performance of duties in public services is due to a lack of motivation as demonstrated by poor salary payment system and structures. Lastly, government employees live in poor working and family conditions with negative impacts on the future of their own children.

In an anonymous interview on the use of local resources a parent stated:

We in our family including two of my brothers have planted our own teak trees and some of the teak trees and other species of trees are inherited from our late father. These resources are more than enough to enable good living and for the future of our children's welfare. However, today the government has a contract of selling the government forest of teak to companies for their own interest. While some of us with individual firm of teak trees are restricted from selling to any person unless authorised by the government. We have the opportunities of having local companies which can buy them for the benefit of our children's education. One day a peasant sold his teak tree to another company through the influence of government official and it ended up into no payment. This frustrated most of the people in Yei to remain with their teak firms' redundantly and painfully (PX: 17th Oct 2018, Hai Y).

In my own experience and observation the area of Yei did well in terms of agricultural and food production. Before the conflicts, many people in Yei planted teak trees, coffee and other cash or food crops. During the years of the conflict the teak trees have grown well. Unfortunately the teak owners wanting to sell are frustrated by government officials who want payments from the owners before issuing permits.

This finding shows that there are untapped local resources available for the communities' use which are not exploited because of government self-interest. The companies permitted to

explore the government or private forestry are controlled by government officials for self-gain. This requires a much wider discussion on policy improvement on the use and exploration of national and local resources in order for the local communities and parents to have opportunity for economic development to enhance their livelihoods and education of their children.

5.1.3 Additional role of women as bread winners and managing tensions through child labour for survival

In this study the role of women has emerged critical and instrumental because of their resilience during the ongoing poor security situation and political violence. These roles are influenced by the contextual and cultural practices. Most families depend on women as bread winners for survival and schooling. Evidence from six FGDs, and five families indicates that the role of women in sustaining families is recognised locally in both its livelihood and educational aspects. In a group discussion eight women from six ethnic groups (Baka, Moru, Makaraka, Kakwa, Mundu and Keliko) described their situation).⁶¹ The women sat on the floor on a mat, others on large stones and stools. I sat on a locally-made chair. Some of the women on the mat were knitting and others had hoes with them because they had come directly from the garden without washing their feet. I asked them why women were more in the markets and on the streets than in the gardens in the morning hours. One of them, Mrs. Jane Kiko, described how they are engaged.

I am involved in two activities: farming and small-scale business. We women are subjected to farming by accessing gardens both within Yei Town and in the rural areas to produce food for both livelihoods and marketing to cover our basic needs (salt, soap) and to meet the cost of education as you can see some of us with hoes coming from the garden. In returning from the garden we collect firewood and carry it on our heads for cooking instead of using motorcycles or bicycles. The garden work is heavy and daily from Monday to Saturday, unless we have a commitment in the family for other needs (washing clothes, cleaning). In the rural gardens some of us women are killed, raped and experience brutal torture. For example, one of us (Susan Kiden) - her daughter was raped and killed in front of us

⁶¹ They were from six ethnic groups (Baka, Moru, Makaraka, Kakwa, Mundu and Keliko). 17th Nov 2019, Dar-El- Salam Market, at 10-11:25am.

so that we do not come back to the garden. The men or boys of 12 years and above are considered as serious threats by rebels when they get outside the town.

Esther Poni: The second activity we do as women is small scale business in which we sell agricultural produce from our farms and also we buy other items from the women who come from the rural areas. In addition we buy manufactured items (soap, salt, lotions, cloths, etc.) from the foreign (Ethiopians, Eritreans) wholesale traders in order to make additional profit to meet immediate needs as these are the main source of livelihood for our families. For example, the husband of my sister John Dada attempted to do small businesses nearby rural gardens to meet the burden of their extended family. Unfortunately, he was blackmailed (false accusation) for supporting rebel activities. In this context the burden of family needs and education is shifted to us women on top of our traditional roles.

In education meetings we women are the majority of the parents in the PTA. We share our opinions and suggestions or even vote for the setting of amounts as school fees or development fees. We vote for the amount that we can be able to raise and contribute because we know the burden better.

Juan Margret: I am a member of PTA in Immanuel primary school and in one of our PTA meetings the turn up of the women was higher than the men. The reason was to listen to the plans of the school fees and other school needs for the next academic year. We have come to give our opinion as most of us pay fees for their children on behalf of the men. In some meetings in the middle of the year we do not come in big numbers because no new resolutions are discussed.

Some of the women were quiet but if others gave information that touched their emotions, they showed it by moving their heads. Joy Pita, who was involved in small scale business, farming and teaching, stood up and spoke vigorously about their interactions in the PTAs:

My child goes to a government school X and during meetings discussions are guided by circulars sent from the government education office. For example, what parents and communities are supposed to do, school calendar dates of when to open and close for the term, etc. Our opinions as parents (women) are referred to government education authorities but usually we do not get feedback. We are limited in all discussions and this makes most of us who sell in the market not to go to attend school meetings in the middle of the year and we concentrate on our business. When our children come back with letters from the school, we then do what the school wants, sometimes we ask some of our neighbors who attended the meeting to give us narrative of it. We parents are to decide the school budget according to the resources we can afford. If we the majority have voted for an issue our voice should be heard. Sometimes the few wealthy parents enforce high parental contributions, and it inflicts pain among parents. For example, two of our women on their way home fought because the other assumed wealthy lady insulted the other one that if you're unable to pay fees why did you bring your child to this school or why did you give birth? We in the market sometimes are rude because of hard labor and pain of the difficulties.

One day I was on my way home from the field work, I met a group of people (5 men of mixed ethnicities and professions) at a tea place on the roadside and I was invited to take tea because I knew some of them. In an informal discussion Mr Dada TB (a local chief) in the tea place stated:

We men are confined like goats in the fence and cannot do much work or move beyond 2 km to engage in economic activity or visit relatives. For example, I am a family head and local chief in Hai Guwafa. I do small gardening and the yield cannot take us for the whole year. My wife supports me in digging and also she goes to the market to do petty business. Her contribution is bigger than what I offer and the little amount she gets we use it to buy basic needs (salt, soap, clothes) and pay fees in the nearest government school. It is a horrible situation that put us in stress and sometimes conflict in the family

because of unbalanced roles in which our wives do more work than us men. When my wife comes home tired and shouts unnecessarily I keep quiet (PLC1: 3rd Nov 2019, Hai Guwafa at 4:05 to 5:48pm).

In Yei, women have greater access to the village markets than men. The men are considered as potential threats to the armed forces and are regarded as spies and this creates much fear among the men in moving outside the town jurisdiction. It explains why the markets in Yei are dominated by women. Secondly, women can visit their small gardens to some extent outside Yei town and in return bring firewood for cooking. The danger is that some of these women experience rape and sometimes the looting of their property on their way back home. Thirdly they relinquish their role as mothers to the children as part of managing their tensions.

The access of women and children to both market and garden is an opportunity for them to mobilize resources to support the family and education of their children. On the other hand it can hinder schooling because the mother comes back home late, and the children are overworked and that is a role overload by doing heavy work at home beyond their age. In this scenario the family environment becomes unfriendly. A boy learner in a family I visited and another schoolgirl I met at a water collection point (borehole) commented:

Our mothers come home late from the market, and it results into late cooking and most of our supper is not prepared till around 8-9 pm in the night. We feel tired and too dizzy to study and sometimes the water is too far to collect and difficult if there are many people in the borehole. In other days we go to sleep without bathing and our school uniform is not washed on time (LG3: 1st Dec 2019, Hai mission).

I witnessed in some families children carrying twenty litres of water who are too young for the task. The girls are like second mothers in taking responsibility for domestic affairs. By the time their mother arrives home she expects some of the activities like the washing of dishes and fetching water and firewood to have been done by the children. The position of the man in South Sudan, as in other African contexts, appears to be less important in home management. The woman decides when to go out and when to come back home.

This finding illustrates the fact that children's access to education often depends on the expanded role of women.⁶² Women have access to resource opportunities but there is no clear definition of family roles and consideration of risks, for example, what the woman does at what time as a mother, what the man can do at home in absence of the woman, and what activities children should be able to do at their age level to avoid child labour. Both women and men experience role ambiguity. According to Biddle's definition of social roles and position in the family and society, clarity of duties and responsibilities is significant (B. J. Biddle 1986).

According to South Sudan labour law:

No person shall engage or permit the engagement of a child under the age of eighteen years in any hazardous work, which constitutes the worst forms of child labour. Secondly work, which by its nature or circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of the child (Ministry of Justice 2017)

In a working paper presented by the African Development Bank, child labour in South Sudan is associated with poverty, which forces parents to use their children as sources of labour to earn a living for the family (Bérenger and Verdier-Chouchane 2015). In theory a ministerial order mandated local chiefs to ensure every girl child of school age attends education and report any non-parental compliance to the relevant authorities (Yai 2017: 8). But many poor families have no choice but to use their children for family survival. In practice parents encourage early marriage from the age of thirteen years instead of the legal eighteen years to earn income through the payment of the bride price. Furthermore, some of these crimes are committed by those in power, for example, senior government officials or army officers, and most cases reported end on paper because moving the case further becomes a threat to the complainant. In our local culture work in the home is regarded as a way of training the children to be hardworking and future responsible parents. I was brought up in this way and my father often used to quarrel with my mother for giving me a heavy load of firewood to carry. Thus, both traditional culture and economic necessity

⁶² Photo: 15, 16 & 17, pg. 202 illustrate some of the income generating activities women do to support education of their children and livelihoods.

frustrate the goal of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) of ending child labour by 2025.⁶³

In summary, child labour at the family level is regarded as a cultural aspect of upbringing and for economic survival. At the societal level it can often lead to an abuse of the child's rights. One response to this situation is for the women to empower themselves to improve their economic activities amidst the crisis. However, women are overloaded leading to role conflict and role stress.

5.1.4 The influence of economic crisis on parental participation and school leadership

There are two areas for potential community and parental participation in education. There is the modern role of the parent at home in providing remedial or alternative teaching or helping with the learners' assignments. The second area is the modern role of parents and community in the school context.

The significance of parental participation was clearly underlined.⁶⁴ One parent from an Episcopal Church run school stated:

During holiday we are assigned to remind other parents to send the children to school on time. Each parent is responsible to provide uniform, scholastic materials and pay the required fees. Parents need to respond to school calls and in community meetings to share plans and decisions. Some parents do not honour school or community call. We parents authorize the school to write letters to us (parents) about the needs of their children and this is followed up by reminder in church announcements, local FM radio station including funeral and birthdays gatherings (Pch 2: 1st June 2018, Hai Sobe).

⁶³ ILO has six policy approaches to end child labour and these are: 1. Advancing the legal commitment to child labour elimination and the central role of social dialogue; 2. Promoting decent work for adults and youth of legal working age, especially through addressing informality; 3. Building and extending social protection systems, including floors, to mitigate the economic vulnerability of households; 4. Expanding access to free, quality public education as the logical alternative to child labour; 5. Addressing child labour in supply chains ; 6. Protecting children in situations of fragility and crisis.

⁶⁴ Interviews that involved four members of Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) from Episcopal Church schools, two from PTA from a government run school and one PTA from a privately run school.

A parent (a retired education officer) from one of the government schools explained that the Education Act of 2012 allows government schools to operate with the help of the parents and communities:

This school runs because we are behind it as individual parents and through the Parent Teacher Association. The school administration is the main decision-making body and is government led. When it comes to operations, we the parents are asked for learners' requirements and for school developments. The school authority is the main voice and we the parents are given opportunity for suggestions. The role of the parents is to prepare the educational environment for the child at home. At school, plans and resources are directed by the school management towards the education of the child (PG1: 3rd June 2018, Hai Leben).

The functionality of schools depends on the level of parental financial support. The government schools press strongly on the parents to pay fees and generate finance to enable the schools to run. There is little legal justification for parents to pay school fees for the operation of government schools but usually financial support from the government is very irregular and insufficient. Private and Church schools rely exclusively on parents' fees and so they have to offer better education. Parents who take their children to private or church schools with the intention of getting a quality education do so at a cost.

In a FGD with a women's group in the market (Dar El Salam), one of the parents remarked with annoyance:

My child goes to a government school X and during meetings discussions are guided by circulars sent from the government education office. For example, what parents and communities are supposed to do, school calendar dates of when to open and close for the term, etc. Our opinions are referred to government education authorities but usually we do not get feedback. We are limited in all discussions and this makes most of us who sell in the market not to go to attend school meetings and we concentrate on our business. When our children come back with letters from the school we then do what the school wants, sometimes we ask some of our neighbors who attended the meeting to give us narrative of it (12th Oct 2018, Dar El Salam market).

My participation in two government schools parents' meetings indicates that there is little encouragement of parents to participate in school planning other than being pressed harder by school headteachers and or sometimes by PTA chairpersons for financial contributions. The women in attendance are those mainly engaged in domestic agriculture while some of the business women regard the government school meetings as a waste of time. In contrast, in

church schools I have visited, both Episcopal and African Inland Church, the PTA meetings were exciting and with good interaction. Any decision reached was negotiated in detail between the parents and the school's administration. In the African Inland Church school, the plan of school activities was raised and discussed in the meeting. Sometimes some parents may enforce activities that are not of priority. In one meeting the parents opted for classroom renovation undermining teachers' salaries, indicating a weakness in policy and practice and inadequate role definition. The Episcopal Church-run schools offer space for dialogue and meetings are guided by school plans and this enables the parents to better understand the school priorities. Although not all ideas of the parents are adopted, the PTA committee is aware of their concerns, and this gives strength in policy and practice at the school level.

The government-led schools are run in a bureaucratic top-down approach in which parents, communities and the school management are not on the same level. It is a cultural characteristic nationally and in other countries. South Sudan is worse because most decisions are made at the central government and delivered to the state and county level for implementation. There is little space for dialogue with the community and parents in planning and decision-making, which undermines the building of relations between the school and the parents. This limits the possibility of adapting roles to local situations and of creating new ones.

Bamberger argues that the role of parents and communities is not limited to inclusion in planning and management through consultation (Bamberger 1991). A school in a given locality that draws parents and community from different interests and cultures needs interests and objectives to be shared widely for better delivery and sustainability. In This promotes building structural roles and compliance through their participation in the PTA. Inevitably, however, there exist cases of personal interest among members, PTA executives

and parents that pose challenges to the school administration and create tension among parents.

A common practice is headteachers lobbying with parents before a meeting is conducted.⁶⁵ In a PTA meeting I attended the headteacher was forging his way through and side-lining the interest of the parents. The usual intention is approval of the headteacher's objectives, especially when it concerns accountability, replacement of the headteacher or an increase of fees or parents' contributions. A female parent reported:

The headteacher of school X stayed longer without been transferred. He does not perform well but when it comes to PTA meetings he starts earlier by giving influential parents bribes so that his evil plans can succeed. Secondly sometimes he can decide to postpone the meeting if he sees a failure, for example, when his supporters could not be in attendance. On the eve of the meeting he can make a radio announcement at 8pm in Spirit FM for the meeting's cancellation. He controls the meeting instead of the PTA chair and in selecting opinion he chooses hands that support him when it is the role of the chair (P13: 5th Feb 2019, Hai Luzira).

In conclusion to this section, South Sudan needs to build school communities that share common interests and norms. Participation in education by local residents is a motivation, a source of networking for the school, and a strategy to support and define roles when it comes to ownership in the education process. This presents an opportunity to create shared expectations about roles. The higher involvement of women compared to men in economic activities is an aspect of changing roles and demands more women in education decision-making. This requires a change of culture and careful attention so that some learners are not pushed out of classrooms because their parents have only limited resources. My observations showed that inadequate financial support to schools and consequent poor motivation influence many teachers and headteachers to be slack in their roles and responsibilities.

According to the ministerial order on School Management and Leadership headteachers should have knowledge of teamwork and interpersonal relationships. They should facilitate continuing professional development in the school and enhance individual and team

⁶⁵ In six individual interviews and two focus group discussions

development to build and sustaining a learning community (Yai 2017). However, this ideal contradicts the actual practices in most of the government run schools because the economic and resource provision by the government is not flowing to the schools and decision-making is top-down. This has led to poor grass-roots participation.

5.2 Political and security factors

The findings showed that the parental role in schooling depends strongly on political will and a security situation that allows parents to work for their livelihoods and the schooling of their children. In this section we look at the influence of the political and security environment, the influence of the local churches for peace, and the dominance of cultural community expectations over education needs.

5.2.1 Influence of political and security environment

Insecurity created by violent clashes and robbers destabilises the life of communities and raises the level of violence generally between people in the community. One parent from the Episcopal Church school commented:

The political environment of South Sudan remains in turmoil and in Yei county, many parents are displaced internally and others went to the refugee camps in the neighbouring countries of Uganda, Congo and Sudan. The result of displacement has made many of us parents lose livelihoods and sources of income to send our children to school. Those who migrated from the villages to Yei town due to fear lost the chance to recover their resources. The resources⁶⁶ ended up being looted by unknown gunmen. Those who remained in the villages have lost the opportunities to send their children to school due to lack of access to safe road for coming from the villages to the town. In the last three years Yei has become an active war ground with various insurgencies (PCh 7: 28th March 2018, Hai mission).

A female respondent showing considerable stress because of the attacks on her family said:

The insecurity has affected the school age children especially boys, who become victims of the conflict by being conscripted forcefully into the military especially in the villages and rebel-controlled locations. This denied them the opportunities for education as their basic right. The school age girls have lost the opportunity to continue schooling because some of them have been forcefully married or

⁶⁶ The resources refer to animals like goat, sheep, cattle and chicken; and agricultural products such as maize, groundnuts, coffee and other various crops including fruits that can be sold on a small scale to generate income for the parents to fund basic education. The looting of these resources are done by armed forces of different categories that are not mentioned by respondents for safety reasons and which are commonly known in South Sudan and Yei as 'unknown gunmen' although they are known.

sexually abused by the armed forces. This contributed negatively to the education of our children because the girls become ashamed or infected by sexually transmitted diseases. We parents in this war situation can do very little in order to protect our children from the armed attacks because we are also victims of the same circumstances. We need peace to enable schooling of our children, if not we women will join the fighting to protect ourselves and our children (PCh 8: 28th March 2018, Gabat).

A local chief in a position of anonymity remarked angrily in the Kakwa language:

Yi kilo in dara duma in jur lo sawudeni sudani. Kudo sina in jur kode in towuni ana gele. I dignitan lig ngutu laga ko kipiya kilo wutu I midiji in ragu na kapaji ko momoga na ngutu wate. Piriton naga a meta ko kapaji kode in mede, kode I dukani, kode in sukuluton ko I officinal ka'deka'de raraka. Ko ngutu laga a ngaju kutu pepeya. We in South Sudan whether in town or villages, our property is looted, and our women are raped. Looting occurs to villages, towns, homes, shops, offices or to any person or place with valuables. We are killed at any time and in the looting process do not resist or say something against the looting otherwise you will be killed (Elder X: 2nd April 2019, Hai Gabat).

On public occasions like the education conference (Episcopal Church of South Sudan 2017), in addition to the need for security clearance, national security or civil investigation department officers are sent to monitor the discussions.⁶⁷ In such a situation people live difficult and restricted lives with only limited freedom of speech. This means that sustainable peace is paramount, and if South Sudan continues with conflict many people will join the military or rebel groups and the whole country will become militarised. Subsequently, parental and community participation in education will be minimal because most parents will lose hope for the education of their children, and the girls will be the worst affected.

Interviews and FDGs revealed that in this difficult political crisis, cooperation from school administrators is required if children are to learn.⁶⁸ A parent from an African Inland Church elaborated:

We do not have enough money to pay the full fees required by the schools. Most of our resources are looted or destroyed, for example, I have 8 cattle, 12 goats and a number of chickens. The cattle are gunned down and goats and chickens were taken. The current insecurity does not allow us to offer more support for the basic needs of our children to facilitate education as before. We cannot allow our children stay at home but with the little resources their schooling goes on. The headteacher collaborates with us parents but insists on the fees payment in instalments (PCh 8: 30th Nov 2018, Hai Leben).

⁶⁷ In any memorial prayer that involves overnight singing and praises, soldiers or police are sent by the government to attend. The committee of the memorial prayer is to cater for their upkeep, including food, tea or any other required drink. If their needs are not met or they are not given money, they will raise other allegations that some of the people in attendance are rebels or criminals. This would jeopardize the occasion and people will be jailed and tortured for no good reason.

⁶⁸

Without the parental contributions the running of the schools become impossible. The parents accept this and also their obligation to follow up on parents who are not fulfilling their duty and try and persuade them to contribute.

The political and security situation in the country has a strong and dominating influence on the role of parents and communities in any kind of participatory education. Furthermore, under the current conditions, school management regulations in government schools do not allow the headteacher to send children home even if the parents have not paid fees or their contribution on time. This creates a conflict of role expectations for the headteacher between the parents' expectations and the government policy. Fee payment is a necessity because the teachers need salaries and the school needs to meet its running costs, especially since prices in the market have risen.

5.2.1.1 Disappearance of learners and parents

The prolonged conflict in South Sudan has caused the loss of many lives. One teacher stated under anonymity that some learners and teachers had recently disappeared. The school administration and parents have no control over this. It is a situation no one mentions for 'security reasons'. In a state of despair, a teacher comments:

I feel saddened with our situation in Yei. During the day life looks partly encouraging and the roads are busy with people. In the night different attacks on people take place. For example, in a school if two children fight who are from different ethnic groups the parents of one of the children will secretly attack the family of the other by beating the child and parents. The same attack is done to the headteacher or class teachers. The parent of the attacked child sometimes disappears for days after torture or is found dead at the roadside and then dumped at the hospital. The school teachers experience the same scenario. It makes some learners fear coming to school, and some parents feel hesitant to send their children to school (PX: 17th Nov 2018, Hai Jigomoni).

I witnessed this twice. One of our church members (a lay-leader) was kidnapped for three days and found dead twelve miles away from Yei town. Secondly, in 2014, the Episcopal

Diocesan Bishop of Yei was attacked and robbed in the same way but was made to sit on the floor and was not beaten. The diocesan car and his phones were robbed. The attackers debated among themselves whether to kill him or not. In a day of prayer for these two incidents where I was in charge, the invited Catholic Diocesan Bishop Erakolan Lodu spoke with great emotion:

I am now above seventy years and I have experienced several wars in my life. There was no attack on religious leaders, teachers and medical personnel. To us in Yei and South Sudan, there is a war on influential individuals and institutions. I am telling you all who are in this occasion today especially the armed officers that you have taken the law into your hands to kill the innocent people. Their blood will be counted on you and your generations. We in the church will keep speaking for the voiceless and we have no guns and security personnel on our gates (Catholic Bishop of Yei, Erakolano 19th Dec 2014).

Such threats to individual lives affect the nomination of executive members during PTA meetings due to the fear of being attacked because of raising school concerns. There is no enforcement of the rule of law because rampant attacks and killings happen regularly. The Church is a moral institution that advocates for peace on behalf of the communities despite its own challenges (financial resources, inadequate staff, etc.). This context is a disincentive to parental and community participation.

5.2.1.2 Occupation of schools and institutions by armed forces

The occupation of schools or institutions by ‘government armed forces’ is commonly excused because the armed forces do not have their own barracks in areas where they want to establish a base and because its location is more necessary to the respective community than the services the institution offers, e.g., education, health, church, etc. The removal of armed forces from schools and institutions occupied by these forces is very difficult because those in charge of the army units rarely listen to the voices of any community leader (see photos: 20 & 21, pg. 203). In one of the quarterly meetings, the major issue raised was the occupation of

schools, health centres and churches by armed officers.⁶⁹ One of the school inspectors remarked:

Schools of X, Y & Z are occupied by armed forces. The children in those areas could not access the school and they have to move to another location if their parents need their children to go to school. Families living around those schools are beaten most of the time. It was a way of threatening them to vacate their homes (Inspector, 26th April 2018, Jigomino).

In a PTA meeting in St. Paul's Primary School one of the members said:

Apart from occupation of schools by armed forces, there is serious misuse of the facilities, for example some of the classrooms are used as kitchens, by using firewood that produces thick smoke during cooking and it darkens the roofs and walls of the classrooms. Secondly, some of the classrooms are used as toilets instead of using the actual toilets; and some of the doors and windows are broken. The government in its education policy urged committees to be in charge to monitor performance and the management of the school. In this situation the active role and responsibility in the leadership of the school is withdrawn and given to the military and the morale of the school and PTA leadership is lost (PCh11: 13th March 2018, St. Paul's Primary School).

Taking the experience of one ECSS school occupied in Western Bahr El Ghazal in the north of South Sudan with which I am engaged in a leadership role, the removal of armed forces from the school required the attention of the State or national authorities of the army as well as local government education authorities. When we requested compensation for the damage caused to the classrooms, we were referred to the army which in turned referred us to the parents because they claimed the government had no money. It was a humiliation for the ECSS and it had to be handled with patience and care. The involvement of the local communities and parents in the removal of armed forces from a school can pose threats to PTA members that might end in loss of life. Yei is in a similar situation and needs appropriate procedures to be in place in order to recover its occupied schools.

This finding illustrates the misuse of authority over the local population which is a threat to the parents and community leaders in their support of school leadership. Top-down planning in a situation where education is dependent on local initiative and participation is rarely

⁶⁹ In a consultative meeting with the county education office in Yei, and in a further presentation at a quarterly education review meeting (26th April 2018), at Jigomino Primary school hall

capable of building good relationships between the local community and the national leadership. According to the Safe Schools Declarations and Guidelines from the Red Cross armed forces should limit the effect of armed conflict on students, teachers, educational facilities and education in practice (ICRC 2018)⁷⁰. How this can work in a post-independence conflict country such as South Sudan with minimum or no rule of law will be discussed later.

5.2.2 Influence of peace initiatives by the local churches for managing community relations

Attacks on schools by killing of learners and teachers with ‘unknown gunmen’ who are actually known by the local population are political and security concerns. This has led to local peace initiatives by the churches, which in turn enable parental opportunities for schooling of their children (see photos: 6, pg. 200; 11, pg. 201 & 20, pg. 203). The signing and implementation of the 2017 revitalized peace agreement in South Sudan took more than fifteen months (IGAD 2017), reflecting a lack of political will between the government and opposition parties. To rescue the lives and property of people the churches had to intervene for local peace initiatives in order to reduce hostilities and to borrow time until the peace agreement was finalised and to allow some opportunities for schooling. Local peace initiatives by the churches and building community relations with the armed forces became crucial in managing minimal peace and a window for schooling. I observed and felt that the need for peace is the main cry of people in South Sudan. Yei in particular was devastated in the two conflicts of 2013 and 2016, leading to loss of many lives, the destruction of property and the displacement of people. It affected systems and structures and delivery of social services including education.⁷¹

⁷⁰ <http://www.protectingeducation.org/safeschoolsdeclaration>: The purpose of the guidelines are to establish a set of actions that parties to the conflict can take to reduce the military use of schools and universities, and to minimize the negative possible impact of such actions on students' safety and education.

⁷¹ For this theme I drew on 31 individual interviews with local chiefs, parents, teachers, learners, women groups, church leaders, staff of national and international organisation and staff of UN agencies (in anonymity),

In the centenary celebration of the Episcopal Diocese of Yei, which took place in February 2017, hosted by the Bishop of Yei, the Rt Rev Hillary Adeba Luate, and attended by other dignitaries including the archbishop of the Episcopal Church, the Most Rev Canon Dr Daniel Deng Bull, the President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir Mayardit, and several government ministers and bishops representing local dioceses, Bishop Hillary Adeba remarked in his address:

We need everyone in South Sudan and particularly in Yei to have life in its fullest. The Catholic bishop of Yei [Bishop Erakolano Tombe] presented humanitarian issues in the face of the ethnic conflict, saying that better security is more urgent than, and the precursor to, peace in the area (17th Feb 2017, Christ the King Parish).

One of the local chiefs added that:

We are living in Yei not because of government protection or the presence of UN keeping forces. People are persecuted every day and families got divided by others seeking safety in the villages and others left to refugee camps. Today we are united and led by the churches through the church leaders representing our voices and rescuing people from some murder cases. If the church leaders announce that they are leaving the county, we are all moving with them to that destination. The UN peace keeping forces come to Yei several times for assessments and we are killed and suffering (Chief: 29th Jan 2017, Hai TTC).

An internally displaced person (IDP) lamented:

The painful attacks waged on us in villages left us vulnerable without basic needs. Some of us left the elderly and the sick in the villages because it was difficult to carry them. We are here sheltered in the church compound and provided food yesterday through mobilization and donations of the Christians and people of Yei regardless of religious affiliation. Our children are provided with class and volunteer teachers from the church schools. Some of the IDPs who have got shelter with friends and relatives in Yei town were encouraged by the volunteer teachers to send their children daily to this centre (IDP: 15th March 2018, Hai mission).

In Yei during the two conflicts of 2013 and 2016, some of the population remained without fleeing as refugees because of the presence of the church leaders, notably Bishop Erakolano Tombe (Catholic) and the Episcopal Bishop Hillary Adeba. These two leaders attend to external meetings or make visits outside Yei alternately so that there is no leadership vacuum. I visited Yei for two weeks and it happened that Bishop Hillary Adeba went for pastoral work in the refugee camp in Uganda; and suddenly the Catholic Bishop Erakolan

together with four focus groups with UN agencies, parents, teachers and church leaders. My own observations and attendance at relevant meetings, celebrations, and conferences in the community also contributed.

Tombe fell sick and went to Juba for medical attention. In this situation there was rampant shooting by the army, and no one could talk to the political leadership and army commanders. In these conflicts the role of the police was undermined by the army, only the church leaders being able to approach the army leadership. People rushed into the compounds of the two churches to confirm whether the two bishops would come back or not, saying that if not they also would leave. Bishop Hillary had to cut his trip short and return to Yei.

Episcopal Church schools and health centres kept on operating alongside the institutions of the other churches like Methodist, AIC, SDA, etc. This is reflected in the general policy by which parents are encouraged to send their children to church schools for protection. There is still the need to pay for uniform and stationery but there is an opportunity to learn. Episcopal Church budgets reveal that the church's focus is drawn to peace and social services. The data below show mission work accounts for only 1% of the budget as compared to relief, peace and education.

Episcopal Church Budgets: 2014-2021

Departments	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Amounts in USD
Relief and Disaster Reponses (SSUDRA)	1,283,814	436,365	560,604	542,413	251,299	54,166	424,411	396,981	4,750,053
Peace Commission	1,500,000	55,000	12,000	49,000	14,000	18,720	7,500	5,000	1,661,220
Education and	902,162		850,276	484,660					

Training		1,235,521			357,477	675,768	878,867	424,214	5,808,945
Mission and Evangelism	-	-	-	-	3,000	6,000	6,000	7,500	22,500
	Total								12,242,718

Source: ECSS Provincial Quarterly meetings, 2018-2022

The church in Yei strives to be a neutral institution advocating for human rights and concerned about basic needs, although it has its own weaknesses such as human resources, which will be discussed in chapter nine. The churches have shown that their capacity and style of leadership is able to challenge the local authorities for the interests of the people regardless of cultural backgrounds, working with the common objective of achieving peace. However, education in times of conflict cannot wait for peace and children need learning opportunities in order to avoid a generation gap of no learning. It was the religious leadership that stopped the community deserting in a situation where the political or military authorities were seen as a threat to the population. This event has become part of communal memory and is popularly shared in public on many occasions in Yei.

According to Agensky, the incorporation of religious institutions into governance networks enables church-based actors to pursue political, social, and structural interventions for peace. Religious actors have a good record in implementing activities in areas of wartime governance, aid, assistance to refugees and displaced persons, civil mobilization and promoting people-centered approaches to sustainable peace (Agensky 2019). According to studies by Boswell, local peace deals work and show evidence of contributing to relative peace in South Sudan. For example, one of the local peace agreements initiated by the churches in Yei sought the immediate withdrawal of armed forces along the road (Boswell et al. 2019). As national peace negotiation is taking a long time, the local peace initiatives by

the churches are of immediate help, providing parents and communities with a window of stability, enhancing opportunities for education. One of the chiefs expressed this:

The real peace between the government and the several rebel groups will take years. In the early war of 1990, many of our children ended without going to school because the parents were waiting for permanent cease fire and peace agreement. Today the local churches are engaging with some of the rebel groups in local dialogues to avoid threatening the civilian in the rural areas and towns. From time to time the church leaders meet the local government and security personnel to avoid persecution of the people. This enables the people to stay and you can see life goes on including education. Some of my brother's children are with me and they go to school together (Chief2: 2nd Dec 2018, Hai Lomuku II).

Local peace initiatives are useful in counteracting violence. As a result, I have observed many children brought from the villages into Yei town for education. People are able to walk to the town to seek medical attention as well as bring food items for sale in order to buy their basic needs. However, there is continuing evidence of violence by the armed forces despite the local peace deals as there are no guarantees. Despite the continued insurgencies in Yei, the local peace initiatives have sustained the population and children's enrolment, and learning has continued for the last six years. It is a minimal opportunity for parents to take advantage of for their children's schooling and to participate in education and keep strong community relations. A parent who stays in the village and whose children go to one of the church run schools in Yei town stated:

I did not go to school in 1970 during the early wars. Later many children ended education because of the 1983 to 2005 conflict and today most of them are with me in the village and others ran to the camps. My education was limited because my parents never thought of taking me to Uganda or to the town. I do not want my children to end in the same way. I have taken two of my boys to Yei to stay in the family of my younger brother and go to school together with his children. The road is difficult but our local priest accompanies me half way and on my return he comes for me (Parent X, 14th Nov 2018, Hai Nyakama).

Many children in the schools in Yei whose parents stay in the villages bring food to them or food items for sale. There are many road restrictions and killings on the way from the village to the town, but through the support of the local priest these parents especially women are allowed access to Yei on limited days in certain periods. Secondly many families in Yei are crowded with many children especially from relatives or friends and the host family incurs

the burden.⁷² Thirdly torture (killings and beatings) is commonly used against the civilian population in village or town as evidenced by many respondents but there is some respect accorded to the church leaders.⁷³ Fourthly many parents had learnt from the previous wars that education cannot wait for their children. This made many parents venture to Ugandan refugee camps or to reallocate from the villages to Yei town so that their children could have access to education. This explains why most of the schools in Yei town were crowded in the conflict period.

This finding shows that there is economic commitment from parents for the education of their children regardless of the context or their poverty. Second, many parents learnt that even during war education is needed for their children. Third, local relationships are relevant for relative peaceful existence and access.

5.2.3 Dominance of cultural community expectations over education needs

This section is related to contextual factors. Some socio-cultural practices in South Sudan and particular in Yei limit the learning opportunities for school children, particularly girls. This presents the parental conflict between traditional and modern practices. One of the parents with a child in a government-run school explained:

When a person is sick at home or hospital the person is cared for by many female persons and a few men who are drawn from the immediate family members and relatives. In unfortunate case of death the funeral takes three to five days or even more. The mother or the father stays away for several days. Some of the sick attendants are teachers and in that situation the learners miss class for several days. Sometimes two teachers are taken away for the funeral leaving behind a teacher to manage a class. In this situation the learners are taught for half day or they are told to stay at home (PG: 29th Jan 2019, Hai Leben).

⁷² Some of the parents send their children to Yei from the villages without taking into consideration the welfare of the children. Sometimes the burden is left to the host and it brings friction or conflict between the host families the parents of the children. It is a common practice and when the children are not looked after some of them end into streets or becoming thieves and eventually dropout of schools. In case of the girls they end up in early pregnancies.

⁷³ For example in June 2019 we conducted the three year Yei diocesan synod meeting held in Yei town and it drew most of the priests who were resident in the villages, who had been able to travel.

Similarly, one of the teachers remarked:

Funeral services are important occasions to attend in our community. If you do not appear or participate in the funeral services like in construction of shelter for shade, transporting chairs and other needed services people will look at you as not being compassionate. In case something happens to you or you have any occasion at your family of any kind, the turn up will be poor. If the funeral is related to any teacher in the school, then most of the teachers and learners have to attend and the whole school is shut down for a day or more. If the funeral is nearby the school learning is affected because all the teachers and learners have to join the funeral as being a neighbour. Some parents in hearing of a funeral nearby a school they will immediately stop their children from going to school (TCh11: 3rd Feb 2018, Hi Guwafa).

One female respondent in a controversial discussion raised a concern that:

Most of the poor performance of children in Yei is attributed to inadequate coverage of the syllabus and less attendance of the lessons by the children in the academic year. Many teachers take a lot of excuses in the name of funeral or attendance to sick people as well as learners especially girls who take family responsibility on behalf of their mothers at home. Parents need to discourage this syndrome because final examinations for candidate classes in primary or secondary leaving certificates are set in national level without looking at your personal or cultural issues (PX: 16th March 2019, Hai Sobe).

I observed that many teachers in South Sudan, especially in government schools and including Yei, who are requested to undertake extra duties outside the school academic activities, take the opportunity to be absent in order to work for themselves to earn a living. In church schools some of the headteachers are pastors and they prioritise church duties over their educational role. This calls for redefinition of structural roles.

In an FGD respondents raised the issue of schools being used for church events during school time and some teachers neglect their role on these occasions. One of the parents' remarked that:

Most of us are Christians from the different faiths and we respect the ministry of the church. We are sometimes disappointed by the school administrators in the church schools when we see our children coming home early or to stay at home for two to three days because there is church conference or seminar held in the school premises. We parents are not informed of these issues in advance or circular letters are not given to us (FGD5: 7th March 2018, Hai Tarawa).

One day a teacher (TX, 15th Dec 2018, school X) from a church school confessed to me that the learners' performance in 2017 in his subject was poor because the school headteacher assigned him more to church activities than to classroom roles. At an evaluation meeting he was blamed for underperformance, yet he was authorized to perform those activities. It is

critical that job descriptions be revised so that the different sectors respect their distinctive roles. Biddle & Chikati argued for the appropriate cultural distribution of roles to individuals based on their social behaviour and status because culture is involved in daily learning activities ((Biddle 1986 & Chikati 2011). Roles are to be clearly distinguished. Later consideration will be given to how the diocesan administration can frame proper job descriptions for the headteachers vis-a-vis their pastoral roles.

Public rallies are common in South Sudan. These rallies are in two categories. Political rallies are conducted in Freedom Square or on a football pitch when a government leader such as governor or vice president is authorized to address the public. One headteacher remarked:

Politicians and government officials make frequent visits to Yei and when they are here a public rally is organised to all people to attend. The education department is served with a letter to release the learners to go and welcome the visitor from the airstrip or from the Yei bridge (1 km to Yei town) as a sign of warm welcome and sing songs for entertainment. Such an occasion takes the whole day or two days and schools are shut down. Secondly there is heavy guarding by soldiers and some of the parents could not allow their children to the rally or to the school until the visitor leaves due to fear of indiscipline of the army (Headteacher X, 16th April 2018, School X).

Political or government oriented public rallies are usually compulsory. Once you have reported to the rally venue you will not be allowed to leave until the rally is finished. The armed forces misbehave by beating people or scaring the gathering by firing bullets which sometimes causes harm. It seems justifiable for parents to keep their children at home to avoid getting into such risky situations. Some youth, both boys and girls, take the opportunity of going to the public rallies to misbehave (meeting their friends, taking alcoholic drinks, etc.). Schools are required by higher authority to release the learners at the expense of classroom learning. Headteachers who do not comply are warned or disciplined. This indicates the short coming of a top-down approach in leadership which fails to consult the local authorities or parents. The opinions of the headteachers who are responsible to communicate to the parents on the release of their children are neglected. This undermines the parental role in decision making concerning the school activities of their children.

Secondly a lot of financial resources from the national expenditure are used for such public rallies instead of investing in social services like education, health, roads, etc. which are in a desperate condition in the country.

A similar problem is the misuse of religious crusades meant for evangelisation. A parent who has a child in a government run school stated angrily:

Yei is flooded with various evangelists who conduct crusades at the wrong time, for example during school term and they can be for a week or more. Most of our children end up attending the crusade on the way back from school and reach home late. A daughter of my elder brother was found pregnant because she used the opportunity of the crusade to go and meet the boyfriend in the name of the crusade. Whenever there is a crusade or any public rally in Yei today some parents do not send their children to school in fear of several misconducts and challenges (P12, 17th April 2018, Hai Gabat).

5.3 Conclusion

The government's top-down model of leadership that is characterized by continuing war and looting of government resources undermines the empowerment of parents particularly in government-run schools and drains the income generation of the wider population. This limits the parental role and capacity to contribute in money, time, and skills to the education of their children. Successful education of the child requires fulfilling the learners' needs both at home and in the school. The government policy has recognized the role of parents and communities in education but failed to meet its obligation of providing financial resources and the burden is left to parents.

In contrast to government schools, the church-run schools have been relying on parental role and participation for long, and with a significant degree of success. Church school parents, however, are also affected by the context of continual conflict, and are unable to provide enough of the demanded resources. There is an increase in the number of returnees especially from Uganda and Congo, and most of the returnee parents have little income to support

themselves and education. Moreover, the cultural differences brought by the returnee parents and learners present an additional challenge. Despite these contextual and cultural problems, however, parents in general are keen to avoid again a missing generation of uneducated children, and they continue to struggle to see that learning takes place despite of the economic and resource challenges and the on-going political and security concerns.

Chapter Six: Parents, community and the Episcopal Church interpretations of participation in education

6.0 Introduction

In this chapter I investigate the findings on objective two that concerns the interpretation by parents and community of their role in participation in education. The data are drawn from the same categories as discussed in chapter five and supported by my own several years of experience. The findings are analysed according to the objectives following the research questions. The interpretations of participation in education are influenced by three aspects: enhancing learning conditions of the children, what the school management needs to make learning possible, and issues arising from culture and context.

6.1 Managing and enhancing learning conditions

In this subsection I analyze four aspects that emerge from the data collected: improving learning conditions and learner-parents; the need to widen resource mobilization and appropriate utilization; improving school hygiene and teachers' welfare; and the experiences of returnee parents and parents of children with disabilities.

6.1.1 Challenges facing the learners and learner-parents

Learners in Yei are returnees, displaced persons or from the host communities. In 2018 Immanuel Primary School (an ECSS school) had a total of 650 learners - 128 from the host community, 316 IDPs and 206 returnees. Some of these learners stayed with relatives who were not able to meet their basic needs like food and accommodation and others stayed independently individually or in a group. The last group of 'learner-parents' described themselves both as 'learners' and 'parents' because of the situation they experienced.

In the course of my data collecting, I met a 'learner-parent' (Taban John) on my way walking to visit Immanuel primary school for meetings and observations. He was washing his legs

after laying bricks in the early morning from 6-7:15 am which he intended to sell after burning. Near him was a very old motorcycle he used as a boda boda (motorcycle for commercial transport) after school in his own time to earn a living. At the same his books and uniform were placed near him put on a log so that he is ready to go to school after washing his legs. I asked him why he was still there when it was time for going to school. He replied at some length:

My father is a soldier in the front line and only comes home perhaps after several years (3-5) years. Some of the soldiers die in the frontlines without the family knowing. Our mother takes care of us for all basic needs but it's difficult for her to pay fees in the school... The focus of our mother is food and because education is unaffordable, and we have to work for ourselves. Some of our relatives live at a distance in the rural areas without any means of visiting us in Yei town because they are cut off by the insecurity from accessing their children. Many of our relatives are killed on the roads in struggle to follow up their children in town. Parents in the rural areas are considered as those supporting the rebels and if they visit their children in town, they are immediately arrested because of being suspected as rebel spies. On the other hand, any child who follows their parents into the village is regarded as spy of the government forces. This creates isolation for us and barrier between us the children and our parents. This forced us to depend on ourselves for both basic services like food and education. Sometimes we 'learner-parents' have vulnerable parents with disabilities, who are unable to do much to support their children's learning (a male learner from Tore village (40 miles from Yei –Maridi road), aged 15 and from Avokaya ethic group (L4: 18th Nov 2019, Hai Mission).⁷⁴

On a visit to Jigomoni primary school after getting down from the boda boda, at the gate I met eight learners (6 boys, 2 girls) who had been stopped outside the fence by the teacher on duty because they were late. One of them was sitting on a stone (Tako Joseph). The learner looked frustrated, his shirt was torn at the back and the pair of shorts was worn-out and had lost its colour because of over washing and long-use. I pulled him up and took him with me to the headteacher to ask for permission to talk to him. We then talked together for 46 minutes while the rest of the seven late learners were cleaning the school compound as a punishment. I introduced myself and later asked him why he was late and in which class he was. The learner was in tears, and it touched my emotions. I told him to relax, and he described his situation:

I am a learner and a parent for myself. I need education and no one helps me. I have both of my parents in the village. My father cultivates and sells the crops for drinking alcohol without his decision being

⁷⁴ South Sudan considers only two seasons: dry season from end of December to end of March; and rain season when it receives a lot of rain fall from April to early December and it is wet.

questioned. If my mother talks about education when he is sober, he keeps quiet. In the evening after drinking, he comes home and beats everyone including my mother. I decided to venture into Yei Town. My survival depends on three things: one, I do 'boda boda' [ride motorcycle for public transport] by using someone's motorcycle and at the end of the day I take it back and get given some amount. It is a risky activity because many of the motorcycles are stolen at gun point, and you could easily lose your life. Most of the 'boda boda' riders drink alcohol and if you do not drink you are treated as odd with the colleagues. I go to school late and struggle to fit into the class and it's difficult to balance time between school and 'boda boda' riding. Second, I cultivate vegetables which I sell to earn little amount to meet my basic needs and education. Sometimes many people cultivate similar crops and create a surplus, making the demand low. The demand is supposed to be from the internally displaced people (IDPs) and some of the host communities, but they do not have the money. The demand is greater from the people working with the NGOs who come from other counties and states who do not have any access to land and are the main buyers. Third, I do brick laying (making) in the dry season and sell them to generate income. It is a hard labour as compared to my age. On the other hand, the market is low because most people are on the run because of poor security, except a minimal demand from NGOs constructing toilets or doing repairs in schools or at hospitals. We learner-parents are conditioned by the poor security situation and to some extent poor parental care especially for parents who do not value education but sell the family property for alcohol drinking. The schools do not compromise with us if we do not meet school requirements, for example, fees, uniform and stationery.

Some of us learner-parents have relatives in town, but they are hesitant to accommodate us due to unbearable burden that they could not meet besides meeting their own children's basic needs (food) and education. In addition, if there are many children staying in one home, the family would be suspected of hosting rebels, and it might lead to the family being visited for investigation by the security apparatus or intelligence. Many family heads or members are killed for a similar reason, or you have to pay a lot of money to security to bail a family member taken in this situation (a male learner from Lasu village, aged 17 and from Kakwa ethnic group (L4: 30th Nov 2019, Hai Jigomoni)⁷⁵.

The youth who ride 'boda boda' in South Sudan including Yei are mainly dropout learners or likely to dropout. Some of them take drugs like alcohol, opium, *marungi* (a kind of marijuana) and are hooligans. The learners in school who are involved in 'boda boda' are therefore at high risk of dropping out from school. It indicates that learners who support their education on behalf of their parents can easily be distracted and their interest in education drawn away towards an alternative lifestyle. The headteacher of the African Inland Church in Yei banned the admission of 'boda boda' school learners because these learners are mostly, from his point of view, ill-disciplined and leave the school at any time for their transport business. The headteacher argued:

The parents or guardian whose children ride 'boda boda' complain of their children not being attended and controlled while in school. The education authorities in a local standing order instructed all schools to enroll children as their right to education. But for me I do not want it because it brings conflicts between the parents and the school management as their children do not listen to us the teachers (HTAIC12: 12th Dec 2019, Hai Leben).

⁷⁵ South Sudan has only two seasons: dry season from end of December to end of March; and rainy season when it receives a lot of rain fall from April to early December.

At education coordination meetings⁷⁶ in Yei County I attended, the issue of food for education⁷⁷ was frequently raised. In my school visits I witnessed many children in the morning claiming to be sick and asking for a sick report to visit a health centre or hospital. The medical officers reported orally to the schools and county education department that most of these children end up on the roadsides in a search for food (14th March 2018, Yei Civil Hospital), while those who are seen by the medical personnel are not prescribed medicine for two reasons: most are hungry and only need food and those who have medical problems are too weak for medication. When I was in P5 class of Immanuel primary school for observation no learning was taking place even when the lesson was on-going because the children were either sleeping or disturbing the teacher for permission to go out to the toilets as an excuse to go and look for food (Immanuel primary school, 15th May 2019).

In one FGD conducted in an Episcopal Church school, the seven learners participating (four boys, one with a hearing impairment and three girls) emphasised in their own joint statement:

Provision of food for learners while in the school and at home is paramount. We are in a conflict situation and most of our parents are not here and some of us stay with relatives. Some of the learners stay with their parents but in a status of IDP because they left their gardens in rural areas and have no access due to insecurity. We struggle for a meal a day and sometimes we come to school hungry when we never had food last evening. The school should think of gardening and also our parents need to cultivate in the empty plots in the town whose owners deserted and use the lands until the owners return to claim them. No food, no schooling because the mind cannot concentrate and sometimes we do not have attention to teachers. In case a teacher is absent we are happy because it offers us an opportunity to go out and collect the raw mangos and other wild fruits (GDC1: 25th Nov 2019, St. Paul's School, Hai Luzira).

The context here is that Yei Town depends on food supply from the local farmers in villages⁷⁸ and from neighbouring countries like Uganda. The conflicts in 2013 and 2016 with rampant continuing banditry on the roads had reduced the food supply drastically. The United

⁷⁶ Annual review meetings conducted in every November of the year. The focus is to hear reports from school inspectors and Education Development Partners operating in Yei. The agenda is to assess enrollment, performances, conditions of learning spaces, teachers' statistics and level of training, etc.

⁷⁷ Food for education is a meal prepared in school to improve nutrition, end classroom hunger, improve school attendance and performance. It is food contributed by parents or NGOs to schools (WFP 2020).

⁷⁸ 'Village' in South Sudan context commonly refers to a place of origin (Ojway 2002) and in this study it means the place of origin of the respondents. For example, I live in Yei and work in Juba but my village is Morobo County.

Nations World Food Program started supplying food to the population in Yei including schools, but the distribution was only done twice in 2018. Foreign traders reached Yei with various food supplies and other basic needs, but the prices were too high for many parents. Regular food provision is crucial for learning. But even food is not enough in itself without classrooms.

6.1.2 Transparency and control and utilization of resources

In FGDs with church education authorities, parents and learners, another issue raised is transparency and control of resources. It was claimed that parents are more likely to contribute to school fees if they participate in management, and they can ensure that resources are used transparently. It was generally understood that parents are the backbone for school resources and for learners' school needs. One female government teacher remarked in an interview:

I am a teacher in a government school, but we send our two children to private school. There the teaching is of fair quality compared to government schools. The teachers in the private school are more serious and many children pass from primary school to secondary school at the final examination. Teachers' payment is not motivating but regular. If you do not make payment on time or inform the school owner on late payment, your child will be sent home immediately without compromise. Fee increments follow market prices. Sometimes extra fees are requested from us to meet other school costs without a meeting only by decision taken by the school proprietors. I am one of the members of the PTA, but our participation in school affairs is not recognised. If you talk hard in the meetings your membership will be terminated (TG 5: 13th June 2018, Hai Erap).

Another teacher, quoted from the South Sudan Education sector plan (2005-2010) saying that:

The Education Sector Plan recognises the important role that communities have played until now. The main burden of supporting education has fallen upon the community. The response of communities has been inspirational in maintaining such an extensive education system in the absence of any systematic public expenditure from the authorities (MoEST 2005, Section 3.3; (TCh 8: 14th June 2018, Hai Erap).

The same teacher further argues that:

The parents and communities need to know what are the areas of participation, how it is done and by whom. Participation rests on parents and community. The PTA needs to have committed parents of a wide scope. It has to be gender sensitive because the role of women is to motivate the girls. The PTA has to conduct visits to the school and meet with the teachers to discuss the learners' performance and

approaches for next interventions. This persuades the teachers because it builds a good teachers-parents-learner relationship that aims at learners' better outcomes (TCh 8: 14th June 2018).

The government has recognised the role of parents and communities in the provision of education. It encouraged participation in schools by introducing the concept of decentralisation of schools to community level. On the other hand education planning and decisions are mainly handled by the school owners and managers especially in the private schools. The space for dialogue with the school management is limited. I observed that the process of learning in government schools (Kanjoro & Jigomoni) seems not to motivate many parents. Children are sent to church or private schools (Immanuel or AIC), where learning is assumed to take place. Adhikari suggests the learning of the children is a collective responsibility and therefore inclusive planning and decision making promotes consent among the parents and community for sustainable and improved relationships (Adhikari 2012b). The church schools appear to cope better with the situation because of the existing parental and community participation in education (see photo 3, pg. 199), whereas most of the community and government schools operate in a dire state (see photo 18, pg. 203 & photo 22, pg. 203).

Analysis of the above data suggests that there are two main aspects how parents and community interpret their role in education. First, the concept of participation in education is a national policy in which the stakeholders are involved in the education process. This means participation in education should be a collaborative process, in which professionals, families, community groups, government officials, and other relevant stakeholders work together for better learning outcomes, preferably in a formal or informal partnership. Second, the government has transferred the burden of running schools to the local community without providing adequate resources as an approach of managing its tensions.

6.1.3 Improved school hygiene and teachers' welfare

School hygiene and teachers' welfare is a vital learning condition in planning resource utilization. In discussions with learners (including orphans and two disabled young people) in focus group discussions the issue of motivation and hygiene was emphasised. A pupil from the AIC primary school interpreted participation in education to mean 'a good school environment, good teaching, and better hygiene in school with the involvement of parents':

She described their learning situation:

The school environment is poor, and we have no library. Most of the teachers are volunteers and they come and disappear at any time. The lessons offered are not fully done because sometimes we have only one or two lessons a day. It is by chance that you get three lessons a day. The toilets are horrible to enter, and you get scared at the entrance. Again, the school is leaking during the rainy season and no renovation has been done for a long time. The school depends on parents' contribution and without their support the leadership implements nothing. Most of the schools in Yei have problems with hygiene especially toilets. I witness the condition during school debates which are organised rotational in schools. For example, a school has one toilet block for girls that has two stalls for a population of about 150-300 girls. Some of us during monthly periods could not be able to have time to change pads because the door is knocked frequently. This makes some girls during monthly periods cannot come to school. Some schools and parents consider it a normal situation for a girl to be at home (L7: 18th March 2019, St. Paul, Hai Leben).

In my visits and observations to schools (X, Y) in Yei most of the toilets are horrible. Washing facilities are lacking and children join their colleagues in the classrooms without washing their hands after visiting the toilets. Cholera outbreaks are common in Yei especially during the rainy season and this poses a particular risk. In the toilets for girls there are no bins for disposal of sanitary pads. One school has provision for the bin but due to limited cubicles frequent knocks on the door cause inconvenience.

In my visits to selected schools (ECSS and AIC) teachers and support staff showed reluctance to take hygiene seriously, and despite the poor sanitation of the schools it is not considered a priority. Learners perceive better hygiene as a consequence of increased parental participation while parents focus their role on school needs, for example, fees payment.

6.1.3.1 Increase motivation of learners and teachers

The respondents during the interviews and observations on school hygiene and teachers' welfare presented further two aspects which I had to explore: the role of participation in the motivation of learners and teachers and the building of a school and community culture. My experience working with schools shows that both parents and teachers need to understand the importance of motivation in learning. One of the learners from Episcopal Church primary school in a hopeful mood said:

Examination is twice each term in our school, one at the beginning of the term and another at the end of the term. At the end of the year gifts and scholarships are given to learners. Every child who passed from position one to three is given books and pays half the fees. Any smart child of the year is given a prize; same as the top football scorer and the top singer are awarded prizes and a hard working school prefect is honoured among others (L9: 18th March 2019, Royal International school, Hai Mission).

This was further confirmed by an interview with a parent from an Episcopal Church school on the role of parents and communities in school:

We parents have a role in following our children on school issues and assignments while they are at home. We aim to help our children to build an interest in education and improve their performance in school. We check what the children learn in class and confirm this by making a school visit and to meet the teachers for details. Some of us parents do not read and write and so we consult the teachers on this. If we get a letter from the school we take it to our neighbours to read for us. Without family motivation many children drop because the parents and the children will have a gap (PCh 8: 1st June 2019, Hai Zizira).

In a FGD with five teachers⁷⁹, teacher motivation was considered paramount for learners' performance.

Teachers from ECSS, AIC and private schools unanimously agreed that they conduct frequent continuous assessments, and their examination sheets are marked. The learners are given back their marked sheets for further progress. A teacher from ECSS added that they have regular other allowances although little compared to other church or private schools. While the teacher from the government said: We have one examination at the end of each term. We the teachers in the government schools are not motivated by marking incentives compared to the church or private run schools (FGDT2: 2nd Dec 2018, Jigomoni primary school).

Perhaps rather surprisingly, parental participation in education requires the school leadership to motivate learners through by rewarding exemplary performance and encouraging the rest of the learners in the class (Ball et al. 2016). For example, the gifts given to the different

⁷⁹ 2 ECSS, 1 AIC, 1 Private & 1 government

performing categories impress parents and communities when they see their children progress. Inputs from the parents and the learners' outcomes should constitute motivational factors in improving parents and community participation in education. These motivational factors energize the stakeholders and beneficiaries in the schooling process. The parents will then provide moral support both in school and at home to enable schooling for their children. This partly explains why ECSS church schools perform better compared to other church schools or government-run schools in Yei. For example, in the primary leaving examination results of 2018, school X of the Episcopal Church 35 (5 female) students out of 62 obtained a Grade 1; while in government school Y only 7 (0 female) out of 81 students reached a Grade 1.

The motivation of teachers is of similar importance for good education and learning in schools. According to the South Sudan education policy teachers in government schools who are appointed by the public service are entitled to regular salaries and other entitled benefits, for instance, housing and medical care among others. In my observations on school visits and in a meeting with inspector of primary schools for central Yei Town (14th March 2020, Yei Town Payam Office) teachers often go for more than four months without pay while volunteer teachers are not on government payroll and are paid through parental development fees that are sometimes not paid on time or at all. Teachers and learners have to be motivated to enable schooling amidst the national crisis. These are key issues that have impact on education quality and require the school and the parents to forge a common approach for this achievement.

6.1.3.2 Building a shared school culture

Few interviews and FGDs with parents and education authorities mentioned school events. However, in discussion with teachers and especially with learners, the significance of school

events was stressed. For instance, a learner from Episcopal Church school presents participation in education in the following words:

We need our parents to come to school to visit us during visiting days. We need our traditional dances with drums on visiting days and we play together with them. During visiting day our parents meet our teachers and the headteacher and they hear what we need in the classroom and the different type of school activities we need in the school. We feel happy during school meetings when our parents come to talk to our teachers because some of the teachers beat and insult us for being lazy and dull in class (L4: 25th April 2019, Hai Lomuku II).

During public celebrations when the time for traditional dance comes many children participate actively, while at home most parents do not share cultural practices and claim to have no time for them or say that these are against religious norms. This parental disinterest gradually might lead to losing important cultural practices. The people of Yei Town today are not the indigenous Kakwa people alone. The majority population (of 60%) come from other tribes in South Sudan or foreign nationalities. Schools forge new cultures and traditions in order to have unity in diversity for peaceful co-existence to enable schooling for their children⁸⁰. Therefore, PTA and school management should take the cultural diversity into account and develop school policies to build a common school culture that will encourage parental participation.

Parents think the preservation and renewal of traditional culture is non-Christian and inappropriate for the present-day because it isn't sufficiently 'modern'. In fact, what parents are keen on is 'the invention of tradition', which is an instrumental use of culture for modern purposes. A strong sense of community is important because it acts as a unifying factor and enables the recognition of oneself. It instils moral values in the children. Schools and parents have a role to forge a new community because the children are from different cultural backgrounds. This echoes Nishimura's concept of a community that is created to function within a particular social structure and exhibits and creates norms, values and intuitions for

⁸⁰ In a discussion with the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) Secretary of Yei County, he mentioned that the population of Yei Town is about 90,000 people, and the indigenous (Kakwa) populations is about 20-30,000 or less (Meeting, 29th Jan 2019, SSRRC Office).

long term benefits (Nishimura 2017:2). More widely, the argument here is that school ownership is a collective responsibility that requires sharing in planning and management as manifested by the parents' visitation, meetings, and bishop's and pastor's participations at different times. Schools need to engage the experiences of the host communities, returnees, internally displaced persons and learners (inclusive disabilities) to build a shared culture.

6.1.4 The experiences of returnee parents and parents of children with disabilities

As already noted, during the research period in Yei the respondents consisted of the host community, internally displaced persons (IDP) and returnees from Congo and in larger numbers from Uganda (see photos: 10, pg. 199 & 19, pg. 202). The understanding of parental and community participation in education by returnee parents and learners, and by the parents with children with disabilities raised two particular issues: changes in sexual mores and education; and the specific parental role for children with disabilities.

6.1.4.1 Changes in sexual mores and education

The returnee parents spoke about sexual education and HIV/AIDS education. One of the female parents expressed her concern in the local language (Kakwa):

Ngaji kak jore isa in sukulu kenga na wate kine kukgown tedinesi jore a tiki kow in sukulu in kulia to 'durundue. Kenga in lowusesi to mugung kine. Koti yi laga a ka yugolo kilo bgebeki ko I tiji na ngaji in duruntio. I kine kulia bongo ngaji jore a kenudia ma'di bayi parik. I jur lika lo Yei ko do 'dida kine kulai to mamana kugwon to joka ngaji in kulia to yema merot. (Most of our children especially girls stay in school in the refugee camps because they are given sexual education. It exposes them to understand the stages in growth, for example, from childhood to youthful stage with emphasis on the adolescence period. It is important for the parents to inform both boys and girls of this stage. In the camp the parents are given education for child management, and it reduces cases of early pregnancies for school girls. In Yei community the mention of sexual education is a cultural misconduct, and many parents refer to it as misleading children into early marriage) (RP1: 22nd April 2019).

In related focus group interview, a returnee learner in primary seven class stated that:

Our class has 34 learners (14 girls) and out of the 14 girls, 11 are returnees. Most of the girls from the host community dropped because of early pregnancies. Secondly out of the 20 boys 14 are returnees; and most boys from the host communities and IDP dropped because some of them made school girls or girls from the communities pregnant, and their parents forced them to take responsibility. In our school if you mention boy-girl relationships you will be punished or dismissed for influencing immorality (RL2: 21st April 2019, school D).

The returnee parents further mentioned the issue of HIV/AIDS awareness as crucial and one of them strongly lamented:

In the camp learners in the schools and communities HIV/AIDS including testing and counselling is done. This prevented most learners from contracting the virus because the experience is that those who are tested positive usually drop out from school due to psychological depression as his or her school mates will be afraid to move near or associate with him or her. In Yei I see the concern of HIV/AIDS is meant for married couples or for the youth who dropped out of school and are regular goers to night or disco clubs. In our area I met a woman who expressed to me in tears saying my boy was tested positive and dropped from school and is now associating with boys in the market and comes home late (RP3: 23rd April 2019, Hai Dar-El Salam).

In my visit to the voluntary counseling and testing centre (VCT) in Yei civil hospital the medical officer-in-charge emphasised that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is on the rise with many registered cases of learners from high primary and secondary schools including some teachers. There are cases when teachers make some learners pregnant in their own schools and this can be a cause of infection. For example, I was shown statistics of 50 clients in the general hospital register that tested positive for HIV/AIDS in one month. Out of the 50 positive cases 11 were learners and 10 were teachers. It is an indication of the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in schools if the statistics of the positive learners⁸¹ and teachers are combined (25th April 2019, Yei Hospital).

This finding illustrates two important issues. First is the issue of girls' dropping out of school due to lack of sexual education and early pregnancies caused by boys and men. This calls for the immediate attention of parents, communities, churches, mosques and local authorities for appropriate measures to control the spread of this and to introduce gender-neutral sex education. The increase of HIV/AIDS spreading is a relevant concern for policy discussion because it affects not only learners and teachers, but the entire community of Yei and beyond. Second the good culture of traditional African communities of teaching their boys and girls how to grow into responsible men and women is diminishing. The evidence indicates that

⁸¹ Those with money and having the HIV/AIDS also lure the school girls for sexual relations and this contributed to the pandemic raise.

mentioning sexual issues in communities and at homes is considered by some parents as immoral and obscene. At the same modernization is taking root because youth relate more with their age mates and less with parents. The church is concerned about morality and equal access to education. The church is involved in health education including HIV awareness (church services, funeral services, etc.) but it is an expensive intervention that requires government funding. The people of Yei or South Sudan should equally be aware that promoting traditional values and practices are relevant in building moral attitude (good behaviour) and fundamental in contributing to community well-being. It is a role that requires the participation of government, schools, churches and parents in educating its members about HIV /AIDs and its transmission (Logan 2008).

6.1.4.2 Specific parental role for children with disabilities

The learning conditions for children with disabilities in South Sudan are dire because financial allocation for such learners by the ministry of education is minimal. A parent of a child suffering from paralysis mentioned that in their family participation in education meant:

Taking the child to school every morning and bringing him or her back home. It is a long-term commitment for the right and future of the child. It further means educating children of the neighbours and at school to support any child with disability. Sometimes, I repair the scratches of my disabled child so that he does not miss going to school (PCD1: 26th April 2019, Hai Leben).

A returnee female parent of child with hip dysplasia emphasised that:

Education of a female child with disability is difficult and frustrating, for example, if the girl reaches to puberty and experiences monthly periods some of them cannot clean themselves and require parental support. For me my husband has died and sometimes when I have gone to funeral places and come back the following morning my disabled child cannot make it to school. When I take the child to school I remind the administration to maintain the toilets clean for all the children so that children with disabilities can have access and remain in school. Unfortunately, sometimes some of the teachers bark at me for disturbing them and I come back home in embarrassment and feel like not going back again to take or bring the child (PCD2: 27th April 2019, Hai Gabat).

Some children with disabilities (paralysis, hip dysplasia, cerebral palsy, and muscular dystrophy, etc.) are not considered by their parents as useful persons. Some of them stay at home and act as guards as other children in the family go to school and the parents go to work or to the garden. One day I was upset to meet a disabled child of 12 years staying in a

hot place in the sun. She had been left in the morning with water and some food near her. She had passed a lot of waste on her body and there were flies all around her. It is a form of parental abuse of children.

It is a useful finding that many parents, teachers and learners have not brought forward this issue in the interviews and focus group discussions. This demonstrates that children with disabilities face a challenge in accessing an equal right to education, although there are a few encouraging cases through the commitment of some parents. Many teachers, parents and communities need more awareness in recognising and supporting children with disability and this is the role of social workers in the ministry of gender, churches and partners, and the government directorate concerned with children and persons with disabilities. There are still strong cultural beliefs that children with disability is a misfortune or that they are unwanted human beings. It is to be brought to the attention of local education authorities to make schools accessible for all categories of children because there are cultural and contextual aspects that influence schooling. The role of government, schools and parents are to be redefined because there are role conflicts so that learning needs of the children with disabilities are met.

6.2 Meeting the needs of school management and parental participation

According to the findings, the interface between school management and parents' participation is focused on three aspects: having appropriate school development plans and ownership; improving school monitoring and parental visits; and enabling equitable access in education. These in turn are influenced by economic and security factors that limit or create opportunities for schooling.

6.2.1 Appropriate school development plans and ownership

The government of South Sudan's priority in education is to focus on access and quality. In my visits to three schools and attending of PTA meetings⁸² (which are conducted twice a year), parents and community leaders (chiefs and women leaders) stressed the importance of the joint development of a school plan that is acceptable both to the school and parents. This led one of the disabled parents to state that:

Parental and community participation in education means involvement of parents in the process of school development plan. This strengthens school management and administration because the parents become closely associated with the school and it promotes the concept of ownership and sustainability. Additionally parents are tasked with the responsibility of resource mobilization, for example, location of land for various school developments, the provision of local materials like timber from the local community forest and fundraising during *longa lo kayugolo* (school parent days) that brings together all the parents, local community, learners and entire school. Attending school meetings periodically in which the parents, school administration and the learners are represented to share their opinions on: teachers' and learners' welfare, academic performance and other relevant school related issues (PCh 3: 5th Dec 2018, Hai Lomuku I).

This parent from a church school expresses three key aspects of the parental understanding of their role: the involvement of parents in the process of drawing up the school development plans, in strategies for mobilizing local resources, and in attending planning and participating in decision making. The joint planning and decision making was surprising to many parents because they thought decisions were decided by the church council and referred to parents for implementation. The statement of the disabled parent represents a bottom-up approach because planning and decisions are taken from the parents and community to the school management and thereafter to the church education department for approval and blessings. The church's approach was in contrast to the voices from government schools which indicated that decisions are decided by the county education office following a directive from the national ministry of education with minimal or no consultation of parents. In both private and government schools, parental participation in education is given only a limited space.

⁸² PTA meetings are recommended three times a year or termly. That is, generally one assembly at the end of the year, then the second is at the end of term one and third is at the end of term two. However, each school decides on their own schedule and at least two PTA meetings are conducted in the course of the year.

However, the ECSS education policy is not yet fully implemented in all schools. One peasant parent in an FGD reported some headteachers taking decisions without the approval of PTA committee executive members, which frustrates parents in the next PTA meeting. One headteacher testified to me in his office that he had made an over-expenditure for the production of examination papers which had been urgently required⁸³. The decision might have been right due to the need and urgency of the examination; nevertheless, he should have consulted the few PTA executive members prior to decision-making and implementation in recognition of the parental role as this might have created an opportunity for financial mismanagement.

6.2.2 Improving school monitoring and parental visits

The importance of monitoring of school activities by parents was mentioned across all interviews with teachers, learners and parents. There were several incidents when headteachers misused school plans and budgets, for example, one of the head teachers deviated from school plans without consultation for personal gain. Instead of building a four classroom block as agreed in the development plan, a school administrator pocketed some of the money and changed it to three classrooms (Government school X). In an FGD, a local farmer parent, who sends his child to a government school, lamented:

We parents with children in government schools are guided by education policies developed at the national levels and followed in the schools. Our main role is to monitor school performance and strengthen the relations between the school and the local education authority at the payam or county levels. We make suggestions about areas of school improvement and the better motivation of teachers through regular remunerations, unfortunately our ideas do not receive feedback and our children learn in poor contexts that are associated with irregular lessons and mismanagement of resources with no concern for our views (PG1: Jan 2019, Hai Mission).

A returnee parent who had come from Uganda four months previously (April 2019) and registered his children in a government-run school expressed his concern:

⁸³ Meeting with school X headteacher (18th April 2018), he explained there had been an increase in the prices of printing papers and cartridges for additional examination papers due in three days.

I have two children and during registration I was asked to pay registration fees before being issued with admission letter. The details in the admission letter include parental role to provide school uniform, books, fee for meal at school and development fees. The amount of the development fee is higher than all the other cost. When I was requesting for an explanation of the development fee, the headteacher mentioned that it is to meet the cost of school developments (school repairs) and pay volunteer teachers or meet teachers' salaries when government delays to pay salaries on time. My view was that the development fee should be referred as school fees. The headteacher told me to shut up because it is a government policy and if I am not interested let me walk away with my children (RP2: 2nd Feb, 2018, Hai Sobe).

In my personal experience of collaborating with government school inspectors, reports from the parents in government schools are not considered seriously by the inspectors. In a joint inspection at a government school the parents complained of poor toilets for the learners. The response from the government inspector was that toilets were not a priority. In the same meeting a woman representative asked why salaries for teachers delay for two to four months if it is a priority. The feedback from the inspector was that government has top priorities and it is not the concern of the parents. Their role is to send their children to school. I observed after the meeting that the majority of the parents went back frustrated because there was no consideration of parental ideas and the rudeness of the inspector.⁸⁴ The role of parents is undermined and restricted leading to limiting the role and demotivation of PTAs in government schools as compared to church schools.

I attended two meetings, one in an Episcopal Church school and the other in a government school. In comparing PTA meetings in an Episcopal and a government school, the principle of parental participation is acknowledged in government schools but has no space in decision making, whereas in the church schools the parents have the recognition and position for participating in both planning and decision making when it concerns school management and learners' performance.⁸⁵ Good monitoring strengthens the process of planning and implementation because it encourages reporting on school issues for the benefit of learners..

⁸⁴ Meeting in government school X, 11th April 2018 attended by inspection team, teachers of the particular school and the members of the PTA. The Inspection team consisted of government school inspector and education officials from ECSS, AIC, Catholics, Methodist, Presbyterian and school officer of a private school.

⁸⁵ PTA Meetings, in Jigomoni primary schools 27th April 2018 & Immanuel primary school, 11th May 2018.

However, I witnessed some government inspectors had low supervision skills that could not contribute adequately to improving education quality besides promoting equitable access.

6.2.3 Enabling equity and access in education

In my interviews with parents and education authorities in the Episcopal Church schools and the local government the concern for the issue of gender was under-emphasised due to cultural factors. Two teachers from Episcopal Church schools stressed that most parents prefer to send boys to school. When the time for fees payment came, in both private and church schools, they had seen parents prioritize payment for boys. On several occasions I witnessed parents' encouraging early marriage for their daughters. A businessman made a school girl pregnant and when the case was reported to the gender protection desk, the parent blamed the headteacher for trying to frustrate the marriage of his daughter. On another occasion I met a girl child on the road who had been sent home because her fees had not been paid. The parent of the child is someone who has a higher income than other parents in Yei. There is a cultural misconception that a girl will be married away to another family and any investment on girls' education is a waste of resources. This contributes to the lack of parental concern for girls' education especially at higher primary education (p5-p8).

But there are also parents and teachers with a sense for equity in education. A teacher from an Episcopal Church school commented on the ideal:

Children both boys and girls go to school equally. Dropouts and those who are denied access to education in their early years need to have alternative education or become exposed to other learning opportunities. Town and rural areas should have access to education without constraints. We in this school give special consideration for learners with special needs, orphans and contribute to the top five learners. The teachers in a school and PTA members include women (TCh 9: 17th July 2018, Immanuel school, Hai Mission).

This teacher is concerned about equal learning opportunities without gender differences. The emphasis is on motivation for schooling in various contexts; and the same teacher further says:

The stakeholders in church schools are church leaders, community leaders, parents and local authorities with female representation. For example, in PTA committees 25% are women and the secretary is usually the headteacher who might be a female or not. The defined role of PTA are reminded to the members in annual PTA meetings (TCh 9: 17th July 2018, Immanuel school, Hai Mission).

South Sudan needs to build school communities that share common interests and norms to enable them to participate in their children's modern education in a particular local school. Such a policy should take into account local cultures and traditions in which the children and the parents share ideas on learning aspects. Community participation in education is to be a dynamic interactive process that reinforces the voices, cultures, tradition and context of the local community. Women should be involved to improve girls' education which is weak in South Sudan. Nishimura argues that local community and government have their own weaknesses in a participatory education process but encouragement by professionals, families, community groups and government officials could promote greater equity and access in education (Nishimura 2017). This will be discussed further in chapter nine.

6.3 Socio-cultural issues

The need for improved school management and learning conditions influences participation in education which is shaped by cultural and contextual factors that include: indiscipline and trauma; local traditions and cultures; and awareness-raising of parents and learners.

6.3.1 Indiscipline and trauma

Due to prolonged and continuing conflict, learners in the classroom behave contrary to school regulations because of trauma. The issue of indiscipline and mitigating conflict and trauma are discussed in the subsection.

6.3.1.1 The issue of indiscipline

In discussions, most parents understand the concept of participation to mean above all the teaching and maintenance of discipline. This reflects a deep desire for a peace that extends to

all levels of society; and secondly a cultural tradition in which becoming an adult is to learn the moral and communal disciplines of a particular society. It is widely understood by the participants in my discussions that the traditional methods of inculcating these disciplines (e.g., initiation rites) no longer have any effect, and the school must take over. Parents are therefore seeking to use traditional roles in the modern setting of a school in order to address the wider concern of continuing conflict. Another reason for the high value placed on discipline relates to the trauma which many of the learners have experienced because of the continued war context. One parent from an Episcopal Church school stated:

Most of our children are undisciplined and traumatized. They fight their colleagues in the class or in the school compound and sometimes including the teachers. *Ngaji jore 'baya yinga yi kayugolo* (most of our children do not listen to us the parents). We parents who have children in the church schools need to instil discipline if we need schooling. The church prioritizes education as number one after spiritual activities, for example, through supporting teacher trainings to improve learning but *yinga baya* (without discipline) no schooling because the teachers will be demotivated to perform their duty (PCh 1: 1st Oct 2018, Hai Gabat).

In visits to an Episcopal Church and a government school, I learned that most of the time of the teachers in a school disciplinary committee is focused on settling disputes between learners and between learners and teachers with the involvement of parents. Cases of unusual misconduct, for example, learners insulting or abusing teachers, have increased. The same parent commented:

Teachers react to undisciplined children by beating or sending them out of class or out of school compound. Through the parent teacher association there is need for the development of a school code of conduct that is signed by both the children and parent during the admission process of learners. This should be followed by parental visits to the school at least termly to check the discipline and academic progress of the learners and seek further advice recommended for improvements (PCh 1: 1st Oct 2018, Hai Gabat).

Due to the influx of internally displaced persons and returnees from Uganda and Congo into Yei, most of the schools, especially church primary schools, are overcrowded (a class having 60-70 learners instead of 25-45), far beyond the ECSS or government standards, consequently limiting the quality of education (Balla 2019).⁸⁶ The learners bring with them

⁸⁶ ECSS Education Policy Guidelines, 2018-22 on pupil-classroom ratio stated the following minimum and maximum standards numbers: 20 -30 learners for ECD, 25-45 learners for primary schools, 35-50 learners for

different cultural and social behaviours into the schools and into interactions within and beyond the school community. Behaviour such as fighting and making insulting remarks is copied by young children in lower primary school, who in turn carry this misconduct back to their families and friends where they are staying. When I attended the county education coordination meeting in February 2019, an inspector in the eastern part of Yei Town reiterated this concern to address disciplinary issues in the school, confirming the rampant indiscipline of children both in school and among local residents.

I have witnessed corporal punishment as a measure to discipline children in the school and at home. Often after any disciplinary meeting the child who is in the wrong is beaten with a cane. One day a woman brought her child to a school to be beaten because the child refused to wash his uniform and refused to come to school. The teachers were happy to oblige her as a culturally accepted way of instilling discipline (School X: 17th March 2018). In 2010, South Sudan, however, passed a law against corporal punishment stating:

Corporal punishment is prohibited in schools in the Republic of South Sudan as stipulated in the Transitional Constitution 2011, Article 17, Section (1) (f) and Section 20 9a) of the General Education Act, 2012; Any teacher, who contravenes shall be guilty of an offence and liable to punishment by law. Any teacher who violates the law would be deemed to have committed an act of gross misconduct and shall be subjected to civil service disciplinary procedures (D. D. H. Yai 2017b).

Experience shows physical beating remains acceptable to the learners, teachers and parents in South Sudan both at home and schools and if it is not inflicted on the offender, the offended cannot feel contented and can seek retaliation within the school or at the local residences.. The role of teachers is supposedly to discourage corporal punishment and educate the parents and learners about its dangers, but since the teachers themselves are involved in

secondary schools, 40-45 learners for AES (Alternative Education System), 25-40 learners for TVET (Technical Vocational Education Training) and 50-55 learners for TTIs (Teacher Training Institutes) (article 6, p17). The South Sudan National General Education Policy, 2017-2027, recommended pupil-classroom ratio to the following minimum numbers: 20 learners for ECD, 25 learners for primary schools, 40 learners for secondary schools, 40 learners for AES, 25 learners for TVET and 50 learners for TTI in (section 17.8, p74).

implementing corporal punishment in schools and at home, the phasing out of corporal punishment remains a distant goal.

In interviews with parents from church schools the issue of learners' moral character was discussed, and one of the parents remarked:

Episcopal Church schools need to go an extra mile from other churches and government schools by emphasizing the role of patrons and chaplains. Children need to develop moral character through biblical teachings to enable them to be God fearing in order to instil love, compassion and forgiveness for one another to enable them coexist in the classrooms and schools. *Nan bayin taju kulia ti yepet nan 'dek sukulu, si'da nabut ko ti kulia ti gbiyari* lo nyarju (I am not talking about conversion of learners into faith but the good behaviour of learners in schooling and moral building). For me as a parent our participation in education means looking at moral development and good relationship with school management and the fulfilling of learner's and school requirements (PCh 2: 15th Oct 2018, Hai Guwafa).

A widow whom I met in her small garden near one of the schools had this to say in simple Arabic:

Ana tabani ma kalam ta zira tayite. Iyal the mederesas kan ku ruwa fi fotur umon kija seregu. Jaman tani kan umon guruwa fi beti umon kamani bi kasuru aserifu tayide fi sika ta serega. Yom tani I ana kobudu talata iyal, itin min madarisa ta hakuma yala tani mini madarisa tanina ta kanisa de. Ana jalan shedit lahad ana dugu umon kulu, yala saba tode ana ruwa fi madaris ta umo de asani be wudi le umon woning. I am tired at working at my small maize garden. School children during break time or when they go home tend to branch to my garden and steal the maize. One day I caught three school children, two from a government school and one from the nearby church school. I beat them in anger as discipline and the following morning I reported to their schools so that they are given warning or further punishment (PC15: 11th Oct 2018, Hai mission).

This demonstrates that definition of roles is critical because culturally the discipline of children is seen as the collective responsibility of parents, community and the school. On the other hand, beating continues to be a common practice of instilling morals despite being against the law. The cases of indiscipline in school, at home and in the communities are attributed to the impact of conflict, lack of parental care and poverty.

6.3.1.2 Mitigating conflict and trauma

Trauma or mental health is not the focus of this study; however, in a study conducted in Juba, mental health is recognised as a key public health issue for conflict-affected populations. High levels of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are common amongst populations

experiencing conflicts and war. Men, IDPs, and refugees and persons displaced more than once were all significantly more likely to have experienced traumatic events. This study provides evidence of high levels of mental distress in the population of Juba Town, and associated risk-factors. Yei is not exceptional and this means comprehensive social and psychological assistance is urgently required in South Sudan as a whole (Roberts et al. 2009: 1).

In my visits to homes during interviews, I observed the following characteristic behaviour of people affected by trauma: people talking to themselves, inappropriate reactions reflected in the beating of children, animals and use of insulting language. One parent in a PTA general meeting remarked that:

Teachers beat children unnecessarily in the schools by transferring their personal anger. We parents have the same behaviour, for example, my neighbour in a fight broke a hand of the wife because she gave away little salt to the neighbour. It was unusual behaviour as being his neighbour for twenty years. I am sure he was frustrated due to looting of his property and his two children who were shot. The churches and the government through the schools need to organise trauma counseling sessions to parents and teachers and eventually to include the learners. It is the reason of many suicide cases in Yei Town between 2013-2019 (PCh7: 19th March 2018, Immanuel Primary School).

The data shows effects of trauma in schools and at homes due to the war. The various effects of war made the National Ministry of General Education in its National General Education Policy, 2017-2027 develop Peace-building and Conflict-Sensitive Education that aims to:

Promote peace education in and through all schools and institutions. Integrate peace education into the education and training curricula. Integrate conflict-sensitive approaches in education and training to foster a culture of peace and tolerance. Develop strong coordination and partnership on peace education with line ministries, commissions, education development partners and parents. Counter violence and extremism; and promote peace through sports and encourage participation of children, youth, adults and young people in sports and cultural activities (MoGEI 2017: 65).

A study conducted in South Sudan among teachers, parents, counsellors, and NGO staff who were stakeholders in terms of providing education and psychosocial support for refugee children or children living in emergency situations showed that a link between education and psychosocial wellbeing is important but comes with its own challenges. The question is how

to enable education to move ahead amidst the trauma of learners, teachers and parents (Heltne et al. 2020:1).

The findings from the group of parents confirm three key aspects of the parental interpretation of their participation in education:

- The need for building and strengthening of moral character, and its connection to the relationships between home and school;
- Instilling discipline in learners affected by trauma as result of continued conflict in the country. In my attendance at refresher teacher trainings, some teachers continued to report incidents of harassment by parents. This will be expanded in chapter nine.
- The need for regular school visits by parents to reduce the gap between school and home in order to improve the learner's performance (quality of education) as the teacher comes into close contact with the parent of the learner in order to maintain the local traditions and cultures.

However, the issue of trauma is a national agenda that requires government commitment and resources through the Ministry of Peace, Healing and Reconciliation. The parents and local communities cannot do much as they are challenged in terms of financial resources and expertise.

6.3.2 Respecting local traditions and culture

In Yei Episcopal Diocesan Synod meeting held on June 2019 (Luete et al. 2019), the diocesan education department reported the concern for access to learners of all categories and the consideration of local cultural aspects in its schools. This was reiterated by parents and county local education authorities in a FGD involving the county education director, female inspector of girls' education and the primary school inspectors. In the focus group the county education director quoted a government policy:

The government of South Sudan aims to increase access to general education and promote equity in its education mission statement which states: We cherish education for all people of South Sudan equally and aim to provide a lifelong education for all children and adults of South Sudan; an education that is relevant and based on the needs of the people, to enable them to be responsible citizens strategies (Ministry of Education Science and Technology 2012: (Go 1: 13th June 2018, Office of County Education Department).

The focus group reaffirmed participatory education by all stakeholders at the community level and the government sector whether in church, government, community or private schools as a national policy. In practice, however, the situation is very different. The female inspector of girls' education in this meeting stated:

My experience in both village and town schools as an inspector of girls' education at the county, is that parents are involved in schools when they are called for a meeting or do some work. Most of the parents do not turn up for school activities when it has rained because they are busy planting. In the villages many parents value market days because they need to collect basic items for their survival. Any school activities scheduled in those days and seasons do not work (Go 2: 13th June 2018, Hai Simba).

The same respondent argued that:

In most government schools, parents stick to the government slogan of free education. Parents are not performing their duties as expected because some of them feel they need to be paid and why to waste time in the school. In church schools, parents are more engaged because they value their ownership and roles as core values. Some of the parents do not know their roles and this makes some headteachers especially in government and community run schools to co-opt influential parents to help him or her at difficult times (Go 2: 13th June 2018, Hai Simba).

In a FGD one woman raised a concern:

My husband has three wives and I am the third wife. I have six children, four boys and two girls while my other two co-wives have more children than I have. A few boys are sent to different cheap government schools and most of our children especially girls (only a few most bright girls and bright boys attend school) stay at home because my husband cannot afford to pay. My husband is a son of a local chief and children of chiefs in our village marry many wives in order to have many children to keep the clan large. No woman is allowed to say the number of children she wants to produce. My second co-wife was sick one day and she suggested not producing again and this issue was taken seriously by our husband. It led to the in-laws being called and they were fined a goat for the mistake of their sister. The husband is the final authority at home (P14: 15th June, 2018, Hai Tarawa)

I witnessed a parents' day in a village community school which was scheduled on a Saturday with the objective of better attendance so that it could include representatives from the county education office from Yei Town. To my surprise the attendance was low because most parents were in the market shopping for their basic needs, including the school PTA chairperson. In the record of the parents' day, the PTA chairperson was recorded present

when actually he was absent. In my follow up meeting with the school headteacher about the absence of the PTA chairperson, the reason given was that he had realised in the night that his soap for washing clothes was finished and he had to visit the market. The accounts of both the focus group and the parents' day show two significant issues: one, when planning school activities consider the local context as opposed to external factors (visitors from Yei town). Two, the PTA chairperson was not honest (lack of commitment) and an embarrassment to the school by being absent on such an important occasion. Policy announcements are often mere rhetoric in South Sudan, reflecting a serious gap between the schools, parents, and community and the government sector. There is a controversy over what participation in education means in government schools. So, parents distance themselves from school activities in government schools and this necessitates awareness raising.

6.3.3 Raising awareness roles of parents and learners

The Episcopal Church at parish level conducts prayer meetings in 'areas'. The objective of the prayer meetings is to strengthen the faith of Episcopal Church followers. It is also to build roles and good relationships and co-existence of people in the communities. It is a common scenario in South Sudan that when a particular church brings a prayer meeting into an area whether Episcopal, Catholic or AIC, all community members attend and participate to offer labour.⁸⁷ In one of the prayer meetings (2nd April 2019, Hai TTC) I got into discussion with parents, learners and the county education inspector for girls' education of Yei County. The discussion was motivated by the active participation of the school age children in the prayer meeting, most of whom do not attend school. The issues were awareness raising and the capacity of PTA. For example, the inspector for girls' education said vigorously:

⁸⁷ Other occasions at the local level that concern the whole community include peace meetings and communal work, for example, the cleaning of paths to the nearest market, health centre or water point.

Most parents and communities do not know why we need a school and why to send children to school. There is need to have awareness campaigns on the importance of education and who is eligible to go to school. Today in our area we have one community school but many children stay at home and those who go to school return early before departure schedule. The school we have in our area is only from primary one to primary four. This school existed in the same structures and number of classes for two years without moving further to primary five or primary six. I see these children going there every year for the same classes all the time. We try to make some inspection in a few schools in order to encourage the teachers and parents to perform their duties. Teachers are reluctant because of poor motivation and this makes it difficult to correct them and give inputs (GO 4: 21st June 2018, Hai TTC).

This was further echoed in continuing discussion with one of the female PTA members from the African Inland Church who added that:

Nan tokokindio ku'de kayugole ada ku nan a kode kita nio? Nan a wule a meba na tomoret na kayugolo tojo ina digit todinesi ako tiki yi gwong. Ngo nagon nan kokon na if digit naga nan ;bak kita nan wuwutu I sukulu yulu in momora for heditmasta lo, koti I ku'de digita lebe ;bak sa ko nan. Koti nan a ko tedino ayen nan meda ko kune sukulu kita a da (kakwa). (How can I tell other parents to be part of school community if I do not know my role? I am elected as a PTA member but up to date I do not know what to do in the school. If I get free time I visit the school but even the headteacher has no time for me. I am unable to learn from other schools because I do not read and write although I can see what they do) (PCh 13, 2nd April 2019, Hai Guwafa).

I witnessed an election of PTA executive members in a private school (2nd Feb 2019, school X). The nomination procedure focused on influential members in the meeting without considering the strengths and capacity of potential members. It emphasised the members present in the meeting without asking for nomination of members who were absent and had potential skills. In my experience, members nominated in absentia do not reject the appointment because they see it as a community demand. The PTA is invisible, and its members show no interest in talking to parents whose children stay at home. The private school operates independently without or with only limited PTA participation. This creates a gap between the parents and the school, and the learners' needs are no-one's concern. However, it also needs to be recognized that the demand of the government for parents and the communities to support school activities is challenging because often parents' reluctance is due to economic constraints. The expectations placed on the PTA, individual parents and the community in this respect is sometimes unrealistic because of the lack of expertise and commitment to education as evidenced by the poor election procedures for the PTA members. Episcopal Church schools seem to be more successful in encouraging parents and

community participation due to their inclusion of parents in planning and decision-making but even they cannot do much without lasting peace in South Sudan.

6.4 Conclusion

The main findings on parental, community and the Episcopal Church interpretations of participation in education are analyzed under three categories: school management, learning conditions and socio-cultural factors and these are linked to or influenced by economic resources, and political and security factors. The government role is to provide a framework for education, but its top-down model of leadership that is characterized by continuing war and looting of government resources undermines the role of parents particularly in government-run schools, leading to role conflict and role overload because the parents and the wider population have to struggle for both their livelihood and education. This limits the parental capacity to contribute in money, time, and skills to the education of their children. Successful education of the child requires fulfilling the learners' needs both at home and in the school and this presents role stress to the parents when resources are inadequate. The government policy has recognized the role of parents and communities in education but failed to meet its role and obligation of providing financial resources and the burden is left to parents. Despite these many problems, however, parents in general are keen to avoid again a missing generation of uneducated children, and they continue to struggle to see that learning takes place in the unbearable context of conflict. Thus, the parental role and response continue to be visible in schools today. South Sudan needs to build stronger community participation in education through a dynamic process that reinforces the voices of all the stakeholders.

Chapter Seven: Parental participation in improving education in the face of continuing challenges

7.0 Introduction

This chapter examines how parents respond, positively or negatively, to the challenges of educating their children in the post-independence conflict situation identified in the previous two chapters. The widened roles parents and community take in education are influenced by two key factors: managing the consequences of lack of peace and stability; and creating a suitable learning environment.

7.1 Managing the consequences of lack of peace and stability

Peace and stability is a crucial factor for promoting economic and social development in a post-independence society. In this subsection I analyse three key factors: enhancing peace and coexistence, managing the indiscipline of learners and the mobilizing of children.

7.1.1 Enhancing peace and coexistence

Learning is severely influenced by a lack of peace within the local communities. Disaster management and trauma healing become important pre-conditions for restoring learning conditions. One of the teachers in an individual interview stated:

In this school we have many children who lost their parents during the 2016 crises. These children sometimes behave in unique characters which are not normal when in class. They don't associate with their friends, and they are not always attentive in class during lessons and their performance keeps on deteriorating. We keep telling them to study hard so that when peace comes, they will be leaders of the country and we cite to them examples of successful learners who were formerly learners in this school (TG: 17th March 2018, St. Paul Primary School).

In a focus group discussion (FGD) with parents a PTA executive member remarked that:

We engaged many parents, learners and teachers on trauma management and counselling, for example, a learner gave a testimony of being left with relatives because the parents were killed and also separated from his brothers who are now in Uganda refugee camp. Each time I think of them I propose to drink alcohol so that I forget my challenges and reduce depression. We parents call for the teachers to manage the children well in school because many of them have social problems which are not known or exposed to the school administration or to the class teachers (PCh8: 27th March, 2019, Immanuel Model Primary School)

In five schools visited, the PTA and school management formed committees concerned with disaster management. Each school had its own name for this, disaster management sub-committee; disaster response committee; emergency committee, etc. One parent emphasized:

In our school we have a school disaster response committee (SDRC) that is responsible for developing practices and engaging in school activities to support school-based disaster risk reduction and preparedness. The SDRC is also responsible for dissemination of key preparedness messaging and emergency alerts to learners, staff and parents so that there is peaceful stay among the schools and communities to enable education move ahead in this difficult time of continued conflicts. The SDRC committee is composed of six members: four PTA members (two male and two female) and two teachers. The head of the SDRC committee is selected from among the PTA non-office bearers, and the other three are from the PTA General Membership (PCh6: 17th Nov 2019, Hai Lomuku 1).

In a quarterly education meeting, a school inspector argued that:

Local authorities, PTA committees and teachers should not only focus on learners' peace at school and at homes as an education factor for schooling. Parents cannot do much if they are too traumatized, for example, a woman who lost her only son studying in Yei Town decided to commit suicide because she was insulted over a minor issue (she was nicknamed 'woro geleng' - a person moving alone). Parents and learners both need safety to reduce depression to enable schooling (Inspector, 15th Nov 21, 2019, Jigomoni Primary School Hall).

Cases of violence (rape, murder) are often reported in Yei (Billy 2017; Juan 2021) but peace intervention is slow. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has a base in Yei but their response to immediate conflict is bureaucratic and many lives and property are lost by the time of their intervention. The churches (Episcopal & Catholic) respond instantly by approaching the armed forces to stop firing and by providing basic food to the IDPs and refugees. But the churches' resources are constrained, and their response is insufficient due to the huge demand.

My school visits and observations over a period of seven years confirmed that church and private schools work continuously at building peace. Some private schools do listen to parents. Initiatives are based on the ideas of parents and adopted into school plans forging spaces conducive to learning. The government of South Sudan, in a ministerial order (2017),

announced the establishment of Peace Clubs in all schools with the aim of promoting a culture of peace in schools across the entire country (Yai 2017a).⁸⁸

Despite government schools adopting peace initiatives into their school plans they are largely not implemented due to lack of staff commitment and inadequate funds.⁸⁹ According to Juma, peace clubs are a practical approach to educating for peace in schools and communities for example, conducting inter-school debates with a focus on peace building topics ('peace is better than war') (Juma 2019). Education partners supported this programme in a few selected schools but most of their initiatives collapsed in government schools where they remained a top-down approach with a lack of ownership by the school.

7.1.2 Managing the indiscipline of learners and parents

The discipline of learners is a main concern of most parents, teachers, communities and learners themselves. It is partly a cultural factor because children were brought up in different backgrounds and in a context of conflict. It is clear that some learners do not respect their teachers. In one a government school I witnessed a teacher who asked a learner why he came late,, and the response of the learner was 'none of your business', and that if the teacher insisted on questioning him, he would involve his father who would come in military uniform, and the teacher would face the consequences. In an ECSS school a teacher stated emotionally that:

Some parents do not want their children to be given any punishment in the school for any mistake committed. While other parents bring their children from home to school to get help to discipline the child properly, whether in corporal punishment, or given to clean the school compound, etc. However, in this school parents and learners are given to sign a document of code of conduct to offer respect to

⁸⁸ The objectives of the peace clubs are: to promote peace, patriotism, respect and tolerance for other cultures, traditions, religions, beliefs and opinions; inculcate in the learners' awareness of and respect for and human dignity and human rights; promote national unity and cohesion; contribute to all personal development of each learner and to the moral, social, cultural, political and economic development of the nation and provide leadership training for learners to be able to resolve conflicts peacefully.

⁸⁹ Inter-schools sport competition, poems, stories conflict mitigation trainings, life skills development, and constructive community engagement meetings and information dissemination.

all those within the school community. In any disciplinary issues you are given a reference to it (TCh4: 27th March 2018, Immanuel Primary School).

A female teacher in an AIC school said:

One day a learner was going out and when I stopped him, it was like I am his small follower sister. It discouraged me from teaching, and I went out without coming back to this class for a week. The class was concerned and also chased out the boy who made the misconduct because they were angry for missing my lessons for a week. The school disciplinary committee called the parent, and the parent was on his knees and in reaction started beating his son in front of the teachers. The indisciplined boy ended up crying and apologising to the mistress. The school decided to suspend the boy for two weeks and in addition gave him a portion of the school compound to clean (TAC2: 17th March 2019, AIC School).

I observed some of the learners taking advantage of the positions and role of their parents to subdue their teachers or their group mates without the parents knowing, while other parents supported the misbehaviour of their children. I found a schoolboy in Yei Prison and when I asked he was there, the prison warden stated:

The boy had committed misconduct in school and used the position of the father to threaten a teacher and the school headteacher. The father, who works in the police department of criminal investigation, was annoyed because the child misused his name and was blackmailing his character. It is to be a lesson to him and children of other armed forces not to do such act in schools, hospitals or anywhere else (Prison Warden: 27th Feb 2020, Yei Prison).

Despite the recent law prohibiting corporal punishment in schools, parents, teachers and members of community continue to discipline children by beating or other harmful means commonly regarded as culturally acceptable. A teacher disciplined a child (in school X) by telling him to push thirty wheelbarrows of stones to a classroom construction site 200 meters away. The age and strength of the boy was not appropriate to such a punishment, which caused pains in the boy's chest. In teachers' training other methods of punishment are emphasised but the teachers themselves are still deeply rooted in the culture of corporal punishment. Even the law enforcement agencies themselves use great brutality claiming that some of the school children are associated with bad groups, for example, drunkards, thieves, etc. In reality, many of the learners experience trauma because of challenging family contexts besides the effects of the war, which requires psychosocial support rather than brutal

punishment⁹⁰. Some learners are orphans and stay with guardians and feel neglected. Others are girls who were raped and need close psychosocial support both at home and school to enable them to remain in school. Parental involvement with the support of teachers is important to assist these affected learners.

In a school parents' day a chief presented that parents are concerned about looking for money at the expense of educating their children and modelling discipline:

Some of us parents concentrate on work and searching for money for the welfare of children and come home late. We do not interact with our children, and we are not their friends. We do not know how our children behave and even cannot check whether they go to school and attend lessons in the classroom. One day we are with my colleague chief seated at tea place in town and we saw a crowd moving towards a police station. Unfortunately, it was the son of my colleague chief dragged to the police station because he had stolen food in the market (Chief: 6th Dec, 2019, Immanuel Primary School).

AIC women leader:

Discipline is a collective effort of parents at home and teachers in the school. The parents should be able to brief the school about the character of his or her child so that the school is aware of how to help and model. At the same time teachers should be able to communicate with the parents about the conduct of their children (PCh: 10th Dec, 2019, AIC Primary School).

Hindu & Biddle argued that sharing of social roles in school activities needs to be by agreement, and the parents and teachers must both be willing and take responsibility for the social behaviour of the children (Biddle 1986 & Hindu 2007). My experience shows that many teachers have a culture of not communicating concerning the discipline of learners to their parents, claiming that the number of children in class is too high, except in a school report at the end of term, or if it is a serious issue. Reporting learners' academic performance and discipline should be a routine that is to be expected, both in a report as well as in face-to-face meetings involving the teacher, learner and parent. I have also witnessed a scenario where a teacher was angered by a learner in a top class, and he decided not to conduct effective lessons. In the end the learners failed his subject in the primary leaving examination.

⁹⁰ See photo 7, pg. 200: Episcopal Churches schools conduct orientation for their teachers on managing learners' conflict because of emerging cultural differences. This can be a practice that government and other managed schools might learn from in managing the indiscipline of learners in their school.

The damage was huge, affecting innocent children and giving a poor reputation to the school and its leadership. The teachers' code of conduct is emphasized in teacher training in South Sudan but unprofessional conduct, such as corporal punishment and absenteeism by teachers because of learners' misbehaviour, still remains a common way of disciplining learners. This makes most schools (e.g. government) unfriendly learning environments.

7.1.3 Mobilizing of children

The mobilization of children to 'go back to school' is a campaign conducted by the government in collaboration with churches and NGOs, building on parental and community support. It is a response to a situation where many parents fear to send their children to school due to the continuing conflicts.

At a PTA training that involved members from government, church, private and community schools, one of the participants noted:

Many children were not going to school especially after the 2013 and 2016 conflicts in South Sudan, particularly in Yei. During school days and hours, I meet several school age children loitering at the residential areas or in the market without clear reasons. For example, in my school where I am a PTA executive member we experienced many dropouts of learners. In our end of year PTA general assembly we agreed on children mobilization and awareness campaign to learners to go to school. The following year our school had registered an increase from 362 (121 girls) to 634 (213 girls), (P21, 17th Jan 2018, Community Hall).

In the same training one of the church mothers' union leaders, also an active PTA member, stated:

The situation of the latest conflict in 2016 made many children not to be sure whether they will be staying in Yei or they will be chased to be refugees due to the increasing and daily fights in the outskirts of Yei Town. The population of children you see in Immanuel primary school was because of our efforts. We were formed into groups and to follow our learners in homes to check whether they are in Yei or changed school, or left for safety. This exercise has influenced education because we were able to mobilize so many learners who even dropped earlier and were at homes. We also encouraged internally displaced persons (IDP) children who were at homes to join any school of their choice (LCh 3, 17th Jan 2018, Community Hall).

One long-serving local chief who is an influential PTA member argued that:

The community leaders are close with the parents, learners and teachers and to talk to them the places are churches, funeral places, parties, radio stations and personal visits. The Yei Town today is in a different nature because many cultures are brought here and some of the ethnic groups, e.g., cattle

keepers do not value education. In most cases there is less value for education at family level and this frustrates on-going children. This is another area which requires collective commitment at all levels for people to be committed for mobilization and value education. For me many church leaders and elders know my role (chief) and I am usually given time to greet the people in most occasions and in my speech I emphasize enrolling of children to school (Chief, 3rd April 2018, Hai Erap)

My experience shows that the local chief has a voice and is a gateway to parents and conducts community meetings in both pastoral and agricultural communities. The mothers' union⁹¹ are also particularly significant in mobilization because of their rapport with families. The women (faith-based or not) are good in mobilizing communities, a traditional role used for modern purposes that comes to them culturally, especially through songs and dance, and can take the lead role in organizing the school social mobilization activities. They and the girls clubs (Girls Education Movement-GEM) can organise creative activities to reach out to the communities to increase school enrolment, as well as in encouraging community participation in communal activities in support of the school. In practice 'to mobilize the children, first mobilize the community'.⁹² However, the voice of women is still not accepted in some communities for cultural reasons, another example of the significance of changing roles or perceptions of roles in the attempt to create an effective parental and community response. Politicians today undermine the role of local chiefs. The only government action at county level to promote awareness I have observed is public announcements of school opening dates over the radio and during quarterly meetings. This has not been enough to draw parental attention to remind their children to return to school for beginning of the term.

Burns & Joseph (2004) argued that community and parental participation builds effective strategies that bring understanding, knowledge, and experiences in planning, mobilization,

⁹¹ Mothers' Union is a global Christian movement especially in Anglican churches working with people of all faiths to strengthen families, and to advocate for change. In South Sudan the Mothers' Unions are engaged in peace building and advocacy, gender-based violence, literacy, counseling, economic empowerment, creating awareness for self-reliance, etc.

⁹² It is a common slogan in Yei that to reach the children reach the parents. It is a local approach of involving both the parents and children for a common good.

and management. Glassman discussed parental participation as an aspect of strengthening partnerships with the school (Glassman et al. 2007). I experienced that the parental and community participation in education is what led schooling to continue in Yei during the periods of conflict, in particular in 2013 and 2016 when Yei Town was controlled within and surrounded by armed forces. Both parents and communities have strong personal networks with the armed forces, with government and in opposition, with education partners, churches, civil society activists, etc. as discussed in chapter five. Schooling needs to operate in an environment where peace prevails and children practice discipline and morals and that encourages teachers and parents in their roles. This interests many learners and they become enthusiastic about schooling during mobilization.

7.2 Creating a suitable learning environment

A good learning environment is key to creating successful school education. UNESCO calls for communities to promote peace and intercultural dialogue so that their children are able to access schools and learners can have peaceful and creative interactions for learning purposes (UNESCO 2018b). The learning environment in this subsection is analyzed in four areas: parental role vis-a-vis learners' academic performance, strengthening school management, motivating of teachers and widening resource mobilization.

7.2.1 Parental roles vis-a-vis learners' academic performance

Parents have a responsibility for creating a positive learning environment. In a FGD with teachers, academic performance emerges as strongly impacted by parental roles. A teacher from a private school commented:

We teachers have specific duties in the school and in the classroom to handle learners. Parents have more to do with looking after the welfare of the child at home. For example, provision of food, medicine, uniform and other clothing's, fees payment among others. One day a child was sleeping in the class and when I asked him, he said he was hungry as last evening they had no meal. It is common in this school, and I observed that feeding is a learning factor. Parents have to contribute for school feeding to cater for the children while in school and provide meals for them while at home. Some

children come to school without answering the homework given to them due to absence of evening meal and this has effect on their academic work (TPS2: 2nd March 2019, Royal International School).

A teacher from an ECSS school discussed the importance of parents' visits to teachers for learners' performance in the school:

Most children in our schools in Yei stay with relatives or parents who have not gone to school. Some of them are concerned and visit the teacher in the school to help him or her see the books of the child if he or she is doing well. Some parents check the books of their children after school or over the weekend and follow what they learn. It is a role of the parent at home toward the learning of his or her child (TCh12: 19th Feb, 2019, Immanuel Primary School).

My own learning was influenced by my mother who had not gone to school and my older brother who attended school up to secondary level. My mother made sure that every evening after a meal at 8pm all children entered into our study room for revision for at least two hours. If we were playing, she might enter the room abruptly with a stick and be ready to beat us. Our elder brother was serious in checking our books, and if any paper was removed because of being marked wrong in school, punishment would follow. In addition, our aunt, who taught in the same school, reported any misbehaviour at school to our mother and she took immediate action.

Educational research conducted in three districts in Uganda also confirms that the academic outcomes of the children depend on the time and resources the parents commit to the education of their children (Berg and Noort 2011). However, some parents in Yei have a tradition of not visiting or attending school meetings and it is a deeply rooted cultural practice. However, they show their response by providing for the learning needs (fees, books, etc.) of the child and the school. This demonstrates partial parental participation; but good participation that has an impact on the child's academic performance demands teacher-parent-learner role relationships. Both parent and teacher are to be kept in the loop of the learning process of the child.

One parent I met reiterated that learners' outcomes are influenced by positive community attitudes towards the local school:

Our school was demand driven [the establishment of this school was our interest and need] and one day thieves broke into the school and took the new supplies of food, stationery and school uniforms. It was at a time closer to end of term and learners were preparing for examinations. When the news went into the communities and to the local authorities everybody was discouraged including the learners and there was general concern because it will affect the performance of their children. In the same day the thieves were arrested and the stolen school property was recovered, only few missing. School security is important as it enhances safety for school resources which have a direct relation to learning (Parent: 18th Jan, 2018: Hai Gabat)

In a FGD during an education conference a girls' education officer in the church schools stated:

We encouraged girls' performance by motivating best performing girls by offering them scholarship, dignity kits⁹³ and to other girls we give books to morally boost them. Also, the best girls are announced over the radio and many parents picked concern for their girls to be among the best by initiating to the teachers to offer remedial teachings to their girls and they would pay them (GChO: 14th March 2018, ECSS Gust House Hall).

The parental role, both at home and school, can have a positive impact on the learner by the fulfilling of basic needs. Secondly two-way communication between the parent and the learner impacts on performance because then the learning gaps of the children are appropriately addressed. Thirdly community awareness and motivation of learners influence academic competition among school children to study hard, and for parents to develop an interest and investment in the learning of their children. This echoes Uemura's argument for community and parental participation in education to meet the provision of learning needs, policy development and school management structures (Uemura 1999b). However, it is a challenge because parents and school depend both on the national and local contexts that influence school development and management structures, and on the prevailing culture that may discourage parental participation.

⁹³ Dignity kits are hygiene and sanitary items meant specifically for the local needs of women and girls of reproductive age to enhance cleanliness. It contains items such as soap, sanitary materials, toothbrushes and toothpaste.

7.2.2 The role of the PTA in strengthening school management

Reports presented to the county education office through the quarterly coordination meetings stated that out of 38 primary schools (all types of school) 21 have active PTA committees, 11 have PTA without clear structures and 6 schools do not have PTA committees. The active schools are mostly church owned (55%), whereas the majority of the schools without clear PTA structures are government run (29%) and the schools without any PTA committee are mainly private (16%) schools.

An active and competent PTA is an important factor for good school management and participation of the community. One parent from an active PTA schools remarked in a FGD:

Our PTA members in the school where I belong are active and we have collaboration with the community members who are able to identify issues in school that need serious attention by both the PTA and the community. These issues identified include, school by-laws, increase of contribution by parents and communities in supporting school development, issues of girls' education, inclusive education, restructuring of PTA committees and finance mismanagement in schools (FGD4: 24th March, 2018, Immanuel Cathedral Green Mango Centre).

An influential member of the Mothers Union, added her concern for school planning and decision making:

We have worked with the headteacher of this school for eight years. In the beginning when he was recruited, he had minimal experiences in networking with parents and coordination. He could not organize meetings well and was shaky in decision making. We parents in the PTA executive committee were in close contact and frequently visited him and guided him on the school aspects: the school needs to have a plan and a budget, school constitution, subject departments and other relevant committees in the school and with the PTA committees. After three years our school is among the best performing in several disciplines, e.g., academics, sports, religious activities and made a cluster centre⁹⁴ for a number of schools (PCh: 24th March, 2018, Immanuel Cathedral Green Mango Centre)

It is clear that the key to a successful PTA is to have members who are educated and influential. In the communities where these do not exist, the schools run under the influence of the headteacher and informal parent committees without clear structures and school plans, leading to the learning needs and outcomes being hardly achieved. It was the same problem

⁹⁴ A cluster in South Sudan, particularly in Yei, is a grouping of neighbouring schools or local arrangement for a certain number of schools to form a cluster. For instance, a cluster has about 5-6 number of schools. The aim is to strengthen schools in sports and academics. For example, a cluster might decide to have a joint examination every term before having the final examination from the county level. In sports it prepares the schools well before meeting other schools for competition.

with ‘harambee’ in Kenya where the better educated, more influential and richer communities benefited from ‘harambee’ and many poorer communities simply fell further behind (Mbithi and Rasmusson 1977; Noreh 1988). Similarly in Uganda at the time of UPE the communities that were not mobilized fell far behind (Ministry of Education and Sports 1999).

Parents with children in government and private schools expressed different experiences. A parent from a government school said:

Management in the school where my child goes is problematic. Last year the children had a strike for three days and teachers had a strike also for about a week without entering into classrooms and children were sent home early. School decisions are mainly the role of the headteacher. In a PTA meeting what we agreed upon is not taken into consideration and most of the parents are reluctant to act on school plans and making their contributions. It is difficult to really stop these strikes completely unless the government intervenes as being a school owner and tells us what are the needs from us the parents and what the government is to do (PG9: 30th Nov 2019, Hai Lomuku II).

A parent having a child in a private school added in simple Arabic saying:

Zaman tani sidu sukule de bada abune class tani ligo ma werilenina ali abuwani ma umahat. Zuwade mawusulu fi dereja ta subam guruse de gata. Yale fi nebisa zama muderesin de detus moyiya tomon. Batali tow kulu, muderesin de aba sokol, yala iyal deru duku mudur de, yala dreu kasuru mederesade. Yaja kwesi wayi min abuwani de jere if polisi asam kala de wogifu: (One day the school owner started to construct a new classroom block without the notice of parents or meeting. Unfortunately, the cash ran short, and the building ended half way without reaching the completion stage. At the same time the schoolteachers demanded their end of month pay which he failed to provide. The teachers refused to offer lessons and the learners reacted by having an intention to destroy the school. Luckily one of the parents ran to the police and the situation was rescued without the school owner being beaten and the school was not destroyed) (PP3: 10th Oct, 2018, Hai Guwafa)

My experience of school management showed four important things: first, it is easier to build a relationship between the school management and the parents if there are common objectives which impact schooling. Second, an organized and informed PTA committee strengthens the school administration as it supports the headteacher in the day-to-day running of the school and improves the focus on learners’ discipline and academics. This is a tradition practiced mainly by church schools. Third, school strikes are common in government and private schools, especially when decisions are taken without consulting the parents. And fourth, some private schools tend to avoid PTA meetings with the aim of maximising profits or having the freedom to take decisions without consultation. I also observed incidents when

some PTA leaders, unaware of their duties, tended to take over the role of the headteacher. Others acted for personal gain, and some were willing to offer support but were challenged because of their inadequate capacity.

7.2.3 Motivating of teachers

In general, nearly all respondents expressed their conviction about the impact that teachers' motivation has on schooling, and the role that parents can play in this. A parent from an ECSS school remarked:

We parents are in a difficult financial situation and we lack material resources. But if we value the education of our children, we need to put aside our individual claims for having nothing in the families. The teachers who are in our school sacrifice their time for our children and have to be supported to encourage them to teach well. Every parent who is here with a child in this school must take into account the education of his or her child by making his or her contribution as per the fees allocated. This promotes regular teachers' payment of salary although minimal and can motivate them (PCh8: 21st March, 2018, St. Paul Primary School).

A teacher from an AIC school emphasized:

Some of us teaching in AIC school are motivated by the respect given to us by parents and learners. I have taught in this school for over six years without adequate payment. I am impressed by the love the parents of the children accord to us, including neighbours of the school. For example, if any of us got sick and have not come to teach or death has occurred in any of our families, the parents, learners and the neighbours turn up in great numbers and offer unexpected support. One day my brother died in the village and when there was a loud cry in my family suddenly there was a turn up of people and the funeral was heavily supported by the community, parents and the learners. This made some of us to think twice even if there is a better offer in other schools (TAIC2: 21st March, 2018, St. Paul Primary School).

A teacher from a village government-run school also spoke of motivation in non-financial terms:

In a situation like South Sudan where teachers' pay is generally low parents should not rely on financial aspects only to motivate the school or the teachers in their work. In our school parents come to cultivate for us in our gardens once a month during the gardening season. Some of the learners also do their agricultural practices in the teachers' gardens. Secondly, the mothers of the learners help the wives of the teachers in their domestic activities and gardens as well. The agricultural produce we get due to the parental support is quite helpful and any additional pay in cash will be a top up to buy basic needs like salt, soap and others (TGS4: 30th March 2018, Jigomoni School Hall).

Teachers who are not paid or motivated make more excuses to leave the school before closing hours or claim to be sick. It is a cultural practice that might take time to cease. The school administrators attend to their duties irregularly and no one can question their authority as they search for other means of survival. I made an appointment with a government school

headteacher three times, and each time was informed he was sick, and he would come the following day. On the same occasions I saw the headteacher selling foodstuff in the market.

In a consultation meeting with the county education director and school inspectors on school performance, one of the inspectors angrily remarked:

We are blamed for not doing our job⁹⁵ and not reporting school issues. Many times we visit the schools we find some of the teachers absent for several days and the headteachers do the same. The headteachers have no control over the teachers because they are not motivated, and their families are in needful situation. We inspectors have the same challenge with the headteachers, and some of them apply for several holidays, for example, sick leave, annual leave, maternity or paternity leave when they do not need them. In the church or private schools at least teachers and their school administrators are regular due to regular motivation and learning takes place (Inspector, 14th March, 2019, County Education Office)

Policies for the motivation of teachers exist, but they are rarely implemented in government schools. The government teacher remuneration policy states that:

..... teachers' salaries will be increased for all government employees and additional allowances to teachers at a rate to be determined from time to time by the National Ministry of Education in consultation with the National Ministry of Labour, Public Service and Human Resource Development will be issued as soon as the economic situation is stable. Teacher remuneration will impact positively on teacher recruitment, morale and motivation, performance and retention as well as the image of the teaching profession (MoGEI 2017: 49)

Teachers and education officials working in government schools are poorly motivated. There is high absenteeism in government schools as teachers and school operators opt for other ways to sustain their living and there is no control over them. Teachers in church or private schools also have very low salaries, but it is paid regularly and teachers experience support from parents and community which raises their motivation. For learning to take place under the difficult conditions in South Sudan, parents and community have to step in even in government schools. However, parents are being asked to fund schools when it is not really their role. Biddle refers to this as role taking in which parents and communities are to be willing to take social responsibility in schooling of their children (B. J. Biddle 1986). But if

⁹⁵ According to article 4 of the ministerial order on school inspection, all early childhood development centres, primary schools and secondary schools are to be regularly inspected. The aim is to ensure that learning facilities are adequate and fit; the curriculum is implemented accurately; pupil progress is ensured; the teaching quality in the school is high; there is care for and good conduct of learners; the school has good community relationships and functional leadership and management (Yai 2017: 1, 5 & 6).

the parents and the communities are not willing and the state does not play its required role, then no education takes place.⁹⁶ Role taking here refers to parental contribution solely in terms of fees to the school or labour from parents to support teachers in their gardens especially in the villages. However, besides its contribution to learners' education, this latter practice deprives the parents of their time in working for themselves as cultivation is the main source of livelihood in the villages (including animal rearing and other local resources) and in working for themselves, parents could have a greater impact.

7.2.4 Widening resource mobilization

In my experience, all schools, whether run by government, churches, communities or privately owned, depend on the parents for resource mobilization. In an interview with a headteacher of a government school he lamented that:

I have been heading government schools for more than ten years now. I witness that parents and the community have a role in schooling through financial and non-financial contributions. The government grants do not flow into schools and through the PTA meetings the chairperson influences the parents to make their contributions for the learning of their children. One term due to unavoidable circumstances the school failed to conduct its meeting, and this resulted in poor school income and it almost let the school not to have the end of term examinations (HG2: 17th Nov 2018, X School).

The records in one church school presented to me during a school visit by the school finance officer in anonymity read: The proposed annual school budget was SSP 2,753,333 (USD 9,833). The sources and income received were: from parents USD 6,883.1, donations from education partners USD 1,769.9 and deficit USD 1,179.9. The deficit was from parents who had failed to fulfil their obligations. In three other schools (church, private and government) I also observed that parental contributions significantly outweighed the other sources of

⁹⁶ Some schools we visited in 2013 in the northern part of South Sudan in a joint ECSS & local government inspection and in a repeated visit in 2019 for three of those schools, one of the schools remained poorly constructed and the classrooms were still roofed in grass, and it had not grown from P1-P5. It is a typical community where parents are reluctant to make contributions and the government commitment to reach them is only on paper.

income. The role of parents accounts for about 70% of resource mobilization. In a FGD discussion one parent stated in the Kakwa language:

Miri lo kata ko kappa laga sukuluto kine jojo rumbi bak gurut kode midi ropa. Kapa beti kaden laga tika, kode sukulu jojo pija turubli in jowudia na kap ti sukulu in mudi a 'bugi welet ko gurut na ropani ka sukuloni. Ko ropa na usuru 'bayin. [Government has other resources which schools can benefit from. For example, teak trees are available and can support school construction in building or making school fences. Secondly, there are also possibilities of vehicles which schools can borrow and only put fuel and pay the driver without charge for hire] (P19: 16th April 2019, Hai Leben).

One day we made an application to the government forestry department, and we were approved a number of teak trees for roofing and fencing of our local school and for the church.⁹⁷ There are natural trees under the local chiefs and land owners and government planted forests. These are resource opportunities. The bureaucracy takes time and technical know-how to negotiate, but in the end it reaps its reward. This depends on members of the school committee having influence with the forestry department to speed up the approval. Local communities donate many trees to village schools for school furniture, roofing and fencing, depending on the nature and creativity of the school management and PTA members. The experience of Uganda during the UPE programme was that the government committed resources for school construction materials and the labour cost was left in the hands of the local authorities and community (Ministry of Education and Sports 1999). This was to large extent successful, and the parents were able to contribute what was possible regardless of the challenges.

Parents and communities are the backbone of terms of resource mobilization for schooling. There are difficulties in raising parental contributions because of the continuing conflict in South Sudan, leading to failure to meet school budgets. Functional and informed PTA committees have the power to move a school forward due to their skills and influence despite

⁹⁷ 3rd February 2016

their sometimes low level in education and management. Poverty however remains the major structural obstacle in parental contributions.

7.3 Conclusion

The country's context is characterised by a deteriorating economy, continued political violence and inter-communal clashes. Under these conditions, parents and communities have widened their participation in education in South Sudan. Their wider participation is the response to the crisis in education influenced by the absence of peace and stability, the government's inability to finance education, and by cultural factors. The most important of these responses are attempts to secure a peaceful learning environment, to react to the challenges of school drop-outs or indiscipline, and, in resource mobilization, to sustain a suitable learning environment and the motivation of teachers. School management with support of functional PTAs are the way to motivate wider parental and community participation.

In their responses parents and communities partly build on their cultural traditions, like the role of the chief in mobilizing the community on social development activities or the role of women in mobilizing people for community works during social events, but parents and communities also have to overcome traditional barriers in their cultural backgrounds, like the hesitation of some communities to engage in formal education and to visit schools. The response of parents and community is stronger and more creative in schools like church schools which have a history of participation and where bottom-up approaches are common. In government schools a top-down approach undermines parental and community responses. Despite the parental and community limitations, education has continued in South Sudan particularly in Yei during the difficult times of conflict. This has helped to create a tradition that makes parents and community participation desirable in schooling even in post-

independence conflict situations, especially when government has little to contribute to the education sector beyond controlling policy, curriculum and assessment.

Chapter Eight: The policy implications for improved parental, community and church participation in education in South Sudan

8.0 Introduction

The policy implications are more rhetorical rather than actual because the country is in continued conflict and development is not a priority including education. This thesis describes an ideal situation that could become a reality at any time soon when sustainable peace is achieved and functional structures are established. On the other hand, there are short term and doable suggestions the parents, community and church could do to enable education to function in the post-independent conflict situation.

This chapter looks into government policies and practices in its own managed schools and the parental and community strategies and practices in the Episcopal Church, African Inland Church and privately managed schools, taking into account the national socio-cultural and contextual factors that shape the role, limitation and opportunities for parental and community participation in schooling of their learners. It explores improvements in policy the government and the church could put in place to enhance parental and community participation in schooling.

The main sources of data for this question were quarterly education meetings, education conferences and PTA meetings in schools (details of meetings in appendix 2).⁹⁸ These forums offered wide and open discussions on school and learner-based needs. The in-depth individual interviews and FGD were with the same categories as highlighted in the beginning of chapter five. I also made three additional follow-up FGDs with parents and teachers, and education authorities in the government and Episcopal Church education that offered further

⁹⁸ I attended four quarterly education meetings, two education consultative conferences, and five PTA meetings in schools (two Episcopal Church schools, one AIC school, one Government school and one private school).

observations of the contexts. As before, the findings are further supported with my own many years of personal experience in working with schools in South Sudan and Uganda. Each theme contains an initial analytic commentary for further discussion and recommendations.

According to the experiences of post-conflict countries like Rwanda, South Africa, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Uganda, recovery programmes should minimize the risk of conflict recurrence and prioritize the restoration of confidence in social, political and economic institutions. The country should provide security to its people. It needs economic security, enforcement of the rule of law, delivery of social services and relevant sector reforms. This chapter is analysed under three main themes: reform of roles in government, church and schools; security reforms; and short term and achievable suggestions. Sections 8.1 & 8.2 are longer term suggestions and section 8.3 is short term and immediate solutions the parents, community and church could do for continuity of education.

8.1 Reform of roles in government, church and schools

In this subsection I consider three aspects necessary in reform of roles: improvement of teachers' training; strengthening the capacity of Parent Teacher Association members and training; and social services improvement.

8.1.1 Improvement of teachers' training

Better training of teachers was stressed by respondents as vital for improved parental and community participation in education. The training of the teachers, inspectors and education managers themselves is considered significant because it improves pedagogical and managerial skills for better learning outcomes (improved academic performance). The parents become motivated to raise their participation when the school strives successfully for better results of their children not only in terms of academic performance but also in terms of improved morals.

The concern for a better teacher education that also takes account of the post-independence and continued political and ethnic crises was raised in FGD with teachers and individual interviews with parents, teachers, and education authorities (see photo: 14, pg. 201); I also witnessed presentations on this topic from one education conference and two education cluster meetings. As one participant summarized it:

The objective of national teacher education strategy is to ensure that sufficient numbers of well-motivated teachers with appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes are supplied to deliver quality education to all the society's children according to the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the individual children (Department of Teacher Education and Training 2018). This has to be done in strong collaboration with the parents and community members because we are in post-independence and continued political and ethnic crises that require Education in Emergency (EiE) guidelines, for example, community members are to participate actively, transparently and without discrimination in analysis, planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of education responses for effective schooling (Education Cluster South Sudan 2012)⁹⁹, (TG, 16th April, 2018, Youth Centre).

My own experience in working in teacher education for several years showed that teacher training is not adequately coordinated in South Sudan. The Government has not prioritised a particular teacher training model. Brinkley argued, from research in Central Equatoria State (Yei County inclusive), that teacher training should be available for all of the schools regardless of whether they are government run or privately managed and the curriculum should be unified and standardised (Brinkley 2016: 36). The poor qualification of teachers contributes to poor motivation in the classroom which is further worsened by the high pupils-teacher ratio. Teachers' frequent absenteeism from the classroom and the uncontrollability of learners all contribute to poor performance and learning outputs. This has resulted in many learners dropping out or repeating classes, which in turn affected parental confidence and thus their participation. For example, in an interview with one of the women selling in the market, she expressed that she only pays fees for her children who pass and go on to the next

⁹⁹ Education In Emergency (EiE) defines the following as community members: village authorities (chiefs); county commissioner; payam and boma administrators; Parent Teacher Association (PTA) members; religious leaders; mothers, fathers, grandparents and caregivers; women's group members; social advocacy group members; sports group members; girls, boys and youth; people with disabilities; school administrators; representatives from locally identified vulnerable groups; representatives of returnees; representatives of internally displaced people; representatives of refugees; and representatives from the host community.

class. I also observed that there many dropout pupils who could progress through vocational training, including those who had missed their learning opportunities because of the conflict. This, however, has low government priority and is worsened by the community culture of discouraging learners from enrolling in vocational schools because of the preference for white colour jobs. Therefore, better teacher training embraces parental and community participation in education and this calls for reforming the curriculum of teacher training colleges towards a standard curriculum that responds adequately to the post-independence instability that South Sudan is currently experiencing.

8.1.2 Strengthening the capacity of Parent Teacher Association members and their training

The capacity of Parent Teacher Association (PTA) members in terms of literacy, influence, resource mobilization, organisational skills, etc. in most of the schools was debated in several interviews and in reports presented in most of the quarterly meetings and education consultation forums. The same issue was discussed in four education forums, fifteen individual interviews with parents, learners, teachers and education officers, and it is supported by my own observations in the schools through PTA meetings attended.

PTA members do not necessarily have to have children in the school where they serve. One of the headteachers from a government managed school argued in an education quarterly meeting that:

The national policy for appointment of PTA in the schools has no clear criteria, for example, [here he quoted from the PTA Training Guide] ‘The PTA is a voluntary association composed of parents whose children attend the primary or secondary school, teachers and any member of the community who is interested in the promotion of the general welfare of children in the school’ (MoE, 2016) (Headteacher: 14th Jan 2019, Jigomoni Primary School Hall).

He added that other criteria for selecting PTA members who have no children or dependents learning in the school are (continuing to quote from the Guide):

‘People who are respected in the community by virtue of their leadership or other special qualities and the contributions they make to the community. People who have participated in development activities through other community projects; People who have gone through the formal system of education and have gained useful professional experience in various fields; People who have not been through any formal system of education but have useful knowledge and experience in community work; and People who are willing to participate in school improvement programs’ It is a useful policy but it neglects the involvement of the local community. My opinion is to have both members of the local community and external skilful members to constitute PTA to enable the school have functional and useful PTA members (Headteacher: 14th Jan 2019, Jigomoni Primary School Hall), (MoE 2016).

In the government schools, any parent can be elected so long he or she has a child in the school and suits the interest of the headteacher regardless of their skills. This might mean missing out electing significant PTA members who have the right skills and experiences. The criterion for selecting PTA members who have no children or dependents learning in that particular school is more useful because it looks at people’s personal qualities. In church schools, on the other hand, PTA members are selected from the community, e.g., committed Christian with skills and experience who do not have to have a child in the respective school. In private schools, it works on the basis of personal interests and relations between the school headteacher and school owner.

Mead argues that the taking of social roles in the community should consider the requirement of the post or the abilities of the applicant (Mead 1934 cited in Biddle 1986). It might be a challenge in most communities in South Sudan to get fully qualified people to occupy the PTA position in the school. Secondly having all PTA members from outside the local school community creates a gap or poor relation between the school leadership and the local community because the cultural and the local context of the parents and learners might not be considered in the planning and decision-making. Schools have to bear with the contextual and cultural limitations in order to welcome willing parents to promote schooling despite the poor learning outcomes (academic results and moral development).

In Episcopal Church schools, parental and community participation is further supported by the Diocesan Education Council. In an in-depth interview with the diocesan education coordinator of the Episcopal Diocese of Yei, he stated:

Parental participation improves or builds relationship with the school management and the team of the PTA committees. For example, in the Diocese of Yei governing bodies are expected to put in place people in all schools and institutions who are with the relevant skills and in case of the PTA it is similar to the government policy of electing PTA members who have no child in the school as stated above. In addition the governing body in the education department is the Diocesan Education Council that comprise of 21 people of high professional qualifications. They must have a deeper understanding of educational issues as well as the will to contribute towards the education course of the Diocese (Diocese of Yei 2014), (Diocesan Education Coordinator, 14th Feb 2019, Diocesan Education Office) .

My experience shows that the diocesan education council is active and useful in all the diocesan education issues of the diocese including vocational, secondary and other training matters. Overall, the existing PTA members in the Episcopal Church schools demonstrate participation and a strong engagement with parents that enhances schooling. The membership is not restricted only to members of the Episcopal Church but included members of other denominations willing to follow its church policy in management, although it does not recognise the inclusion of 30% women in the diocesan education council as per the national PTA guidelines.

8.1.2.1 Training PTA members in awareness raising

The role of PTA committee members in raising awareness about the start of school terms, the importance of girls' enrolment, the role of parents in schooling, etc. were other concerns that parents, teachers, learners, education authorities and local chiefs raised. One of the parents (a carpenter) in an individual interview stated:

I am a parent in one of the private schools and I was taken by surprise that our PTA assembly was organized by the PTA committee in which I am a member. I never heard a radio announcement. I am a carpenter and sometimes the school calls me to do some repairs and I go with my team because I have a child in the school regardless of the pay and we offer discount to the school. This character of making school meeting known to particular people has discouraged my participation. We parents need to be made aware even if we do not read and write well but our ideas can help others to implement for us and therefore we need inclusivity despite education or influence level (Carpenter, 13th Nov 2018, Hai Gabat).

In an education quarterly meeting one of the girls' education officers at the county level

remarked:

Churches are good forums for massive awareness to parents. Many family members go to churches, and they can take the message to the communities for those who never heard about the role of parents in schools. Different churches have education days and the message in those days is about: learning, role of parents, role of teachers, role of the local communities, girls' education and peace among people, etc. For example, the referendum which brought independence to South Sudan was successful through the involvement of the church leaders and awareness in churches (Inspector of Girls, 29th Jan 2019, Diocese of Yei L-Shape Block).

On several occasions I witnessed how the opening of school terms, PTA meetings and other related school activities are announced in churches. The government schools usually make one general announcement on the radio for their schools without any follow up, for example during the registration of learners' at the beginning of term. The private schools and the church-managed schools replay the announcements which help most parents understand the message. This is one of the main reasons which attract many learners to private or church schools despite the parents' challenges in meeting the school requirements. The announcements alert the parents and the communities that the schools need them to play their particular roles. Similarly in Uganda, under universal primary education (UPE), the government designated the labour costs and the food for workers in schools as the responsibilities of parents and they registered a breakthrough because of home to home awareness raising and announcements in churches and mosques (Ministry of Education and Sports 1999). Riffkin argues that common participation should be driven by common interest (Riffkin et al. 1988 cited from Chitambo et al. 2002). In South Sudan the learning process relies on the parents to support financially or offer labour in the absence of adequate financial support from government, and the unifying factor is raising financial support and offering labour because it is the practice that worked for several years during the pre-independence conflicts. In this context, therefore, awareness raising, and the training of parents are important to enable them to play their roles. For example, in 2018 and 2019 I observed three trainings of PTA committee members on the use of the South Sudan revised PTA Training

Guide. I observed constructive interactions among the PTA members from government, private and church managed schools. This was a learning environment for sharing knowledge among the different PTA committees (church, private & government), and the building of awareness skills. This enhances a strong building of grassroot communities of practice through the PTA.

This subtheme demonstrates three main issues: awareness raising improves parental participation; awakening parents to send their children to school and to provide the school needs; and for communities to take up their responsibilities in mobilization of learners and parents about school schedules etc. Different approaches are needed to reach the communities. For example, in Yei an urgent message can be broadcast on Spirit FM radio station, and within less than an hour the whole community is reached with the message. The station, which is founded by the Episcopal Church, is the community favourite station as compared to the other two stations.¹⁰⁰ In Yei listening to radio announcements every evening through Spirit FM radio station is a deeply rooted culture among the wider population, although some families have difficulty in purchasing the batteries.

8.1.2.2 Recognition of PTA at county level and their roles

In my working collaboration with the national ministry of education and several counties in South Sudan, I observed that there is no proper coordination of PTA work. At the national level there is no desk officer-in-charge of PTA Programmes. At the state level PTA desks are in place in most states, for example, in 2018 eight states out of ten had PTA officers and two states had previously had officers who had retired with new appointments in process. At the

¹⁰⁰ The other two stations are Liberty FM - community founded, and popularly used for marketing adverts - and St. Bakhita Catholic Radio, most of whose Programmes are dedicated to prayers and which in consequence has fewer listeners. The Episcopal Church Spirit FM station has programmes such as news, talk shows, announcements, preaching and various discussions which are community driven.

county level the activities of PTAs are managed by the school inspectors. In an education conference in Yei attended by over sixty participants from different categories (teachers, learners, chiefs, religious leaders, government officials from different departments), one of the school inspectors described:

I am a school inspector and also named as PTA supervisor. The PTA supervisor title is created by the county without recognition in the public service with an interest to strengthen the capacity of PTA for improved and effective community school-based management (School Inspector, 10th June, 2017, ECSS Conference Hall).

In the same meeting the county education director added that:

In the PTA policy document, the national ministry of education and the state ministries of education acknowledge the role school communities, community leaders and the local authorities play in promoting education in South Sudan. The national and states levels have committed themselves to strengthening community organizations such as the PTA, including other school governing bodies like School Management Committee (SMC) and Board of Governors (BOG) to address challenges facing the education sector. We in the county level have recognised that the PTA plays a very important role in supporting schools with resource mobilization, helping schools to understand learners and their home environment and strengthening collaboration between the home and the school. Therefore, the position of PTA at the county level should be created and an officer is appointed and enumerated like any education officer (County Education Director, 10th June, 2017, ECS Conference Hall).

My experience in working with the PTA in schools observes that if there is a PTA training or a school inspection the county education director assigns to the event different inspectors depending on who is available and willing because there is no one officer who is responsible. In contrast in most of the reports presented by the school headteachers (Immanuel, St. Paul, Kanjoro primary schools, etc.) about their school performance, the role of parents, community and the involvement of the PTA committee is at the top (see photos: 3,4 & 5, pg. 198). The neglect of the PTA desk at the county level is of concern. Iwu argued from a Nigerian perspective that effective management of primary schools needs to incorporate the parents of the pupils because their learning depends on their parents' role (Iwu & Iwu 2013). The contexts differ but the parental role is similar to the situation in South Sudan.

In a FGD with two education coordinators of the Episcopal Church and African Inland Church the lack of clarity concerning the role of PTA in the national policy guidelines was stressed. The Episcopal Church Education Coordinator cited from the national policy document the PTA's role, which is to:

'Ensure compulsory school attendance for every child who has reached the age of 5 or 6 years and collaborate with county education department and community leaders like chiefs for any failure' (Ministry of Education 2016), (17th Jan 2019, Diocesan Education office).

He further noted that the role of the PTA in Episcopal Church schools is to:

'Promote the interests of the school by bringing parents, members of the community, learners and teachers into close co-operation. Mobilize resources from the community on behalf of the school. Support the school financially in addition to payment of school fees. The additional money is used for supplementing teachers' salaries and buying textbooks and for meeting emergencies etc. Develop projects for the school e.g. a school canteen, brick laying project, poultry project or piggery unit etc. Monitor regularly the activities of the school e.g. attendance. Lobby and carry out advocacy on topical issues affecting education of children e.g. early marriages. Ensure that all children in the area enrol and remain in school. Ensure the welfare of staff and pupils. Regulate learner - teacher relationship. Give appreciation by rewarding students and staff who perform exceptionally well. Regularly assess hygiene and sanitation in the schools. Ensure that decent dressing code is observed in the schools and ensure safety and security of school property' (Diocese of Yei 2014: 14), (17th Jan 2019, Diocesan Education office).

My experience of attending PTA meetings in government-managed schools is that there are no such concrete guidelines for parents. The headteachers are served with circular letters from the county education offices which are instructions from the national ministry of education on issues that require parental participation, unlike in the church or other managed schools. The lack of clarity in government schools affects the parental participation because of the fluctuating planning and learning requirements of the learners and school. This top-down model is one that the government of South Sudan has practiced in its schools for years. I observed children in church or private schools bringing circular letters to their parents for additional school requirements, but this was done after a consultative meeting that would later also be presented to the PTA committee for further explanation. Kim argues that the reconstruction of education in post-independence South Sudan requires two phases: rehabilitation, and the establishment of an educational structure (Kim et al. 2011). This assumes a normal development process of reconstruction and reform in a situation where

peace is sustainable and there is political will to increase investment in education. The continued conflicts and poor budgetary allocations to education negatively impact parental and community participation in schooling. The culture of centralised budgetary allocation is a top-down model that makes government policy to achieve universal quality education for all remain on paper.

8.1.3 Social services

The development of education has to be seen in the context of other social services. In three education forums (one conference and two education quarterly meetings), that I attended, as also in four FGDs with parents, chiefs, local education authorities and education development partners, participants raised these concerns. Better roads and health services, and the boosting of agriculture were given equal priority besides sustainable peace as key factors for education development. One of the participants (a local chief) remarked that:

People in many meetings in schools, churches, government offices at various levels, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) raise a lot of concerns and plans for improved participation during meetings with high level government dignitaries, Members of parliament (MPs), NGO officials, etc. To me as a local chief who experienced changes in governments for over fifty years, our participation as citizens is only improved by three things: peace, roads and health. Other factors are supplementary because if we have the three elements the rest of the sectors can be improved (Chief, 18th June 2017, ECSS Conference Hall).

In a similar meeting one of the female staff working for an organisation in the department of economic empowerment in anonymity said:

We provide training to the local women in South Sudan particular in Yei and give them loans. So that they are able to sustain an income, be well, make decisions, and have social networks to support themselves, develop the confidence they need to transform their lives, families, and communities. Our programme promotes women's social and economic empowerment as the key to building more peaceful and stable societies. However, in our follow up and evaluations, most women use their incomes and the profits from the loans to support medical care of their children. The government medical facilities mainly provide consultations without drugs and other services. This forced many parents to seek medical attention in private clinics that requires additional fees at the expenses of family feeding and educational cost (NGO2 Staff, 17th March 2018, Youth Gardens.)

While in Yei Diocesan synod communiqué it was argued that:

..... People have suffered decades of war. Now that the revitalised agreement has been signed, we need to see the fruits in terms of sustainable peace and more government investment on social services that include health, education, roads The local communities are able to

improve their livelihoods when given the working environment to support themselves (Luate et al. 2019).

My experience shows that the parental role is also affected by these factors. For example, community health is an important aspect for improved parental and community participation. For instance, in 2016 and 2018 there was an outbreak of cholera in Yei. Many learners suffered both in schools and homes due to poor hygiene. Parents were forced to spend all that they had for the survival of their children. Unfortunately, some children lost their parents in the tragedy and that resulted in some learners dropping out of school. Secondly, we have an Episcopal Church schools in a village and during heavy rain the access road and the local bridge are covered by water. Most activities involve crossing the river, including schooling, markets, and meetings in the area. The rate of parental participation is affected by such factors even if there were peace in the country. Some of these challenges are beyond the capacity of the local community and require government investment and intervention.

8.2 Security reforms

Experiences from post-conflict countries (2.3.3) demonstrated that security sector reform is an important aspect so that the armed sector becomes professionalized with minimal numbers that requires less budgetary allocation (Hendricks & Lucey 2013). It accelerates the country's economic recovery and encourages productive investment. This subtheme analyses peace and security implication for improved parental and community participation in schooling.

8.2.1 Urgent need for Peace and security

The need for peace and security in the country was raised as the overriding concern by parents, teachers, leaders, community leaders, returnee parents and education authorities, in thirty three individual interviews, four FGDs, four education meetings and conference and

my own observations and experiences. To underline the absolute necessity for peace, I return to the voices of my respondents. One of the parents (a farmer) from an Episcopal Church school in a PTA meeting stated:

We parents are crippled and camping in Yei Town due to fear to work for ourselves. The South Sudan prolonged conflicts has hindered our strength to contribute towards education of our children. The cost of primary education is not something that we are supposed to make complain to our brothers who are working or to the government to seek for help because the fees and the requirements are within the capacity we parents could be able to mobilize (PCh18: 31st March 2018, St. Paul Lizira School).

In the same meeting one of the school inspectors, after observing all the participants, remarked:

Parents and communities cannot do much without peace and security in the country. It is peace that we need now and soonest. Parents have become vulnerable because of restricted movements, torture and killings. If you are seen with some good amount of agricultural produce, animals or selling items in a small business scale you become a prey and in the night you're attacked and all these items are robbed away and if you talk or ask question then you're killed on top of your items. Improved peace will result into improved parental role and that is what we are longing for many years (Inspector, 31st March 2018, St. Paul Lizira School).

In an individual interview a female parent with a child in a church school (later transferred into a government school) angrily emphasised that:

Participation in child education goes together with family resources. I am a trained tailor and can sew clothes of different fashions. I have basic knowledge on art and can make pots and other crafts. Many people especially visitors to Yei used to come to my place to buy these items. Some of them use to make an order before arrival to Yei. In that time the education of my children, basic health, clothing and most basic needs at home were not a challenge to me. With the continued conflicts in South Sudan particularly in Yei today no-one thinks of asking even the price of these items. The little income has all gone and others were taken away forcefully. It is peace that we need to return us to effective schooling of children (PGS7: 30th Nov 2018, Hai Erap)

My experiences and observations in the period 2013 to 2017 when the conflict was at its peak in Yei, is that it was difficult for parents and communities to respond to school calls or activities when they were thinking of escaping to safety or looking for food. For example, I attended three PTA meetings in 2017. The turnout in the government school was poor with 8 people out of 35, in the AIC school with 19 out of 37 and the ECSS schools with 24 out of 36. In my investigation and observations in the schools most of the children who attended the church schools were living with their parents nearby or close relatives and were there to stay;

while most of the parents of children who went to the government school were in the villages (i.e., outside Yei town) or had already left town as refugees in order to prepare a place to welcome their children if Yei was to be invaded by the war. Peace promotes parental participation because it enables self-reliance for the parents and societal stability. Breidlid argues that the consequences of war for the civilian population have been devastating, and this deprives parents of the moral energy to play an active role in participation in their children's education, and consequently violates the right of the child to schooling (Breidlid 2019: 129). I also observed that following the local peace initiatives by the churches many South Sudanese refugees, particularly in Uganda, start returning, most of whom were school-aged children, but that education was not prioritized in the humanitarian response (Luate et al. 2019). The government has poor response to education because of its own priorities (e.g. military). Also the education development partners (NGOs) in the post-independence situation continued to support emergencies (food, medical) with less attention to education. The inadequate support from government including the NGOs is a key factor that draws parents closely to participate in the education of their children, particularly in church and privately managed schools.

The World Bank argues that prolonged conflict presents not only serious challenges for reconstruction in education but also it offers significant opportunities for the reform of education systems., Key among these for the situation in South Sudan are the decentralisation of structures to encourage parental involvement in school governance and building the capacity for reform, which includes supporting the participation of communities, local authorities, and other stakeholders (World Bank 2005: 19). The policy of decentralization is conflicted in South Sudan. The policy is decentralized on paper with the centralization in schools represented by the school headteachers responsible to the central government. In

practice, the absence of central government funding forces the local communities to run education themselves as a largely decentralized operation (so far as resources are concerned). So this is a significant area of conflict between local communities and central government, which ought to be mediated by members of Parliament (MPs) but this has not happened due to their own self or political interest. The policy ‘on paper’ clearly states ownership of schools by parents with government support and ‘in reality’ the headteachers are directed to implement according to government guidelines without financial support other than relying on parents. My experience shows that the relationship between parents and teachers in government schools is bitter as compared to that in church-run schools because decision-making in the former is controlled by headteachers who represent the national ministry in a top-down structure. The headteacher in the government school reports to the county education director. The director represents the national ministry of education. The result is the demotivation of parental participation, with the burden levied on the PTA members who take on roles in school management regardless of their lack of knowledge in management skills and are powerless to influence school leadership in resource mobilization, academic issues, etc. In the church school the decisions are based on parental consensus. This led parents to have control and ownership and that is a motivating factor to resource mobilization. This perhaps can be a model that the government can learn to improve its schools in addition to contributing its own resources to education.

8.3 Short term and achievable solutions

The policy implications discussed in sections 8.1 and 8.2 of this chapter are broad and not immediately practicable. The findings in chapters’ five to seven and my own experiences have shown that learners and teachers need immediate attention and support for the schools to function and for the learners to remain in the classrooms. This section offers short term

suggestions that can be put in place to improve the situation on the ground and the daily lives of the learners and teachers.

The continuing current imbalance between spending on defence on the one side and immediate priorities by the government in health and education on the other is unsustainable. The parents sustained education in the pre-independence period from 1983 to 2005 with major success despite little or no government contributions. Amidst challenges (especially poverty) today's parents similarly need to increase their financial contributions to meet the cost of financing education and food. Timely contributions will enable the school to pay teachers' salaries, and this will be a motivating factor despite the hyperinflation. In addition, the school will be able to procure the required stationaries for lesson preparation and examinations. Because of current parental expectations that the greater burden of school financing should now lie on the government, however, unless politicians and other leaders are honest about the situation this proposal will not be easy to achieve.

Food for education is an immediate need too. The school plan within the fees payment should factor in an amount for purchasing food items (maize flour, beans, etc.) for light meals in schools. Other schools have started doing this and this could be a model to improve the health and sustain children in the classrooms. Parents should also be encouraged to provide food in kind because some of them are farmers. This was successful in the pre-independence period. Further, most of the rural schools and some of the town schools have acres of lands. Currently the county departments of agriculture are provided with tractors from the office of the governor to boost livelihood and the schools could benefit from these immediately to cultivate their land for food for the school.

The findings show that the church schools through their parents' days mobilize and fundraise for school activities (e.g., construction of classroom blocks, toilets, etc.). This resource

mobilization can be widened to meet other school costs (teachers' incentives, running cost') if the parents are informed in advance for the purpose of each parents' day. This might work in church schools because these experiences do happen in some church schools. In return an accountability report needs to be presented to the parents in regular meetings as a motivating factor for improved contribution and enhanced learning. However, it would not work in private schools because of their regard as business entity, unless it has its own parental influence.

Despite the inadequate support from the government to the education sector, the churches (especially the Episcopal Church) have been able to raise their own additional funds from their church partners. For example, from 2014 to 2021 the Episcopal Church received a total of USD 5,808,945 (see chapter 5, section 5.2.2). This supplemented parental contributions and improved education provision in the face of the continuing conflict. In 2014 the government of South Sudan in collaboration with partners¹⁰¹ introduced Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS), with the aim¹⁰² of enabling access to girls and improving the quality of education. The initial idea of GESS was to target government schools. However, the churches (Episcopal and Catholic) were able to lobby and advocate from the government and partners for GESS to include church and community schools. This was successful and each church school that meets the criteria¹⁰³ is able to receive the capitation grants. On the other hand the government provides annual statistics, reports and partial training of teachers (in-service) although with support of partners. The voice of the church continues to remain stronger in resource mobilization. In absence of huge expenditure by the government it is able to participate in providing education services in addition to parental participation. These are

¹⁰¹ United Kingdom, Canada, Sweden, USAID, and the European Union

¹⁰² The GESS programme aims to contribute to removing these barriers and enable a transformative societal change through education. <https://girlseducationsouthsudan.org>

¹⁰³ Eligible schools need to meet the following requirements to receive capitation grants: Submit enrolment data Schools' Attendance and Monitoring System – SAMS – www.sssams.org. Provide a daily update on the attendance of pupils on SAMS. Have a School Governing Body in place to manage the funds.

doable interventions that support education to continue in the face of the conflict. In 2005 Episcopal Church developed administrative policies¹⁰⁴ for its own schools serving both the schools in the Sudan and Southern Sudan (before separation). However, following the insights of this research the board decided for the review of these administrative policies to reflect the current context of Episcopal Church in South Sudan with focus on shaping the roles of parents, teachers, PTA, learners, government, communities and education partners. The lack of peace does not offer enough environments to reach out to all the schools including those in the remote areas. The government on the other hand developed a new PTA policy manual¹⁰⁵ in 2016 that detailed the roles of parents and provided it to all the schools in the country through the county education offices, although it lacks monitoring and follow up in the schools due to inadequate resources. These are basic policies and practices that are doable with limited resources both in the Episcopal Church and government which can enhance learning in the face of the current context.

8.4 Conclusion

According to respondents the policy implications for improving parental, community and church participation in education in South Sudan could be on both long and short term based on: the achievement of peace and security, the capacity building of PTAs through awareness raising trainings, recognition of PTA structure at the county level and their roles, improved social services, the training and improvement of teachers' conditions of services; and through short term and immediately achievable proposals. The training of teachers is significant because it improves pedagogical and managerial skills for better learning outcomes

¹⁰⁴ Administrative Policies for Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS) Schools formulated during the Education Coordinators Workshop in Khartoum November 2005.

¹⁰⁵ Training Manual for Parent Teacher Association, School Management Committees and Board of Governors in South Sudan, 2016

(improved academic performance). In addition, improved teachers' conditions of services (better salary and allowances) will be a motivating factor. The learning achievement of the children strengthens parental participation and builds strong teacher-parent relationship. This demands reform of roles in government, church and schools. However, security reforms override all others because continued conflict means that parents and communities experience deteriorating livelihoods that in turn affect levels of parental participation in education and improving the quality of learning. Hence the impact of parental response and community participation in education is shaped by peace and stability and learning environment. This has significant policy implications for building an educational system that in the immediate future will largely rely on parental role in schooling. The short-term suggestions are feasible for the parents, community and church to implement to enable education function in the post-independent conflict context.

Illustrations of contextual issues during the research period



Photo 1 Morobo primary school destroyed by armed forces Photo by: Bp Data Amosa, 11th July 2022.



Photo 2 Church leaders plan to rebuild destroyed St. Joseph primary school: Photo by: Deco, June 2020



Photo 3 PTA chair giving training on PTA roles in Immanuel primary school: Photo by: Wani Justin, 28 Aug 2019



Photo 4 Elders and community leaders at Mugwo Payam for lobbying and advocacy meeting for reopening of Alero, Pawaya & Longamere Primary schools after closure for 3 years because of conflict: Photo by: Taban Francis, 6th May 2019



Photo 5 PTA Executive committee members & teachers on the verandah making plans to start a school term during conflict. Staff furniture has been stolen & classrooms are too dirty to use at the time of the meeting: St. Paul-Luzira Primary school: Photo by: Luete Charles, 15th July 2019.



Photo 6 Group photo after Civil-Church-Military local dialogue in rural community for peaceful co-existence in Yaribe, an example of a local peace initiative: Photo by: Todoko, 16th Oct 2019 & Aug 2022



Photo 7 Orientation of teachers in church schools on managing learners' conflicts because of emerging cultural differences: Photo by: Lubari, 16th Oct 2018: MU Hall.



Photo 8 Joint church-govt inspection of church schools to promote quality & relations. Its church initiative supported. Aweil East County: Photo by: Eluzai Khamis, 7th Sept 2017.



Photo 9 Poor and insecure roads to rural communities showing difficulty of access for social services: Terekeka-Awerial road: Photo by: Gido Lokosang, 16th Oct 2019.



Photo 10 Stranded IDP persons from Lasu, Ombasi, and Logo at ECSS Immanuel Cathedral Church due to violence: Photo by: Guya, 19th Nov 2019.



Photo 11 Opening prayer during local community, church and military dialogue on peaceful co-existence and access to road, markets, health and schools in Lasu Payam (local peace initiatives). Photo by: Elias Guya, 23rd Aug 2022.



Photo: 11

Photo 12 Internally displaced pupils learning, at Tore village payam. Photo by: Kenyingo Joseph, 10th March 2019.



Photo 13 Class showing most furniture stolen as firewood during conflict: Immanuel primary school. Photo by: Inspector Martin, 8th March 2021.

Photo 14 Follow up group discussion with respondents, Hai Gabat. Photo by: Baiga Francis, 11th Feb 2020.





Photo 15 Mothers Union (MU) presenting some of their products for income generating, some of which will be used for school fees & livelihoods at MU office, Yei. Photo by: Dure Turupania, June 2019.



Photo 15 MU in group work at Education Conference organized by the church on girls' education, the role of the church in mobilization, and mentoring at ECSS Guest House. Photo by: Taban Francis, 24th -26th



Photo 17 Mothers Union debate with church leadership about their role in education, rights and quota: Immanuel Cathedral Green Mango Centre. Photo by: Mary Gboka, 18th Oct 2021.

Photo 18 XXXX Govt primary school collapsed because of poor construction & absence of PTA supervision. Photo by: XXXX 27th Sept 2022.





Photo 19 IDPs from Kendila camped at Tangayika Episcopal Church in Morobo due to continued violence that involved rape by armed forces. Bishop in pink shirt addressing the IDPs. Photo by Driliga, 9th Oct 2022.

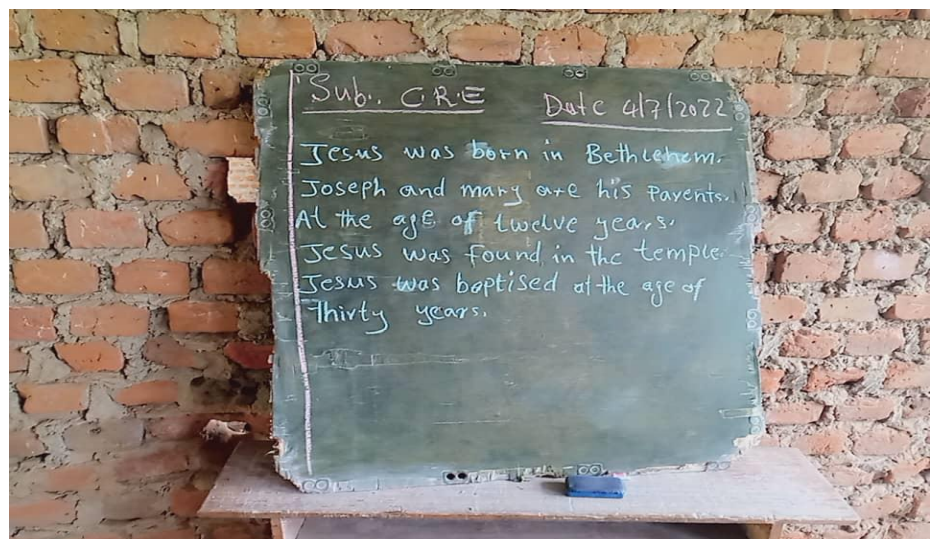


Photo 20 Kendila primary school remains occupied by armed forces. Local chiefs meeting armed leaders due to increasing violence causing displacement (IDPs). Photo by: Bn Data. 11th Oct 2022.



Photo 21 Lasu primary school abandoned and occupied by armed forces. The photo does not show the soldiers at their own request. Photo by: Rev. Kiden, 21st July Nov 2020:

Photo 22 Learning conditions of many government schools. XXX primary school. Photo by: Wani Justin, 4th July



Chapter Nine: Discussion

9.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the findings of my research. The main research question of this thesis is: what is the role of parents and community in the education of their children in Church schools in Yei County in the context of the post-independent conflict South Sudan?

The four subsidiary research questions, concerning cultural and contextual factors, the interpretation of participation in education, parental participation in improving education in the face of continuing challenges, and policy implications are integrated throughout the discussion. Four key cross-cutting themes have emerged from my research: 1) Instability of the roles and the challenges of managing the tensions between the roles of government, church, and parents; 2) the significant shifts in the roles of women and learner-parents in education, emerging from the continuing conflict and extreme poverty; 3) the factors influencing parental practices in participation in the education of their children; and 4) diversion of national budget, expenditure, and utilization of local resources. The discussion will demonstrate how the parents, community, the Episcopal Church, and government manage the tensions and pressures between the traditional, transitional (traditional to modern) and modern roles in the course of enabling modern education in a post-independence conflict situation.

9.1 Instability of roles and managing tensions

This section discusses the shifts in roles of government, church, and parents due to the on-going conflicts and pressures especially when roles are forcefully imposed upon parents and communities by government reluctance in supporting education. It explores the connection and tensions between role changes of all the stakeholders and how education continues to function through the flexibility of parents and communities operating loosely within a

bottom-up approach, with minimal government support except over policy (curriculum, inspection and examinations).

9.1.1 My own experience of role instability in education

My role as manager and agent of change in the Episcopal Church's educational programme became unstable, similar to those of the parents and community. When I started this research in 2016, I thought that the recently signed and revitalised peace agreement would return the country to a situation of normality. I anticipated my own professional role would change from being an education programme manager to an education advisor. The manager is responsible for day-to-day implementation of activities and overseeing the schools; while the advisor's role is to focus on external relations with government, education development partners and networking with other relevant stakeholders. Despite my new official role as education adviser within the church programmes I have continued to carry out the day-to-day management of education activities including the operation of schools. Those who had agreed to take on my former role as education programme manager were unable to complete their three months' probation period and resigned because of the conflicts and poor security. The clash in roles I experienced does not promote traditional career development but taught me more of the impact of conflict on the school systems and on human lives, and to reflect on the building of resilience. My own experience of the conflict between formal and actual roles is similar to that of thousands of actors in the education system of South Sudan. This led to constant shifting of roles, today as manager and another day as advisor and I had to create my own plan of activities to meet the organisational objectives. This resulted in role overload and role conflict because I became conditioned to manage two roles at the same time. In the break-down of formal roles, both traditional and modern, people turn to creating their own, and at the grassroots in South Sudan, they have done this by creating their own 'communities

of practice’, merging ‘traditional’ roles with ‘professional’ roles. Another way of describing the narrative reflected in the stories of how people interpret participation in education during the conflict is to see it as a resurgence of the bottom-up approach in face of the failure of a government–led ‘top-down approach’.

There are cultural and political tensions between communities at grass-roots level and authorities in the counties, states and national capital. South Sudan needs to learn urgently from other national contexts that have emerged from conflict, for example, Rwanda, South Africa, Liberia and Sierra Leone, which developed their own relevant post-conflict education strategies for national building.

9.1.2 The unstable government role in education during the post-independence conflicts

This subsection is about local communities taking on the government traditional role of financing education because of lack of government funding. It is mainly based on research question four concerning policy, but it also relates to parental and community participation in education in research question three. The expected role of government in schooling, as in other countries, is first and foremost the maintenance of peace, stability, and security. In addition, it promotes a philosophy of education and a curriculum, and recommends teaching methodologies, provides teaching and learning materials to learners and teachers, and pays teachers’ salaries and required remunerations. This is where the ‘top down’ approach is vital because these services require professional skills and huge expenditure. Churches and parents need a conducive and peaceful environment in which to take up their roles in the schooling of their children. South Sudan, like other countries that have experienced prolonged conflicts, has had its political and socio-economic systems and structures destroyed (see photo: 9, pg. 199). This has negatively affected the lives of its learners, young people, survivors, parents, teachers, and local communities, curricula, the quality of education, infrastructures, cultural

values and technical skills (Bentrovato et al. 2016). I recall here the words of one of the parents from the Episcopal Church school:

The political environment of South Sudan remains in turmoil and in Yei county many parents are displaced internally and others went to the refugee camps in the neighbouring countries of Uganda, Congo and Sudan. The result of displacement has made many of us parents lose livelihoods and sources of income to send our children to school. Those who migrated from the villages to Yei town due to fear lost the chance to recover their resources. The resources ended up been looted by unknown gunmen. Those who remained in the villages have lost the opportunities to send their children to school due to lack of access to safe road for coming from the villages to the town. In the last three years Yei has become an active war ground with various insurgencies (PCh 7: 28th March 2018, Hai mission).

At the time of writing (2023), South Sudan experiences continuing conflicts on both political and ethnic grounds that still claim lives and cause the destruction of property (Yei-UN 2023 news)¹⁰⁶. This situation has led the government to hand over some of its roles and particularly expenditure responsibilities to the parents and communities despite of its clear definition and structure of PTA role (see appendix 3, pg. 280), although the latter are in dire need themselves. This context presents role ambiguity because the government has neither understood nor acknowledge the impact of these role changes upon actors at the grassroots. Parents and communities are obligated to support school infrastructural development and pay teachers' salaries which, are supposed to be the government's role and responsibility because the parents are paying taxes to the central government although minimally. This 'minimal' payment of taxes does not mean the government has less money to carry out its responsibilities. The non-oil revenue (taxes) contributes 20% and oil contributes 80% to the national budget. Despite the size of the national budget the parents and communities experience role overload and role stress because of the burden put on them; and yet they have to meet their own basic needs. Nevertheless, this long term 'support to education' from 1990s (still continuing) by the parents is the key to the strong resilience holding the parents and

¹⁰⁶ Yei-UN news brief updates October 2023- <https://www.google.com/recent> attacks in Yei, South Sudan & (INSO 2021)

communities together, which enables the education system to function with significantly reduced government spending. However, it comes at a cost.

Vargas-Barón & Bernal (2016) argue that countries emerging from conflict need to implement three strategies in nation building and education: firstly to consider peace building, stability; and the reconstruction process for its people by improving the quality of education by investing in teacher training and better pay for teachers. Secondly to consider nation-building in the light of advocating for political and structural systems by encouraging people and communities to gain a sense of citizenship and belonging through contributing to the development of their own country. Thirdly to build a positive citizenship that helps to achieve more equitable socioeconomic development and social justice, promotes cultural maintenance and growth, intercultural understanding, respect and tolerance, and self-directed growth for all groups within the nation to improve security and peace for sustainable development (Vargas-Barón & Bernal cited in Barrios-Tao et al. 2016: 5).

Building on Vargas-Barón & Bernal, Davies argued that every national conflict creates trauma and the violation of human rights and in planning the rebuilding process it is necessary to consider psychological issues, peace education, justice, tolerance, and a respect for human rights. South Sudanese communities that are in continued conflict require psychosocial support as part of a healing process for the stressed parents. Human rights need to be considered so that the country will be attractive for returnees and internally displaced persons to come home and participate in nation building. The armed forces need to refrain from harassing and looting from civilians. Although the church has shown its effectiveness in negotiating local solutions, this can only be tackled at the national level through political and security reforms at the top level by the government. The government of South Sudan needs to

undertake security reforms in the management, discipline and training of its armed forces. A school inspector at a quarterly education review meeting remarked:

Schools of X, Y & Z are occupied by armed forces. The children in those areas could not access the school and they have to move to another location if their parents need their children to go to school. Families living around those schools are beaten most of the time. It was a way of threatening them to vacate their homes (Inspector, 26th April 2018, Jigomino).

Rwanda, South Africa, Liberia and Sierra Leone considered education as a vital tool in the post-conflict process. These countries explored in depth the roots, consequences, and resolutions of conflict, so that their governments developed the skills necessary to rebuild the functional and structural relationships damaged by the violence; and they learnt how to resolve existing differences on ethnic, religious, political and cultural grounds (Barrios-Tao et al. 2016). In connection with research question one concerning cultural and contextual factors, the root causes of conflicts in South Sudan are connected to ethnic, political and cultural issues, and if these are not addressed the country will remain in turmoil for years, creating an educational generation gap due to limited access for learners. A key problem is that there is no national army, and the armed forces act as individual militias under different commanders with their own ethnic loyalties. Political decisions in the country are taken at the top level without considering the needs of the citizens below with no bottom up engagement (Haider 2021) as evidenced by the extension of the transitional government and election period (R-ARCSSS 2022). The parliament acts as a rubber stamp of the government, not looking at the issues of its citizens but rather passing laws according to their own interests. This widens the gap between the grass-root communities of practice that are the backbone of education and the government at the centre and demotivates parental and community participation in education.

Rwanda, South Africa, Liberia and Sierra Leone have all worked hard to free schools and teacher training colleges from the violence, whether structural, physical, or symbolic, so that learners can receive the modern education they deserve (Davies 2015). South Sudan needs to

learn from this experience by removing the armed groups that have physically occupied its schools and colleges until today. This is primarily the task of the government.

In 1997, after the conflict in Liberia, the country had to cope with large numbers of children and youth who had missed out on formal education, and to re-integrate the school-age children into appropriate grades in the regular school system. The Liberian government also introduced an Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) for the youth in order to keep them in school, reduce the risk of their recruitment as combatants, and facilitate their reintegration into society at the same time as offering them educational opportunities (Longden 2013). South Sudan experiences a similar situation with a huge number of learners outside school, a situation exacerbated by COVID-19. Findings from teachers and learners (6.2.3) have shown that the South Sudan government introduced the ALP education programme but it is not given priority funding. The few ALP learning centres operate with support from the education development partners (NGOs) instead. In consequence, many youth continue to join armed groups and practice cattle raiding for survival.

This situation is also exacerbated by a poor school environment where teachers are not paid for several months, obliging them to engage in non-educational daily paid jobs for their livelihoods. The resulting redundancy (no lessons) of learners in the school compounds demoralises learners, who eventually dropout leading, to an increase in robberies and unplanned early pregnancies as a strategy to meet the demands of their social life.

The continuing conflict has a strong impact on education and needs corrective initiatives through the government, for example an integration of peace education into the curriculum and establishment of psychosocial support for learners in schools. However, this will require a commitment and funding from the central government. Experience has shown that the damage caused by violent conflict on an education system takes longer to put right than the

actual period of the conflict itself (UNESCO 2011). The political leaders from South Sudan need to have the will and commitment to embrace peace and in turn to allocate an appropriate budget for investment in education. The 2021/2022 budgetary allocation to education is 6% (MFEP 2021). This shows a significant increase in funding over previous year, but in practice less than 4% is transferred to the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) and poor conditions of learning still continue as demonstrated by low and irregular salaries of teachers, many untrained teachers in schools, etc. (Haider 2021). This practice continues to burden parents and communities with the responsibilities of schooling and the government reforms remain on paper¹⁰⁷. The continuous role overload burden parents and communities resulting in role strain. This has forced parents and communities to struggle to balance multiple conflicting and ambiguous roles. These include trying to reduce role strain in order to meet their social expectations. The perseverance of the parents and community through negative experiences of role conflict, role overload, role ambiguity and role strain is what led to the positive effect on their children's learning outcomes.

Barakat argues that many post-conflict governments have difficulty in supporting recurrent expenditures and the overall education system to meet the need for teachers and training. Parents, learners and teachers are forced to meet their own costs of education and training until the government is at recovery stage and able to contribute adequately to educational development (Barakat et al. 2013). Therefore, building an education system from a post conflict context for a new country like South Sudan requires both 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' approaches because local and national or international expertise and experiences need

¹⁰⁷ The South Sudan revitalized peace agreement of 2017 stipulated reforms: Political and military sector reform focuses on demilitarization of civilian centres, collection of long and medium range of weapons, cantonment of all forces and screening for recruitment into army, police and national security. Economic reforms are to: review legislation governing the Bank of South Sudan (BoSS), ensuring the statutory and supervisory independence of the Bank of South Sudan, review and implement the Strategic Economic development Roadmap (national development plan). Social and Service Cluster strategizes to organize and fund the five Ministries: Higher Education, Science and Technology; General Education and Instruction; Health; Public Service and Human Resources Development; and Labour (Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) 2018: 92, 100).

to be integrated in order to offer workable and contextual definitions of roles (B.J. Biddle 1986), and that is what school owners need to know for the provision of quality education. And South Sudan needs a government that shows that it is willing to give priority to internal development, a task made difficult given its expenditure on the military and its history of corruption. My experience indicates that the roles of the government personnel in the ministries and commissions are ill-defined and their capacity is too low to manage some of the issues they face (see appendix 3 for meetings attended). The government of South Sudan needs to invest in capacity development of staff who are in the working age (not beyond the age 65 as most of them are in the ministries) and their salaries have to be paid timely. This will be a motivating factor to improve their performance and reduce the chronic corruption.

Findings from this research have shown that the continuing conflict and the voluntary repatriation of South Sudanese refugees from Uganda and the Congo have overwhelmed the government budget, which is unable to meet the increasing demand for education apart from its main focus on military and defence. Records from SSRC have shown that some trained teachers had returned (from Congo and Uganda) who might be resourceful, but the poor remuneration has forced them to seek other jobs to earn their living. The extreme need of the local population has attracted churches especially the Episcopal Church to increase its investment in peace building, relief and education despite the resulting shift in resource expenditure away from their mission activities (evangelism and outreach). The next section discusses the shift in roles of the Episcopal Church in education.

9.1.3 The changing role of the Episcopal Church in education during the post-independence conflict

I now turn to discuss and analyse the role (both traditional and modern) of the Episcopal Church and parents in sustaining schooling through the building of ‘communities of practice’.

The role of the churches in South Sudan in particular the Episcopal Church as shown by the findings is largely on supporting fees payment for vulnerable learners, advocating for equal opportunities particularly for girls in schooling, resource mobilization and peace building, managing a significant number of schools, running of TTCs, influence of government educational policy alongside its spiritual formation role.

Uemura & Lessing argue that community participation in education has to be a dynamic interactive process that recognizes the importance of the local context. This is particularly relevant to the task of strengthening and encouraging girls in schooling. The Episcopal Church initiated mini scholarships in its schools for ‘intelligent’¹⁰⁸ learners, with lower points’ consideration for girls. In South Sudan where traditional cultures confine the role of women to domestic activities, such as kitchen, garden work and childcare, it is a significant change to engage women in modern roles, such as the school education of their children. According to UNESCO (2018) the literacy rate for women in South Sudan stands at 28% and this inevitably limits the participation of women in their own and public affairs. Knöbl argues that to adopt modern practices requires dismantling the traditional norms to pave the way for progress (Knöbl 2003 cited from Perera and Mcleod 2023). The Episcopal Church has female ministers or priests but few female headteachers and this requires changing local cultural practices and advocating for training more female teachers to promote gender equality. Nishimura argues that local community and government have their own weaknesses in a participatory education process in planning and decision making. Involving professionals, families, community groups and government officials can support the community in identification of learning gaps that can enhance equity and access in education, for example, the need for female teachers in schools (chapter three section 3.4.3). It is a

¹⁰⁸ In this research discussion the term ‘intelligent’ is used for learners who have passed with a recommended grade to win a scholarship

critical policy development process for building local democracy in bottom-up and top-down approaches.

Developing policy issues in education, such as school development, requires consideration of the cultures and contexts of the parents and the church. For example, there is no policy and standard fee for church schools other than that decided by parents and the local community in a particular school. This means that at least Church schools have the funds to pay teachers on time, even though these schools are unable to meet the cost of living of their teachers because of the country's hyper-inflation.

The local peace initiatives as transitional roles (traditional and modern) by the churches (Episcopal Church & Roman Catholic Church in the lead) and their associated communities have successfully forged relations with the armed forces in maintaining a minimal peace for schooling in the conflict areas and internally displaced people's camps¹⁰⁹ despite the low quality of modern education they provide to their learners.

The churches demonstrated some potential ability in political mobilization for the separation from the Sudan government in 2005 and during the referendum that led to independence in 2011. However, today the government has not shown any commitment to the signed 2017 revitalized peace agreement and there is lack of political good will between the government and opposition parties. Moreover, the government has not given that recognition to the church as it did in the CPA 2005. It has continued to destabilise the communities, igniting conflicts, for example, through the militarization of cattle raiding which has become an excuse for political violence (Wild et al. 2018). To rescue the lives and property of people the

¹⁰⁹ In this discussion the IDP camps are those families which have been displaced from their own places of residences or homesteads and have gathered in a school or a church for safe or protection.

churches (chapter five: 5.2.2) have had to intervene by calling for local peace initiatives to reduce hostilities and to borrow time until a sustainable peace agreement is achieved.

Findings from local leaders, parents and teachers (5.2) have shown that government has ignored the local churches' grassroots peace initiatives which have contributed to holding the communities together for several years. The government policy is contradictory; on one hand it has changed its role to provoking conflicts with rebellious groups rather than initiating and acting as a peace maker as the churches have done. At the same time, the government struggles to curb the conflicts it has fostered in the country by diverting national resources to support military interventions.

The church initiatives of promoting peace and schooling for the last twenty-one years of conflict at the local level are forms of basic grass-root communities of practices in sustaining education and building local democracy. The Ministry of Peace Building could learn from these local church initiatives and continue to engage the churches, directly or through the South Sudan Council of Churches¹¹⁰ in strengthening community peace negotiations and democracy. Nevertheless, the church has only limited resources and runs the risk of being diverted from its primary spiritual traditional role, and the government of South Sudan has other ministries and directorates, for example, Peace and Relief and Rehabilitation Commissions which can contribute to peace building, rehabilitation and recovery. I now move further to discuss the shift in roles of parents in education.

¹¹⁰ South Sudan Council of Churches is an ecumenical body comprised of seven member churches (Episcopal Church, Roman Catholic Church, African Inland Church, Pentecostal Church, Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Church & Evangelical Presbyterian Church), and associate Churches in South Sudan

9.1.4 The essential roles and changes in parental roles in education during post-independent conflicts

The discussion in this subsection is based on the first three research questions and to some extent also relates to policy. Following the destruction of the education system during the twenty-one years of war (1983-2005) and the post-independent conflicts of 2013 and 2016 education has relied almost solely upon parents and communities. The role of parents therefore changed during the conflicts, a change that has continued when the acute conflicts ended. There is evidence from this research that parents were mobilizing resources in terms of fees and provision of support in kind to teachers (e.g. parents tending the gardens of the teachers in villages). This demonstrated an innovative ‘bottom-up approach’ because schools planning was based on the local needs (Kendall 2007b). Hendricks & Lucey (2013) argue that a country emerging from conflict needs to take into account the principle of local ownership and community involvement determined by its own local human resource capacity and consider a gradual development process with a focus on strengthening the peace architecture and tackle issues of gender equality. Government alone cannot manage the provision of education alone without the wider participation of community and parents. The evidence on parental responses and community participation collected in this study demonstrate this.

Uemura & Lessing argue that community participation in education is possible when a ‘bottom up’ community approach is considered as a basic unit necessary for planning and the decentralization of activities at the local level (Lessing et al. 2012: 6). According to my research findings based on research question three, on establishing and strengthening of a PTA committee in an emerging community, the approach requires recognizing population power structures, traditions and cultures. In addition South Sudan needs to consider

strengthening its grass-root educational ‘communities of practice’ (Wenger 2015: 1) by having committed and trained PTA members in all schools. According to the findings (chapter 6, section 6.2.6), parents have the possibility of building such a network defined by local cultures, sharing information and becoming practitioners working on agreed objectives. The challenge in doing this relates to the limited parental and local community skills in professional school management, and inadequate information on educational policy issues from the national level.

The internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and host communities that exist together in a local community (teachers, learners and their parents) in the conflict strengthened the role of the PTA as a platform for information sharing in the existing schools and in the new schools of displaced communities. This process of forging new communities is what has led to the continuation of education in South Sudan for last twenty years of conflict despite of the role overload and role ambiguity on parents. The contextual factors which relate to research question one are what led to the creation of new communities and in part to the process of building ‘communities of practice’ (Wenger 2015: 1) at the grass roots levels.

The displaced and host communities in a particular school location are brought together from different cultural backgrounds for common objective (learning of children) despite of their weakness in level of capacities, example, instability in knowledge (management). Their common interest is the learning outcome of their children which then builds cohesion for democratic community participation, the planning and the decentralization of activities at the local level, as well as creating wider geographical grass-root communities of practice (e.g., PTA trainings, awareness on role of parents). Therefore, it is easier to build a relationship between the school management and the parents if there are common objectives which impact schooling. Despite the grass-root communities’ inadequate professional knowledge

and capacity, their ‘bottom-up approach’ values commitment and trust. A traditional leader (chief) who is nominated to oversee a school in a given community might not have the necessary formal qualifications but can mobilize parents and teachers for schooling to take place despite the apparent risk to pedagogical and learning outcomes because of his reputation, influence and commitment as shown by my research findings (chapter 7.2.2-7.2.4). In this critical period of transition, African communalism is actively promoting modernity because traditional roles are linked to local government in the protection and provision of social services (Logan 2008) and maintaining kinship, aspirations, values, beliefs and unity (Ikuenobe 2018a). Evidence from teachers and parents have shown that an organised and informed PTA committee strengthens the school administration as it supports the headteacher in the day-to-day running of the school and improves learners’ academics and discipline. However, recruiting unqualified teaching staff leads to poor quality assurance, such as the unprofessional setting of examinations and inappropriate school planning that might contradict national education policy. Nevertheless, African communalism through the traditional role of the chief remains the default mode in resource and community mobilization in supporting modern roles in education.

Role theory considers the division of labour amongst the community a key component despite the fact that, in this context, members come from different cultural or ethnic backgrounds. The division of labour in role theory refers to the skills that the actor has in fulfilling social roles. This explains a criticism of Western role theory in a traditional setting. However, the concept of role theory becomes useful to assist in the redefinition of PTA roles to better fit the South Sudan local context. The emergence of grass-root ‘communities of practice’ and the aspect of community participation, planning and decentralization of activities at school levels are evidence of the strength of the traditional connections that helped education function minimally in South Sudan during the years of conflict. On the

other hand, national policy cannot rely solely on local networks, and needs broader national directives to ensure uniform educational development across the country. The government has recognized the parental and community practices in sustaining schools, but it does not supplement their efforts and strategies in building and maintaining relationships among the schools, churches and communities despite their different contextual, cultural and social backgrounds. Role theory considers that a person given a responsibility should have the capacity to occupy the given roles and then be able to operate within a stable social system. However, it has to be inclusive of the cultures both of stable communities and those emerging from conflict.

Similarly, the ‘bottom-up approach’ emphasizes parental and community participation in school issues without considering the need for expertise for the person given a specific modern role. For instance, a PTA member nominated to sit on a finance committee needs to have basic skills in accounting. However, in my working experience with parents during school meetings some do not know how to present reports and they raise policy issues which are decided by the central government, like curricula and certification (MoGEI 2017). ‘Bottom-up’ and ‘top-down approaches’ need to function collaboratively and in a clearly demarcated design. This only becomes feasible when there is political will from the central government to recognise the parental and community roles; and there is sustainable peace to allow the government to reduce its expenditure on military and defence and increases its investment in social services including education.

Parents in most local schools include a mix of host communities, returnees and internally displaced persons. The returnee parents from Uganda brought with them skills in health education concerned with prevention of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and practices of birth control and sex education that are passed on by teachers or members of the communities to

learners. This demonstrates a shift from traditional cultural practices to those based upon modernity. In this study this process is seen within new grassroots ‘communities of practice’. This is at variance with the cultures of the host communities, who are unaffected by modern practices from Uganda, and who want their children to be married early in order to obtain a bride price, more desired now because of the prolonged conflicts which have destroyed their livelihoods. The host and incoming communities are in a cultural clash that requires the attention of local communities, churches and government to forge commonalities through new ‘communities of practice’. The working together of host and returnee communities is both a strength and weakness. The host communities are sometimes rude because of trauma and the returning communities somehow demonstrated peaceful co-existence due to the peace education offered to them at the refugee camps. The cultural clash is sometime demonstrated at water points when women from the host community and returnees fight.

The cultural differences between the host and incoming communities (returnees and internally displaced persons) have led to a series of conflicts between families and have led many learners to have only limited access to schooling as the parental focus was on survival. Concerns about the effects of pandemics and the laws regarding early pregnancy of learners (e.g. General Education Act, 2012 & Girls’ Education Strategy)¹¹¹ are national issues and the structural parental role remains important in prevention, advice and warning but government needs to be in the driving seat in terms of policy formulation and implementation. The changing of roles in any society requires a strategic approach from all parties, whether community, government or development agencies, and a willingness to demonstrate commitment because it involves cultural shifts, that require changes of attitudes. Rwanda and South Africa experienced a similar situation in their post conflict response to education;

¹¹¹ Girls’ Education Strategy for South Sudan 2015-2017 & Laws of south Sudan in the General Education Act, 2012 states that sexual relationships between teachers or staff members and learners, molestation, and sexual harassment of learners shall be prohibited; and any teacher or staff member who impregnates a learner shall be dismissed and deregistered (Yoh 2017 & MoGEI 2012: 20)

teachers were given refresher courses on how to handle learners from diverse cultural backgrounds and those with trauma. Stephens argues that culture is both what people think and do. It concerns the conditions of how they describe their beliefs and actions (Stephens 2020: 7). In this study the PTAs can be seen creating new school communities from diverse cultures and traditions. This reflects Edward Said's statement that cultures are humanly made structures of both authority and participation (Said 1993 cited in Stephens 2020:7). The cultures the returnees brought with them from Uganda require communities, schools and government to handle the integration process carefully (chapter five). This commitment is lacking in South Sudan. As has already been mentioned, the integration of host and incoming communities is a key domain for emerging grass-root communities.¹¹²

Children with disabilities are a category of disadvantaged learners in South Sudan to whom little attention is accorded by parents or government so far as their schooling is concerned. However, some parents are keen to support children with disabilities by making local assistive devices to enable them to go to school or to socialise with other children. Teachers, parents and communities need to be informed that supporting children with disabilities is primarily the role of the parents with advice and support from social workers in the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare. For the provision of assistive devices the parents require medical advice in terms of measurements and how to make adjustments as the child grows. The strong traditional cultural beliefs that regard children with disability as a misfortune should be discouraged by engaging massive campaigns through local government and community structures, churches and schools. Schools need to have ramps to enable access but parents must still demonstrate their practice of love and commitment (6.1.42-

¹¹² Characteristics of host and incoming communities (returnees): Host communities value marriage of girls because of urgent need for wealth to support their family needs, like food, while incoming communities (returnees) promote girls education because of the awareness offered to them at the refugees camps about the importance of education especially girls education.

some parents still continue to mishandle children with disabilities) at home besides their traditional and modern roles of providing food, learning materials, school fees and other related school demands.

As already noted the integration of the host communities and returnees raises cultural challenges and is a source of conflict among some families. Similarly, findings have shown that teachers in schools experience different cultural behaviours from learners which teachers need to deal with gradually in building a new school culture. For example, in chapter seven (section 7.1.2) one of the female teachers in an African Inland Church (AIC) school remarked:

...a learner ... shouted at me . . . It discouraged me from teaching and I went out without coming back to this class for a week. The class was concerned and also chased out the boy who made the misconduct because they were hungry for missing my lessons for a week. The school disciplinary committee called the parent, and the parent was at his knees [the parent asking for a pardon to his child] and in reaction started beating his son in front of the teachers... (TAC2: 17th March 2019, AIC School).

Parents at the family levels have modern roles that are beyond their capacity, for example, a non-literate parent is now expected to provide parental support for her child's homework; but there are roles that sit well within their capacity such providing food or school needs. Thought needs to be given to traditional and modern roles parents can play to prevent role ambiguity and role strain.

9.2 The shift in the roles of women and learner-parents in education

The shifts in the roles of women and learner-parents have been observed when examining the response of parents to community participation in education in various cultural and contextual situations. As in many countries the role of women is manifested in South Sudan principally through livelihoods and schooling. In livelihoods women are engaged in agricultural practices and small-scale business; and in schooling by being members of PTA

committees¹¹³ and the provision of learning needs (fees, learning materials, etc.). During the period of the research, women have gained stronger modern and traditional roles. This has been strongly emphasized by one of the local chiefs:

I am a family head and local chief in this area. I do small gardening and the yield cannot take us for the whole year. My wife supports me in digging and also she goes to the market to do petty business. Her contribution is bigger than what I offer and the little amount she gets we use it to buy basic needs (salt, soap, cloths) and pay fees in the nearest government school (PLC1: 3rd Nov 2019, Hai Guwafa)

The men's fear when accessing the rural areas for agriculture because of being targeted as political spies, and the threat of their businesses being looted has currently shifted their roles and responsibilities to women, resulting in role overload and role strain for the latter.

The access of women and children to the markets and gardens is an opportunity for them to mobilize resources to support the family and education of their children. However, some of these roles are imposed on the women and children because it was not their decision to take on onerous roles such as heavy digging alone in the gardens or lifting heavy loads of food items on their heads. This latter is a traditional role, but the heavy tasks are no longer shared with the men, for example, digging. Another danger in the current situation is that women who go outside Yei town to the rural areas for marketing and gardening are raped and are sometimes robbed on their way home.¹¹⁴ Also sometimes boy children aged 15-18 are recruited forcefully into the armed groups (Billy 2017). In addition, children left at home to take care of younger siblings in the absence of their mothers miss schooling and doing heavy work beyond their age.

The resilient participation of women in business activities during the conflicts in Yei encouraged the Episcopal Church and other education and community empowerment

¹¹³ In a PTA meeting attended women were 8 out of 25 (Duku 2018); and the PTA national policy suggest for 25% of the PTA committee to be female (MoGEI 2016)

¹¹⁴ Human Rights Violations and Abuses in Yei, July 2016 to January 2017
https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/SS/UNMISSReportJuly2016_January2017.pdf

organisations to invest in women through the provision of loans to enhance livelihoods and education. This led to the formation of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) and is step towards commercialisation (Friedman 1994: 212) and modernity (Shilliam 2010: 1). However, the literacy level of the women is low, and it is hard for them to calculate their profits due to poor records management. This has led many market women in Yei to remain at the same level of business for several years; their marketing is hand to mouth, and any little gain goes to support the education of their children. The members of the VSLA are women with families, often with good records with the local communities and they fulfil a stabilising role in the situation of crisis. They need to be assisted to develop their roles further. Basic literacy should be offered to them through microfinance loan officers and the adult literacy program (part of the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) in the national MoGEI (Ministry of General Education and Instruction). Currently banks in South Sudan do not offer loans to VSLA for fear of losing their capital. Durkheim argues that the process of modernizations is a gradual change and requires time and a shift from traditional to modern practices (Durkhiem 2020). Economic reforms through the banking and microfinance institutions should recognize VSLA as appropriate recipients of basic loans. The VSLA are similar to the recognised Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (Saccos) in Uganda and Kenya. Perhaps South Sudan needs to regard the VSLA as Saccos and register them in accordance with cooperative principles.

Learners who support their own education because their parents are active soldiers in the front lines, or at a distance in the rural areas, or are in other ways vulnerable, are referred to in this research as 'learner-parents'. This category of learners is a newly emerging group in schooling. They plan their time daily to fulfil both learning and livelihood. The findings indicated that these learners have limited hours in the classrooms, less interaction with teachers or come to school late and eventually miss some of the lessons. This leads to poor

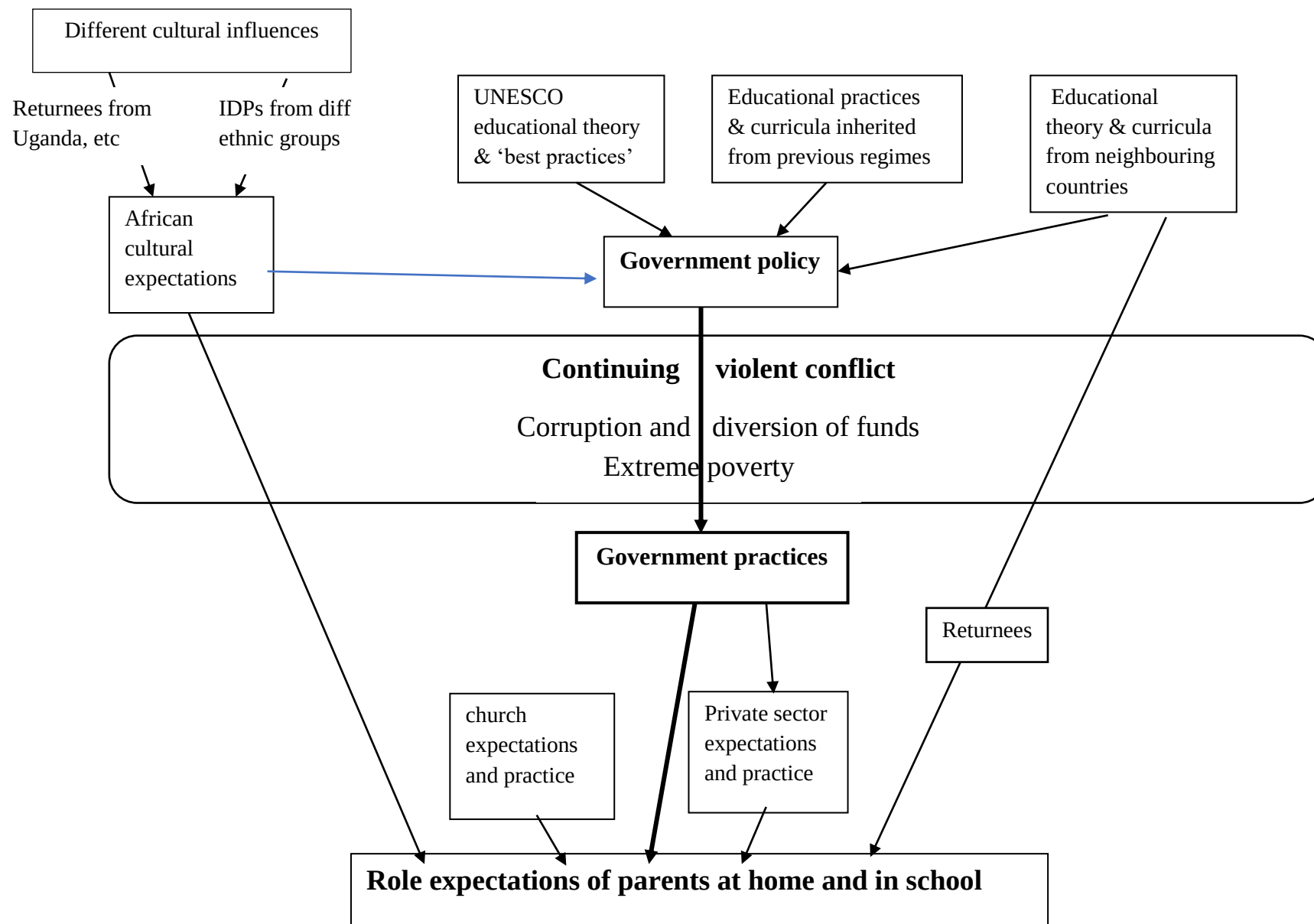
performance and, due to hardship, some resort to theft and other anti-social behaviour. The traditional and modern roles (searching for food, clothing, raising money for school fees and learning materials) imposed upon these children violate their right to learning and contribute to child labour, something rooted in contextual factors. Biddle & Hindin argue that the allocation of roles needs to be both an interactional process so that the individuals (actors) who are given the roles are willing to take responsibility and implemented with regard to ability for effective performance. The argument of Biddle & Hindin is based upon countries with established system of education (Europe) that have defined roles and structures, but in the context of South Sudan, which is characterised by conflicts, roles are developed as a necessity to enable basic education to continue despite issues of quality, rights, age or capacity.

In summary, my research findings have shown that women in particular develop new and stronger roles to build resilience as they learn to survive in the conflict. However, findings demonstrated (chapter 5, section 5.1.4) that there is lack of political will from the top leadership to make use of these potentials. In addition, we have the misuse of authority over the local population. The threat of violence to parents, especially men and community leaders, discourages them from taking a lead in school leadership.

In 9.1 and 9.2 we discussed the instability of roles and managing tensions which affects work in government, churches and management of education and has led to new roles of parents and community. The Episcopal Church and parents especially women and learner-parents continue to shoulder a role overload and the burden of education in the face of government inability or unwillingness to shoulder its responsibilities. Now in 9.3 we discuss how parents continue to sustain education despite issues of quality and poverty.

9.3 Factors influencing parental expectations and practices in education participation

Factors influencing parental expectations and practice of participation in education in South Sudan



The Ministry of Education priorities for 2017-2027 were access and equity, quality and management for general education and instruction under the National General Education Policy 2017-2027 with a focus on early childhood development, primary and secondary education, besides other sectors of alternative education systems (AES) and TVET. The aim was to improve access to and equity in education through payment of salaries, capitation grants, and cash transfers to girls who are enrolled in upper primary and secondary education (MoGEI 2017: 7). However, the government's policy expectations and practices remain rhetorical with a narrow focus on policy, curriculum, assessments and to lesser extent inspection.

In principle, South Sudan should have the resources to implement these education priorities. The country is endowed with natural resources such as oil which constitutes over 80% of the national income and the land is fertile for agriculture, which used to produce a significant tonnage of coffee to the world market through farmers' cooperatives before the war in the 1980s. Despite these resources, the continuing violence in the country has led to extreme poverty for most parents. Those with resources have had them destroyed by bandits or looted by armed men, which has affected their livelihoods and their ability to meet school needs (e.g. school fees).

Harber & Davies argue that school effectiveness or success is primarily associated with more resources allocated for teacher training and teachers' conditions (remuneration). This enhances outputs, for example, better performance of children (Harber & Davies 2002). Formal education is a process of modernization and Rostow argues that in the process of change modernization is enhanced by access to technology, construction of infrastructure, political change that transforms society, economic growth and investment in education (Rostow 1990). The expectation of the church and the private sector was for the government

to train teachers and improve the inspection of schools to improve quality learning. However, both the research findings and my own experiences of education (chapter two, section 2.1.2) have shown that the functional teacher training colleges are church-managed and there is poor collaboration between the government and the church and private sector. This demonstrates the unprofessional functional and structural roles (Biddle 1986) of government characterised by inadequate investment in education. Consequently, the church and private schools formulate their own plans and policies.

Churches (Episcopal, Catholic, AIC, etc.) and private schools have to fund the operational costs of their schools by school fees. Both categories charge high fees. Private school fees include also a profit. The findings show (chapter five, section 5.1.1) that the private schools are too expensive for the majority of the learners. In private schools children are sent home when full payment of fees is not made. Church schools constantly remind the parents of their financial contribution without resorting to sending the children home.

Despite the government slogan of Universal Primary Education, the majority of children still remain at home and the expectation of the parents for free education has never been met. Learners and parents in South Sudan consider education as a ticket for a happy life because of their expectations of white collar jobs. De Ruyter and Wolbert (2020) argue that the central purpose of education is human flourishing and to create a modernity. It is a right of every child in which governments and communities are to play an enabling environment. Therefore, there is a need to improve the government schools and allocate reasonable resources to the church and community schools to improve access. The current minimal government resources given to church and community schools are donations from educational international partners channelled through the government. The actual national income from oil or other revenues is not used to benefit these schools. This contradicts the Education

Policy Act (2012)¹¹⁵ which requires all schools and children in the country to benefit from the national government through their schooling. The failure of government to provide resources for schooling does not meet parental expectations which was their hope after independence. It is a call to the parents to remind the government of their role through the PTA in providing educational resources equally.

The effects of the turmoil South Sudan experienced after independence, which continue until today, strongly influence parental practices in education participation.

The returnees from the neighbouring countries bring new cultural challenges in education to South Sudan. In 2018 South Sudan experienced daily arrivals of about 10-15 returnee families from Uganda and Congo (and continuing) as registered by SSRRC¹¹⁶ with most of them being children. There is a need to provide education to very large numbers of learners as well as an alternative education system to cater for children and young adults who previously were deprived of education and now need the skills to earn a living (SSRRC 2018). These are policy issues that require huge investments and political commitment. The returnee learners are dissatisfied with the South Sudan education system because the teachers are irregular, untrained and rude to learners. Class assessments are given depending on the mood of the teacher, since there is poor motivation and remuneration. The curriculum and part of the subject content were inherited from the previous regimes of Sudan, neighbouring countries (Uganda, Kenya) and Western (UNESCO) contemporary educational theories, including child rights and sex education. This has brought cultural conflicts between the host and returnee families and communities. The educational practices, delivery and management

¹¹⁵ General Education Act, 2012, Chapter Five: Resources Allocation, Financial Management and Accountability.

¹¹⁶ South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) register all returnees and IDPs and work in collaboration with International Office for Migration (UN-IOM). RRC is a legal entity that works in collaboration with the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management and it has representation at State, County and Payam level. <https://southsudanrrc.org>

challenge the government's theoretical expectations, and raise policy concerns as evidenced in the research findings (chapter 6, section 6.1.4). The cultural differences between the returnees, internally displaced, and host communities are challenging to the parents at homes and teachers in the school. This requires careful management of the role of parents at home and teachers in the schools in order to meet the learning expectations.

There are similarities here with the Kenya collective 'Harambee' policy of parental participation in the education of their children (Noreh 1988) alongside the government's role. However, the parental and community representation on Board of Governors or School Committees in Kenya were in the context of settled communities. This is contrary to South Sudan where the new communities of different ethnicities and traditions are only beginning to cohere and lack the knowledge to promote modern practices of parental participation. Yei County of South Sudan in particular receives children from different parts of the country who are from the sixty-four cultures, and different traditions, religious affiliations and beliefs. Some of these tribes are cattle keepers, by tradition prone to take up arms, who tend to value animals more than education; and experience suggests they are not easily mobilized for community issues such as school construction, or the cleaning of local feeder roads to a water point or health centre. Shilliam (2010) argues that for modernization to take place requires a move from 'traditional' communities to modern societies. Ikuenobe, however, cautions that the transition to modernity should be balanced with traditional practices because communalism in the African setting promotes unity, togetherness, brotherliness and cooperation which are vital elements to enhance the drive to globalization (Ikuenobe 2018b). Yei is an agricultural community significantly influenced by missionary education with a culture of community involvement. The cohesion of these multicultural and ethnic differences needs to be considered in building new school 'communities of practice' and in pushing for greater bottom-up involvement, planning and decision making. Parents and

teachers have to learn how to handle children from cattle keepers and from agricultural families whose behaviour differs, both at home and at school, because cultural practices impacts up on the intellectual and moral development of the learners in society.

Friedman argues that culture is power because it describes individual characteristics of the past, present and building of the future (Friedman 1994). The bottom-up approach has been useful in providing learning access to children and creating a new learning environment and communities at the school and community levels. The government needs to consider its top-down planning for reconstruction of the education system because of the need for huge funding and development of relevant policies despite its challenge of being less or non-consultative with the people at the community and school levels. The risk is that government planning will remain mainly bureaucratic, which will hold back the development of community knowledge base (e.g. local PTA management skills). Harber & Davies (2002) warns education practitioners that bureaucracy causes unnecessary delays in implementation and creates hierarchical dependencies. This thesis shows that South Sudan needs both ‘bottom-up’ and ‘top down’ approaches in building its emerging communities of practice in order to support and enhance the education of its learners.

One factor influencing parental expectations and practice of participation in education is that the churches (Episcopal, Catholic, AIC, etc) and private sector’s expectation that the government would train teachers and improve the inspection of schools has not been met. In practice the government teacher training colleges have all but collapsed. Episcopal Church teacher training colleges remain functional but with financial constraints to quality improvement. Similarly parental and community expectations of universal primary education (UPE) as announced by the government for equal access of learners remains just on paper. Government has prioritized the military sector with social services including education

second. In addition, it is widely believed that government officials corruptly misappropriate the social services funding for their personal interests. These factors increase the growing involvement of parents, communities and funding agencies in education participation. The financing and support of schools are left to parents, especially women and learner-parents who are unwillingly burdened and overloaded with the mobilization of resources amidst the on-going conflicts. The expectations of returnee learners' from Uganda and Congo was frustrated when they encountered untrained and unprofessional¹¹⁷ teachers in the classroom and continuing violence caused by armed forces. This led some parents in 2020/21 to take their families back to neighbouring countries to seek better education and for safety. The continuing violence is an opportunity for the government to divert some of the resources allocated for security purposes in a claim for peace building.

9.4 Diversion of national budget, expenditure, and the utilization of local resources

In 9.1, 9.2 & 9.3 we discussed the instability of roles, especially in government administration and education management as well as the new roles in education emerging for Episcopal Church, communities and parents. These shifts in roles have led to the burden of education being placed on parents, especially women and learner-parents; and these and other factors impact parental expectations, practices and participation in education. In this section I discuss issues relating to national expenditure and the use of national and local resources as influencing education delivery by parents, community and church.

Findings have earlier shown (5.1.2) that the national budget of South Sudan does not prioritize education and learning continues to be in poor situations (see photos: 12 & 13, pg.201). For example, the South Sudan national budget for the year 2021/2022 proposed to

¹¹⁷ Unprofessional teachers characterized by poor communication skills, rude, tardy, frequent absenteeism without clear reasons, among others.

spend a total of SSP 287.0 billion (717.5 million USD) and the education sector is allocated SSP 49.2 billion (12.3 million USD), (MFEP 2021). The budget distribution shows that education will receive 17.1% of the national resource envelope but in practice less than 6% will be transferred to the Ministry of Education as evidenced by the previous national budgets. Out of the 4-6% budget 80% is directed to recurrent spending like salaries which are not in practice paid as recommended; with a minimal focus on capital goods and services (e.g. school structures). It is a policy question concerning the government's implementation of the budget as passed by parliament. In case of a shortfall, the public should be made aware in a transparent manner if the parents are to be expected to meet some of the cost. Rostow argues that modern education is expensive and needs the country to have a stable military and security situation to enable increased investment in education and political change for societal transformation (Rostow 1990). The critique of modernization theory is that it is associated with colonialism, capitalism and its tendency to ignore the role of culture and history in shaping societal development; but its concepts clarify how each country prioritizes its development process (Webster 1984). For example, Uganda in its post-conflict recovery through UPE made political commitment in public financing by improving its education budget from 10% progressively to 25% despite other shortcomings. Unfortunately, in South Sudan due to the high level of corruption in the government and continued conflicts donors have tended to pull back or implement projects themselves. The context is worsened by the extension of the Transitional Period of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) by two years (R-ARCSSS 2022). This involves more diversion and commitment of national resources to political and defense sectors and the burden of education delivery will continue to rely on parents and communities.

In the celebration of South Sudanese independence in 2011, the President declared in a loud voice, ‘education for all’ and pledged full support to social services, including education, because of the boom in the oil money. Findings have thrown light on the policy implications in the section of training and improvement of teachers’ services (section 8.2.1). The result is poor performance of duties in public services due to lack of motivation, caused by a poor salary payment system and structures; and government employees and their families live and work in poor conditions. This has a negative impact on teachers’ own parental participation in the education of their own children as they have no access to financial resources. One parent (a community elder) expressed concern (section 8.2.1) about the poor working conditions of teachers in Yei in government managed schools:

Teachers working conditions is characterized by poor and irregular salary payments, absenteeism, immoral behaviour of coming to school in hangover after drinking last evening. Worst of all most of them are not trained or even are primary school dropouts and learners doubt their teaching capacity especially in the government schools. ... (Community Elder, 19th Nov, 2019, Diocesan L-Shape Block).

The President and national leadership need to respect budgetary allocations, avoid the diversion of funds, and demonstrate political will to bring sustainable peace so that the budgetary allocation to social services is improved followed by increased accountability, transparency, and appropriate utilization of resources.

Local resources are significant, for example, teak trees which are individually and community owned. Unfortunately, these resources are not tapped because of their inaccessibility in remote locations, due in turn to poor security. The companies permitted to explore and exploit the government or private forests are controlled by corrupt government officials for self-gain. The minimal agricultural produce (groundnuts, maize, simsim, coffee) of the peasant farmers, for example, in Yei do not have markets because of poor feeder roads and poor security for buyers from the capital Juba or other towns in South Sudan. The farmers’ cooperatives which used to facilitate the marketing were all destroyed and or collapsed

because of the prolonged conflict. The revitalized peace agreement (2017) which is the hope for bringing peace to facilitate policy improvement on the exploration of national and local resources is becoming doubtful to many citizens because conflicts and violence are continuing. This calls for the architects of peace in South Sudan to improve and expedite the peace process in order to motivate local communities in the continuing conflict through economic empowerment to enhance the education of their children and their livelihoods.

South Sudan at independence in 2011 developed an economic policy to achieve prosperity through increasing production, creating an efficient and self-reliant economy and encouraging a free market and the prohibition of monopoly as a process of economic reform (National Constitutional Review Commission 2011). The two conflicts of 2013 and 2016 led to the collapse of the peace agreement, and a Revitalized Agreement (2017) on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan signed by the parties under the leadership of IGAD. Despite legislation creating an Economic and Financial Management Authority (EFMA) to provide an effective structure of economic and public financial management to ensure transparency and accountability in public expenditure, revenue collection and other related economic matters, the country continued with its corrupt system of no accountability and transparency as showed by the national audit report (Wondu 2021).

Vargas-Barón & Bernal argue that countries emerging from post conflict should propose nation building in the light of advocating for revival in its political and structural systems; and the socio-economic cultural structures which were destroyed. These are reforms that are urgently needed in South Sudan to instil hopes in the desperate citizens who are experiencing hyperinflation, high dropout rates of learners, continuing divisive formation of political parties and a high mortality rate.

9.5 Conclusion

My research findings, supported by my experiences in education over the past years, have shown that parental, community and Episcopal Church participation in the education system is challenged by the continuing political and ethnic violence. This has led to a shift in roles of government, church, parents and (more personally) the instability of my own responsibilities. These local communities are negotiating the changes between the strong communalism of traditional societies to an individualism characteristic of modernity and capitalism. This shift has been most visible in this thesis in discussions around whether the parents in PTAs can sustain the roles expected of them, given that they lack the professional skills of governance, financial accountability, and bureaucratic procedures, but also in the instances of teachers adopting quasi-parental responsibilities for some of their vulnerable pupils, just as might have been expected of them in a traditional society. The role and resilience of women has emerged strongly in sustaining livelihoods and education as well as that of the learner-parents who support their own education in absence of their parents.

What appears to have happened is that the effective absence of central government from many of its traditional roles and responsibilities has forced parents and local community leaders, on the one hand, and teachers on the other, to merge professional expectations and traditional roles, drawing both on traditional communalism and contemporary modernity, in order to fill the gap. This can be seen in the PTAs, as evolving communities of practice. In this way, parents and local community leaders acquire agency. This in turn can become (indeed has already become, as this thesis shows) a significant means of strengthening grassroots democracy and educational sustainability in the midst of conflict.

Role and modernization theories that were developed from a Western stable social system consider division of labour amongst the community without taking into account different

cultural and ethnic backgrounds. It emphasizes that a person given a social responsibility should have the capacity to deliver the required roles but the theories need further elaboration and nuancing to adequately conceptualise the new communities emerging from conflict. Role and modernization theories for South Sudanese communities still in the process of creation from different ethnicities and cultures only partly address the distribution of roles for the PTA in a local school that relies only on the often technically inadequate capacity that is available, with inadequate support from central government. Whether central government will accept the idea and practice of bottom-up development that gives weight and credit to local roles, as shown in this research, remains to be seen.

The government focus is directed towards mitigating conflicts, leading to national resources being diverted towards political and military sectors at the expenses of social services such as education. The increasing displacement, conflicts and hunger led the church to become more involved in humanitarian work and peace building initiatives in order to save lives, reducing its primary role of mission work (mission and evangelism). The parents especially the women and children (learner-parents) are burdened with the responsibility of food provision and support to education in addition to their traditional roles. The government reluctantly handed over its top-down role of providing resources and peace-building to parents, community and church to sustain schooling, relying on a bottom-up approach which lacks adequate expertise and resources but values commitment and trust. The experiences for the last ten years since independence in 2011 have indicated that the government has continued to be characterised by a corrupt system in managing national resources. The on-going conflicts and deteriorating economy have led to the default role of parents and communities in continuing to support the learning of their children; yet the government remains in control of policy with a focus on curricula, examinations and assessments. South Sudan needs to seriously propose improving

the capacity building of its grass-root 'communities of practice' by having committed PTA members and teachers in the schools to sustain schooling.

'Communities of practice' theory that was developed with the aim of bringing professionals together to learn from each other, and to welcome new members, in order to promote better practices considers the expertise of the members and their different social and cultural aspects. As with role and modernization theories it has not taken into account the example, of communities emerging from conflict whose capacity for modern community participation is low. However, its concept of learning from each other has been shown to be relevant in building of a PTA committee in a context of conflict and enhancing grass-root educational 'communities of practice' for democratic community participation, planning and the decentralization of activities.

This research has shown a tension between top down and bottom up approaches in the South Sudanese context in which the government's claims to take responsibility for peace building, provision of education and control of policy is rhetorical rather than real. The funds for curriculum development and school supplies are contributed by education development partners (NGOs) and managed by UNICEF. At the community and school levels government announces the better remuneration and capacity building of teachers and in practice parents meet the cost of learning of their children. This evidence shows that the top-down approach is theoretical and educational policy is driven through the bottom-up approach practised at community and school levels.

South Sudan seriously needs to learn from Rwanda, South Africa, Liberia and Sierra Leone which in their top agenda addressed education for reconstruction in a post-conflict situation by exploring in depth the roots, consequences and resolutions of conflict in order to alleviate

the forces that drive a country back to war. Second, it must consider a higher budgetary allocation for education in order to have improved enrolment of children, youth and adults. This will reduce the number of youths who might think of joining armed groups because the knowledge and skills they acquire will engage them instead in businesses, technical and agricultural sectors as the case in Liberia. These policy recommendations will be further explored in the final chapter.

Chapter Ten: Conclusions and Key Policy Recommendations

10.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the key policy recommendations that have emerged from the thesis, for the attention of the South Sudanese national government, the Ministry of General Education and Instruction, and all education partners.

Parental participation in schools during the 21 years of the political and military struggle for the independence of South Sudan was high and essential for the continuation of education. When this conflict came to an end and national independence was celebrated in 2011, my expectation was that the local grassroots strategies of parents of running schools and of the local government for the previous 21 years might serve as a model that the emerging South Sudanese government could learn from in building the education system and structures in the new state. Parental participation could have been a model or template for the reconstruction of South Sudanese society. I was expecting nevertheless that the financial burden of parental participation would decline because of anticipated higher government support to social services including education. Even at the start of this research in 2017, my thinking was the same; the bottom-up approach applied by the parents for these 21 years could be married successfully with increasing top-down support from the central government.

With this in mind my initial intention was to examine the role of parental participation during the pre-independence conflict. As I delved deeper into the research, it became clear that the role of parental participation in education, rather than declining, has in fact increased and that government and educational theorists and planners needed to take this into account. This changed the direction of my research towards exploring the role of parents and community in

the education of their children in Church schools in Yei County in the context of the post-independence conflict situation.

In this chapter I focus upon five areas: the need to improve government policy and practice, sustaining education and inclusion, contribution to knowledge, the limitations and problems of my research, and ideas for further research.

10.1 The need to improve government policy and practice

The government has used the continuing political and ethnic violence as a pretext for over-spending on political issues (e.g. the purchasing of military weapons) in an attempt at peace-building while engaging in corruption and the diversion of funds for personal gain. This has led to instability and tensions in the roles of government, church and parents. The inability of the government to meet the needs of its citizens for social services including education has led the government to reluctantly hand over some of its roles to the parents, learner-parents, women and communities despite their own struggle for basic necessities. The government decision to concentrate funding on the military rather than on social services has gone hand-in-hand with a recognition of the role of parents and local communities over the previous 21 years, and this role may still continue as evidenced by the extension of the transitional national government in August 2022 and continued conflicts. The challenge is that educational demand and expectations have been very high since 2012 (encouraged by official government statements), the perception that conflict had ended, and that it was time to return to invest in schooling; in fact government central funding remains seriously inadequate.

Statistics have shown that during the last five years (2017-21) government budgetary allocations to education were on average at 7.6% (chapter six: 5.1.2) but in reality it has been less than 4%. This is a very low allocation to national education costs. The government has shown a lack of commitment to the signed 2017 peace agreement and there is absence of

political good will. These government practices and failures have led the Episcopal Church to become increasingly involved in local peace initiatives in order to reduce hostilities and borrow time until a sustainable peace agreement is achieved. This has forced the churches in general to divert energy and resources from their traditional role of mission work to concentrate on peace processes and the provision of relief to vulnerable communities and to education despite their own limited resources. As a result, mission work accounts for less than 1% of the total annual budget of the Episcopal Church (chapter five: 5.2.2). Similarly, parents and communities have had to continue and indeed increase their role of financially supporting the education of their children, despite role overload and strain, since the government has shown its inability to do so. This thesis demonstrates that countries such as Liberia and Rwanda emerging from post conflict situations needed to prioritize nation building for revival of their political and structural systems, and the socio-economic structures which were destroyed. These are the reforms urgently needed in South Sudan to instil hope in the desperate citizens. It further calls for serious security reforms in the management, discipline, and training of its armed forces with an aim of creating a unified national army and military evacuating school buildings.

The local peace initiatives by the churches (especially the Episcopal and the Roman Catholic Churches) that have forged relations with the armed forces in maintaining a minimal peace for schooling in the conflict areas and in the internally displaced people's camps need to be recognized. It was due to the efforts of the churches that learning spaces became partly secure despite the low quality of education that could be offered. This is the first thesis on education in South Sudan to show the relevance of church initiatives in promoting peace and schooling for the previous twenty-one years of conflict at the local level. And continue to be - forms of basic grass-root communities of practice in sustaining education through establishment of PTA and building local democracy. The Ministry of Peace Building can learn from the local

church peace initiatives and continue to engage with the churches and the South Sudan Council of Churches in strengthening community peace negotiations and the building of democracy.

Other ‘post-conflict’ African countries, for example, Rwanda, South Africa, Liberia and Sierra Leone, experienced brutal conflicts but considered education a vital tool in their post-conflict process of national building. They examined the in-depth roots, consequences, and resolutions of conflict in order to rebuild relationships and engage in better educational strategies of teacher management, curricula and policy that had been damaged by violent conflict. South Sudan as a conflict state can draw lessons from these countries for rebuilding its own systems by recognizing both its non-formal and formal education systems, given that the country’s education system is strongly divided along social classes and ethnic lines, as evidenced by the increasing tribal nature of the conflicts.

Three Western nations, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Norway, which are South Sudan peace guarantors, still have a role to play in mediating and monitoring the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement because continuing misunderstandings among the rival political parties can easily take the country back into war; and also a role in ensuring the transparency and effectiveness of the expected elections in December 2024. This study urges the President and the national leadership to demonstrate political will to bring sustainable peace so that the budgetary allocation to social services is improved, followed by increased accountability and transparency. Greater democracy and accountability will attract higher investment by donors to supplement government efforts in rebuilding the national education system and necessary reforms.

10.2 Sustaining education and inclusion

Evidence has shown that in the years since independence schooling in South Sudan, particularly in Yei, has depended significantly upon parents, especially women and learner-parents, and the government's role remains principally to control policy. The new roles of women and learner-parents are described for the first time in the context of education participation.

The economic reforms in the revitalized peace agreement emphasized the strengthening of economic situation of the local population. In this context banking and microfinance institutions should recognize the Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) as appropriate recipients of basic loans for economic empowerment. The members of the VSLA are women with families respected by local communities, and they should not create fear in the banking institutions. In Uganda and Kenya Saccos (Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies)¹¹⁸ are recognized for promoting economic and social interests. One way of recognizing and enhancing women's participation in education would be to recognize VSLAs as suitable for receiving loans. Since South Sudan is a member of the East African Community it should regard the VSLA as Saccos and register them in accordance with co-operative principles. This will promote basic economic recovery and enable parents especially women to raise funds to sustain the schooling of their children and improve their livelihoods.

This research has further shown that children with disabilities are a category of disadvantaged learners in South Sudan to whom little attention is accorded by parents or government so far as their education is concerned. To an extent, some parents are keen to support children with

¹¹⁸ Two of many thousands of examples: MARUSACO, the Mafubira Rural Saving and Credit Cooperative Sacco in Uganda; Bureti Women Group Sacco for Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Bureti Constituency, Kericho County, Kenya

disabilities by being involved in making local assistive devices to enable them go to school and socialise with other children in the local community. This study recommends that teachers, parents and communities be better informed that supporting children with disability is the role of the parents with advice and support from social workers in the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare. Secondly, parents require medical advice in terms of measurements of assistive devices and how to make adjustments as the child grows. There are strong cultural beliefs that regard such children as a misfortune. Promoting community awareness through local authorities, communities, local chiefs, churches and schools will lead to these children being treated with dignity.

My experiences and evidence from this study demonstrates that returnee learners from Uganda and Congo have been discouraged by the poor quality of education, and because they have encountered continuing violence in the local communities from the armed forces and untrained and unprofessional teachers in South Sudan classrooms. Further, there are cultural differences between the host and incoming communities (returnees and internally displaced persons). The returnee parents from Uganda bring with them modern skills of health education concerned with prevention of HIV/AIDS pandemic and practices of birth control and sexual education that are passed on by teachers or members of the communities to learners. These bring changes from the traditional communalism to the individualism more characteristic of modern societies and create tension with the culture of the host communities who want their children married early to obtain a bride price for their survival because their livelihoods have been destroyed.

The poor quality of education, cultural differences, and the high cost of education charged by private and church schools led some parents in 2020/21 to take their families back to the refugee camps in the neighbouring countries to seek better education, and for their own

safety. This thesis argues that government needs to improve education by investing in teacher training, and better remuneration and by creating safe learning environments in schools and at the community level by keeping armed forces away from the civilian population. The study further recommends improvements in the government schools to accommodate the large number of returnees and out-of-school children, and the allocation of reasonable resources to the church and private schools in order to reduce the high fees charged on learners. Improving the quality of education is a need but access is a priority, and the proposal of charging considerate fees by the PTA would enable some parents to send their children to school but limit access to those who cannot raise the fees. South Sudan has over five hundred thousand out-of-school children, and this demands immediate attention in order to reduce the number of youths who might think of joining armed groups to fight against the government as was the case in Liberia.

10.3 Contribution to knowledge

In this research I explored one model and three theories that seemed relevant in the investigation, which shaped the research study. These are the bottom-up approach to development model which is concerned with local community participation. Then role theory, which considers division of labour in society, modernization theory that attempts to explain and manage the process of change from traditional to modern practices, and communities of practice theory which deals with collective learning and sharing of ideas. This research has revealed the new roles of women, in the community and at home which have impacted significantly on their roles in grassroots education, for example, the resilience of sustaining livelihoods through agriculture and engaging in small scale business. In education they are active members of PTA and provide learning needs (fees, learning materials, etc.). Indeed, in livelihood and schooling they often seem more significant than men. Moreover, learner-parents, whose parents are soldiers in the front lines, or at a distance

in the rural areas, or have disabilities, have emerged as a new category of learners who support their own education. The emerging resilience of women and learner-parents are themselves defining new roles.

These new roles have emerged in the context of continuing violence. Overall, I suggest that there has been a noticeable and significant shift in agency from government to parents, and specifically to women, learner-parents, and communities who are vulnerable and scarcely able to meet their own basic needs. These shifts have changed the landscape of education participation in South Sudan. Over and above the phenomena of newly active women and learner-parents, this thesis has explored the pressures, struggles, and hopes for educational actors (parents, communities) at the grassroots as they negotiate the challenges of continuing violence and lack of central government support.

The ‘bottom-up’ approach to development in this thesis demonstrates a process of decentralization that takes into account local population power structures, traditions and cultures – despite the resulting tensions with centralised government policies. It shows that the Government’s claims to take responsibility like other countries for peace building, the provision of education and control of educational policy are rhetorical and not realistic. At the community and school levels the government announces better remuneration and capacity building of teachers but in practice it is the parents who meet the cost. To build successfully on this reality, parents need to establish stronger PTA school committees (educated and informed) that can engage and influence local government through structures at Payam, county, state and national levels. This would build rapport with the top-down hierarchical system of government and eventually strengthen governmental working relationships with grassroots communities.

This study shows that the local communities are negotiating the changes between the strong communalism of traditional societies and the individualism characteristic of modernity and globalisation. This shift has been most visible in this thesis in discussions around whether the parents in PTAs can sustain the roles expected of them, given that they lack the professional skills of governance, financial accountability, and bureaucratic procedures required for follow up of government commitments, e.g., grants. In addition, teachers have adopted quasi-parental responsibilities for some of their vulnerable pupils, as might have been expected of them in traditional society.

The continued absence of central government from many of its primary roles has forced parents and local community leaders, on the one hand, and teachers on the other, to merge professional expectations and traditional roles, drawing both upon traditional communalism and contemporary modernity, in order to fill the gap. This is most clearly visible in the PTAs, seen here as evolving communities of practice. In this way, parents and local community leaders acquire more agency. This in turn can become (indeed has already become) a significant means of strengthening grassroots democracy and educational sustainability in the midst of conflict.

Role theory was developed in the context of a Western stable social system and needs to take into account different cultural and ethnic backgrounds in the process of division of labour to be suitable for countries in or emerging from conflict. The situation in South Sudan is characterised by widespread displacement of families and individuals, and local communities are still in the process of creation from different ethnicities and cultures, which affects the distribution of PTA roles in local schools that rely on the only, and often technically inadequate, capacity available locally.

In these situations it is clear that a PTA committee needs to consider the cultural differences between the ethnicities. In the context of Yei, the process should take into account parents from the agriculturalist communities (e.g. Kakwa) and cattle keepers (e.g. Dinka, Nuer) who usually do not find it easy to meet and work together. Here, the school can be a unifying factor in building peaceful coexistence, on condition that the school administration treats learners the same and parents who form the PTA committee are drawn from across the diverse local cultures in the building of new school communities.

Modernization theory is another Western concept that seeks to describe and account for the transitions of societies from traditional to modernity, rural to urban, communalism to individualism and global capitalism – all of which underlies Western educational theory and practices. It opens up education to everyone, irrespective of caste, religion, culture and economic background. From a non-Western perception it seems to have failed to keep a balance between traditional and modern practices. The stages of modernization were proposed in 1940s for Western and other stable countries. This thesis argues development stages should be nuanced and based on the context and priorities of each country.

‘Communities of practice’ theory was developed with the aim of bringing professionals together to learn from each other in order to promote better practices. It considers members’ expertise and their different social and cultural backgrounds (ethnicities, education level). As with role and modernization theories it has not taken into account the case of communities emerging from conflict whose capacity for community participation is low and which are also constrained by non-Western cultural issues. However, its concept of learning from each other is relevant for the building of a PTA committee in an emerging community, as a grass-roots educational ‘community of practice’. The contribution to knowledge is by adapting the theories (role, modernization and communities of practice theories) to ‘fit’ non-Western

cultural contexts. PTA committees can build on concepts of governance in schools; and government can train PTA committees to raise funds locally, resolve conflicts in schools, and acquire financial management and leadership skills. This would also be useful in building grassroots democratic processes. In this way, the integration of role, modernization and communities of practice theories has brought into focus an interplay of professional expertise and local communities beginning to build a new form of governance in conflict-affected communities, through the PTA, that draws on both traditional and modern understandings of leadership and participation, and takes into consideration and values different cultures, contexts and understanding of roles in schools.

10.4 Limitations and problems of my research

The study is limited to Yei County and does not permit generalization of the issues of church schools and education across South Sudan, although it is clear that many of the operative factors identified are found nation-wide. However, some lessons emerging are relevant, for example, the essential need for the local contribution of parents to schooling during conflicts.

The study was conducted using qualitative methodology because of its relevance in taking into account the context and culture of human behaviour and experience. However, due to the continued conflict it proved difficult to use larger sampling. I suggest a mixture of methodologies by considering quantitative methodology in qualitative research in future because it enumerates attitudes, opinions, behaviours, and other defined variables and generalizes results from a larger sample population.

The continued conflicts limited the research in another way. They forced communities to shift from rural areas to town; and again within town, families moved from one area to another to search for safety. This affected the researcher's attempts to locate the respondents for follow up. Moreover, despite the assurance of confidentiality some respondents still feared to offer

sensitive feedback. All this may have affected the quality of data, but the broad trends are clear.

10.5 Further research

In the course of this research there are many issues that have emerged and merit further investigation. There is a need for comparative studies focusing on how countries that have emerged from conflict could rebuild their systems and structures. It is important to explore the effects of violence in education. The role of women in sustaining education during violence is another area to investigate further, as is the question of how to integrate demobilized child soldiers into an education system. There is a large category of children and youth in South Sudan, who need skills to earn living to avoid creating further violence.

Sustainable peace is urgently needed in South Sudan to instil hopes in the desperate citizens who are experiencing hyperinflation, the high dropout rates of learners, the continuing division of the army and formation of political parties and a high mortality rate. Peace is paramount because it enables the grass-root communities of practices to sustain education and build local democracy and decentralization. This calls for the architects of peace in South Sudan to improve and expedite the peace process so that the government can invest in development and motivate the refugees to return home and participate in national building.

Primary Sources

A. List of individual interviews, focused discussions, visits and meetings attended with teachers, parents, learners, authorities (government and churches) and other informants

Acronyms

TCh	Teacher in a church school (ECSS)
TAC	Teacher in a church school (AIC)
TG	Teacher in a government school
TPS	Teacher in a private school (Royal International)
TX	Headteacher X or Teacher in anonymity
PCh	Parent from a Church School (ECSS, AIC)
PG	Parent from a government school
PX	Parent in a position of anonymity
PP	Parent from private school
RP	Returnee parent
RL	Returnee learner
IDP	Internally Displaced Parent
GO	Government officer
PCD	Parent of Child with Disability
HG	Headteacher in Government school
Hai	Means an area (Hai Gabat = Area Gabat)

i. Teachers

1. TCh11: 3rd Feb 2018, Hi Guwafa
2. TCh4: 27th March 2018, Immanuel Primary School
3. Headteacher X, 16th April 2018, School X
4. TCh 8: 14th June 2018, Hai Erap
5. TCh 9: 17th July 2018, Immanuel school, Hai Mission
6. TX, 15th Dec 2018, School X- Teacher X
7. TCh12: 19th Feb, 2019, Immanuel Primary School
8. TCh11: 7th Dec 2019, Immanuel primary school
9. TCh2: 17th March 2019, St. Paul Luzira School
10. TAIC2: 21st March, 2018, St. Paul Primary School
11. TAIC2: 17th Nov 2019, Hai Gabat
12. HTAIC12: 12th Dec 2019, Hai Leben
13. TG 5: 13th June 2018, Hai Erap
14. TG7: 31st May 2018, Hai Erap
15. TG5: 6th March 2018, Jigomoni
16. TG: 17th March 2018, St. Paul Primary School
17. TGS4: 30th March 2018, Jigomoni School Hall- during coordination meeting
18. TG, 16th April, 2018, Youth Centre
19. TAIC/P-X: 17th Nov 2018, Hai Jigomoni
20. TPS2: 2nd March 2019, Royal International School
21. TP/AIC2: 17th Nov 2019, Hai Gabat

ii. Parents

1. PCh 8: 1st June 2019, Hai Zizira
2. PCh 3: 5th Dec 2018, Hai Lomuku I
3. PG1: Jan 2019, Hai Mission
4. PCh 1: 1st Oct 2018, Hai Gabat
5. PCh 2: 15th Oct 2018, Hai Guwafa
6. PC15: 11th Oct 2018, Hai Mission
7. PCh7: 19th March 2018, Immanuel Primary School
8. PCh 13, 2nd April 2019, Hai Guwafa
9. PCh 1: 31st May 2018, Hai Gabat
10. Pch 2: 1st June 2018, Hai Sobe
11. PG1: 3rd June 2018, Hai Leben
12. PCh 7: 28th March 2018, Hai mission
13. PCh 8: 28th March 2018, Gabat
14. PCh 8: 30th Nov 2018, Hai Leben
15. PCh11: 13th March 2018, St. Paul's Primary School
16. PCh18: 31st March 2018, St. Paul Lizira – School farmer
17. PG9: 30th Nov 2019, Hai Lomuku II
18. PP3: 10th Oct, 2018, Hai Guwafa
19. PCh8: 21st March, 2018, St. Paul Primary School
20. PCh8: 27th March, 2019, Immanuel Model Primary School
21. PCh6: 17th Nov 2019, Hai Lomuku 1

iii. Church and Local Government Education Authorities

1. Inspector, 15th Nov 21, 2019, Jigomoni Primary School Hall
2. Inspector, 17th March 2019, Inspectorate Department- Girl Child Education Officer
3. Diocesan Education Coordinator, 14th Feb 2019, Diocesan Education Office
4. GChO: 14th March 2018, ECSS Gust House Hall
5. Inspector, 14th March, 2019, County Education Office
6. County Education Director, 10th June, 2017, ECSS Conference Hall

iv. Focus Group Discussions

1. Teachers from Church schools (ECSS & AIC)
 - a. FGDT2: 2nd Dec 2018, Jigomoni primary school
 - b. TGS4: 30th March 2018, Jigomoni School Hall- during coordination meeting
2. Teachers from government schools
 - a. FGG1: 17th Nov 2018, school X
 - b. GDG 1: 3rd Dec 2018, School X, Lomuku 1
3. Teachers from private school
 - a. FGD5: 7th March 2018, Hai Tarawa
4. Parents
 - a. FGB: 13th Oct 2018, Freedom Square Market- business women
 - b. FGD4: 24th March, 2018, Immanuel Cathedral Green Mango Centre
 - c. PGS7: 30th Nov 2018, Hai Erap
5. Learners from ECSS schools
 - a. L8: 30th Nov 2019, Hai Jigomoni
 - b. GDC1: 25th Nov 2019, St. Paul's School
 - c. 6th Dec 2019, Hai Christ The King
6. Learners from AIC school

- a. L4: 30th Nov 2019, Hai Jigomoni
- b. L7: 18th March 2019, St. Paul, Hai Leben
- 7. Learners from government schools
 - a. LG: 12th Dec 2018, County office
 - b. LG3: 1st Dec 2019, Hai Mission
- 8. Learners from private school
 - a. L9: 18th March 2019, Royal International school, Hai Mission,

v. Visits

1. 14th March 2018, HP2: 14th Dec 2018 & 25th April 2019 visited Yei Civil Hospital to obtain HIV statistics and assess the role of government
2. 14th March 2020, Yei Town Payam Education Office to seek further opinion on teachers attendance and inspection
3. 2nd Dec 2018, Morning Prayer, School Y: to assess the role and capacity of school Chaplains
4. 29th Jan 2019, SSRRC Office for Yei, Population, returnees and IDPs data
5. School X: 17th March 2018- observe corporal punishment practices
6. 3rd Feb 2018 & 28th Jan 2019, Freedom Square Market to compare prices
7. 12th Oct 2018, Dar El Salam market to meet business women
8. Inspector, 29th March 2019, Jigomoni Primary School Hall- data for enrolled new learners
9. 17th Feb 2017, Christ The King Parish- Bishop Erakolano Tombe in Yei centenary making follow of previous interview
10. Prison Warden: 27th Feb 2020, Yei Prison- to find out why children below 18 are in prison
11. Headteacher: 14th Jan 2019, Jigomoni Primary School Hall- to access quarterly meeting report

12. P14: 15th June, 2018, Hai Tarawa- parent who migrated from rural area to town
13. P12, 17th April 2018, Hai Gabat)- parent who experienced torture
14. L4: 25th April 2019, Hai Lomuku II- visit learner who stays without a parent and support his own living and education
15. PGS7: 30th Nov 2018, Hai Erap- parent who is a tailor and was able to maintain his livelihood and provided education
16. PG: 29th Jan 2019, Hai Leben- parent who served in government schools as PTA member over 15 years & I was interested on parent and government participation.
17. P14: 5th Feb 2019, Hai Luzira- a widow who played a role in her children education and respected in the community.

vi. Meetings Attended

1. Immanuel primary school, 15th May 2019- PTA meeting and listen to reports and plans
2. Yei Education Conference organized by the Episcopal Church (October 26, 2017), ECSS Guest House; on the theme Learning Access for All
3. 2nd April 2019, Hai TTC- Attendance of fellowship prayer- Women fellowship focusing on faith building and livelihood
4. Parent: 18th Jan 2018: Hai Gabat- During prayer meeting on building hope in conflict
5. 3rd Feb 2017, Hai Lomuku I -A memorial prayer organized in Yei Town- I was seeking the context involved in organizing such occasion that needed security clearance
6. Quarterly Education Review meeting, 26th April 2018, Jigomino Primary School Hall- to listen for the reports from inspectors, NGOs, Church & private schools
7. General Assembly of the PTA in Immanuel primary school (December 2, 2019)- To hear plans and observe PTA election process.

8. PLC1: 3rd Nov 2019, Hai Guwafa - Parent & Local Chief: how he uses his role on education during conflict
9. HG2: 17th Nov 2018, X School). Headteacher in a government school: to follow up the contribution of government to its own managed schools.
10. Go 2: 13th June 2018, Hai Simba, to assess the support of government to other service sectors, like Health, etc.
11. Inspector, 31st March 2018, St. Paul Lizira School & Inspector, 26th April 2018, Jigomino to assess the learning conditions in church, private and government schools; and perhaps performance in these schools.

vii. List of elders and chiefs met

1. Elder X: 2nd April 2019, Hai Gabat
2. Chief: 29th Jan 2017, Hai TTC).
3. Chief, 3rd April 2018, Hai Erap
4. Chief: 6th Dec 2019, Immanuel Primary School - parents day
5. Chief, 18th June 2017, ECSS Conference Hall). – education forum
6. Chief2: 2nd Dec 2018, Hai Lomuku II
7. GO 4: 21st June 2018, Hai TTC
8. P19: 16th April 2019, Hai Leben
9. P14: 29 April 2019, Hai Erap
10. P13: 5th Feb 2019, Hai Luzira).

viii. Other informants

Provided confidential information to confirm or supplement in detail what other respondents had presented

1. School Inspector, 10th June, 2017, ECS Conference Hall at education conference
2. PCh : 10th Dec, 2019, AIC Primary School at parents' day
3. P21, 17th Jan 2018, Community Hall during PTA training
4. LCh 3, 17th Jan 2018, Community Hall- role of women in PTA training
5. local farmer, 18th June 2017 at education conference
6. NGO Staff, 17th March 2018, at Youth Gardens during education cluster meeting and in anonymity
7. Carpenter, 13th Nov 2018, Hai Gabat
8. PX: 16th March 2019, Hai Sobe
9. RP1: 22nd April 2019), Hai Leben
10. RL2: 21st April 2019, school D/X
11. RP3: 23rd April 2019, Hai Dar-El Salam
12. X Headteacher, 18th April 2018
13. IDP: 15th March 2018, Hai Mission
14. RP2: 2nd Feb 2018, Hai Sobe
15. Parent X, 14th Nov 2018, Hai Nyakama
16. Parent, 16th Feb 2019, Freedom Square Market (Business Woman)
17. GO1: 13th June 2018, Office of County Education Department
18. PCD1: 26th April 2019, Hai Leben, Parent of Child with Disability
19. PCD2: 27th April 2019, Hai Gabat
20. PX: 17th Oct 2018, Hai Y (parent in a position of anonymity)

B. Unpublished documents

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Appendix 1- Interview Guide

Research for academic purpose for Lubari Stephen, South Sudan

Name of the school/location:	
Name of the interviewee:	
Gender & age (male, female):	
Position in the school/community:	
Number of years in teaching in the school/position:	
Area of residence:	
Status (normal or special needs)	
Date of interview:	
Time and duration of interview:	
Any further information	

Research theme: Parental and community participation in church schools in Yei County of South Sudan focusing on the issues of role, context and policy

- a. ‘What is the role of the parents and community in the education of their children in church schools in Yei County in the context of the post-independent conflict South Sudan?’
- b. Subsidiary research questions
 1. How do parents, community and the Episcopal Church interpret participation in education?
 2. What are the contextual and cultural factors that shape the role, limitation and opportunities for parental and community participation in schooling of their learners in Episcopal Church schools?
 3. What is the role of parents and community participation on education?

4. What are the policy implications for improved parental, community and church participation in education in South Sudan?

Respondents are: Teachers, parents, Learners, Education Authorities and interest persons

Methods: Individual, focus group interviews and observations. Questions and language used were modified according to the category or nature of the interview and meeting.

1. Contextual and cultural factors that shape parents participation in schooling of their children
 - a. What are the things that the parents consider relevant in the school education of their children (boys, girls)?
 - b. What aspects do you see parents as most important in the learning of their children (boys, girls)?
 - c. What are the areas to consider in a school development plan for your school? What role do you play in school development? What are the barriers and opportunities you face?
 - d. What factors and cultural perspectives influence and limit parents support to the education of their children?
2. Interpretation of parents and community participation in education
 - a. What is the role of parents' and community (and church if a church school) in your school?

Focusing in:

- i. Supporting their children
- ii. Maintaining discipline
- iii. School management
- iv. Mobilizing resources
- v. Organizing school events
- vi. What are the barriers and opportunities?

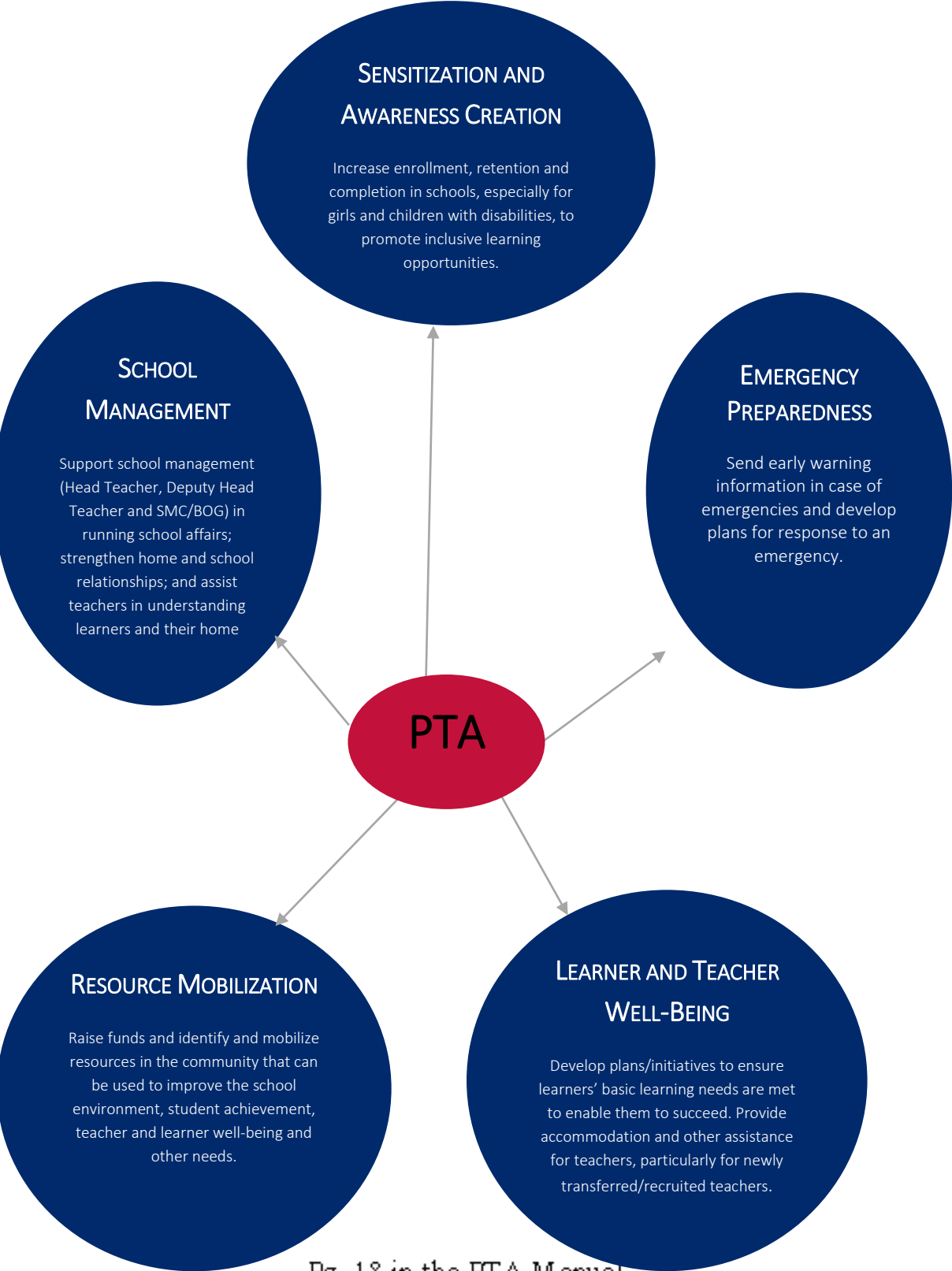
3. Role of parents and community participation on education of their children

- a. Do you think the participation of parents adds value to your school?, for example in:
 - i. Supporting their children
 - ii. Motivating teachers
 - iii. Children discipline
 - iv. School management
 - v. Mobilizing resources
 - vi. Organizing school events
 - vii. Raising examination performance
 - viii. If not, what might improve it?
4. Policy implications for improved parents' and community participation in education in South Sudan
 - a. What should the government and or Church do to improve parental participation in schooling?

Appendix 2- List of schools visited for in-depth interviews, observation and meetings

1. Faith based schools
 - a. Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECSS)
 - i. Immanuel Model primary School
 - ii. St. Paul Primary School, Luzira
 - b. African Inland Church
 - i. St. Paul Primary School
2. Government schools
 - a. Jigomoni Primary School
 - b. Kanjoro Primary School
3. Private school
 - a. Royal International Primary School

Appendix 3- Extract from Government PTA Training Manual on PTA’s work with the schools



Pg. 18 in the PTA Manual

Appendix 4- Extract from Episcopal Church of South Sudan Diocese of Yei Education

Policy

Areas of collaboration for both Government and church

- Training of teachers
- Salaries and allowance for teachers
- Curriculum development
- Setting of policies and standards
- Admission and selection of learners
- Grants

Role of the community

- Mobilise learners to join the school
- Contribute ideas, time and energy towards improvement of the school
- Contribute to positive discipline of the learner both within and outside the school
- Safeguard and protect the school facilities within the area
- Mobilise resources/fund for the school development projects etc.
- Provide local materials for school construction.
- Participate in monitoring and evaluation.
- Act as source of resource person for effective learning
- Provide Land for school development
- Promote awareness on education
- Report cases of neglect of children to the relevant authorities for action
- Demand accountability for use of the school funds
- Participate in formulating by-laws and guidelines for good of the school

Role of the Parents

- Sending children to school
- Provide children with scholastic materials and other requirements like school uniform, fees, food, stationary, shelter and medical care
- Supporting the development of the school by contributing local materials
- Participate in repair and maintenance of school property/buildings
- Participate in school visits
- Allow enough time at home for children to study and do their homework
- Lessen the amount of house hold chores given to children at home especially girls to enable them concentrate on their studies
- Monitor progress of their children learning both at home and in school
- Ensure discipline for improvement of performance and behaviour of the learners
- Provide guidance and direction for positive child growth and development
- Demand for accountability on use of school resources/funds
- Develop positive relations with teachers for improvement of learners performance
- Monitor learners' attendance and performance
- Participation in development work at the school
- Report children's absenteeism to school authorities.
- Correct bad behavior arising in children.
- Meet cost sharing arrangements laid down by the school governing body
- Improve sanitary condition, health and water supply e.g. by constructing pit latrines and protection of wells.
- Attending school meetings and participate in discussion such as making accurate and appropriate decision, formulating rules and regulations for how the schools can be governed.

- Motivate teachers by ensuring payment of school dues and acknowledging their good work.
- Help teachers in making and collecting teaching and learning resources.
- Act as source of resource person for school activities
- Ensure better performance in the school

Responsibility of the PTA

- Promotion of the interests of the school by bringing parents, members of the community, learners and teachers into close co-operation.
- Mobilize resources from the community on behalf of the school.
- Support the school financially in addition to payment of school fees. This money is used for supplementing teachers' salaries and buying text books and for meeting emergencies etc.
- Develop projects for the school e.g. a school canteen, brick laying project, poultry project or piggery unit etc.
- Monitor regularly the activities of the school e.g. attendance
- Lobby and carry out advocacy on topical issues affecting education of children e.g. early marriages
- Ensure that all children in the area enrol and remain in school
- Ensure the welfare of staff and pupils
- Regulate learner - teacher relationship
- Give appreciation by rewarding students and staff who perform exceptionally well
- Regularly access hygiene and sanitation in the schools
- Ensure that decent dressing code is observed in the schools
- Ensure safety and security of school property (Diocese of Yei 2014)