

**HOW SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS BUILD TRUST IN KENYAN  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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By

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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the Dissertation entitled:

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SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Carol, my children Ronnie, Rodney, and Leone. For their unconditional love, for the many hours of special prayers for daddy, for their timely and unending encouragement, for believing in me and for according me the two most beautiful titles of 'A Husband' and 'A Father'.

At last am coming home to stay.

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## ABSTRACT

The most successful school leaders are those who have been able to transform their schools into centers of deep and ongoing learning by managing relationships (Kaser & Halbert, 2009). Consequently, strong levels of trust are preconditions for successful school improvement initiative. Research confirms that no cooperation strategy works in high schools without sufficient attention being paid to the quality of relationships and the level of trust in those high schools (Kotter, 2002) . When adult relationships as those between parents and principals in schools are characterized by trust, stories about change and failure shift from indifference or negativity to possibility and hope (Kaser & Halbert, 2009). Unfortunately, and according to Solomon and Flores (2001), trust is never something ‘already at hand’; it is always a matter of human effort. It can and often must be conscientiously created, not simply taken for granted (p.87).

This qualitative multi-case study sought understanding and describing how secondary school principals in south western Kenya build trust with the communities in which their schools are located. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to elicit opinions and reflections of participants about challenges, individual efforts to develop trust as well as their efforts to adapt to unstable parental demands and expectations. Multiple interviews with six high school principals were conducted. The interview data was triangulated with extensive observation data collected in naturalistic settings in the schools. Observations were augmented with several days of “shadowing” each principal and the utilization of document analysis at the site.

Due to the instability present in the study area coupled with the need to secure resources from the community while meeting parental expectations and demands, data gathered indicated an urgent need on the part of principals to build trust with parents. To achieve this, principals had



to close the gap between the community and the school and the community and the self in addition to sustaining high levels of competence, professionalism and morals. Through modeling, mediation, genuine interest and participation in community activities and issues, good instructional leadership, balanced management practices, free and open communication with the parents were found out to be some of the methods used by the principal to close these gaps and consequently build trust with the parents.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Since the transition to multiparty-ism in the 1990s, ethnic violence in Kenya has been part of political strategies to retain or win power (Klopp, 2001). Cycles of aggression and antagonist articulation of ethnic identity of perceived hostile voters have enmeshed grievances over unequal land distribution into political discourses of exclusion (Kamungi, 2009). Increased use of hate speech, intimidation and inability to recover from the cyclic violence has encouraged ethnic balkanization in some areas and institutions.

Ethnicity itself is often asserted to be a key contributor to ‘ethnic conflict’ (Nyukuri, 1997). However, it is increasingly evident that “ethnicity neither causes conflict, nor in many cases does it accurately describe it (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). Rather ethnicity/identity is increasingly mobilized and politicized in contemporary violent conflicts” (Bush, 1997; Wolff, 2006). In Kenya ethnic violence is a function of historical land injustices and multiparty political competition in multi-ethnic regions (Lake, 1995; Wolff, 2006). Political support becomes equated with inclusion or exclusion from resources associated with perceived territorial identities (Kamungi, 2009).

The emergence of this violence has impacted to a greater extent both the role performance of high school principals and the emergence of parental expectations. Since both of these adults have an interdependent relationship, and have a common aim of ensuring the success of the learner, there is need for this relationship to be characterized by high levels of trust. Unfortunately, the development of trust in this interrelationship is not automatic as parents become more reluctant to trust the principals due to the high levels of uncertainty. The purpose of this research is to find out how secondary school principals in south western Kenya not only

develop but initiate and sustain trustful relationships with the parents and communities at large in their catchment areas.

## **Background**

Ethnic violence is a recurring theme in Kenya's recent history (Klopp, 2001; Makoloo, 2005; Waki Report, 2008). During the colonial period, British land policy favored (white) settler agriculture, entailing the dispossession of many indigenous communities' land (mainly the Kalenjin, Maasai and Kikuyu) across the Rift Valley and Nyanza, Western and Central provinces – the so-called White Highlands (Morgan, 1963; Kamau, 2009).

Just before independence and soon after independence in 1964 to compensate the displaced, the government began a series of resettlement schemes based on a market system, which was biased towards those with the financial means to acquire land (Kenya Land Alliance, 2004).

In response to the political threat posed by the advent of multiparty politics in the 1990s, the then Government of President Moi sought to portray multiparty politics as an exclusionary ethnic project to control land (Klopp, 2002; Rienner, 2006). This entailed evoking *majimboism*, a type of federalism that promotes provincial autonomy based on ethnicity (Humanitarian Policy Group, 2008 ; Bond & Sharife, 2009). To recover 'stolen' land, non-Kalenjin resettled tribes were evicted from the areas they had settled in the Rift Valley and western Kenya (Kamungi, 2009). Associated clashes throughout the 1990s left thousands dead and over 350,000 displaced (Klopp, 2002).

While the political arena was undergoing these changes, educational reforms were also being introduced that drastically changed the leadership landscape in Kenyan high schools (Amutabi, 2003). The introduction of free education at the secondary school level since 2002 and

the subsequent abolition of tuition (BBC News, 2008) had a tremendous impact in the nature and character of school community relationships and by extension principal-parents relationship. In addition, the decentralization of teacher recruitment by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) to the school level gave parents much control over the education process of their children (Akala, 2002; Oketch & Rolleston, 2007; Kipsoi & Sang, 2008; Kinuthia, 2009). The emergence of ethnization and subsequent ethnic violence has also introduced new and untold challenges to the traditional authority of the school principal.

Suddenly principals have found themselves navigating not only hitherto unknown leadership terrains but also those requiring the adoption of innovative leadership styles that not only consider but also respect and take into account the community expectations (Dempster & Berry, 2003). The importance of this innovative leadership styles cannot be understated because the resources required for running and maintaining the schools reside within the community and if principals expect to tap and utilize these resources, they have to cultivate and maintain a level of trust with the community in order for the community to release these resources

As the socio-economic challenges of society have increased, the role of a principal or school leader has become increasingly difficult and complex (Eller, 2010). This has not only exacerbated the already complex work environment confronting high school principals but has also raised expectations of what they should achieve (Crow, 2006). As a result, the high school principalship is one of the most complex and challenging assignments in the public education system (Murphy & Louis, 1994; Roe & Drake, 1980). Murphy (1994a) believes that “while expectations are being added, little is being deleted from the high school principal’s role” (pp. 94-99). Most of the literature describing current roles and expectations of principals around the world is common enough – it is one mostly portrayed as fragmented, dilemma-ridden, and demanding (Leithwood et al., 1999; Schlechty, 2001; Uben et al., 2001).

Of the many responsibilities a high school principal has, that of an instructional leader has been affected most in terms of expectations. As an instructional leader, key responsibilities include (a) providing for a safe and positive school environment, (b) fostering good teaching and learning, (c) promoting good school-community relations, (d) hiring and developing a strong staff, and (e) monitoring student progress (Lyons, 1999, p. 21). These responsibilities are based on the premise of a stable environment. Unfortunately, in most regions of the world, where there is instability and contestations, realizing these key responsibilities becomes a challenge.

According to Bush (1998), principals still have to deal with the multiplicity and context-specificity of demands made upon individual schools. According to Dempster & Berry, (2003) schools have never been islands able to ward off effects of trends emerging in the wider society and especially when stakeholders require rapid local responses. Consequently principals are experiencing increasing difficulty in coping with the complex and competing demands made of them. School principals are leading their schools in extremely challenging and complex contexts unknown to school leaders of the past (Dempster & Berry, 2003). As a result, like in the study area, the increased sense of uncertainty in the community and many social issues find their way inside the school gate.

The role of a high school principal cannot be viewed in isolation of the contexts within which they operate. According to Walker & Qian (2006), high school principals work in multiple and many-sided contexts. For example, in Western countries, contexts range from a crowded and increasingly standardized reform environment to the increasingly multicultural nature of the schools. In the developing world, similar elements are observed although due to cultural contexts and structures, they are played out often, within an environment typified by severe poverty, inequity, instability and insecurity (Walker & Qian, *Beginning Principals: balancing at the top of greasy pole*, 2006). Despite these contextual differences, the principals are

expected to be successful in carrying out their instructional responsibilities and meeting annual academic targets as well as communal expectations (Ray *et al.*; 2004; Leithwood & Riehl, 2005).

Even though successful principal leadership practices are common across contexts in their general form, they are highly adaptable and contingent in their specific enactment. As Ray *et al.* (2004) explains, high school leadership is a “reflexively automatic” activity and such activity is never innocent of context. Rather, context:... provides the subtle, implicit, tacitly interpreted cues for enacting everyday actions ... The active process of “doing things” in practice is always shaped by the reflexively automatic use of “here and now” tacit knowledge that is deployed locally, *in situ*, by the actors themselves (Ray *et al.*, 2004, p. 332).

Research confirms that school principals have to deal with different contexts that ultimately influence and determine their success and effectiveness. Studies already conducted in these contexts include social and political forces that undermine tolerance (Felt, Jolly, & Malloy, 2001), bullying, sexual harassment and aggression (Ma, Stewin, & Mah, 2001), sexuality (Myers K. , 2002), changes in the traditional structure of the family (Bessant & Watts, 2002), child abuse, increased exposure to medication and drugs (Sullivan, 2001) as well as specific issues such as unhealthy eating habits and preoccupation with attaining unrealistic and unnatural body image( (Kater, Rohwer, & Londre, 1992).

Undoubtedly, different contexts exert and influence eventual attainment of educational objectives and the success of any high school principal in meeting these educational objectives of the school is a function of the unique contexts they operate in. For instance a high school principal working in a stable environment in one of the major cities in the USA would deal with a different set of issues and demands as opposed to a high school principal working in a violence prone -unstable environment in the south western Kenya. The challenges posed by these two

very different environments and contexts will affect and influence their role performance and eventual attainment of educational objectives at the end of the learning cycle.

To further expound on this argument, reference is made to organization theory. According to these studies, the concept of *environment* in organizational systems is often defined in terms of boundaries as “everything . . . outside the system’s boundary” (Immergart & Pilecki, 1973, p. 36). Indeed, the environment in which the high school principals working in south western Kenya functions is surrounded by an “external world that is becoming less predictable, less orderly, and more cluttered creating a much more complicated managerial context within the school as well” (Louis & Murphy, 1994, p. 266).

According to DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran (2005), principals as those working in south western Kenyan high schools have no choice but to interact with these changing unstable environments since their boundaries are permeable. Schools must interact continually with the environment to survive (Katz and Kahn, 1978). Effective school leaders recognize that reciprocal influences between the school and the environment are as significant as relationships within the organization to the creation and maintenance of high functioning schools (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2005).

Even though there are different parts that comprise a school’s environment, this study focuses on the trust formation between high school principals and the parents in south western Kenya. This interaction, which DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, (2005) are referring to is about principal-parent interaction. In schools, parents take many entities. In a research conducted by Johnson & Fauske( 2000) parents were seen as entities upon which the principal depends heavily for school success. In addition parents were seen to play various roles in the school including taxpayer, patron, customer and client. When asked about their experience in different

environments, participating high school principals in the Johnson & Fauske( 2000) study noted that in stable environments where they are trusted, they are guaranteed support in the following ways; a) a willingness to help when called upon b) a willingness to come to the principal and discuss problems c)standing behind and supporting the principal when tough decisions are made d) minimizing opposition to the school principal and e) active help in making needs of the school known to the governing boards and electorate (Johnson & Fauske, 2000).

Clearly, positive parent interaction with the high school principals in the study area is likely to be enhanced by a climate of mutual trust and confidence in the principal and by extension the school. Conversely, an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust as that in south western Kenyan high schools is likely to increase competition for the control of student learning between these two groups of influential adults. Consequently, a productive relationship between parents and high school principals must be based on trust from both sides but a strained relationship can only lead to a concomitant decrease in productive relationships between parents and the principal to the detriment of students (Casanova, 1996).

Building on the work of Coleman (1988), Putnam (1994), and others in their study of five communities, Onyx and Bullen (2000) concluded that trust formation is possible where there are participation in networks, that are characterized by reciprocity, trust, social norms, the commons (shared ownership over resources), intergenerational closure, and social agency.

In Kenya, schools are significant public institutions which groom the younger generation for their participation in the dynamic life of society (Onyango-Ouma, 2006). Schools are also viewed as gatekeepers for access to economic development as well as socializing of attitudes and values (Watson-Gegeo & Gegeo, 1992).To the Kenyan parents, schooling is perceived as a major investment and an obligatory activity for all children (Onyango-Ouma, 2006). Accordingly,

school principals in Kenya play pivotal roles in the overall running of their schools (Huber & West, 2002). Indeed principals have been viewed synonymous with their schools as they are the key personnel focused on whenever a school is perceived to be performing well or poorly with equal measure of praise and condemnation (Onguko, Abdalla, & Webber, 2008). The principals, or head teachers as they are called in Kenya, are required to play multiple roles such as being instructional leaders, accounting officers, and public relations officers, among others (Onguko, Abdalla, & Webber, 2008).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The study area is located in an area along the border of two provinces; Nyanza province and Rift Valley province in Kenya. This region in some literature is referred to 'Sotik-Borabu' border. Sotik district is in the southern tip of the Rift Valley and Borabu is in the eastern edge of Nyanza province. Sotik is mainly inhabited by the Kipsigis who are a Kalenjin sub tribe. On the other hand, Borabu strides both Nyamira and Kisii district and is inhabited by the Abagusii people. Ethnic violence in this region has been going since the 1800's albeit on a limited scale (Morgan, 1963). The Kipsigis argue that the land comprising Borabu district is their ancestral land (Mars Group, 2008). They claim that they lost it when the Europeans forcibly acquired it during the colonial times to establish White highlands. The rivalry between the two communities predates the colonial era, and this rivalry gets passed down through folklore from generation to generation by both the Kisii and the Kipsigis, each side exalting their own valiant exploits against the other ( Waki Report, 2008; Ng'ang'a, 2006).

Even though for the schools located within the study area, constant insecurity and instability is a common phenomenon, schools alone cannot prepare our youth for productive



adulthood (Klopp, 2001; Chesoni, 2006). Instead it is when schools and communities work closely with each other that they meet their mutual goals (Gire & Moyer, 2002; Mitrofanova, 2004). Schools need the input from other players in the education sector. It is when these players form a relationship that within that relationship, a conducive environment is created.

Schools influence and are influenced by the communities in which they exist (Hall, 1991; Jacobs, 1974; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Meyer & Scott, 1992; Scott, 1995, 1998). The presence or absence of resources as well as critical information flows between the two constrains or facilitates educational processes and the realization of instructional goals (Aldrich, 1979; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). And since communities in which these schools are located in form and define the schools environment there is need to have strong links. Constructing schools as organizations, Weick (1978, 1995), contends that environment is consequential for the survival and success of organizations. Consequently effective organizations are those that create bridges and buffers between themselves and the environment (Aldrich, 1979; Thompson, 1967). Advancing the idea of schools as organizations, organizational leaders often develop bridging or buffering structures to mitigate environmental effects on the organization (Scott, 1998; Thompson, 1967).

It is my contention that in the study area, and due to the violence present, the communities surrounding the school and acting as their environments have become unstable and unpredictable. This instability and unpredictability has rendered the principals' duties and role vulnerable especially bearing in mind that schools in the study area were initially put up as Harambee schools that dependent on the community for survival. In the study area, schools serve learners from a catchment area that's afflicted with conflicts, violence and rampant mistrust.

Unfortunately, this violence has led to high levels of mistrust between the high school principals and the parents.

In order for the communities and the principals to work in unity towards the successful attainment of the educational objectives of the schools, there is need for the principal to make a deliberate effort by creating a bridge (Scott, 1998; Thompson, 1967) to enable the flow of resources and information between the two. Metaphorically, bridges are meant to link two distant places and in so doing unite them. It is my submission that in the study area, principals need to build trust with the parents they serve which then will serve as both a bridge and a buffer and help in mitigating against the effects of ethnic violence as well as conflicts and the resultant mistrust between the communities and the principals. This is because during periods of uncertainty, trust becomes even more central and critical (Mishra, 1996; Webb, 1996; Weick & Roberts, 1993).

According to Achoka (2003), prior to 1985 when the current 8.4.4 education system was introduced; the role of the secondary school principal in Kenya was clear and manageable. Achoka (2003) notes that after 1995, the role of the secondary school principal widened to include management of increased parent's involvement in school functioning (Achoka, 2007). Coupled with the introduction of the new education system, community involvement in schools especially in the rural areas increased. The change in the secondary curriculum necessitated a corresponding change in the physical infrastructure in the schools. Suddenly communities became responsible for the construction of physical facilities as well as stocking the workshops that were mandatory (Ngigi & Macharia, 2006). The decentralization of development projects to the district levels also encouraged communities to establish 'their own' harambee schools. Once

these schools were registered, only a skeletal staff was posted and the community became responsible for hiring and paying teachers (Achoka, 2006; Wekesa, 1993).

Based on the above, it is obvious that a high school principal in south western Kenya needs to have and maintain trust with the communities surrounding his school because he draws support from them not only to run the school but also to legitimize his leadership and that of the role of the school in that particular community. For instance, the attendance policy in Kenya is decentralized and parents have a free hand in deciding where to send their children. And given that in Kenya funds from the Consolidated Fund towards free education are tied to enrolment, principals find it an added advantage to have a large student population since schools with more students will receive more state funds. Sometimes when funds are delayed or diminished, community leaders find it necessary to supplement operational costs of the school by organizing funds drive (Keller, 1983; Chieni, 1999 ; Rotich, 2004). The success of these funds drives is tied to how much the community trusts the principal to allocate and invest their money wisely (Mwiria, 1990).

Secondly, these schools being community schools, much of the staff is sourced from the immediate environment. For instance the labor needed in the school as well community policing towards the safety of the school property. Once the parents acknowledge that the school is 'theirs', they will protect the physical structures in the school and school property against theft and destruction.

After and during the ethnic violence, having the community on your side is always an added advantage. This is because sometimes when there is an impending attack, community members can alert the principal thus give him enough time either to lock down the school or hire security to guard the school. Sometimes parents arm themselves and guard the school against attacks.

Even though there is justification for the high school principals to develop trust with the parents, the location of the study area in a contested area presents a number of challenges to the principal. For instance, as the area is inhabited by many resettled ethnic groups, many of the PTA's committees are populated by people and parents from different ethnicities. Trust becomes an issue when a section of the parents insists on taking charge of the school based on arguments laced with tribal prejudices and demands. The existence of groups and subgroups of parents in a school implies that there can be no one accord on an issue as each group and subgroup jostles to take advantage over the others with no signs of co-operation. In parent meetings numerous scenes of mistrust are played out as projects are debated endlessly while a section of parents spend many hours browsing through the school finances with a tooth comb. Student populations fluctuates on a daily basis as parents shift their children on flimsy grounds ranging from the principal belonging to a different ethnic group to principals not being seen to be 'nice to them!'. The sad part is that at times the students are moved when the semester is halfway making transition to the next level difficult.

And since according to literature, trust makes cooperative endeavors happen (e.g., Arrow, 1974; Deutsch, 1973; Gambetta, 1988) and is a key to positive interpersonal relationships in various settings (e.g., Fox, 1974; Lewis & Weigert, 1985a) as well as being central to how the principal interacts with parents (e.g., Berscheid, 1994; Golembiewski & McConkie, 1975), lack of trust in the study area as a result of constant conflicts based on ethnic affiliations among parents, has hindered effective role performance of the high schools principals.

### **Rationale for Conducting this Study**

In Kenya, the secondary education cycle is recognized as the springboard to tertiary and/or higher education and training. Therefore, it is a significant juncture in the national and

educational development (Achoka, 2007). Any attempts towards enhancing the success of this cycle therefore would be welcome by policy makers as well as those in charge of principal-preparation programs. And since high school principals play a very important role in the success of this level, any attempts to enhance their ability and competence in ensuring that the secondary cycle succeeds would be an advantage.

Unfortunately since the advent of ethnic violence in Kenya in the early 1900's, most of the research studies conducted in Kenya with respect to the violence are about ethnicity (Ndegwa, 1997; Chege, 1981 ; Alwy & Schech, 2004); Causes of ethnic violence (Abrams, 1979; KNCHR, 2006; Mackenzie, 2000; Kenya Land Alliance, 2004) and effect of ethnic violence on agriculture (Mars Group, 2008). In addition, the government also set up commissions of inquiry (Waki Report, 2008). Even though these studies and researches focused solely on ethnic violence in Kenya, none of these studies directly dealt with the effect of violence on schools or the issue of trust formation in schools.

Research on trust in schools confirms that a high level of trust in a school is necessary in the success of that school regardless of its location. For instance Adams, Forsyth, & Mitchell (2009 ) using multilevel modeling, found out that regardless of poverty status, school size, diverse ethnic composition, and school level, school leaders can build and sustain parent trust by aligning policies and practices to address the affective needs of parents. Doing so reduces parents' perceived vulnerabilities and risks within the parent-principal relationship (Adams, Forsyth, & Mitchell, 2009).

In another study, Forsyth et al. (2006) found that high levels of parent trust contribute to effective school performance. Other studies, such as Tarter, Sabo, & Hoy,( 1995); Bryk &

Schneider, (2002); Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, (2001), Forsyth, Barnes, & Adams, (2006) reaffirmed similar productive consequences for schools.

Findings of the Epstein (2001); Henderson, (1987) ; Wenfan & Qiuyun, (2007) studies also supported a direct contact between parents and high school principals based on high levels of trust as being an important ingredient in the success of the principal and eventual attainment of educational objectives. Other studies on the relationship between parents and school principals suggest that strong principal-parent relationships with high trust levels matter to student achievement (Bank & Slavings, 1990; Garner & Raudenbush, 1991; Jones & Maloy, 1988; Lareau, 1987; Lee & Croninger, 1994; Sui-Chu & Douglas, 1996). Consequently, trust is vital for the maintenance of cooperation in school as well as a necessary ground for even the most routine, everyday interactions (Blau, 1964) and as Lewis and Weigert (1985) agreed, trust is indispensable in social relationships such as parents-high school principal relationship.

Unfortunately much of this research has been conducted in the western world giving rise to theories whose applicability and generability are limited to the western world. Given the nature of ethnic violence and the consequent conflict and mistrust in the study area, putting into practice the findings of studies carried out in the western world might be impracticable. Thus there is need to conduct this study in order to bridge a gap in the literature on trust and trust formation. Further, carrying out this study provides an opportunity to the principals to express their experience in developing trust in the study area thus bridge a gap in the literature.

Since the ethnic violence emerged in 1991, there are few studies of the ethnic violence situations that address school leaders' need for trust relations, challenges principals face in developing and sustaining high levels of trust, new demands from the community as a result of unpredictable, and principals' challenges and efforts to work in the complex and turbulent

educational settings of South western Kenya. This study becomes imperative as trust is at the heart of strong relationships that help children learn (Kyle, McIntyre, & Miller, 2005; Hoy & DiPaola, 2007).

In conclusion, research is unclear about the principals' experience in developing trust. In addition, no studies have been conducted to highlight the unique contextual challenges that principals face in developing and sustaining trust with the parents in Kenya as a whole and in south western Kenya in particular.

### **Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of this study will seek to not only understand but also describe how secondary school principals in south western Kenya build trust with the communities in which their schools are located. The study area located in the South-western part of Kenya lies between two provinces; Nyanza and Rift Valley provinces. This border region has witnessed ethnic violence since 1992 with the most recent being in December 2007. These conflicts have spilled into the schools pitting teachers against teachers, students against students and at times teachers against parents based on their tribal affiliation. Consequently, mistrust is rampant. Six high schools will be selected for the study and interviews conducted with the school principals of each of these schools. Information will be gathered regarding the subjects' understandings of trust formation and the challenges they face in developing and sustaining this trust with the parents.

Additionally, this study aims to elicit opinions and reflections of participants about those challenges, about individual efforts to develop trust as well as their efforts to adapt to parental expectations and demands.

### **Research Questions**

To achieve the purpose of this study, the researcher will examine six high school principals in south western Kenya along the Nyanza-Rift valley province utilizing the following 3 central questions:

- i. How school principals build trust with parents.
- ii. How does a school principal/leader know that he/she has the trust of the parents they serve?
- iii. What is the role of mindfulness in the development of trust?

### **Significance of the Study**

Study of leadership in the contested areas at the Nyanza-Rift Valley boundary offers a unique opportunity to view the productive, but unpredictable struggle to maintain stability and safety of the learning environment, reconstruct and renegotiate organizational norms and patterns of activity within an unstable environment (Zabusky, 2002). Leaders facing destabilized environments cannot rely on taken-for-granted rationales or adopt pre-legitimized innovations available in normalized fields (Greenhouse, 2002). Exploration of what Greenhouse calls “performative and improvisational” efforts of these school leaders to reestablish and secure school operations promise to be particularly revealing interethnic relations and “political tribalism” (Klopp, 2002) of local community. Certainly, the context and particular social relations are unique to southwestern Kenya. Still, given commonalities with Kenya’s education sector reforms and in its ethnic tensions, the findings are likely to transfer to educational and organizational settings in the U.S. and abroad.

This study will help to close the knowledge gap by examining high school principals’ response to the changing parental demands and the need for trust. Unfortunately, there are no



studies that address the education reforms in Kenya and ethnic violence in this particular region in Kenya. But more importantly, there are no studies that show the impact of leadership experiences on the preparation of school leaders in coping with these issues. Lack of studies especially quantitative or qualitative that addresses this concern and knowledge in dealing with ethnic unrest hinders the ability of administrator preparation organizations or service agencies, especially the Ministry of Education and the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) to prepare and to assist school principals to lead schools through the challenging and intense phenomena.

Based on education reform processes that are taking place in Kenya and areas of contestation, policymakers can appropriately facilitate and develop practical strategies to help expand school principals' capacities to deal with challenges and accomplish educational goals.

Additionally, findings from this study will contribute to the knowledge base among south western school principals and other school leaders who may face similar challenges in their particular contexts. Findings from this study are also useful for preparation programs as well especially in reconsidering designs and developing programs for pre-service teachers.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This research will attempt to study objectively the subjective experience of six high school principals along the south western Kenya. As such, data collected in the naturalistic setting of field will have to bear the weight of many interpretations. The worth of this study will be dependent on the detailed description gathered in the field. However, the presence of a researcher will have an impact on the people who will be interviewed and observed. It will be important to offset this factor by interacting in an unobtrusive and non-threatening manner.

This study is based on only six cases in south western Kenya. As such it is not the intent of the research to imply any generalizability beyond the cases at hand. Any speculation beyond this study is left to the reader's interpretation. Furthermore, the sampling method employed throughout the study will be both purposive and convenient. To offset any bias from a single perspective, triangulation will be utilized during data collection. This study is framed by literature purposefully selected to design and inform this research due to the time and availability constraints. This entire research will be a single researcher experience, which means all evaluations and conclusions will be dependent on a single researcher's collection and analysis of data.

Finally, the sample for this study will be limited to only public secondary schools located along the border zone of Nyanza and Rift Valley provinces. By concentrating within these parameters, primary schools and private schools will not be studied. Since Primary schools and secondary private schools will not be studied, my findings will not be applicable to private schools and elementary schools

### **Definitions of Terms**

Ethnicity: In *The New Oxford American Dictionary* (Jewell & Abate, 2001), ethnicity is defined as “the fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition” (p. 583). Ethnicity is associated with cultural commonality—i.e. shared beliefs, values, and practices. Weber (1978) described, ethnic groups are “those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent...it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists” (p. 389).

Political Ethnicity: Academics define political ethnicity as the ‘deliberate politicization and mobilisation of an ethnic consciousness’ in order to achieve certain political and economic objectives, (Mamdani, 1996)

Harambee: Harambee is a Kenyan tradition of community self-help events, such as fundraising or development activities. *Harambee* literally means "all pull together" in Swahili, and is also the official motto of Kenya and appears on its coat of arms. *Harambee* is a Swahili word and the national motto of Kenya. It means *pulling together* or *unity* and it is the philosophy the people of Kenya try to follow and uphold.

Kalenjin is a composite group which was coined by the colonial government and consists of five tribes: The Nandi, Kipsigis, Keiyo, Marakwet and Tugen (Oucho, 2002)

Majimboism: “*majimbo*,” a Swahili term which can be taken to mean devolution of central government power, or federalism. However, in Kenya it is most often used politically as a form of hostile territorial sectarianism-an arrangement in which each community would be required to return to its ancestral district or province and if for any reason they would be reluctant or unwilling to do so, they would by all means be forced so to do (Akiwumi Report, 1999, pp.10).

White highlands: The term 'White Highlands' was derived from the official policy that certain agricultural lands in Kenya should be reserved for settlers of European origin. Land regulations in 1915 enabled white settlers to expropriate much of the indigenous peoples' fertile land in the highlands. The British colonial administration instituted policies thwarting Africans from owning land in the Rift Valley area. The creation of the "White Highlands" displaced thousands of African nomadic groups (the Kalenjin, Maasai, Samburu, and Turkana) who had lived in the area. While the colonial settlers ousted these pastoralists who were unfit for providing agricultural labor, they recruited cheap labor from the neighboring areas (now Central, Nyanza

and Western Provinces). Thousands of Kikuyu, Kisii, Luhya, and Luo squatters were brought into the Rift Valley area in the early 1900s.

Conflict: A *Conflict* has been defined as ‘a struggle in which the aim is to gain preconceived objectives and simultaneously neutralize, injure or eliminate rivals’ (Horowitz D. L., 1985). Conflicts is a manifestation of one particular group’s desire to control certain resources. According to Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff (1990) these groups may be tribal, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, socio-economic, or political. Conflicts may be *interstate* (between states) or *intrastate* (within states).

Ethnic Group: An *ethnic group* is a group of people classed together according to common traits and culture as well as common myths of origin and territory (Horowitz, 1985; John & Smith, 1996; Chandra, 2006; Constant, Gataullina, & Zimmermann, 2006) which differentiate it from other groups. Ethnic conflict occurs when two or more ethnic groups contend against one another, in order to achieve objectives perceived as incompatible. *Ethnic clashes* are one particular form of such conflict: that in which the goals of at least one conflict party are defined in (exclusively) ethnic terms, and in which the primary fault line of confrontation is one of ethnic distinctions (Horowitz, 1985; Constant, Gataullina, & Zimmermann, 2006). Inter-ethnic violence is always a sign of underlying conflict (Horowitz, 1985; Wolff., 2006; Hilker & Fraser, 2009).

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Education has been viewed as a critical factor in development, especially with reference to the development of human resources for socioeconomic growth (Zamberia, 1996). Consequently, education has been assigned a priority role for its ability to effect the transformation of the people as individuals and groups, thus promoting social equality, and strengthening national identity, as well as fostering the nation's political development and historical maturation (Thomas, 1992). Just like Fuller (1991) has observed, most nations view education as a panacea for societal problems a fact supported by empirical studies that have demonstrated the positive effect of education on economic development in both developed and underdeveloped countries (Delacroix & Ragin, 1978; Fagerlind & Saha, 1989; Fuller, Gorman, & Edwards, 1986; Walters & Rubinson, 1983)

Kenya's National Development Plan (1999-2003) emphasizes an education that provides equal opportunities to every Kenyan as effective tools for meeting the challenge of development (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2004).

#### **Organizational Structure of Kenyan Education**

The Kenyan education system is highly structured (Owuor, 2007). The current education system in Kenya, commonly referred to as the 8-4-4 provides for 8 years in elementary school, 4 in secondary and 4 at the university level (IPAR, 2008; Achoka, 2007; Akala, 2007). Duties and functions of administrative and supervisory personnel from the ministry of education headquarters right to the officer in the field are spelt out in the out in the education act of 1968 Cap.1 (Akala, 2007). This Act further provides for the regulation and progressive development of education in the country. Since high school principals are classified as administrators and

supervisors of Kenya's education system, they are the link between educational policies and the implementers of the said policies country wide. Principals draw their authority from the education act of 1968.

The principals' play out their role within two contexts, namely the system in which their duties are embedded and secondly the community within which their schools are located (Loxley, Johnston, Murchan, Fitzgerald, & Quinn, 2007). The success of the individual principals in attaining the expected educational outcomes in their students is a function of the educational objectives as stated by the ministry of education and the parental expectations. In order to understand these contextual influence and the current national educational objectives of the 8.4.4 there is need to retrace the changing faces of education from pre-colonial times to modern times and highlight the radical transformation in the system of colonial education (Freire, 1978) as well as the mass discontent and social upheavals caused by historical injustices and oppressive structures that were bequeathed to the post-colonial leadership (Ong'ayo, 2008).

### **An Overview of Education Development in Kenya**

Education is central to the country attaining its goal of industrial development and technological advancement as well as protection of democratic institutions and human rights through well informed citizens (MOEST, 2004). Despite the structure and the curriculum content having undergone tremendous changes, the role and functions of education for the Kenyan society has relatively remained stable over the years (Chesaina, 1994). These changes have been geared towards reforming the education system inherited from the colonial government to make it more responsive to the needs of the country (Ngigi & Macharia, 2006).

Starting from the standpoint that education is inherent in nay society, education in Kenya goes back to the pre-colonial era. The history of education in Kenya can be divided into pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial education.

### **African Traditional / Pre-Colonial Education.**

Before the advent of the Europeans in Kenya, a form of education existed that enabled the indigenous Kenyans herein referred to as the ‘Africans’ to survive albeit in ‘primitive conditions’ (Owuor, 2007). This form of education has been referred in some writings as ‘African Indigenous Education’ or ‘African Traditional Education’ (Owuor, 2007; Zulu, 2006).

African traditional education was informal and occurred in the context of family, community, clan and culture group (Mazonde, 1995). It was a life-long process involving progression through age groupings that were correlated with the acquisition of experience, seniority and wisdom. Cultivation of the individual’s communal responsibility was the dominant objective of this education (Woolman, 2001). Mungazi (1996), notes that for individuals to be useful members of the community, they had to be trained to remain sensitive to the needs of the community as a whole and others as individuals. Busia, (1964) further adds that traditional education sought to produce men and women who were not self-centered, but who put the interest of the group above personal interest. As such traditional education was an organic process with a high level of consistency between activities and desired outcomes (Busia, 1964).

Traditional African education was practical and relevant to the needs of society (Omolewa, 2007). Fafunwa & Aisiku (1982), reports that the focus of education in pre-colonial Kenya, was social responsibility, political participation, work orientation, morality and spiritual values. Learning was by doing, which involved observation, imitation and participation. Kenyatta (1965) for example, compares this form of education with the idea of progressive education and contends that it is a “wholehearted, purposeful activity proceeding in a social environment.” Kenyatta further notes that “knowledge thus acquired is related to a practical

need, and, is merged into activity and can be recalled when that activity is again required.

Behavior also is learned from doing things together, and is therefore directed to social activities from the outset” (Pg.119-120).

### **Colonial education.**

Kenya became a British protectorate in 1895. The western concept of formal education was introduced in Kenya by the missionaries and subsequently by the colonial government (Alwy & Schech, 2004; Owuor, 2007). The purpose of education during the colonial period was mainly for religious conversion, economic exploitation, and the assimilation of Africans into the western cultures, values, and practices (Owuor, 2007). Wallbank (1938) clearly states that the native, while being assisted in many ways, was regarded in the main as only an accessory in the economic life of the economy (pg.524) and that at that time, the role of the African was conceived to be that of a laborer on European farms, working for a low monthly wage, and separated from his family in the native reserve. According to Kelly & Atbach (1984) education in colonies was directed at absorption into the metropole and not separate and dependent development of the colonized in their own society and culture. Ngugi (1981) reiterates that colonial education “was far from giving people the confidence in their ability and capacities to overcome obstacles or to become masters of the laws governing external nature as human beings and tends to make them feel their inadequacies and their inability to do anything about the conditions of their lives” (p. 7). The then colonial director of education is on record to have stated that the role of education offered to the African by the British colonial authorities was to enable backward peoples, whose civilization was in many respects admirably adapted to ensure their survival under primitive conditions (Beck, 1966; Wallbank, 1938).



Uchendu (1979), concludes that the purpose of all colonial education was “subordination of Africans.” Colonial schools provided education on European standards in concluding that: “what reached African colonies were not metropolitan educational transplants but ... adaptations which served to perpetuate colonial domination.’ (pg.3). consequently the education provided to the Kenyans during the colonial period was mainly vocational (Owuor, 2007).

Education during the colonial government under a political system dominated by whites provided a useful mechanism for social and political control (Schilling, 1976). As a result, Schilling adds, educational development and policy formation were political processes with significant implications for the roles of whites and blacks in Kenya (pg.218). Even though education was of profound significance for Africans, they had inadequate access to schools, were trained for restricted slots in the colonial economy and society, and had virtually no control over either policy or schools (Schilling, 1976).

The above form of education was greatly affected and its future impacted by the Beecher Report of 1949. Consequent to its recommendations, a new system of education was established. The system of education in Kenya remained unchanged until after Kenya’s independence. Some of the recommendations of the Beecher Report were:

- a) That the education system be changed from 6-4-2 to 4-4-4 with specific examinations marking the end of primary, intermediate and secondary school levels.
- b) The regional education boards be established in municipalities outside native local authorities
- c) The Boards of Governors be introduced in schools.
- d) That fees structures be introduced in schools
- e) That each training be expanded and foreign staff be accommodated in schools

- f) The co-operation between government and mission in education development be maintained.
- g) That education should cater for local needs of students and communities
- h) That repeating at the end of each cycle of education be eliminated. Each cycle was marked by a terminal examination and the number passing the examination was specified.

The Beecher Report also set specific statistical targets for enrolment in schools and training colleges.

### **The Post-Independence Development of Education in Kenya**

The massive Africanisation drive that was adopted by the newly independent Kenyan government was a reaction against policies of colonialism that had imposed a Euro-centric, divisive and exploitative régime upon Africa (Kay, 1975). Concern for empowerment of African peoples brought the promise of social reconstruction (Sian, 2007; Woolman, 2001) which was to be achieved through education. Consequently expansion of secondary and tertiary education became the top priority with less concern for basic primary education (Oketch & Rolleston, 2007). Racially-segregated colonial schools were phased out to provide Africans with the same quality of education once reserved for white settlers (Woolman, 2001).

When Kenya became independent at the end of 1963, a number of commissions and committees were appointed with varying terms of references. Each of the commissions or committees made recommendations whose applications were expected to bring improvements on the system of education in the country. In order to fully understand the impact these recommendations had on education development in Kenya, it is necessary that key recommendations of each commission or committee are given.

### **The Ominde Commission (1964): Kenya Education Commission**

- a) This was the first commission appointed by an independent African government in Kenya. This commission is credited for the restructuring of the education system from 8-4-4 to 7-4-2 as well as the unification of the education system for all the races. Paying close attention to the issues of educational objectives, a relevant curriculum was envisioned through which the objectives would be achieved. The commission set out education objectives in Kenya which may be summarized as follows:-
- i Education must serve to foster national unity.
  - ii Education must serve the needs of national development
  - iii Education must foster, develop and communicate the rich and varied cultures of Kenya.
  - iv Education must prepare and equip the youth of Kenya with knowledge , skills and expertise necessary to enable them collectively to play an effective role in the life of the nation whilst ensuring the opportunities are provided for the full development off individual talents and personality.
  - v Education must promote social justice and morality.
  - vi Kenya’s education system should foster positive attitude and consciousness towards other nations.

During this time, former European and Asian schools were opened to Africans but assumed the title of high cost and medium cost schools.

### **The Ndegwa Commission (1970/71)**

The purpose of this commission was to make recommendations on terms and conditions of service for public servants, code of regulation and salaries for teachers. These were:

- i That education boards be responsible for the administration of primary education.
- ii Inspectoral system for primary education should be overhauled.
- iii Purchase and distribution of school equipment should be decentralized.
- iv Secondary school curriculum should be diversified to include technical and vocational subjects.
- v There should be a new salary structure for teachers.

### **The Bessey Report (1971)**

This was basically a limited study on curriculum development in Kenya. Some of the key recommendations put out by the Bessey Report were:

- i. Recognizing the universality as well as the importance of primary schools.
- ii. Substantial broadening of the curriculum and fashioning of new syllabus both in primary and secondary education.
- iii. Rapid expansion and enrichment of teachers colleges.
- iv. Expansion of role and redeployment of the inspectorate as proposed in the Ndegwa Report.
- v. Refashioning of the K.I.E to guide in servicing of teachers.
- vi. An examination, research, and development unit was established.

### **The Gachathi Report (1976)**

Through a directive of the cabinet in November 1975, The National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (NCEOP) was established. The Gachathi Report of 1976 apart from making a number of recommendations and touched on the publishing industry, it appreciated the fact that educational books have a long production cycle from the time of commissioning to the actual publication. The report was against use of textbooks written by

foreign publishers who could not adequately meet the needs of Kenyans by publishing books with a cultural fit to the needs of the Kenyan education system and its schools (Rotich, 2004).

As regards educational development in Kenya, recommendations of the Gachathi report included :

- i. Focusing education on basic needs, income-earning opportunities and gearing education towards meeting ethical and social values of society.
- ii. Definition of a national standard of education and requiring all schools to attain it.
- iii. Restructuring of the basic education system to include a seven-year universal primary education, imposing a two-year fee paying junior secondary school giving an overall nine-year basic education.
- iv. Broadening of upper primary curriculum to include languages, mathematics, science, cultural studies and pre-vocational studies
- v. Implementing a four-year secondary education, also called senior secondary after which pupils would proceed to university
- vi. Upgrading of Kenyatta University College into a full university
- vii. Establishment of a national examinations council to be responsible for all examinations in the country.
- viii. Integration of continuous assessment for academic achievement
- ix. Establishment of operational TSCV posts at the provincial and district levels.

The recommendations contained in the Gachathi report provided the core material for restructuring of the educational systems.

### **The Mackay Report (1981)**

Primarily, the Mackay committee was to inquire into the suitability of establishing a second university in Kenya as had been alluded by the Gachathi Committee. However the restructuring of the education system to 8-4-4 dominated the outcome of the committee's recommendations. Consequently, its major recommendations were that the second university be technologically oriented; and the existing structure of education be changed from 7-4-2-3 to 8-4-4.

### **The Kamunge Report (1988).**

This was a Presidential Party whose mandate was to investigate on the status of Education and Manpower Development for the Next Decade and Beyond. The party made many recommendations but the following greatly impacted education in Kenya:

- i. Teaching of environment studies to be emphasized at all levels of Kenya's education system.
- ii. Emphasis to be on vocational and technical education.
- iii. Need to expand teacher training at all levels.
- iv. Need to expand university education.
- v. Cost sharing in education, management and financing be introduced at primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

### **The 8-4-4 System of Education**

Kenya, inherited a British-style, examination-driven system which reinforced widespread reliance on rote learning (Woolman, 2001). The secondary school curriculum was substantially revised with adoption of the 8-4-4 system in 1985 (Woolman, 2001; Somerset, 2009 ). In part this was in response to the crisis caused by growing numbers of unemployed

secondary school graduates. The secondary curriculum was vocationalised to improve the correlation of schooling with the world of work.

Since independence, the Kenya Government has established various Committees, Commissions and Working Parties and Papers in an effort to address quality, relevance and structure of education in Kenya. As a result, the Ominde commission had recommended a largely academic curriculum, which excluded the pre-independence industrial subjects such as agriculture and wood work. For a long time pre-independence industrial subjects such as agriculture and wood work subjects had been regarded by Africans as colonial tools of oppression (Akala W. J., 2007). The Mackay Education Report (1981) evolved the 8-4-4 structure, which replaced the 7-4-2-3 structure. The implementation of the 8-4-4 system started in January 1985. This system has four salient features: (a) The 8-4-4 structure which involves eight years in primary school, four years in secondary school and a minimum of four years' basic university education. This is a sharp shift from the former 7-4-2-3 structure. (b) It is highly inclined towards technical and vocational education. (c) It is supposed to give little emphasis to examinations (d) It has a diversified curriculum, which offers a wide range of subjects.

### **Pre-primary (Early Childhood Development & Education)**

Pre-primary education sometimes referred to as early childhood and education in Kenya is an initiative by parent associations. It is a stage of human development between birth and eight years of age. It is the most important stage of human development which neurobiological, physical, physiological and psychological changes take place that mediate the future cognitive, emotional, social and behavioral trends of the individual (Young 2007). The activity-based curriculum is similar to that of traditional education in its emphasis of language development,

environmental awareness, number work, music, movement, art, crafts, physical development, religious and moral education, general health, nutrition and child care (Woolman, 2001).

In Kenya, ECDE caters for children aged 4 to 5 years and is provided through joint effort of households, communities and the state (Republic Of Kenya, 2006). The following table presents the national ECDE fact sheet for 2007.

From the table, enrolment in ECDE centers increased by 10 per cent –from about 1.5 million to 1.7 million. More boys than girls were enrolled during the same period. The number of ECDE centers increased by 27 per cent, from 29,455 to 37,312, with the majority (64 per cent) being publicly owned. Thw GER for boys was higher than that of girls. Even though trends in NER show an increment nationally, from 31 percent in 2003 to 42 per cent in 2007, 58 per cent of the ECDE school age going pupils were not in school by 2007. There were variations in PTR for ECDE's across Kenya with private being 17:1 and public 27:1. This means that there were fewer pupils per teacher in private than in public ECDE center



Table 1: National ECDE Fact Sheet, 2007.

| <b>Education Indicators</b>                  | <b>Measure</b>   |
|--|------------------|
| Total population of ECDE going age 4-5 years | 2,327,146        |
| <b>Total number of ECDE Centers</b>          | <b>37,312</b>    |
| Total public ECDE centers                    | 23,887           |
| Total private ECDE centers                   | 13,425           |
| <b>Total Enrolment</b>                       | <b>1,697,736</b> |
| Total male enrolment                         | 866,612          |
| Total Female enrolment                       | 831,124          |
| Public ECDE teachers                         | 43,165           |
| Private ECDE teachers                        | 31,728           |
| Pupil teacher ratio(public)                  | 27:1             |
| Pupil teacher ratio(private)                 | 17:1             |
| Class size (public)                          | 33               |
| Class size( private)                         | 19               |
| <b>Gross Enrolment Rate (GER.)</b>           | <b>73.0%</b>     |
| Male GER                                     | 73.3%            |
| Female GER                                   | 72.6%            |
| <b>Net Enrolment Rate (NER)</b>              | <b>42.1%</b>     |
| NER male                                     | 43.1%            |
| NER female                                   | 41.1%            |

Source: School Mapping Phase 1 and Ministry of Education (for NER)

### **Primary Education.**

Primary schools in Kenya follow a common national curriculum. Students are expected to develop desirable social standards and attitudes; to become constructive and adaptive to life based on moral and religious values with responsibility to community and nation; to appreciate

their own and others' culture; to grow toward maturity and self-fulfillment; to develop self-expression, self-discipline, self-reliance (Akala, 2007).

The major challenges facing primary school education as identified by policy documents include: inadequate infrastructure especially in arid and semi-arid lands and marginalized areas and the poor state of existing facilities. Currently the top priority for the government during the period 2005-2010 was to ensure affordable and equitable access to education through several strategies including collaborating with development partners, civil society, communities and the private sector in the provision of additional educational facilities.

The table below shows the national primary school education fact sheet for 2007. From table,, the improvement in access rates in 2007 can be attributed to the introduction of Free Primary Education in 2003, resulting into significant enrolment increase in primary school education.

Table 2: National Primary School Education Fact Sheet, 2007

| <b>Education Indicators</b>                              | <b>Measure</b>   |
|--|------------------|
| Total Population Of Primary School Going Age (6-13 Year) | 7,205,243        |
| Gross Admission Rate                                     | 115%             |
| <b>Total Number Of Primary Schools</b>                   | <b>26,197</b>    |
| Total Public Primary Schools                             | 19,397           |
| Total Private Primary Schools                            | 6,800            |
| <b>Total Public Primary Enrolment</b>                    | <b>7,470,301</b> |
| Total Male Enrolment                                     | 3,818,414        |
| Total Female Enrolment                                   | 3,651,887        |
| <b>Total Private Primary Enrolment</b>                   | <b>793,683</b>   |
| Total Male Enrolment                                     | 409,432          |
| Total Female Enrolment                                   | 384,251          |
| Public Primary School Teachers                           | 172,623          |
| Private Primary School Teachers                          | 49,451           |
| Pupil Teacher Ratio (Public)                             | 43:1             |
| Pupil Teacher Ratio (Private)                            | 16:1             |
| Class size(public)                                       | 39:1             |
| Class size(private)                                      | 19:1             |
| <b>Gross Enrolment Rate (GER)</b>                        | <b>114.7%</b>    |
| GER Male   | 116.9%           |
| GER Female   | 112.4%           |
| <b>Net Enrolment Rate(NER)</b>                           | <b>91.6%</b>     |
| NER Male   | 94.1%            |
| NER Female   | 89.0%            |

SOURCE: School Mapping Data 2007 and Ministry Of Education (for NER)

### **Secondary Education.**

The secondary school segment in the education cycle of a Kenyan is important for three major reasons: a) It de-links one from elementary (primary) learning. b) It provides a chance for one to complete the cycle for basic education. c) It anchors as the springboard to either tertiary or higher learning (Achoka , 2007). Increased access to secondary education can also have implications on welfare. Because individuals with secondary school education are less likely to be affected by poverty than those with a lower level of education, (Oiro, Mwabu, & Manda, 2004; Geda et al., 2001; Onsomu et al., 2006). Past studies have conclusively shown that there exists a direct effect of education on earnings, with those with higher education earning more (Onsomu et al., 2006; Oiro et al., 2004; Manda et al., 2002). Improved access to secondary school education can help reduce disparities in earnings. Investment in secondary school education contributes to human capital accumulation, which is essential for development (Harbison & Myers, 1964) the country faces constraints in mobilizing additional public and private resources to meet the high cost of expanding access to quality secondary education.

Secondary school education in Kenya is guided by sector policies articulated in the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005, Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (2005-2010), Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (ERSWC, 2003) and the Vision 2030. Vision 2030, in particular, underscores the importance of secondary school education in laying a firm base for skills development at higher levels of education, including technological adaptation, innovation and technology.

Table 3: National Secondary School Education Fact Sheet, 2007.

| <b>Education Indicators</b>                                  | <b>Measure</b>   |
|--|------------------|
| Total Population Of secondary School Going Age (14-17 years) | 3,152,839        |
| <b>Total Number Of secondary Schools</b>                     | <b>6,495</b>     |
| Total Public secondary Schools                               | 5,132            |
| Total Private secondary Schools                              | 1,363            |
| <b>Total Public secondary Enrolment</b>                      | <b>1,029,481</b> |
| Total Male Enrolment   | 552,968          |
| Total Female Enrolment                                       | 476,513          |
| <b>Total Private secondary Enrolment</b>                     | <b>153,960</b>   |
| Total Male Enrolment   | 73,930           |
| Total Female Enrolment                                       | 80,030           |
| Public secondary School Teachers                             | 46,442           |
| Private secondary School Teachers                            | 11,474           |
| Pupil Teacher Ratio (Public)                                 | 22:1             |
| Pupil Teacher Ratio (Private)                                | 13:1             |
| Class size(public)   | 33:1             |
| Class size(private)  | 22:1             |
| <b>Gross Enrolment Rate (GER)</b>                            | <b>37.5%</b>     |
| GER Male   | 39.2%            |
| GER Female   | 35.8%            |
| <b>Net Enrolment Rate(NER)</b>                               | <b>24.2%</b>     |
| NER Male   | 25.2%            |
| NER Female   | 23.2%            |

Source: School Mapping Data 2007 and Ministry of Education (for NER)

From the above table, in 2007, there were 1.2 million students enrolled in 6,495 secondary schools (5,132 public and 1,363 private). About 1.03 million students were enrolled in public secondary schools. Even though the national GER was 37.5 per cent in 2007, there were wide

variations district wise. From the table it is evident that Kenya has a low NER of 24 per cent. This is a problem facing many developing countries. Kenya faces a double problem of increased enrolment at the primary level putting additional pressure for the expansion of secondary school.

### **Types of secondary schools.**

The official Ministry of Education classification of schools distinguishes between three secondary school types-aided, assisted, and unaided (Mwiria, 1990). Aided schools receive full government support in the form of grants-in-aid, teachers, and other staff. Assisted schools receive partial government support-usually some qualified teachers. More than 90 percent of the schools in the assisted category are Harambee. There are three types of unaided schools- Harambee, church, and private schools. Harambee schools constitute more than 90 percent of the unaided school sector. Therefore, assisted and unaided schools essentially refer to Harambee schools.

### **Harambee secondary school movement.**

A major feature of the Kenyan educational system has been community financing (Olembo, 1986 ; Mwiria, 1990). Such support is manifested in the form of Harambee schools. The term "Harambee" means "let us pull together."(Mwiria, 1990; Woolman, 2001). 'Harambee' was popularized by Kenya's first Prime Minister, Jomo Kenyatta (Bray & Lillis, 1988; Mwiria, 1990; Bradshaw, 1993) On June 1, 1963, during his swearing in as prime minister, he called for a development strategy based on the spirit of self-help (Harambee). And since demand for education was not matched by available government resources, the Harambee philosophy was officially accepted as a prime mover of development (Mwiria, 1990).Harambee schools cater to more than one-half of the country's secondary school population (Mwiria, 1990).

The management of Harambee schools is mainly in the hands of local community which forms local committees that organize fund-raising, recruit teachers, and do other school-related functions. The heavy dependence on local fund-raising makes it difficult for most Harambee schools to meet their recurrent costs and restrict them to the cheaper, purely academic curriculum.

### **Objectives of Secondary Education in Kenya**

Objectives of the secondary sector of education are to: (1) Promote experience and growth of the whole person through integrated development of mental, physical and emotive attributes and abilities. (2) Promote communication skills, numeracy, scientific concepts and skills. (3) Promote social equity through provision of education to all Kenyans including those from disadvantaged communities and households, girl - child and the handicapped (Republic of Kenya, 2003; 1998; 1980). Secondary schools were called upon to promote national unity, economic growth, individual development, social equality, respect for Kenya's "rich and varied cultures," and international understanding (cited in Kay, 1975).

### **Challenges of Secondary Education in Kenya**

However, the secondary school cycle in Kenya faces some challenges. Low transition rates between primary and secondary schools as well as high dropout rates (Republic of Kenya, 2003; 1998). Causes of secondary school education dropouts are: early girl-child marriages; inability to pay school fees due to poverty; hazards of HIV/AIDS pandemic; violence; and, drug abuse (Achoka, 2006 ; Republic of Kenya, 2003; Achoka, 2007). The transition rate from primary to secondary school is currently 50 per cent. The low access to

secondary school education, combined with the high unemployment rate, pose a significant challenge to the Kenyan government (Ngware, Onsomu, Muthaka, & Manda, 2006).

### **Specialized Agencies of Kenya's Ministry Of Education**

There are five specialized agencies within the ministry of education in Kenya. These agencies and a summary of their functions is outlined below.

#### **A. Kenya Institute of Education (K.I.E)**

The main functions of K.I.E include;

- i. To conduct research and prepare syllabuses for schools.
- ii. To conduct research and prepare teaching and evaluation materials to support any syllabuses such as teachers guides, mass media programs and similar materials.
- iii. To conduct in-service courses and workshops for any teachers involved in carrying out experiments and trials of new syllabuses and teaching materials.
- iv. To organize orientation programs for education officers to keep them informed of the developments that are taking place in schools and teachers' college curricula.
- v. To transmit programmes through mass media to support the developments taking place in education.
- vi. To prepare and conduct research in, and evaluation of correspondence courses for students and teachers.

#### **B. The Jomo Kenyatta Foundation (JKF)**

This is a parastatal whose main function is the advancement of education and/or for the purposes of the relief of poverty or distress of the public. In order to meet these afforested objectives, JKF among many other functions is involved in the following;



- i. To print and publish any newspapers, periodicals, books or leaflets that the foundation may think desirable for the promotion of its objectives.
- ii. To engage in activities within Kenya and/or eastern Africa with the object of improving the conditions of education, general and vocational training and cultural attainment of citizens or residents of Kenya or of eastern Africa.

### **C. Kenya Literature Bureau (KLB)**

This is a national parastatal that is responsible to the ministry of education and its main task is to publish books and learning materials. The Kenya Literature Bureau is expected to publish all types of books-not just school books, as well as publishing works of individuals.

### **D. Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC)**

In the colonial times, secondary examinations in Kenya were conducted by the Overseas Cambridge Examinations syndicate and London examinations syndicate. For some time in the nineteen seventies, the East African Examinations Council conducted secondary and technical examinations in Kenya and Uganda. However, in 1980, the Kenya National Examinations Council was set up by an Act of parliament cap 225.

The function of the council include; the setting, administering marking, and awarding all public examinations in Kenya. The examinations are based on the syllabuses developed by the Kenya institute of education. The examinations currently under the KNEC include Kenya Certificate of Primary Examination (KCPE), Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE), Primary Teachers Examinations and the Technical Examinations and Technical colleges. The council is also charged with the responsibility of recruiting examiners and training them so as to streamline the entire marking exercise.

### **E. The Teachers Service Commission (TSC)**

The Teachers Service Commission was created by an Act of Parliament cap 212 of 1967. The commission was established to provide for the registration of teachers, to establish and maintain a teacher's service adequate to the needs of public schools in Kenya.

- i. The commission recruits and employ registered teachers, assigns them for service in any public school, to pay the teachers employed by the commission for services in any remuneration of such teachers to promote or transfer and to exercise the power conferred on the commission by the Code of Registration.
- ii. It keeps under review the standards of education training and fitness to teach appropriate to persons entering the service, and the supply of teachers and to render advice to the minister from time to time on the aforesaid matters and on such other matters as may be referred to it by the Minister.
- iii. It compiles and publishes a code of regulations which applies to all teachers employed by the commission and from time to time modifies or amends the code of regulation in such a manner as it thinks fit.
- iv. To refuse to register an unsuitable person as a teacher.
- v. It may, with the consent of the Minister and subject to such conditions as he may impose, assign any teacher employed by the Commission in an unaided school.

The overall education system in Kenya is in one way or another affected and influenced by the above agencies. The extent of the influence is determined by the directness or indirectness between these agencies and those that are involved in the education sector.

However, the effectiveness of these agencies has been affected by the emergence of ethnic violence in the study area. In the following section, causes and effect of ethnic violence in Kenya and specifically the study area is discussed at length.

### **Ethnic Violence in Kenya**

Educational leaders at the secondary level working in the context of harambee schools are faced with a community based context which affects tremendously their role performance. Since harambee schools are community based and depend on the community for survival, the nature of the prevailing circumstances in the community are very important and crucial to the role performance of the principal and consequently in the attainment of the national and local educational objectives. For this reason and in order to grasp the community context that prevails in the study area there is need to explain at length the origin, nature and effect of the conflicts that prevail and persist. Historical injustices as well as the introduction of multiparty in Kenya coupled with Majimboism are discussed as the major causes of ethnic violence in Kenya. Ethnic violence is hypothesized by the author as a class conflict pitting the elite against the poor. In this chapter, the author contends that ethnic violence is not the preserve of Kenya but rather a worldwide phenomenon

### **Conflicts in the world.**

There is no region in the world that is free of conflicts. Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland have been in perpetual conflict for many years and yet they live and prosper together. There was, a few years ago a bloody civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina when Croats, Serbs, and Muslims had lived peacefully side-by-side for decades. Between India and Pakistan there has been violence in Kashmir for decades. In Guyana, there have been ethnic clashes and as Misir,(2007) notes, Guyanese people live in an intensely divided society and constantly identify

themselves by their ethnic group. However, Guyana has experienced periodic ethnic violence solely at election times. In Guyana, too, race and race-ethnic conflict are both socially and politically constructed. The race-ethnic conflict is not genetic or inborn and not even inevitable (Misir, 2007). Varshney (2001) contends that violence marks many multi ethnic societies especially if communities are organized along intra-ethnic lines and the interconnections with other communities are very weak.

### **Conflicts in Africa.**

In Africa, ethnic violence has been a common feature and occurrence in several countries (Bates, 1983; Fearon, 2004) .There is a lot of literature on ethnic violence and its appalling atrocities that are as a consequence of two formerly peaceful ethnic groups suddenly turning on each other. The worst example of ethnic clashes in Africa is the genocide in Rwanda where the Hutus and Tutsi's who had lived in harmony in Central Africa for about 600 years , turned against each other in 1994 (Andreopoulos, 1994; Melvern, 2004; Totten, 2004) .

According to Malambwe (2005), the last decade has witnessed confrontations between different ethnic groups particularly in Africa. Areas that have been affected by these confrontations include the countries in the Central African Great Lakes Region between the Hutus and Tutsi population of Rwanda and Burundi; meantime, Banyamulenge of D.R Congo has been reported as a mistreated ethnic minority (Robert., 1998; Alwy & Schech, 2004; Driscoll, 2009) and between local fishermen from Kayar and migrant fishermen from Saint-Louis in Senegal (Platteau, 2000)

In Nigeria, the struggle for political and economic space has intensified between and among the various religious groups and ethnic nationalities at the community, state and national

levels thereby making these clashes inevitable (Alubo, 2006). As a plural society, clashes, crises, violent and non-violent demonstrations are all part and parcel of Nigerian history dating back to 1914 when Southern and Northern protectorates were amalgamated (Okafor, 1982; Alubo, 2006; Okafor, 2007; Otite, 1979). Widespread poverty in Nigeria occasioned by social and economic dislocations, under the present dispensation, ethnic and religious manipulations by the political class are the forces that sustain and perpetuate these clashes (Okafor, 2007). More recently, there have been waves of unrest in which erstwhile neighbors are pitted against each other and those assailed are told to ‘go home’ and are expelled from specific geo-physical spaces (Alubo, 2006; Otite, 1979). Furthermore, the assailed ethnic groups are frequently referred to as ‘settlers’ (Anderson & Lochery, 2008) by other groups who claim to be ‘indigenes’ of particular geo-political spaces. In these contestations, the same language once used to rally Nigerians of diverse origins in the anti-colonial struggles has resurfaced (Alubo, 2001). Not to be left out; violence is part and parcel of life in Zimbabwe (Yap (Pohjolainen, 2001)

### **Ethnic Violence in Kenya**

According to Eyoh (1999), bearing an ethnic identity is in Africa “an ordinary aspect of selfhood and a basic social relation” (pg.273). Ethnicity is a primary element in the social and political configurations of Kenya (Kathina & Masika, 1997). To most Kenyans, rites of passage—birth, initiation into adulthood, marriage, and death—are acknowledged through ethnic rituals and regulations that reinforce the bonds between community members (Kathina & Masika, 1997). Ethnicity itself is often asserted to be a key contributor to ‘ethnic conflict’. However, it is increasingly evident that “ethnicity neither causes conflict, nor in many cases does it accurately describe it. Rather ethnicity/identity is increasingly mobilized and politicized in contemporary violent conflicts (Bush K. D., 1997).

Violence has been a feature of every election campaign in Kenya since 1992 (Oyugi, 1997), and during each of the past four national elections, Rift Valley has been Kenya's most politically volatile province (Oyugi, 1997, 2000; Anderson & Lochery, 2008). Ethnic violence in Kenya is a function of historical land injustices and multiparty political competition in multi-ethnic regions (Kamungi, 2009). Political competition for access to state patronage resources makes for ethnic sparring and politicization of the land question (Southall, 2005). Consequently political support becomes equated with inclusion or exclusion from resources associated with perceived territorial identities.

#### **Ethnic violence in the Rift-Valley Province (1992, 1997 and 2007).**

Ethnic violence in Kenya can be traced to 1991 when Kenya was due to have its first multiparty elections (Bratton & Kimenyi, 2008; Waki Report, 2008). Fighting broke out in October, 1991 and spilled over to 1992 (Mulli, 1999). And although initially the violence was contained in Rift valley province, In November and December, fighting between the Luo and Kalenjin extended to Western and Nyanza Provinces, and in the process drew in members of the Luhya and Kikuyu ethnic groups (Mulli, Understanding election clashes in Kenya, 1992 and 1997, 1999). After the elections in December 1992, the Kalenjin again fought with the Kikuyu in the Rift Valley followed by the forced eviction of Kikuyu by the Maasai in the Enoospukia region. In 1995, in the Mai Mahiu area of Naivasha, fighting broke out that left 300 000 people displaced (Mulli, 1999). The violence that characterized the first elections was to be repeated on a greater scale in 1997, the year of the second multiparty elections and also in 2007. Unlike in 1992 and 2007, the epicenter in 1997 was in the coast province of Kenya.

### **Ethnic violence in coast province (1992).**

Ethno nationalist sentiments have characterized relations between the indigenous ethnic groups and the immigrant groups, mainly the Luo, Kikuyu and Akamba at the coastal town of Mombasa. The indigenous groups had long complained of domination by "upcountry" communities in terms of economic opportunities (Oyugi W. O., 1997). The ethnic clashes in the coast province between 'coastal' and 'inland' ethnic groups left forty people dead and 120 000 displaced. Until this time, sporadic violence had been explained away as the result of competing traditional land claims (Mulli, Understanding election clashes in Kenya, 1992 and 1997, 1999).

In retrospective, one cannot help noting that there was then a deliberate strategy intended by those who planned the clashes to give the impression that it was an ideological clash between the Coast people who wished to see the upcountry people removed from Mombasa so that they could benefit from the economic opportunities available in the district (Oyugi, 1997). Whereas the 1992 elections in Kenya had seen violence limited to the Rift Valley, Western and Nyanza provinces, the violence in 1997 was distinctive as it had expanded to include the Coastal Province.

### **Causes of Ethnic Violence in the Rift Valley Province**

Rift Valley Province covers 40 per cent of Kenya's land surface and was originally occupied by the white settlers in the colonial period (Klopp, 2001; Waki Report, 2008). During the pre-colonial era, pastoral communities such as the Maasai and the Kalenjin were the areas indigenous inhabitants (Machira, 2001). Much of the literature on the ethnic violence witnessed in the rift valley concur that even though the violent acts may have been spontaneous, they were a product and a reaction to longer sequence of historical decisions and political actions

(Anderson & Lochery, 2008). The Rift Valley Province has seen some of the worst inter-ethnic violence in Kenya (Lonsdale, 2008). The following historical and political decisions have been listed as causes of ethnic violence in the Rift Valley province of Kenya:

i. Pre-independence historical injustices.

The indirect rule administered by the British colonialists later turned out to be the 'divide and rule' strategy which polarized the various ethnic groups in Kenya which in turn contributed to the subsequent incompatibility of these ethnic groups as actors on one nation-state called Kenya (Nyukuri, 1997; Davidson, 1990). The artificial boundaries and paramount chiefs that the British created in Kenya gave rise to the notion that there was a difference in various groups. This uncaring drawing of tribal boundaries by the imperial powers confined certain ethnic groups to specific regions (Perkins, 1986).

*a). Creation of white highlands*

While land has had a great prominence in Kenyan politics throughout the country's colonial and post-colonial history (Harberson, 1971; Okoth-Ogendo, 1981) it is also viewed as not only a political asset but an economic and social resource (Lonsdale, 2008). When Europeans were encouraged by the British government in the early years of the century to take residence in Kenya, they sought to consolidate and increase their control over the political and economic life of the colony (Harberson, 1971) thereby giving rise to the most skewed land distribution pattern (Okoth-Ogendo, 1981)

Land seized by the British colonists cut a swath through Kenya's modern day provinces of Rift Valley, Nyanza, Western, and Central, creating an area that became colloquially known as the 'White Highlands' (Kenya Land Alliance, 2006; Harbeson, 1971; Morgan, 1963). In total, British settlers took 20 per cent of Kenya's land, most of it prime agricultural spots (Okoth-



Ogendo, 1981). The creation of the 'white highlands' not only hastened the destruction of traditional land tenure patterns but it also fuelled nationalist anger at the allegedly unjust acquisition of African land by British settlers under colonial auspices (Harbeson, 1971).

Colonial social measures coupled with the reserved area policy as well as declining mortality led to a rapid population increase (Harbeson, 1971). And with no natural areas for expansion, many people were displaced. The displaced populations lived as farm laborers, casual workers, tenants as well as squatters. Like their agricultural counterparts, the pastoralists were pushed to the less conducive reserve (Segal, 1968). Increased land pressures over time helped deepen a sense of local grievance over the unfair taking of land (Klopp, 2002).

***b). Million acre settlements.***

As independence became inevitable, Britain devised a program for the transfer of lands from Europeans to African ownership (Klopp, 2002; Leo, 1981; Segal, 1968). This program known as the Million Acre Scheme was meant to facilitate African settlements on 1.17 million acres of land (Leys, 1975; Njonjo, 1977). Due to settler panic in the wake of inevitable black rule and organized attempts by certain groups of African (e.g. the Land Freedom Army), to seize land by force (Okoth-Ogendo, 1981; Leo, 1981), settlement schemes were rather hastily and sporadically started. Three reasons are mentioned for these schemes being a source of conflicts in the Rift Valley. For starters, the methods used for allocation varied over time but in the initial phases local administrators, including chiefs and head men compiled lists of squatters and landless, and a lottery was held (Harbeson, 1971). Unfortunately, it is alleged that the names that finally made the list were not of landless people but relatives and friends of those compiling the lists. Secondly when the Million Acre settlements had been mooted, some Kalenjin communities riled against the notion of buying what they thought was originally theirs (Klopp,

2001). In other areas, the Kalenjin who had wanted to buy land but lost in the initial allocations were out-bid by kikuyu, Kisii or Luhya buyers when the plots were sold later on (Anderson & Lochery, 2008; Gisemba, 2008). On top of all these, suspicions about allocation procedures became increasingly common with accusations that land was corruptly granted to politicians and civil servants (Abrams, 1979). All of these issues fomented resentments as Kalenjin landlessness began to bite more severely and local leaders pressed for new schemes to be established to meet local needs or Kalenjins to be given priority in access to existing ones (Anderson & Lochery, 2008)

Discontent about the rift valley pre-independence settlement schemes was thus expressed in local politics from the beginning of the 1960's, and grew steadily over time, especially as the Kalenjin population expanded and land-hunger among their own communities became more acute in the late 1970' and 1980's (Anderson & Lochery, 2008). In brief access to and property rights remained a function of patronage and political maneuvering as well as the ability to pay (Berry, 1993)

## ii. Post-independence

### *a.) Re-settlement schemes.*

Given the mistreatment of the ethnic groups under the colonial government (Strayer, 1973; Waki Report, 2008), there was widespread expectation during the struggle that at independence land would be freely distributed to the people since it had in the first place, been forcefully taken away from them (Oyugi, 2000; Anderson & Lochery, 2008). Among these were the more radical nationalists who argued that land which the Europeans held, having been stolen from the people, should be returned at independence and be freely distributed to the people (Odinga, 1968). Unfortunately, this was not to be because under the independence agreement

with Britain, the Kenya government was to purchase it from the settlers (Nyukuri, 1997). Towards this end, the British advanced a loan to Kenya to facilitate this purchase (Rothchild, 1973 ; Youe', 1988; Waki Report; 2008). That in turn meant that there was no free land for distribution. The price-tag made land very scarce with the general result being that majority of the people who were actually settled was far from being the absolutely landless (Okoth-Ogendo, 1981). This is the critical point at which the subsequent land-tenure became a factor of ethnicity and landlessness which, according to a 1978 Parliamentary Select Report became a major land problem (Okoth-Ogendo, 1981).

In the Rift Valley, the 'original' owners of the land were the Maasai's and the Kalenjins (Little, 1998; Nasieku, 2004; Gisemba, 2008). It was their belief that if and when the white highlands were reverted back to the Kenyans, they would have been accorded first priority and their argument was that they should have been given the land freely since the colonialists never bought it from them (Odinga, 1968). Unfortunately, the government under Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of independent Kenya, did not accept this argument and therefore encouraged the formation of land-buying co-operative groups in order to pool their meager incomes and purchase these farms (Nyukuri, 1997; Leonard, 1991). The kikuyu with their allies quickly formed land buying companies and co-operatives with the blessing of President Jomo Kenyatta (Nyukuri, 1997; Chege, 1981). Critics of these land buying companies argue that the kikuyu ethnic groups were just as poor as other Kenyan ethnic groups and yet they managed to buy some of the largest and most expensive tracts of land from the white settlers (Nyukuri, 1997 ; Throup & Hornsby, 1998).

Consequently, the kikuyu became the main beneficiaries of the government's post independent settlement plan for the landless at no cost or at minimal rates (Human Rights Watch,

2008). They thus expanded their land ownership and settlement beyond their traditional home; Central Province-into the Rift Valley province (Leonard, 1991). This skewed distribution of former 'white highlands' to Kikuyu people mainly, was perceived by other ethnic groups in Kenya as unfair and there were parliamentary debates that called for equal distribution and the subsequent animosity that later on degenerated in the recent ethnic conflicts between the Kikuyu and the Kalenjins in the Rift Valley (Leonard, 1991; Kenya Land Alliance,2004).

***b). Introduction of multi-party politics.***

The advent of multi-party politics in Kenya also can be pointed out as another cause of ethnic violence (Odhiambo, 2004). Prior to the multi-party era, election violence was restricted to fights between supporters of different candidates, as competition was for power and influence in only one party (Kamungi, 2001; Mutahi, 2005). Although electoral violence has become commonplace of Kenyan politics over the past two decades, the intensity and extent of the conflicts that followed the polls of 27-28 December 2007 was unprecedented (Anderson & Lochery, 2008). When Kenya became a multiparty state in 1991, the Rift Valley was declared a Kenya African National Union (KANU) Zone which was basically a policy of political exclusion (Anderson & Lochery, 2008). The stakes in the elections were made higher by the new constitutional requirement for winning the presidency: being elected an MP, obtaining a majority of votes, and receiving more than 25 per cent of votes in five out of Kenya's eight provinces (Mueller, 2010). Faced with these rules, KANU the party in power was determined to win at all costs and remain in power (Hameso, 2002; Anderson & Lochery, 2008).

Given the multi ethnic nature of the Rift Valley province (Akiwumi Report,1999; Oyugi , 2000; Osamba, 2001), there was a strong likelihood that the non Kalenjins would vote for upcountry opposition politicians running for president thus deny him from obtaining the 25 per

cent of the ballots cast, which he needed to win the rift valley (Anderson & Lochery, 2008) . With the possibility of losing, politicians were faced with two options: to appeal potential constituents and try to win them away from the opposition or to get rid of the opposition itself (Mueller, 2010). In view of the above, it would be conclusively determined that the tendency to mobilize and pursue political interests as ethnic blocs, competitive multiparty politics in Kenya is characterized by dichotomies of inclusion and exclusion, often drawn along notions of territorial ownership and post-colonial land redistribution patterns (Kamungi, 2010).

*c) Majimboism*

This is a narrative of a pre-independence movement for provincial autonomy (Ghai, 2008; Klopp, 2002). In the 1950s majimboism involved conservative white settlers fearful that universal franchise would result in a loss of control and property, particularly the loss of their large Rift Valley farms (Klopp, 2002; Anderson, 2005). Joined by some leaders of the small coastal and pastoralist communities, the majimboists of colonial Kenya promoted the idea of provincial autonomy, reaffirming colonially defined boundaries that in reality included intermingled ethnic communities. According to Klopp (2002) and Ghai (2008), the majimbo strategy was justified as a means to safeguard minority communities within the Rift Valley and Coast from the larger Kikuyu community by claiming that “the violence was aimed at achieving justice in land claims by expelling those who had illicitly occupied land belonging to ‘traditional’ occupants of the Rift Valley” (Galaty & Munei, 1999 pg.11). Since then, aggressive political campaign has emerged promoting a radical ethno-nationalism in which majimboism is presented as the expulsion of non-indigenous peoples from the rift valley, and thus the means toward the restoration of all ‘ancestral lands’ to local Kalenjin and Maasai communities (Anderson, 2008; Lynch, 2006 ; Oucho, 2002; Klopp,2001).

To evoke majimboism in the 1990s was to imply that once again “minority groups” needed protection from a feared Kikuyu domination of the state (Klopp, 2002). The political elites in an attempt to stem off agitation for multi-party use the rhetoric of majimboism to counter the idea of multi-partyism by painting it as an exclusionary project of domination (Klopp, 2002; Ghai, 2008). Witnesses to the violence that would follow pointed to the *majimbo* rallies as the start of the trouble (Republic of Kenya, 1992). Multi-ethnic communities of smallholder settlement schemes and trading centers became targets and were disproportionately affected, indicating a profound class dimension to the violence (Korf & Fünfgeld, 2006, Wakhungu, Nyukuri, & Huggins, 2008)

This rise of majimboism and the violent purification of multi-ethnic communities (Nyukuri, 1997; Klopp, 2002) first in the Rift Valley, Western, and Nyanza provinces and later along the Coast, constituted one of the most decisive and dangerous breaks in Kenya’s independence politics (Abwunza, 1993). Not only was *majimbo* violence targeted at “outsiders” as part of an electoral strategy (Kanyongolo & Lunn, 1998) it also aimed at policing community boundaries through fear and, in this way, undermining potentially threatening trans-ethnic organizing (Klopp, 2002). Votes are among the territory’s greatest assets (Sundet & Moen, 2009). Strangers on the land are blemishes, *madoadoa*, to be cleansed lest they vote the wrong way (Lonsdale, 2008; Ashforth, 2009). In response to resistance and challenges to their power, the majimboist clique at the top of the then patronage hierarchy stood to gain with the status quo. Violence has been effective in maintaining their grip on power (Klopp, 2002). According to Mamdani (1996); the current crop of elites move between being “ethnic chiefs” in rural areas, speaking the language of “custom” over land and threatening violence against “outsiders” to using liberal rhetoric and portraying themselves as protectors of “private property rights” to facilitate their own accumulation (pg.61).

It is my submission that in taking a pro-majimbo stance, politicians were perceived to be supportive of these expulsions even though at no time did they openly declare their support for the expulsions. Consequently, in the rift valley, many people choose to interpret this as an endorsement for the expulsion of ‘aliens’ (Anderson & Lochery, 2008). The proponents of majimbo were advocating for each community to return to its ancestral district or province and if for any reason they would be reluctant or unwilling to do so, they would by all means be forced to do so (Boone, 2007).

*d) Ethnization of politics in Kenya.*

The politicization of ethnicity in post independent Kenya is the key to understanding all the conflicts in Kenya (Kagwanja, 2000; Oyugi , 2000 ;Wakhungu, Nyukuri, & Huggins, 2008). Ethnicity itself is often asserted to be a key contributor to ‘ethnic conflict’ (Steinbruner, Kenney, Klare, & Mazarr, 1995; Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Matheson, 2008). However, it is increasingly evident that “ethnicity neither causes conflict, nor in many cases does it accurately describe it. Rather ethnicity is increasingly mobilized and politicized in contemporary violent conflicts” (Bush, 1997). Politicians have used ethnic structures to create their positions as the representatives of their groups (Horowitz ,1998). Ethnic community claims also tend to correspond to political constituencies, and political participation has been primarily organized along communal and ethnic lines.

Since political parties are usually known by the ethnic and regional basis from which they draw their support rather than by their party manifestos, achievements, or strategies (Juma, 2000), a political party’s loss is interpreted as the entire ethnic group’s loss. It is a historical fact and current reality that most Kenyan districts are haunted by actual or potential ethnic conflicts (Nyukuri, 1997). This is partly because different communities continue to consciously or

unconsciously rely on ethnicity to perpetuate their dominance and hegemony in an atmosphere characterized by scarce resources, fear and prejudice (Nyukuri, 1997).

*e). Cattle rustling.*

Another main cause of ethnic violence in the Rift Valley province has been associated with cattle rustling or cattle raids. Rustling has ancient roots among pastoralist tribes (Crilly, 2008; Osamba, 2001). It swells herd size and gives young warriors a chance to prove themselves by attacking rivals or defending their own people. According to Lamphear (1992) raids were an important strategy of accumulation that also served to cultivate relations with neighbors. Some authors do also argue that pre-colonial raiding could also have been redistributive, transferring animals across social boundaries in situations of need, such as during drought or when young men sought animals to pay out as bride price (Hendrickson et al, 1998; Spear & Waller, 1993). The scale and loss of human life during these pre-colonial raids were much smaller since ‘traditional’ weapons such as spears, arrows and bows were used.

In the last two decades the nature of raiding and levels of violence associated with it have changed dramatically as deadly and sophisticated weapons are used. As a result, the numbers of livestock stolen and the loss of human life associated with raiding have risen enormously (Ibrahim & Jenner, 1996).

### **Violence in the Study Area**

The study area is located along the border of two provinces; Nyanza and Rift Valley provinces. In some literature, this region is referred to ‘Sotik-Borabu’ border. Sotik district is in the southern tip of the Rift Valley and Borabu is in the eastern edge of Nyanza Province. Sotik district covers 537.0 Km<sup>2</sup> and arable land constitutes 82 percent of the land with irrigated land



taking up 14 percent, forest land 4 percent. There is no arid and semi-arid land (Muriu & Owino, 2009). According to the preliminary results of 2009 census, the Constituency has a total population of 188, 264. This contrasts greatly with the data collected by way of questionnaire to the chiefs, which indicates a total population of 245,070 people. 54 percent of this according to the Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey (KIHBS data) population is estimated to be living under the poverty line. Sotik is mainly inhabited by the Kipsigis who are a Kalenjin sub tribe.

On the other hand, Borabu strides both Nyamira and Kisii district and is inhabited by the Abagusii people. The area is mostly hilly and is dissected by rivers flowing west into Lake Victoria. The area lies on a highland equatorial climate, and as such receives rain almost throughout the year, although there are two rainy seasons (March to May and October to November). Average rainfall is over 1500mm and is quite reliable, helping to support, tea, and subsistence crops (maize, beans, millet, potatoes). Temperatures can range from 10°C to 30°C. Due to the high population density, almost all land in this area is put to maximum agricultural use.

Even though large scale ethnic violence seems to have started in 1991 in the Larger Rift Valley Province (Kimenyi & Ndung'u, 2005.), ethnic violence in this region has been going since the 1800's albeit on a limited scale (Morgan, 1963). According to Morgan (1963), the area under contestation was the only fully documented instance of settlement schemes which were deliberately encouraged to separate two warring tribes. Apparently as early as the 1960's the fighting between the Abagusii and the Kipsigis had gotten so bad that the colonial government set out to alienate land and create a buffer zone between the tribes. According to Morgan (1963), the pastoral Kipsigis to the East were in a state of semi-permanent hostilities with the cultivating Kisii to the west. Government officers inspected the area in 1906 and recommended that this

block of land was suitable for farming by Europeans and should be settled as a buffer zone.

According to the same author, the land was pastoral and known to belong to the Kipsigis, but was hoped that the loss of this land would force the tribe to become more agricultural, and thus settled, on the ample land remaining to them.

The Kipsigis argue that the land comprising Borabu district is their ancestral land (Mars Group, 2008). They claim that they lost it when the Europeans forcibly acquired it during the colonial times to establish White highlands. At independence, the Kisii, Kipsigis, and the Maasai were given the opportunity to buy the land at the White highlands partly forming the present border area between the Kipsigis and the Kisii. They bought the land from the departing Colonial Settlers through an arrangement facilitated by the Settlement Fund Trustee. The Kisii's were the greatest beneficiaries of the settlement Schemes among the three communities, because of their higher population density. The Kisii continued to buy land directly in Bomet and Narok, which explains their significant presence in those areas.

The rivalry between the two communities predates the colonial era, and this rivalry gets passed down through folklore from generation to generation by both the Kisii and the Kipsigis, each side exalting their own valiant exploits against the other. Since independence the Kipsigis have launched several ambitious campaigns, to recover what they perceive as their ancestral land (Ndegwa, 1997). They launched major attacks against the Kisii in 1964, 1969, 1992, 1997, 2002, and 2007. Their goal is to push the Kisii deep to a place called Meta Maywa.

### **Education in Kenya: School Community Context**

The importance of trust in any relationship that requires interaction cannot be understated. Literature confirms that trust is necessary in cooperative endeavors (e.g., Arrow, 1974; Deutsch, 1973; Gambetta, 1988) and is a key to positive interpersonal relationships in various settings (e.g., Fox, 1974; Lewis & Weigert, 1985a). Trust becomes even more central and critical during periods of uncertainty due to crisis (Mishra, 1996; Weick & Roberts, 1993) as demands on trust increase. The notion that trust is central to all transactions and relationships has led to it being wrongly treated as background environment, present whenever called upon, a sort of ever-ready lubricant that permits voluntary participation in intra-relationships (Dasgupta, 2000). The truth is that during times of uncertainty, people feel more vulnerable and are more cautious in their dealings while becoming more vigilant.

School leaders who work in contested areas are daily made aware of the importance and need for trust in their role performance. Schools located in clash prone areas are faced with uncertainty and are overly dependent on the community for resources whose availability and continuous flow is not guaranteed. This situation makes the principals more vulnerable to community demands.

In order to understand the context within which school principals operate in the study area, and thus the need for trust, it is my submission that the prevailing ethnic violence has caused uncertainty. This uncertainty coupled with the high levels of dependence on the community has made the principals very vulnerable

#### **Uncertainty**

One of the core functions of the school principal is to ensure that learning takes place in a safe and secure environment. Parents also expect the principal to take charge of the learning

process by ensuring that their children get the right education as laid down by the ministry of education, in the right sequence and within the expected period of time. Unfortunately, the principal does not have control over events in the community that also affect the learning process in the school. Consequently, as an open institution, the school faces uncertainty in the form of multiple and continuing threats to its stability and credibility (Johnson & Fauske, 2000). The ever changing community demands on the school according to Greenfield (1995) are one of the major causes of uncertainty in schools. In addition to unstable demands, the flow of resources from the community to the school fluctuates thus causing more uncertainty for the school principal. For example during ethnic violence, student attendances as well as population fluctuate causing falling incomes as well as slackening or non- curriculum implementation. Teachers fail to attend to students while others seek transfers to ‘friendly’ neighborhoods. Even during periods of nonviolence, the central government at times delays student bursaries and remittances which cause further uncertainty for the school principal. In such a situation, a principal might be perceived to be incompetent by the community regardless of the causes of the uncertainty thus jeopardizing his legitimacy and position.

### **Dependence**

The school community embodies dependence for school and principal (Johnson & Fauske, 2000). Both the school and the principal are dependent on the community for support and valuation of their credibility (Scott, 1998; Selznick, 1957). For the school, credibility and support means that the community values what the school personifies in society and what an individual school represents in its community both in its actual and potential contributions. This valuation provides the moral justification both for the individual institution as well as public education (Johnson & Fauske, 2000).

In a similar vein, for the principal, parents will value both the role of principal and the individual filling that role at a given point in time if they perceive that the individual filling the role not only possesses the requisite values, knowledge, and abilities needed for successful role performance but is fulfilling the role of principal in a manner consistent with their expectations. Bearing in mind that successful role performance and resource flow are closely linked (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Meyer & Scott, 1992; Scott, 1995, 1998), it therefore means that both the school and principal are dependent on the parents for support and for the resources such as money, personnel, time, or cooperation.

### **Vulnerability**

The high school principals working in the study area have to deal with two major factors affecting their credibility yet beyond their control. On one hand, these principals have to deal with insecurity issues as well as the uncertainty of not knowing when an attack will happen. On the other hand, they have to deal with ever changing parental demands based on their expectations.

Long term planning in such situations becomes ineffective as stability is only guaranteed over short periods of time. Fluctuating as well as insufficient resources threaten the principal's credibility and ability to be fully in charge of the learning process. Faced with uncertainty, inconsistency and the concomitant flow of resources as well as the instability caused by ethnic violence in the study area makes both the school and its principal vulnerable to parental demands and eventual loss of credibility. With this vulnerability comes insecurity. And even though stage theorists suggest that concerns for survival diminish in intensity as the principal becomes more socialized to the role (Parkay et al., 1992), the concern for survival, remains intense even among principals with substantial experience working in unstable environments.

## **Principal-Parent Relationship**

### **Introduction**

Literature supports the notion that parent involvement has a positive impact on student achievement and success in school (Casanova, 1996). Crowson (1998), notes that active parental participation and close principal-community connections are vital ingredients of modern day pedagogy. A number of studies on principal-parent relationships concluded that the more active roles parents take at school, the greater the benefit of parental involvement for promoting academic and social change in schools (Comer, 1980, 1988; Gordon, 1979; Leler, 1983).

Consequently schools that have a positive principal-community relationship have a learning potential (Crowson & Boyd, 1993; Weiss, 1995) because of the interdependencies (a "new ecology" of schooling) between schools, families, and communities (Goodlad, 1987), as well as a new sense that sharing between families and educators is essential developmentally to children (Comer, 1980).

One of the main advantages that accrue when there is a close and strong link between the principal and parents is the development of social capital (Coleman, 1994) which is based upon the relationships that exist in a community (Coleman, 1988; Smylie & Hart, 1999). Building on the work of Coleman (e.g., 1988), Putnam (1994), and others in their study of five communities, Onyx and Bullen (2000) concluded that social capital is present where there are participation in networks, reciprocity, trust, social norms, the commons (shared ownership over resources), intergenerational closure, and social agency. For a principal to develop social capital within the community he works in, he or she will have to adopt behaviors that a) set shared norms, expectations, and sanctions; b) build information networks; and c) nurture trust (Coleman, 1988; Smylie & Hart, 1999). To achieve this they need to align their values with the values and

expectations of the parents. In order to do this the principal has to make pervasive efforts to ‘please’ various community groups in order to retain or enhance credibility and resources.

From the above, it obviously is imperative for a high school principal to not only have but also work towards developing and maintaining the support of the parents within the community he serves. Since trust involves interaction, principals are accorded some form of initial trust when they are appointed as principals. This initial trust is based on the belief that they are competent, have a good reputation, have experience and that highest ethical standards and procedures were put in place during the hiring process.

The ultimate nature of the principal–parent relationship that develops is a function of the ‘entering characteristics’ of the principal and the demands and expectations of the parents. By entering characteristics, reference is made to the initial assumed positive characteristics and qualities that high school principals bring with them to the job and which makes it easier for them to be accorded initial trust by the parents they interact with. Principals are assumed to be competent, have a good reputation, are experienced and are certified and registered by state appointing authorities. When all these four factors are considered, whoever is hired as a high school principal is assumed to be the best and most competent candidate to perform the duties of the principal and consequently meet the role expectations of the parents.

#### **A. Principal’s entering characteristics**

When an individual is appointed as a school principal, and based on the assumption that the hiring process was fair, there is overall belief that they have what it takes to meet the demands and duties of the office of the principal. Within this belief is embedded the notion that the successful applicant is competent, has a good reputation and experience based on his past performance in a similar role or position. The sum total of all these is what I hereby call initial trust of the newly appointed principal.

**i. Competence.**

Competence is defined as the ability to perform a task as expected, according to appropriate standards (Tschannen-Moran, 2004) and is an essential facet of trust and trustworthiness (Butler & Canterll, 1984; Solomon & Flores, 2001). When someone is dependent on another and some skill is involved in fulfilling an expectation, an individual who means well may nonetheless not be trusted (Baier, 1994; Mishra, 1996). For instance in schools, parents depend upon the principal's competence to accomplish teaching and the learning goals of the school. If the principal lacks knowledge that will enable him to function and carry his duties as the principal in the school, or cannot adequately communicate with the teachers, students and the community on his plans for the school, the community may lose trust in the principal (Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

In the course of his duties, a principal becomes the first line of defense in disruptions that come from the outside, such as calming an irate parent who demands to speak to a teacher immediately, or assisting in creating a school wide climate that is serious about learning and does not condone student misconduct. A calm demeanor in the face of an angry parent or a child who is out of control can be reassuring and a sign of competence (Tschannen-Moran, 1999). This is the type of competence that newly posted principals are assumed to have when they report to their new duty stations. Because they feel vulnerable to the problems that emerge from an incompetent principal, parents rely heavily on competence as a basis of trust. The parents assume that to have become a principal, the individuals have mastered essential leadership and management skills with which they will ensure that the core duties of the schools are not interrupted.



## **ii. Reputation.**

When a new principal is appointed, it is assumed that he/she has not only the relevant competence but also a good reputation, in terms of consistency, reliability, and personal integrity or dependability (Sztompka, 1999). Reputation is defined as the record of past deeds (Sztompka, 1999) and the person on which trust is conferred need to have been around and actively exhibited the qualities he or she is reputed to possess for some time. Rarely is it a case that a reputation is based on a single instance (Good, 1988). Consequently, the principal's initial reputation that he or she will come with to the new school will depend on direct experience of their meeting or breaching parent's trust in their previous schools, or if there is good first-hand knowledge about their conduct toward other people (teachers, students and the general public). Sometimes reputations are also formed on the basis of second-hand information (stories, biographies, CVs, resumes) about them, based on stories, evaluations, or credentials (given by others). When a principal reports to a new schools, it is a confirmation by the appointing authority that from their reputation, the individual is reliable, of trustworthy conduct and therefore has the ability (competence) to meet the parents trust and can be counted on (Giddens, 1991; Williamson, 1993).

## **iii. Institutional supports.**

High initial trust in the principal is a function of not just the efficiency of assumed trustworthiness but also a function of the institutional mechanisms, such as policies, rules, and regulations (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). The belief that the necessary organizational structures are in place for the parents to anticipate a successful interchange with the principal and the outcomes and expectations they desire support the development of initial trust (McKnight, Cummings, & Chervany, 1998; Shapiro, 1987; Zucker, 1986).

For example, the mechanisms involved in the hiring process are key institutional supports for initial trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). The hiring process is an intentional process of gathering trust-relevant information on both sides of the hiring decision. From the first contact with a prospective employee, school committees and all those involved in the hiring process not only gather information about the person's background and check with references who have knowledge of the person, they also pay special attention to the character of the interactions to be sure they do not sense anything out of the ordinary (Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

Likewise, the prospective principal in the process of making a decision whether to accept the position if recruited, judges the feel of the school and attempts to pick up any discrepancies between what is said (about the school, teachers, parents, the students) and what is done. A general impression or an intuitive sense that everything 'feels normal' supports initial trust (McKnight et al., 1998). If both sides successfully establish an initial level of trust, the principal is hired and may join the school. Parents interacting with the new principal feel at ease in extending initial trust, because they assume that the proper procedures were in place to root out evidence of untrustworthiness (Tschannen-Moran, 2004) making the new principal the best choice. Alongside the hiring process, certification also enhances initial trust. The premise is that a professional must demonstrate a certain level of competence and knowledge to receive certification and is consequently qualified for his or her position. Consequently, the parents assume that the new principal satisfied stringent conditions in order to get certification. Based on this assumption, parents accord a new principal initial trust.

#### **iv. Experience/Socialization.**

Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) assert that principals are expected to do everything well. They are also expected to not only have acquired but also exhibit complete knowledge, expertise

and leadership skills from day one of their principal-ship (Thomas & Hornsey, 1991). This expectation hinges on the assumption that the incoming principal has already acquired the necessary skills and expertise to discharge the duties of an effective school leader. This is what I call experience. Experience is gained when a principal- to- be is exposed to conditions and situations that demand a certain level of professionalism. By ‘living through’ the experience, the principals-to-be are socialized into their respective roles and in the process hone their leadership skills.

Even though Donaldson (1991) observes that no amount or quality of pre-service training will prepare a principal to hit the ground running, a number of recent studies into the needs of beginning principals suggest that more should be done to anticipate and meet such needs (Hewitson, 1995).

For instance Thomas & Hornsey ( 1991) referring to an intensive two-day induction program conducted in New South Wales (NSW) Australia, and despite each participants being issued a 16-page document entitled “Guide to principals. Taking up new appointments”, and despite addresses by three primary and three secondary principals, the preparation of these principals appears to have been none too successful. Instead the authors suggest that where possible, the preparation needs of principals-elect should be addressed more systematically and over a longer time span than was attempted in NSW. Hewitson (1995) concluded that most respondents in his study would have liked some appropriate training to help them manage conflict situations .Unfortunately the authors do not expound on what these ‘appropriate training’ entails and who should offer it and at what stage it should be offered. According to Rooney (2007) newly posted or beginning principals often face the subtle yet distinct message that they

should not “make waves”. A sense of isolation is one of the features of new principal-ship (Draper & McMichael, 2000; Rooney, 2000).

Literature on socialization of principals offers examples where some principals become assistant principals before becoming principals (Crow G. M., 2006) and others where subject teachers and ordinary classroom teachers are appointed as principals without holding the assistant principal’s office. Either way, research confirms that experience as acting principal or deputy principal or teacher- in- charge is an important preparatory factor for beginning principals (Hewitson, 1995).

Consequently, when principals report to their new schools, the parents assume that through the years they have been working, the new principal has the experience that is necessary to be an effective principal.

On the other hand, the eventual success of the principal in attaining the expected educational outcomes lies on the assumption of his ability to not only understand but also implement parental expectations. The principal-parent relationship can only be effective and give rise to the positive results that it has been touted to have only when the interaction gap between the principal and parents is closed. Parents have demands, and expectations that the principal has to attain or attempt to attain. The resources are required for the attainment of these demands and expectations reside within the parents.

#### **b. Parental demands and expectations**

The principal and school depend on the parents support for success. Yet to garner this support, the principal makes a deliberate effort to respond to the community’s values, and incorporating these values into the character and structure of the school (Johnson & Fauske, 2000). For example ‘ as a principal it’s important to make sure that the policies such as the

school dress code are in line with the values of the community in which they serve. This is because when the school reflects the values of the community, it gains support, trust and credibility (Johnson & Fauske, 2000). The values of a community are rationalized and voiced through their demands on the principal as well as their expectations of the principal. It is on the basis of their demands and expectations that they avail and allocate resources to the principal in order to enable him perform his role and position expectations.

**i. Demands.**

Edge (1996), points out that parent participation is theoretically a good thing, but not if it does not contain a fundamental acknowledgement of trust in the principal, and his or her right to steer a course for the school based on their experience and knowledge. Often principals are confronted with members of the community who demand that they should be consulted in school decisions as well as desire to be in control over the day to day running of the school. If they do not have their way, such parents often become outspoken opponents of the school and try to undermine teachers' and administrators' decisions (Casanova, Parent Involvement: A call for Prudence, 1996). Greenfield (1995) characterizes the school environment as a 'demand environment' in which threats to legitimacy and resources capture the attention of principal.

**ii. Expectations.**

According to Crow (2006) post-industrial society has not only exacerbated the already complex work environment confronting school principals but has also raised expectations of what they should achieve. Hess (2003) adds that school leaders are expected to be multi-talented and able to leverage accountability and revolutionary technology, devise performance-based evaluation systems, reengineer outdated management structures, recruit and cultivate non-traditional staff, drive decisions with data, build professional cultures, and ensure that every child

is served. In addition, according to Cline and Necochea (2000), school leaders are expected to restructure schools by implementing new educational paradigms that focus on pedagogical findings, foster the ideals of a just and humane educational system as well as prepare the students to make moral and ethical decisions in an ever-changing society.

The high school principal-ship is one of the most complex and challenging assignments in the public education system (Murphy & Louis, 1994; Roe & Drake, 1980). Murphy (1994) believes that “while expectations are being added, little is being deleted from the principal’s role” (pp. 94-99). Using metaphors, Beck and Murphy (1993) have described major changes in the role expectations of the principal over the years as follows: values broker (1920s), scientific manager (1930s), democratic leader (1940s), theory-guided administrator (1950s), bureaucratic executive (1960s), humanistic facilitator (1970s), and instructional leader (1980s). During the 1990s the principal has been identified as a transformational leader who must be involved in school problem finding and problem solving, shared decision making, decentralized leadership, and systemic change (Crow & Peterson, 1994; Hallinger, 1992; Leithwood, 1992; Murphy, 1994b; Murphy & Hallinger, 1992; Murphy & Louis, 1994).

In view of the above, principals’ expectations in schools within the study area include not only providing a school vision (Abbott, 1994 ; Colon, 1994; Dubin, 1991; Lyons, 1999; Vann, 1994) but also instructional leadership in order to improve core teaching and learning processes and outcomes in the school (Ellis, 1996; Hallinger, 1992; Jenkins & Bebar, 1994; Parker & Day, 1997; Stronge, 1993). As an instructional leader, key expectations include (a) providing for a safe and positive school environment, (b) fostering good teaching and learning, (c) promoting good school-community relations, (d) hiring and developing a strong staff, and (e) monitoring student progress (Lyons, 1999, p. 21). Teachers, parents and children often perceive the principal’s office as the touchstone of authority (and even wisdom) in the school – this appears

common, even though differently formed, across societies (Rooney, 2000; Leung and Chan, 2001). Unfortunately, Lyons (1999, p. 21) reported that “managing time demands and paperwork” and “dealing with the bureaucracy, insensitive bureaucrats, red tape, politics, legislative demands and regulations” are the principal’s greatest frustrations.

### **iii. Resources.**

Greenfield (1995), notes that schools in which parents demand too much control in the running of the school is also a threat to resources. On the other hand the community can also be a source of resources for the school and offer possibilities to enhance both legitimacy and credibility of the principal leading to an increase in the trust level (Johnson & Fauske, 2000). This notion of parents being resources for the principal to use in running the school was confirmed in a study conducted by Johnson & Fauske (2000). In that research, participant principals viewed parents of students as well as the surrounding neighborhood as a resource, or opportunities. To a school, parents play the role of a taxpayer, patron, customer and client. Consequently they become entities upon which the principal depends heavily for school success.

In the study area, parents as source of resources is evident bearing in mind that parents pay tuition for their children, build physical structures through ‘harambee’, as well as decide which schools to send their children. Unlike in many western states where attendance areas are controlled by respective local and state governments, in Kenya school attendance is liberalized and parents are the sole determinants. If parents believe that a particular school is better placed to succeed, they will send their children irrespective of distance from home. And since principals rely on income generated to run the school and meet their financial obligations, the more students a school has the more income will be generated. In this way, parents are a resource.

It is not only on the financial side that parents are a resource. Even at the level of them being a source of support for the principal is important. In the course of their duty, many principals encounter situations, decisions to make and events that require parental support. Decisions that are opposed by the parents however popular with the principal will not see the light of day. Any major changes that the principal may desire will also need the approval of parents. Hosting of certain events that are controversial and opposed by the parents will also definitely end up being shelved. For boarding schools, the foods prepared in the school are supplied by the parents. Parents also become a resource when much of the skilled and semi-skilled labor originates from within the surrounding community.

In stable supportive environments where principals are trusted, parents become an important resource. Principals operating in such schools are guaranteed support in the following ways; a) a willingness to help when called upon b) a willingness to come to the principal and discuss problems c) standing behind and supporting the principal when tough decisions are made d) minimizing opposition to the school principal and e) active help in making needs of the school known to the governing boards and electorate (Johnson & Fauske, 2000).

### **Trust: The Link between Principal and Parents**

For schools to effectively play their role as socialization agents in a society, leadership plays a crucial role in terms of not only organizing staff and resources but also providing a leading vision as well as translating and communicating that vision to teachers and students (Riehl, 2000). If the principal of a school fails to correctly translate the community's demands and expectations and align these with his/her professional expectations, there is a likelihood of mistrust developing (Oplatka, 2004). On the other hand school leadership alone is not enough to enable schools achieve success in their endeavors. Both the school and the principal need



resources in order to achieve success (Maele & Houtte, 2009). These resources held by the parents can only be released to the school if and only when the parents perceive principals as having the competence and experience to invest them wisely.

While negotiating the acquisition and distribution of these resources, school leaders and parents form a relationship. For this relationship to be productive between parents, and school principal it must be based on trust from both side (Casanova, Parent Involvement:A call for Prudence, 1996). Trust is at the heart of strong relationships (Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001)

According to Blau (1964) trust is essential for stable social relationships. And since the social relationship between the parents and the principal involves an exchange, this exchange is possible only on the basis of far-reaching personal confidence and trust (Eisenstadt, 1968). Indeed Golembiewski and McConkie (1975) stated that, "... there is no single variable which so thoroughly influences interpersonal and group behavior as does trust... (p. 131)'.

This phenomenon of trust in exchange relationships is so important that if it is destroyed, societies would falter and collapse (Bok 1978). Lewis and Weigert (1985) agree on this, adding that trust is "indispensable in social relationships (p.968)". Zucker (1986) follows with the assertion that trust is vital for the maintenance of cooperation in society and necessary as grounds for even the most routine, everyday interactions. Consequently, the extent to which principal-parent interactions are productive is affected by the trust that holds these relationships together. (Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001).

### **Definition of Trust.**

Trust is a complex multidimensional construct (Jones & George, 1998) and as such there is no single definition of trust but researchers commonly view trust as an expression of confidence between the parties in an exchange of some kind; a confidence that they will not be harmed or put at risk by the actions of the other party (Axelrod, 1984; Bateson, 1988; Zucker, 1987) or confidence that no party to the exchange will exploit the other's vulnerability (Sabel, 1993).

Consequently, trust consists of willingness to increase your vulnerability to another person whose behavior you cannot control, in a situation in which your potential benefits are much less than your potential loss if the other person abuses your vulnerability (Zand, 1997). Baier (1986) has cogently noted that we notice trust as we notice air, only when it becomes scarce or polluted. In schools, trust arises when parents must rely on the competence of the principal and his willingness to look after what they care about (their children) (Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

Low trust causes friction, whether it is caused by unethical behavior or by ethical but incompetent behavior (because even good intentions can never take the place of bad judgment). Low trust is the greatest cost in life and in organizations, including families. Low trust creates hidden agendas, politics, interpersonal conflict, interdepartmental rivalries win-lose thinking, defensive and protective communication—all of which reduce the speed of trust. Low trust slows everything—every decision, every communication and every relationship.

Even though school principals are accorded initial trust when they report to their schools on the basis of their reputation, experience and assumed competence, they constantly are under pressure to develop unconditional trusting relationships with the parents through speech, conversation, commitments, and action. The need for trust is reinforced because it facilitates

communication, and creates greater efficiency when parents have confidence in the principals' words and deeds (Arrow, 1974). Without trust, friction and "heat" are generated that bog down the work of the school. Consequently, principals need trust to foster communication and facilitate efficiency (Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

Trust is never something 'already at hand,' it is always a matter of human effort (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). It can and often must be conscientiously created, not simply taken for granted" (Solomon & Flores, 2001, p. 87). The need for trust between the principal and the parents is attained when shared values structure the social situation and become the primary vehicle which they experience trust (Jones & George, 1998).

### **Functions of trust.**

Trust is important for the individual principal and the wider community. For the principal

a) Trust liberates and mobilizes human agency; releases creative, uninhibited, innovative, entrepreneurial activism toward other people (Luhmann, 1979). The uncertainty and risk surrounding the principal's actions is lowered, and hence possibilities of action increase proportionally to the increase in trust. Trusted principals are more open toward parents, more ready to initiate interactions and to enter into lasting relationships with them (Brewster & Railsback, 2003). Such interactions are liberated from anxiety, suspicion, and watchfulness, and allow for more spontaneity and openness. The need for constant monitor and control of each other's moves and movements is reduced.

b). It enlarges the 'freedom to' - capacity to release goals, and extends mutual benefits (Sztompka P. , 1999). Consequently, the principal's conduct becomes more innovative, departing from careful routines.

- c) Trust has positive consequences for the principal for it is important to trust, but it may be equally important to be trusted (Gambetta, 1988b).
- d) Being endowed with trust provides a temporary release from immediate social monitoring and social control and inhibitions: such principals obtain a 'credit of trust' which gives a wide margin for non-conformity, innovation, originality, or to put it briefly-freedom of action.
- e) The placement of trust allows an action on the part of the trustee that would not have been possible otherwise (Coleman, 1990) and
- f) Being visibly trusted by the parents may be an argument for other members of society to grant trust too. Thus receiving trust raises one's trustworthiness in other transactions (Sztompka, 1999).

For the parents, trust has important functions in schools within which it prevails. For instance

- a). It encourages sociability, participation with others in various forms of association, thus enriching the network of interpersonal ties, enlarges the field of interactions, and allows greater intimacy of interpersonal contacts or 'moral density' (Cladis, 1992), social capital (Putnam, 1995c), spontaneous sociability (Fukuyama, 1995) or civic engagement (Almond & Verba, 1965).
- b). Trust favors the spread of communication and overcomes the syndrome of 'pluralistic ignorance' (Allport, 1954) thus preventing spontaneous collective action.
- c) Trust encourages tolerance, acceptance of strangers, and recognition of cultural or political differences as legitimate- because it allows them to be viewed in a nonthreatening manner (Parry 1976).

d). the culture of trust encourages and strengthens the bond of an individual parent with the community, contributes to feelings of identity, and generates strong collective solidarities leading to co-operation, reciprocal help as well as readiness for sacrifice on behalf of others (Sztompka, 1999).

e). When culture of trust is present, transaction costs are significantly lowered and chances for cooperation increased (Offe, 1996)

In summary, when there is trust between the principal and the parents, there are increased possibilities for experience and action (Luhmann, 1979) as well as a feeling of order and security (Khodyakov, 2007) , thus fostering cooperation and ultimately contributing to the success of the school. Trust has generally beneficial consequences for the partners in social relationships (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2005), and the groups to which they belong, as well as for the peaceful, harmonious and cohesive quality of wider social life (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006) .

### **Substitutes of Trust**

When trust is missing in a relation, the vacuum will be filled with some alternative arrangements (Waki Report, 2008) providing similar functions and meeting the universal cravings for certainty, predictability, order, and the like. These are the functional substitutes for trust (Khodyakov, 2007). This is because as Luhmann (1979) notes, anyone who does not trust must turn to functionally equivalent strategies for the reduction of complexity in order to be able to define a practically meaningful situation. Consequently, these substitutive practices might turn into more patterned strategies, as they become typical, and spread widely in society (Sztompka, 1999). These typical and widespread standardized ways of coping with deficiencies of trust may

acquire a normative sanction, turn into cultural rules prescribing certain conduct, or even into complex institutions designed to deal with the lack of trust (Khodyakov, 2007)

***Providentialism.*** This is the regression from the discourse of agency toward the discourse of fate, resorting to ancient ‘Fortuna’ rather than effort. This vague and generalized sense of quasi trust in distant events over which one has no control (Giddens, 1990) brings some psychosocial; consolation, repress anger and dread. At the social level it produces passivism and stagnation.

***Corruption.*** Corruption provides some misleading sense of orderliness and predictability as there is a feeling of control over a chaotic environment (Elster, 1989).

***Vigilance.*** this is the taking into private hands the direct supervision and control of others, whose competence or integrity is put into doubt, or whose accountability is seen as weak, due to inefficiency or lax standards of the enforcing agencies ((Sztompka, 1999).

***Excessive Litigiousness.*** No longer do handshakes do as no one trust the other. To guard themselves against any negative eventuality, meticulous contracts are drawn. The more people depend on rules to regulate their interactions, the less they trust each other (Fukuyama, 1995).

***Ghettoization:*** This involves the closing in, building impenetrable boundaries around a group in an alien and threatening environment. The diffuse distrust in the wider society is compensated by a strong loyalty to tribal, ethnic, or familial groups. By cutting the external world off, they reduce some of its complexity and uncertainty.

## **Cultivating Trust**

Trust is a multidimensional and dynamic phenomenon (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). The way trust unfolds will not be the same at all times and in all places. It takes different characteristics at different stages of a relationship (Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006). As trust develops, it gels at different levels, depending on the nature of the relationship and the quality of the interactions as parties have gotten to know one another (Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

Initially, trust on the principal relies on assumptions, institutional structures and deterrents (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). With greater history of expectations being met by the principal, trust may deepen. As trust develops in newly forming work relationships, an initial period of impression making is followed by a period of more intense exploration (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). Trust is established through a commitment period during which each partner has the opportunity to signal to the other a willingness to accept personal risk and not to exploit the vulnerability of the other for personal gain. A kind of courtship takes place in which each party is careful not to violate the others developing trust (Shapiro, Sheppard, & Cheraskin, 1992). This commitment period begins at the moment of initial contact and extends until participants know each other well enough to predict one another's values and behaviors (Jones & George, 1998). As participants begin to feel more comfortable with one another, there may be tacit testing of the limits of trust and influence and attempts to arrive at a mutual set of expectations. According to Gabarro (1978) within eighteen months, relationships generally become fairly stable

Although it makes intuitive sense that trust grows gradually over time, researchers have been surprised to find higher levels of initial trust than expected, even though the parties have very little knowledge or experience of one another. It seems that when people interact with a

stranger, they tend to extend a provisional trust until evidence surfaces to suggest that the other is untrustworthy, thus making defensive action necessary. This preference for provisional trust over initial distrust makes sense because trust is the easier option (Jones & George, 1998). Distrust requires that energy be expended in anticipating possible harm and in planning ways to avert it (Berg, Dickhaut, & McCabe, 1995; Jones & George, 1998). As individuals interact, experience either reinforces these trusting assumptions or dispels initial impressions of trustworthiness. Once people have evidence that leads them to perceive differences in values, distrust is likely to emerge (Sitkin & Roth, 1993)

### **Factors that influence developing trust.**

School leaders need to understand that a number of factors come into play as trust develops. Trust judgments can be influenced by one's disposition to trust, by values and attitudes, and by moods and emotions, especially attitudes concerning diversity (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006)

*a) Disposition to trust:* Some people are inclined to extend trust more readily; they have disposition to trust. A disposition to trust is particularly pertinent to making trusting judgments when people do not know each other and specific information about the person is not available. (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). A person's disposition toward trust may stem from a person's history of relationships, in which promises have either been fulfilled or broken. A person with a high disposition to trust is more likely to see good points and to overlook flaws in another person that could threaten the development of trust (Johnson-George & Swap, 1982; Rotter, 1980). A person with a disposition to trust is likely to have both a faith in humanity and a trusting stance. A trusting stance treats people as though they are reliable and trustworthy despite an absence of evidence, based on the belief that this strategy more often than not results



in more positive outcomes (McKnight et al., 1998; Solomon & Flores, 2001). People with a trusting disposition tend to be more trustworthy than others; are less likely to lie, cheat, or steal, even when they can increase their gain by being untrustworthy. In general, high trusters are less likely to be conflicted, maladjusted, or dependent on others (Deutsch, 1960; Rotter, 1967; Wrightsman, 1966).

**b). Values and Attitudes:** Trust judgments are made in part on the basis of the assumption of shared values (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Values are general standards or principles that are considered intrinsically desirable ends, such as loyalty, helpfulness or fairness (Olson & Zanna, 1993; Rokeach, 1973). Attitudes are knowledge structures consisting of the thoughts and feelings individuals have about other people, groups, or organizations. They are the means through which interactions are defined and structured. Attitudes are evaluative in nature, and values are a key means people use to evaluate others (Jones & George, 1998). Because relationships within schools involve interdependence and a certain amount of uncertainty, people form attitudes toward each other that are likely to contain information about the other party's trustworthiness based on perceptions of shared values.

**c.) Moods and emotions:** Moods and emotions provide a powerful context for trust judgments. Emotions are intense affective states tied to particular events or circumstances that interrupt ongoing cognitive processes and behaviors, whereas moods are less intense, generalized affective states that are not explicitly linked to particular events or circumstances (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Moods are not just occasional occurrences: we are always in a mood. Our moods do not simply happen to us. We cultivate our moods through our thoughts and practices. Moods are not simply an emotional response to what has happened, but an orientation toward the future- about what is to be done (Jones & George, 1998; Solomon & Flores, 2001).

Even though principals and parents struggle to attain the highest level of trust, sometimes it is not an easy task. For instance when an individual principal is perceived as not sharing key cultural values with the community, distrust can arise in a school. When a principal challenges a school's fundamental assumptions and values, that principal may be perceived as operating under values so different from the parents that the principal's underlying worldview becomes suspect. Threat of future violations arises because the principal is now seen as a cultural outsider, one who 'doesn't think like us' who may, therefore, do the 'unthinkable' (Sitkin & Roth, 1993)

In the study area differences in ethnicity as well as differences in cultural norms and values makes the attainment of trust between the principal and the parents even more difficult a task. Trust is more difficult in situations of diversity because people are uncertain (Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006). This uncertainty coupled with limited or partial knowledge about the principal makes the parents often unsure of what to expect. The uncertainty also involves the trust between parents from different tribes. For example schools within the study area where parents from different ethnicities meet, there is a possibility that parents who come from the local community might regard out-group parents with suspicion and to stereotype them more readily and negatively than in-group parents. Biased attributions about the capabilities, intentions, and actions of out-group parents can fuel feelings of distrust.

Group biases can be destructive not only by causing people to regard out-group parents with suspicion but also by promoting too much trust for in-group parents thus developing a 'leniency-bias' for those of the in-group, giving other in-group members the benefit of the doubt when confronted with information that might otherwise be viewed as diagnostic of untrustworthiness (Brewer, 1995). Over confidence in the collective can lead individuals to "defer too readily to other members, and inhibit expression of doubt, or engage in

inappropriately self-censorship rather than press their claims as vigorously as they might” (Kramer, Brewer, & Hanna, 1996, p.381).

In the study area, ethnic violence causes a culture of resignation within and amongst the parents. When a culture or mood of resignation is pervasive in a school, it functions as a self-protective mechanism that steels participants against the possibility of further disappointments. In an attempt to avoid disappointment, the principal might refrain from taking any assertive action consequently closing off the possibilities of negotiation and mutual understanding that might lead to an improved relationship. When the principal has lost grip on hope so that resignation reaches a point of despair, taking preventive actions ceases to make sense (Solomon & Flores, 2001).

### **Facets of Trust**

Even though at times the definition of ‘trust is termed as elusive (Gambetta D. , 1988) and a conceptual confusion (Lewis & Weigert, 1985), a review of trust literature yields general agreement among authors and researchers that the primary characteristics of trust are benevolence, honesty, openness, competence and reliability (Beard & Brown, 2008; Geist & Hoy, 2004; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Mishra,1996).

- i) **Benevolence.** According to Tschannen-Moran (2004), this component of trust is the most essential ingredient, commonly recognized as a sense of caring; the confidence that one’s well-being or something one cares about will be protected and not harmed by the trusted party (Baier,1985; Zand 1997). According to Mishra (1996) benevolence means that a person has unselfish, even protective intentions toward another person. It involves the assurance that parents can count on the goodwill of the principal to act in the students’ best interests and that he will not exploit their

- vulnerability even if the opportunity to do so is available (Cummings & Bromiley, 1996). Parents trust the principal to care for their children and are confident that the principal will consistently act in the best interest of the students (Beard & Brown, 2008).
- ii) **Reliability.** According to McGregor (1967), inconsistencies between words and actions decrease trust. Tschannen-Moran (2004) takes this idea a notch higher by noting that being consistent is an important element of trust. Consequently, she adds, dependability and predictability are key components of reliability. Dependability signifies a certain level of vulnerability on the part of the one who is doing the depending, and setting aside of self-interest in order to honor a commitment on the part of the one who is depended upon (Rempel, Holmes, & Zanna, 1985). Reliability gives a sense of confidence knowing that one can count on a person doing what is expected on a regular, consistent basis (Geist & Hoy, 2004; Tschannen-Moran, 2004)
- iii) **Competences.** Competence has been defined as the ability to perform a task as expected, according to appropriate standards (Tschannen-Moran, 2004) and is an essential facet of trust and trustworthiness (Butler & Catrell, 1984; Solomon & Flores, 2001). Without competence, disappointment and difficulties will ensue (Geist & Hoy, 2004). Parents understand that a measure of teacher competence is directly related to teacher quality (Beard & Brown, 2008) and that knowledge includes the knowledge principals have about their job as well as the skills they have in carrying out their job. Competence is relative to expectations ( (Beard & Brown, 2008).
- iv) **Honesty.** It connotes integrity, character, and authenticity (Geist & Hoy, 2004) and reveals one's capacity for goodwill (Beard & Brown, 2008). Trust in one's honesty

means that one can expect that the words or promises of an individual whether verbal or written can be relied upon (Rempel, Holmes, & Zanna, 1985). Integrity is earned from telling the truth and holding to promises and authenticity relies on one's ability to be accountable, avoid manipulation, and treat others with genuine respect (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998).

- v) **Openness.** People value frank exchanges and communications with others (Geist & Hoy, 2004). Openness is a process by which people make themselves vulnerable to others by sharing of information, influence, and control (Zand, 1997) because with knowledge comes power (Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006).

### **Mindfulness: Skill of Development of Trust**

The expectation that a school principal will use the resources provided by the parents to ensure learning takes place in a stable environment is hinged on the assumption of stability. Often times the upheavals and the instability in the community seeps through to the school compound and in the process disrupt learning. In the study area, ethnic violence that occurs in the community does have a direct impact on the learning environment of the school. Whereas it is the desire and intention of the school principal to ensure a stable and safe learning environment for the students and faculty, his inability to control or regulate social events within the surrounding community exposes him to unforeseen potential insecurity and threats.

In order for the principal to take advantage of the flow of information and warnings of impending threats from the community there is need for him to be trusted and at the same time for the parents to feel obligated to alert him. "Avert the danger not yet risen" is an old Vedic proverb with contemporary meaning for school administrators and is an injunction to catch the early signs of trouble before small difficulties become major crises (Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006).

The concept of mindfulness, has been developed and researched extensively by Langer (1989), and Weick and Sutcliffe (2001). Their assertion is that mindfulness is more than just being alert: it is a habit of mind that scans for subtle changes that causes trouble (Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006). In order to develop habits of mindfulness, principals need situations where they are not afraid to make mistakes and feel free to experiment (Hoy, 2003).

The opposite of mindfulness is mindlessness and is a result of principals relying on standard routines and rules as well as procedures (Trungpa, 1973). There is nothing wrong with routines. The problem is that when principals become too comfortable just because things are being done 'correctly', that's according to procedures; they relax and relapse in their creativity. Consequently repetition, narrow mindsets, preoccupation with ends rather than means cause mindlessness (Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006). Relying on routines and standard practices, protect institutional functioning from the cost of thoughtful adaptability and such principals find themselves unpleasantly surprised and trapped by the unexpected.

On the other hand mindfulness is continuous scrutiny and refinement of expectations by the principal based on his new experiences, appreciation of the subtleties of context, and identification of novel aspects of context that can improve foresight and functioning (Hoy, 2003; Langer, 1989). Mindfulness requires flexibility, vigilance, openness, and the ability to break set (Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006) as well as openness to new information and different points of view. Mindful administrators know that "believing is seeing," and they are on guard- wary of the obvious and searching for "the danger not yet arisen" (Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006).

Working in a border area characterized with ethnic violence and irrational tribal tainted prejudices places a school principal at cross roads in terms of his role expectations. It is acceptable to assume that since the schools have students from different ethnic groups; the principal is also exposed to tribal animosity especially when there are flare ups. To take sides on

the basis of proffered explanations or to allocate resources in the school based on suggestions and expectations from one ethnic group would be inviting conflicts in the school. To be able to navigate through possible accusations and counter accusations as well as demands and counter demands from the parents, principals are called upon to adopt mindfulness as a sure means of being benevolent, honest and open as well as reliable and competent.

In order for the principals in the study area to be more successful in executing their duties and in the process meet their expectations, it has been suggested by researchers that they should adopt the following characteristics of mindful organizations for their schools.

- a) The principal should identify small mistakes before they become major problems and avoid being lulled into a false sense of confidence (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). For example when 90 per cent of the students pass a national examination, a mindful principal will focus on the 10 per cent who failed rather than indulge in celebration.
- b) Knowing that life in multi ethnic environments is complex, a principal should adopt multiple perspectives to understand the shadings that are hidden below the surface of the obvious. For instance differences in perception between parents from different ethnic groups toward the school is best understood by considering rival explanations, each of which should be tested (Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006).
- c) The principal should also be sensitive to operations of the school by staying close to the teaching–learning process. This nurtures interpersonal relations and helps in continuous scanning of problems in the day-to-day operations with no possibility of surprises. Instead the principal should anticipate the surprises (Hoy, 2003).
- d) Knowing that no school is perfect, a mindful principal must develop a capacity of bouncing back when problems occur. He should not give up at the first sign of

trouble. Since no amount of anticipation can prevent problems, resilience becomes critical. The principal must be strong and flexible enough to cope with the consequences of bad surprises (Wildavsky, 1991).

- e) A mindful principal should avoid error of embracing standard rules and rigid structures and instead replace them by enabling ones in which consulting and listening to those with expertise is fundamental to problem solving (Hoy, 2003; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001)

In conclusion therefore, mindful principals are those who develop the ability to anticipate surprise by focusing on failure, avoiding simplification, and remaining sensitive to operations. But in case the unexpected happens, the principal rebounds with persistence, resilience and expertise.

#### **Are Trust And Mindfulness Necessary Conditions For Each Other?**

Hoy, Gage, & Tarter (2006) in trying to answer the above question conducted a research on a sample of 75 middle schools because middle schools have the properties of both elementary and high schools (Herriot & Firestone, 1984). Using the School Mindfulness Scale and the Omnibus T-Scale as well as Factor Analysis, the authors concluded that their results provided a resounding yes; that trust and mindfulness go hand in hand (pg. 251). Their argument was that trust requires the parent's willingness to be vulnerable to the principal based on the confidence that the latter would be benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open. These same characteristics of trust are necessary for school mindfulness.

Trust is essential if errors committed by the principal and the parents are to be openly and honestly admitted rather than hidden, if catching mistakes early is the objective rather than only celebrating success, and if mistakes are to be perceived as learning opportunities rather than times for censure. Openness, honesty, competence, reliability, and benevolence enable the

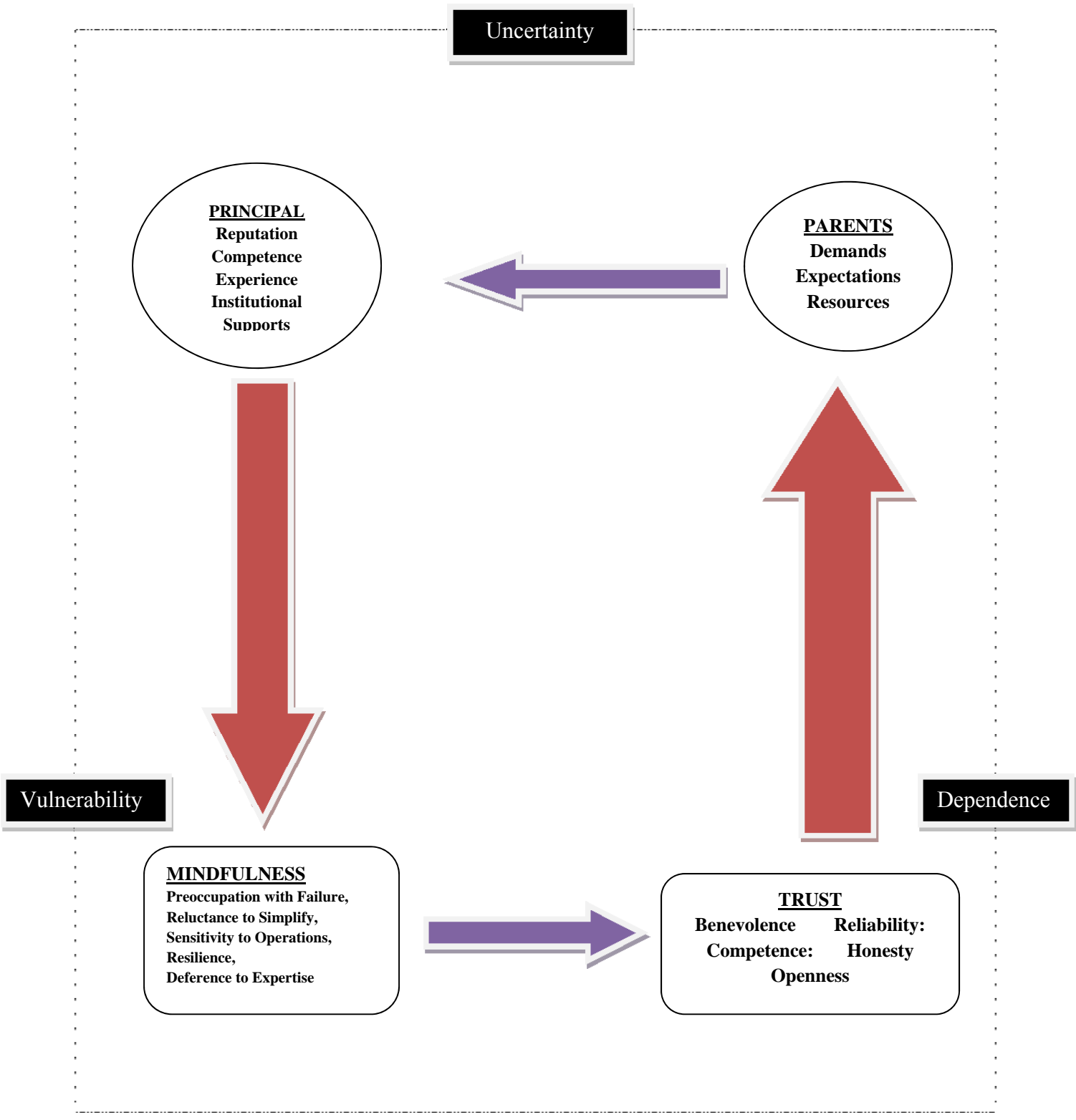


principal to be continuously attentive to small mistakes and multiple interpretations of events. A productive climate of rival explanations in the school is possible only when the principal and the parents respect each other and are open and honest (Edmonson, 1999; Landau & Chisholm, 1995; Westrum, 1992).

In addition, when things go wrong and surprises occur, trust is critical in creating resilience for the principal to bounce back and work together with the parents in problem solving anchored in expertise regardless of rank, status in society or tribal affiliations. Consequently, trust is necessary for school mindfulness and school mindfulness reinforces a culture of trust.

The diagram on the following page provides a visual depiction of the conceptual framework employed for this study.

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter consists of an overview of the methodology, including the research approach, design of the phenomenological case study, site and sample characteristics, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. The final section discusses the issues of validity and reliability in qualitative inquiry.

### **Introduction**

The literature reviewed in chapter 2 has demonstrated that trust not only makes cooperative endeavors happen (Arrow, 1974; Deutsch, 1973; Gambetta, 1988) but is also a key to positive interpersonal relationships in various settings (Fox, 1974; Lewis & Weigert, 1985a) because it is central to how people interact with others (Berscheid, 1994 ; Golembiewski & McConkie, 1975). In the context of the ethnic clashes prevailing in the study area, trust becomes even more central and critical during periods of uncertainty (Mishra, 1996; Weick & Roberts, 1993). This study aimed at understanding and describing how secondary school principals in south western Kenya build trust with the communities in which their schools are located. Specifically it sought answers to the following questions;

- iv. How school principals build trust with parents.
- v. How does a school principal/leader know that he/she has the trust of the parents they serve?
- vi. What is the role of mindfulness in the development of trust?

The intent of qualitative research is to understand a particular social situation, event, role, group, or interaction (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2000). Through this qualitative study, the author was able to understand and describe the lived experiences of the high school principals working in south western Kenya as they developed trust and consequently met the expectations

and demands that came with their position. Individual interviews were used to explore secondary school principals' perceptions, experiences, and perspectives on trust issues.

Additionally, relevant documents such as school reports, manuals, and articles from official websites, especially the Ministry of Education were used to document and facilitate the processes of data analysis.

### **A Philosophical Background to the Research**

To conduct a research study, it is imperative that a researcher understands the fundamental tenets and philosophy of an inquiry paradigm (Heppner & Heppner, 2004; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Silverman, 2001). Heppner and Heppner (2004) argue that understanding the basic tenets and philosophic underpinnings of an inquiry will help the researcher select a particular paradigm that best fit the particular area of the inquiry as well as specific types of data collection and construction modes (Erckan & Roth, 2006).

In the choice of qualitative research, researchers make certain assumptions. These philosophical assumptions consist of a stance toward the nature of reality (ontology), how the researcher knows what she or he knows (epistemology), the role of values in research (axiology), the language of research (rhetoric), and the methods used in the process (methodology) (Cresswell, 2003). Often researchers adopt particular paradigm or worldview to guide their research (Mertens, 1998). According to Creswell (2003), positivism and interpretivism are some of the common paradigms researcher adopt. Positivists engage in qualitative research using a belief system grounded in a scientific approach to research while interpretivists seek understanding of the world in which they live and work (Cresswell, 2003). For instance, the ontological and epistemological tenets of positivism, which is based on the assumption that there are patterns and regularities, causes and consequences in the social world (Denscombe, 2003) show an inclination towards the use of experimental methods and quantitative measures because the objective of

positivism is to discover causal relationships between observable phenomena (Cresswell, 2003). Positivists emphasize truth as an objective reality (Myers, 2000). On the other hand interpretivists argue that findings cannot necessarily be arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Strauss and Corbin, 1990), and instead argue that people understand phenomena in different ways (Livesey, 2003; Creswell J., 2002; Wildemuth, 1993) with the effect that individuals create different realities as they interact in a social environment.

Building on the idea that people understand phenomena differently, a phenomenologist attempts to understand and describe phenomena exactly as they appear in an individual's consciousness, to get at the interrelationships between life and the world (Phillipson, 1972) the researcher's task is to understand reality as it is actively and consciously constructed by subjects (Swingewood, 1984). Phenomenology draws heavily on the writings of the German mathematician Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and those who later expanded his views such as Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty (Spiegelberg, 1982).

A phenomenological study describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). The basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence or the very nature of the thing (Van Manen, 1990). According to Welman and Kruger (1999, p. 189) "the phenomenologists are concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of people involved toward the ways in which ordinary members of society attend to their everyday lives" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000, pp. 488-489).

## **The Role of Researcher in Phenomenology**

A unique feature of phenomenology is the demand on the researcher to suspend all judgements about what is real (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2008). Phenomenologists maintain that human experience makes sense to those who live it. Phenomenologists talk about the ‘reality of consciousness’, a phrase which suggests that reality resides in the interpretation or consciousness of an experience. The goal and role of the researcher is to get into the experience of the participant and see it as they see it. Through this process, the researcher acts as a sort of medium or facilitator (Gluck & Patai, 1991). The medium/researcher relays the voices with minimal reinterpretation or reshaping.

### **Research Design**

This research study focused on how secondary school principals build trust in Kenyan secondary schools and was best served by phenomenological approach that focuses on describing, and discovering a specific phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). A Phenomenological study describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon (Cresswell, 2003). The purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence (a ‘grasp of the very nature of the thing,’ (Van Manen, 1990, p.177)). This was an exploratory study focusing on six secondary school principals in south western Kenya. In order to understand and describe the lived experiences of secondary school principals, Anderson and Arsenault (1988) contend that this calls for the use of multiple sources of evidence to analyze a specific phenomenon in its natural setting. The use of case studies as an approach became very appropriate since trust is a contemporary phenomenon being studied within its real-life context. Since schools are cases of a ‘bounded system’ this strategy was appropriate when one wants to cover contextual conditions.

By using this approach, there was an attempt to preserve the wholeness, unity and integrity of the case; and it relied on multiple sources of evidence with data converging in a triangulating fashion (Glesne, 1999; Merriam, 1992 ; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). This meant that this approach was an all-encompassing method. Its design incorporated specific approaches to both data collection and analysis.

This research approached the concept of trust and trust building through multi-case studies in South- Western Kenya. A case study approach was utilized in order to examine in-depth interviews, and analysis of school artifacts and documents. The study used a phenomenological approach that combined focused, in-depth interviewing informed by assumptions drawn from the phenomenology.

Phenomenological in-depth interviewing has received increasing attention as a qualitative genre (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The use of in-depth, phenomenological interviewing provided access to the context of people's behavior and eventually became a way to understand the meaning of that behavior. The researcher used in-depth phenomenological interviewing (Seidman, 1998 ; Creswell J. , 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003) as the primary source of data collection and analysis purposes. In-depth phenomenological interviewing combines life-history (Bertaux, 1981) and focused, in-depth interviewing informed by assumptions drawn from phenomenology (Schutz, 1967). In this approach interviewers use, primarily, open-ended questions. Their major task is to build upon and explore their participant's responses to those questions with the aim of having the participants reconstruct his or her experience within the topic under study (Seidman, 1998). As a method of inquiry, interviewing is most consistent with people's ability to make meaning through language (Seidman, 1998).

Phenomenological methods are effective at bringing to the forefront the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives (Seidman, 1998). Therefore, the intent of

this multi-case phenomenological study was to describe as accurately as possible the words of the participants.

### **Settings, Participants and Sampling**

This study primarily focused on public secondary school sites in South-Western Kenya, along the Rift Valley- Nyanza provinces border. The participants were six secondary school principals. The researcher made use of purposive sampling, considered by Welman & Kruger (1999) as the most important kind of non-probability sampling, to identify the primary participants. Those who will finally make the list of participants will be based on my judgment and the purpose of the research (Babbie, 1995; Greig & Taylor, 1999; Schwandt, 1997), looking for those who “have had experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched” (Kruger, 1988 p. 150). Since the phenomena being studied was trust, only those secondary school principals who were certified and registered by the Teachers service commission as secondary school principals and had worked in their current schools for more than 3 years were considered. This was based on the fact that the ethnic violence in this region was last witnessed in 2007 and only those who were principals at that time could become a participant. If there was need to get additional participants or informants snowball sampling would have been used. Snowballing is a method of expanding the sample by asking one informant or participant to recommend others for interviewing (Babbie, 1995; Crabtree & Miller, 1992).

While Boyd (2001) regards two to 10 participants or research subjects as sufficient to reach saturation and Creswell (1998, pp. 65 & 113) recommends “long interviews with up to 10 people” for a phenomenological study, Wertz(1985) noted that between one and six participants may be sufficient when conducting a phenomenological research.



### **Purposive Sampling**

Using this sampling method (Creswell J. W., 1998), the sample is ‘hand-picked’ for the research. The term is applied to those situations where the researcher already knows something about the specific people or events and deliberately selects particular ones because they are seen as instances that are likely to produce the most valuable data. In effect they are selected with a specific purpose in mind, and that purpose reflects the particular qualities of the people or events chosen and their relevance to the topic under investigation. In phenomenological research, criterion sampling ensures that all participants are purposefully selected based on the fact that they have experienced a similar phenomenon (Kruger, 1988).

### **Data Collection**

Since the aim of this study was to describe the lived experiences of secondary school principals, data was collected from individuals who had experienced the phenomenon under study; trust.

The following methods were used for data collection:

**a). Interviews.** Interviews offer the possibility of modifying one’s line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives in a way that postal and self-administered questionnaires cannot (Robson, 1993) therefore enhancing reliability of the data. Participants were asked general questions that led to a textual description and a structural description of the experiences, and ultimately provided an understanding of the common experiences of the participants (Moustakas, 1994). As indicated in the research design section above, the researcher conducted unstructured and open-ended in-depth phenomenological interviews. At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. The purpose of in-depth interviewing is not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses, and not to evaluate. The

goal is to have the participant reconstruct his or her experience within the topic under study (Seidman, 1998). The researchers questions were “directed to the participant’s experiences, feelings, beliefs and convictions” (Welman & Kruger, 1999, p. 196) about trust. A basic assumption in in-depth interviewing research is that the meaning people make of their experience affects the way they carry out the experience.

b). **Observation/‘Memoing’**. This entailed the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviors, and artifacts (objects) in the social setting chosen for study (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 69). The observational record is frequently referred to as field notes—detailed, nonjudgmental, concrete descriptions of what has been observed. Observation is a fundamental and highly important method in all qualitative inquiry. It is used to discover complex interactions in natural social settings. Even in studies using in-depth interviews, observation plays an important role as the researcher notes the interviewee’s body language and affect in addition to his/her word.

c). **Artifacts and Documents**: Along with interviews and observations, phenomenologists have been known to utilize the study of documents and artifacts (pictures poetry, music, etc.) to gather additional data (Sheperis, Young, & Daniels, 2010) especially in providing data on the background and historical context of this study as well as the participants. While in the field, the researcher collected documents detailing school enrolment since 2007, examination performance in the national examinations, fee payment and general attendance in meetings called by the principal among other artifacts and documents.

### The Limitations of Using a Western Framework

Before embarking on methods of data analysis used in this research, there is need to point out the dissonance that was experienced in the field during the data collection process. The conceptual framework that formed the basis of this research and depicted in chapter 3 was derived from research conducted in the western world. These western researchers not only conducted research in a different social environment but also a stable environment. One of the most defining characteristics of the study area where the research was conducted is the instability of the environment. Application of the conceptual framework in the field became limited and a challenge as some of the parameters were found to be nonexistent or if they were present then in a somewhat different presentation. In the following section, this inapplicability of the conceptual framework is explained and any emergent themes explained.

To accommodate this dissonance, the researcher had to develop a new questionnaire that contained items that were relevant for the study. For instance, questions about mindfulness were found to be redundant as the concept of mindfulness as explained in the conceptual framework was nonexistent in the study area.

### **Data Analysis**

Mills (1994) asserts that it is best to begin analyzing the data as soon as the initial data has been collected. Hycner's (1999) explicitation process was used in data analysis. According to Hycner (1999) explicitation implies 'a...investigation of the constituents of a phenomenon while keeping the context of the whole' (1999, p. 161). This explicitation process has five 'steps' or phases, which are:

- i. First I described my personal experiences with the phenomenon under study, in this case trust. I began with a full description of my experience of trust. This was necessary so as to set aside my personal experiences so that the focus was redirected to the participants of the study.
- ii. Development of a list of significant statements: Building on data from research questions, I went through the data (interview transcripts) and highlighted 'significant statements,' sentences or quotes that provided an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon. Moustakas (1994) calls this step horizontalization. During horizontalization, every statement initially was treated as having equal value. Later, statements irrelevant to the topic and question as well as those that were repetitive or overlapping were deleted, leaving only the *horizons*. Applying this horizontalization, the researcher listed significant statement relevant to the topic and give each equal value.
- iii. Next I will develop clusters of meaning (how) from these significant statements into themes. This was possible by removing overlapping and repetitive statements (Moustakas, 1994) and grouping the significant statements identified in (ii) above and group them into larger units of information, called 'meaning units' or themes (Cresswell, 2003)
- iv. These significant statements and themes were then used to write a description of what the participants experienced or how the phenomenon was experienced by the six individuals in the study (textural description). (Creswell, 2007). They were also used to write a description of the context or setting that influenced how the participants experienced the phenomenon, called imaginative variation or structural description (Creswell, 2007).
- v. From the structural (how the phenomenon was experienced) and textural (what was experienced-a description of the meaning individuals have experienced) descriptions, the

researcher wrote a composite description, a long paragraph or two (Cresswell, 2003) that presented the 'essence' of the phenomenon, called essential, invariant structure (Cresswell, 2003). This passage focused on the common experiences of the participants and was the 'essence' of the experience and represents the culminating aspect of a phenomenological study. It is typically a long paragraph that tells the reader 'what' the participants experienced with the phenomenon and 'how' they experience it (i.e., context).

The process of data analysis as outlined above was guided by the conceptual framework on page 76. According to the conceptual framework, parents and high school principals were in a relationship. This relationship was characterized by demands, expectations and resources from the side of parents and reputation, competence, experience and institutional supports from the high school principals. It is the existence of these factors that necessitated the existence and maintenance of this relationship. In the presence of the above factors principals responded to the parents in unique ways that enhanced the satisfaction of each of the sides' needs and expectations without blackmailing the other into submission.

During data analysis, the nature of this relationship was examined and confirmed the absence or presence of trust. Consequently the issue as to whether principals used routines to stabilize this relationship was also looked into. The researcher made an attempt at highlighting the creativeness of the principals in the study area. The above objectives could not be attained without the researcher careful reading and rereading of the transcripts and field notes to familiarize with the data (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Lowe, 1991) and to start the process of structuring and organizing the data into meaningful units. The familiarity created by rereading the transcripts heightened the researcher's awareness of emerging patterns and categories

(Patton, 1987) in the data. The researcher used this phase in analysis to take the data apart and then piece it together in a number of ways, each of which was potentially important in answering the research questions stated on page 15. After this stage, the researcher noted key phrases and sentences which were then classified into units relevant to each research question. Advancing further in the analysis, the researcher grouped clusters of units of relevant meaning together in an attempt to determine general themes relevant to each of the research questions. At this stage some chunks of data were discarded on the grounds that they were not relevant to the study and, as a whole, the data collected so far had been reduced to a more manageable level.

Finally the researcher then used the clustered themes and meanings to develop the textural descriptions, structural descriptions and integration of textures and structures into meanings and essences of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). By essence, reference was made to what the participants experienced or how the phenomenon ‘trust’ was experienced by the research participants.

### **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is an essential component of qualitative research. Findings should reflect the reality of the experience. The ultimate aim of a researcher is to produce research that is good and of high quality. To judge the quality or goodness of a research study, both quantitative and qualitative researchers set different criteria (Sungdong, 2008). Whereas quantitative researchers address issues of internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity, (Schwandt, *Qualitative inquiry: A dictionary of terms*, 1997) notes that qualitative researchers establish criteria and procedures that are appropriate for the nature of investigations

The term “trustworthiness” is defined to substitute the term validity and reliability (Seidman, 1998). Drawn from the idea of (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), trustworthiness consists of

Four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Trustworthiness in this study will be enhanced by the following processes:

### **Peer Debriefing.**

Peer review or debriefing provides an external check of the research process (Glesne, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988), much the same spirit as interrater reliability in quantitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) define the role of the peer debriefer as a 'devil's advocate', an individual who keeps the researcher honest; asks hard questions about methods, meanings, and interpretations; and provides the researcher with the opportunity for catharsis by sympathetically listening to the researcher's feelings.

This process involved the sharing and exchanging ideas with my peers as well as colleagues including the committee members as well as my chair of my dissertation committee whom we will be interacting either via Skype or face to face meeting on a predetermined schedule. Working with professionals both outside and inside the research contexts as well those with general understanding of study are acceptable and appropriate procedures for credibility (Schwandt, 1997).

### **Triangulation.**

Another strategy was used to promote credibility was the triangulation of data.

According to (Seale, 1999) triangulation of data is a strategy used by researchers when they use multiple sources of data in the study of phenomena. Triangulation involves including diverse sources of data, so that researchers seek out instances of a phenomenon in several different settings (Denzin, 1978) "The central point of the procedures is to examine a single social phenomenon from more than one vantage point...it is a procedure used to establish that the criterion of validity has been met" (Schwandt, 1997, p. 163). In this study, to establish validity, the researcher used individual interviews, observations, and written documents from each school.

**Member Checking.**

In member checking, the researcher sought participants' views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988). Member checking is the most important technique for determining credibility in a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Member checking as a procedure required that the researcher take data and interpretations back to the participants to confirm their accuracy. Member checking involved taking data, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions back to the participants so that they could judge the accuracy and credibility of the account. According to Stake (1995), participants should 'play a major role directing as well as acting in case study' research. They should be asked to examine rough drafts of the researchers work and to provide alternative language, 'critical observations or interpretations' (p.115)

Interview transcripts, as well as drafts of the final reports were shared with participants to make sure true and correct representation of their ideas (Glesne C. , 1999). Member checking reassured the accuracy of the participants' constructions (Cho & Trent, 2006) and helped confirm the credibility of the information and narrative accounts (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

The researcher convened a focus group composed of participants this study and asked them to reflect on the accuracy of the account.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

#### Introduction

A good starting point in disclosing the findings of any research project is with basic description-what happened? (Wolcott, 1990). With that in mind I began this chapter with an overview of the district in which this project took place. Later I introduce the principals who were the center of this project.

The next section of the chapter developed what was communicated to me by principals who participated in this study. Six participants were interviewed for this study and their experiences and perceptions were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. I analyzed the verbatim transcripts of each participant and triangulated that information with my observations notes and collected documents. I transformed the data to protect the confidentiality and identity of the participants (Wolcott, 1990). What complicated this process was the zeal with which the participant principals checked their transcripts and their repeated requests to read the findings. Therefore, I took extreme measures to protect each individual's identity.

Analysis of collected data provided insights and rich description of how secondary school principals in South Western Nyanza developed and maintained high levels of trust in their interrelationships with parents. As I analyzed each source of data, themes and patterns that were relevant to the research questions emerged. Findings to support these themes are also presented throughout this chapter. I organized my findings from this research by the theoretical constructs presented in Chapter 2. The findings in this chapter are presented through segments of documents, observation notations, and verbatim quotes from participants. This process is known as a theoretical narrative and employs the use of constructs to organize people's experiences into a story (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995).

## **Participant Backgrounds**

Participants were purposefully selected to best represent the phenomena under study. Only those principals who had worked in the study area for more than three years and expressed a willingness to participate in this study formed the population for this study. Consequently, six secondary school principals were interviewed for this study; five participants were male and one participant was female. All the principals hailed from Kisii district and were Abagusii by tribe.

### ***Participant #1 – “Sam”***

Sam has taught for a total number of 15 years at the secondary school level. He graduated from university in 1994 and was initially posted to a different school as a history and business education teacher. The current school is his second station. On his way to the principal ship he was a class master, head of department and a deputy headmaster before being a principal, a position he has occupied for the last 7 years. He is a Son of the Soil (S.O.S) since he hails from the community. Sam is a principal of a public day secondary school sponsored by the Seventh Day Adventist Church (SDA). The school was started way back in the year 1976. Sam defines trust as ‘having faith in somebody’s ability to fulfill his/her promises’ and considers it a ‘virtue’.

### ***Participant # 2– “Elijah”***

Elijah has worked in the public schools system for 18 years. He has been a principal for 12 years have been a principal in his current school. Soon after his undergraduate studies, he was hired and posted by the Teachers service commission (TSC) to an urban high school where he taught Geography and History. He became a deputy principal within 2 years of employment a position he held for 4 years before his promotion and eventual deployment to his present school. Elijah is a principal of a day school sponsored by the SDA. He is a church elder and a choir

master in his church. He is a SOS. He took over a school that had nearly collapsed and as such he is very popular and highly regarded in the community. Wherever he goes community members assure him that they will never let him go to another school unless ‘you are going on promotion’. He defines trust as a ‘feeling a parent has that everything is okay’ in the school; a belief by the parents that a principal ‘will meet parental expectations’. To Principal Elijah, it ‘is very necessary for a parent to have trust for the principal’.

***Participant #3 – “Mogusii”***

Mogusii is the oldest of all the participants. He has worked as a teacher for 26 years. Over that period of time he has worked in three different schools in different capacities. Before his appointment and eventual deployment to his current school as a principal, he had been a deputy principal, a Head of Department (HOD), boarding master, subject head and a class master. He trained to teach Language Arts and English Literature, subjects he had posted impressive results in the national examinations, KCSE over the years.

The current school is his first deployment as a principal. He has been a principal for five years. Mogusii defines trust as ‘a mutual relationship between two parties...’ that involves the principal being ‘entrusted with a given responsibility and carrying it out as per the expectation of the other party ...’.within the school context. Within the school context he sees himself as a care taker. At other times ‘I perceive myself as a surrogate parent’. Principal Mogusii is of the opinion that without trust ‘there will not be any meaningful business or transaction between the principal and the parents’

***Participant #4 – “Minuel”***

Minuel has been in the school system for 19 years. This was his first posting and so he has only worked in the same school all his working life. Minuel trained as a science teacher at a Diploma college specializing in biology and agriculture. Over the years he has earned ‘Approved Status’ and is now at par with bachelor holders. Over the years he has been a class master, a subject head, head of department, games master and a deputy head before being promoted as a principal. He is not a SOS and hails from a different region within the county of Kisii. He is a staunch Catholic. He is a principal of a day school, sponsored by the Catholic Diocese of Kisii.

Minuel defines trust as a ‘sound working relationship’ that involves ‘the creation of a positive learning environment’ for the learners. Consequently, Minuel believes that trust is achieved ‘when parents feel that their expectations for the principal, for the school and for their children are met’. Minuel further believes that to a principal, trust is important because ‘minus trust it is hard for the institution to survive’.

***Participant #5 – “Jane”***

Jane was the only female participant in this research. Jane has worked in the school system for 15 years. After graduating with bachelors, she was deployed as a language arts teacher in a girl’s secondary school within Kisii District. At her first duty station she worked as a class teacher, a subject head and finally as a HOD. This is her first posting as a principal, in a mixed day secondary school, a position she has held for 6 years. She is a staunch catholic and had to conduct a church wedding before assuming her current position. She is not an SOS but her husband hails from the community.

Her husband is a senior education officer in the Ministry Of Education in the capital City. She defines trust as ‘the ability of people to believe in each other, to listen to each other, to take each other’s interests into consideration when making choices...’ and also believes that it is ‘...necessary that there is trust in a school for the school to continue operating’. During the interview sessions, Principal Jane was quite articulate in her opposition to cultural demands that portray women as inferior to the men. She refers to herself as a ‘women’s activist’ against unfair representation in the education sector. Within the community she is fondly referred to as the ‘iron lady’ probably in reference to Margaret Thatcher, the former British Premier.

***Participant #6 – “Onyari”***

Onyari is a soft spoken principal who started his career as an Untrained Graduate teacher. Over the years, he has worked slowly but surely to attain his current Approved Graduate Teacher status taking classes at the university during the holidays. After working for many years as an Untrained Teacher, Onyari joined university at a mature age for the Bachelor of Education degree. But even as an Untrained Teacher he had already built a reputation as a dedicated teacher.

He is a strong SDA adherent. In school, he maintains a very low profile. When I went to conduct the interview, I was surprised at how ease and free he was with his staff and students. In the course of the interview we had to stop several times for him to attend to several students who sort his help and advice. He maintains an open-office policy and so one does not need to make an appointment to see him. His strong faith in God was quite evident during the interview as he kept .....He sees his main purpose as being ‘to serve the nation and ensure the standards of this school especially education standards have gone up’. He defines trust as ‘the ability of the principal to be committed to his work, being sincere in his duties as well as creating confidence in the

community of his ability to meet their expectations’. He strongly believes that trust like honesty is ‘a vital virtue for any principal working in unstable environments’.

### Characteristics of School-Community Context

This section will relay participant experiences as a result of the ethnic violence that afflicts the study area. Due to ethnic violence, the role and duties of the participant principals were affected by this violence. Ranging from constant cattle rustling to the ethnic based violence sometimes referred to as land clashes along the border zone of southwestern Kenya between Nyanza and the Rift Valley provinces have impacted principals in different ways.

All six participants work in what could be called as the epicenters of ethnic violence in south western Kenya between the Abagusii tribe and the Kalenjin along the Bomet/Kisii/Nyamira border to the north and with the Maasai along the Ramasha/Kilgoris borders to the south. The following section will chronicle their experiences as well as perceptions as relates to trust formation .The trust formation journey for most, then, began with being deployed as secondary school principals along the south western region of Kenya where ethnic violence is prevalent.

#### **Principals Depend On Parents:**

As principals organize their schools with an objective of attaining annual educational objectives for the students in their schools, they have to contend with the fact that they depend on the parents for various inputs in their respective schools. When interviewed, participant principals expressed their dependence on their respective communities.

After conducting the interviews, it became evident from the principals’ responses that parental trust was directly related and affected by the principal’s ability to meet parental expectation. In order for the principals to meet these expectations, a number of resources ranging

from human to financial were necessary. The acquisition of these resources rested on the notion that parents were a major source of these resources and their willingness to avail these resources for use in the schools. This assumption can be summed by what Minuel said:

We need the parents because, one, they have given us their students and as an institution there is a lot we expect from these parents.

The importance of parents to a school principal in the study area was summed up by Minuel:

Minus the parents I really doubt whether we can go very far.

In this regard, therefore principals can be said to be dependent on the community giving rise to a dependence relationship between the two. In the following section, principals interviewed acknowledged this dependence and explained the nature of this relationship by sharing their experiences.

### **Parents Provide Learners**

The most direct dependence is that schools are defined as ‘schools’ and are labeled as ‘schools’ because of presence of learners. A school cannot be a school minus learners. Therefore principals depend on the community and the parents to provide them with learners. Parents would readily avail their children only to principals they trust. According to Jane:

When you want to talk of numbers in a school, parents will not give you children if they don’t trust you. Whatever they are looking for, in a school, if they feel you are giving or have the ability to give it, they will readily give you their children.

Parents view their children as very precious. The act of releasing their children to any person therefore would entail a lot of trust and assurance they will not come to harm while they

are under the care of the principal. If a school loses its students, it will lose the title of a 'school'.

Sam noted:

A school is not a school without students. It is the presence of learners that change a place from being referred to as a building and take another label known as a 'school'.

Therefore I wholly think that when parents give you their children they are trusting that you will somehow enable them to learn.

When in conversations, someone talks of a 'school' immediately listeners conjure in their minds a group of learners. Consequently, there is a strong relationship between a school and the community because it is the community's action of availing their children that transforms and creates 'schools'. According to Onyari:

If a community denies you their children, you can never have a school. A school grows when the parents give you more children. In that case then I can say that parents do create schools and can also 'kill' schools by withholding their children or redirecting them to a different location.

The issue of the number of students in the schools within the study area is very important. In a previous observation the principals had indicated that schools are required by the state to have a minimum number of students per class before they can be registered and consequently be eligible for state funds. In this regard therefore parents and the community at large are important in determining whether a school should be registered and receive state funds or be closed or amalgamated with a surrounding school. By allowing their children to attend a particular school, parents are in effect offering a lifeline to the principal. If they decide otherwise, and withdraw their children, parents can bring a school to a standstill or even closure.



## **Financial Dependence**

The Government of Kenya (GOK) only remits monies to individual schools equivalent to their tuition fee. In other words only that portion of the fees made up of tuition is paid by the State and the other portion is passed on to parents as either development fund or staff development fund. Unfortunately these State remittances do not cover the total expenditures incurred by the secondary school principals. This necessitates parents to supplement. Parents defray this expenditure by making payments to schools in form of various fees fixed and authorized by both BOG's and PTA's. Consequently principals depend on parents for financial support to pay for part of expenditures incurred by the school. All principals affirmed this financial dependence.

For instance Onyari was very vehement in affirming the importance of the monies paid by the parents. To Onyari, the continued existence of the schools is due to their courtesy in paying fees to the schools. Onyari said:

If they don't pay any tuition to school, the school will be brought to a halt because you need money to run the school...and those are some of the issues that we can see.

Mogusii also shared his experience. He said that in his school, he heavily relied on parents to support his school budget. As his enrolment was at times fluctuating; his dependence on financial support on parents was heavy. He said:

I sometimes think I am unfortunate because my enrolment fluctuates with the social environment around here. When there is fighting, the enrolment drops so low. And if the state remits the Free Education Funds based on the enrolment when is low, I end up getting low amounts and that always put me in an awkward situation as I try to meet the

financial obligations of the school. That's why I always depend on the monies paid by the parents to run the school.

But even when the enrolment is stable, principals noted that they have to contend with unreliable remittances. Sometimes the remittances are delayed and if this occurs principals have to rely on the parents to see them through. Elijah experienced such a situation early in the year. He said:

Early this year, I had intended to register the form four students for their national examinations. I had hoped to use the Free Education Funds. Unfortunately, there was some computer hitch or something to that nature and the funds took long before we received them. By then the registration period would have been elapsed. I had to seek assistance from the parents. And this was not the first time.

As long as monies available to the principal in the study area is either insufficient or/unreliable, principals will always look upon the parents to supplement them. It was thus found out that there is financial dependence is a characteristic of the school-community environment in the study area.

### **Parents Are Necessary In Decision-Making**

Principals apart from depending on the parents for financial support also depend on them for support in decision making. During the data collection process it became evident that in the course of their duties, principals make choices as well as certain decisions that involve financial commitment. These choices and decisions are made on behalf of the community by the principal. Since some of these decisions for example construction of classrooms as well as purchases of say a school bus ran into hundreds of thousands of Kenyan shillings and even sometimes millions,

parental involvement in these kinds of decisions becomes mandatory. Parental involvement was found to be through either PTA, BOG or school committees and as in the case of secondary schools in the study area the Boards of Governors. All the principals interviewed supported the necessity of parent's support in the decisions and choices they made in their respective schools.

On this point Jane had this to say:

I have also had the occasion of organizing parent meetings and when they come because they have trust they support your projects. Okay first of all you should note that the fact they have come in large numbers is a sure sign that they trust you. How else would you be holding parents meetings if they don't come?

It was found out that lack of parental support on decisions and choices made by the principals in the study area gave rise to conflicts. The principals said that when they held meetings and in instances where parents did not agree, tempers flared up as their every decision was either questioned or outrightly rejected. Opposition by parents to suggested development projects was likened by Elijah to 'I feel like I am mark timing' on the same spot and becoming a potential waste of time. According to Onyari:

If parents fail to support me in the decisions I make in the school, life becomes intolerable—a constant battle between my office and PTA or the school committee. The parents would never support me and will always oppose me because they don't trust my intentions and are always scared....they are paranoid. Everything they suggest to me or I to them would be viewed suspiciously and the school would grind to a halt as this scrutinizing takes toll on us.

Elijah shared with me his frustration .He had bought games equipment worth a substantial amount of money. Unfortunately some parents felt that it was not a wise expenditure and so he withheld their vote and subsequent allocation of funds to pay for them.

You know first term we always have games and cross country. So I decided to buy a new uniform and some equipment for the sports department. It became a tussle with the PTA. Some parents insisted that I should have used that money for another project as sports equipment was not essential. At the same time the sellers were on me and I can assure you it was not a nice experience. Whatever the reason, when parents withhold their support and question each and every expenditure you make, you remain on the same spot and can never move on.

It is not only developing projects that principals need parental support. Sometimes principals come up with certain policies in their respective schools that they think will bring about the kind of changes that they want for their respective schools. Jane and Sam had introduced grade retention if teachers thought that a particular learner had not attained the required level before moving to the next class. Elijah and Minuel had introduced a lunch program and Mogusii was in the process of starting a boarding section for girls in his schools. These policies could be implemented in the schools by the individual principals if support from the parents is forthcoming. The failure of these projects was real if parents do not buy into the ideas. On the need for parental support, Elijah said:

My ability to introduce and implement great policy changes in this school is possible with the support of the parents of this school. I think it is because any change has a potential financial commitment on the parents. So if they do not support my policy, I do not think that I could implement it. When it comes to policies they need also to be cooperative by

coming up with policies that are guiding the school. So in decision making, the parents are very vital, they need to support.... For me to be very effective as a principal I need the support of the parents.

Minuel:

Well I think that is also important because ...eh... if you don't have the parents support and you come up with a project and then however good that project is and if the parents don't believe in you, don't have any trust in you, then they will not support you because they will know you cannot handle that project or if they don't trust you, then they think..If they mistrust you they will think that this project you are starting is for personal gain...is for personal gain and so they cannot even support you.

Principals confirmed that they depended on the parents to support their choices and decisions in their respective schools. Therefore this was also another characteristic of the study school-community environment in the study area.

### **Safety and Security Dependence**

Effective learning can only be carried out when the safety of the learners, faculty and staff as well as visitors who come to the school is guaranteed. Working in the border region of South Western Kenya, the principals noted that the possibility of violence flare-ups were real. The element of surprise in these attacks was responsible for the huge losses incurred. Where there was advance warning of an impending attack, principals were able to close their schools and release the students and teachers long before the attack. By so doing, losses and possible deaths were kept at a minimum. The need for safety was emphasized by Jane:

There is also the element of safety. There is no way I could be in a school when I know that the parents do not trust me. In an area like this border regions, parents are known to physically eject a teacher from the school. There have also been times when the ejection has become violent and there is a possibility of someone being hurt

For Onyari, he not only depended on the community to warn him on an impending attack but also to offer him and the teachers a safe passage way if caught in the crossfire,

Working as a principal in a border region has it is own insecurities. Parents offer security to the principal and advise him when and what to do when the violence flares up.

Onyari and Mogusii depended on the parents to take care and ensure the safety of the schools and their properties. This was very important because a number of schools had been burned down and completely destroyed by the attackers during the ethnic violence.

The safety of the school structures like books and desks needs to be taken care of when the schools are closed and insecurity is rampant

Elijah also depended on the parents to make sure that the school was not looted or torched by the marauding fighters. He talked of parents making a roster and organizing themselves in groups whereby each group guarded the school in a particular period.

Once the violence flares up and escalates to a point where it becomes unsafe to continue learning, we always close school indefinitely. The school becomes vulnerable and the first thing they do, they make sure they guard their property; they regard the school as their property.

Principals interviewed were also of accord that their relationship with the community was important. Unfortunately, not all members of the community or public would interact with the principals on a daily basis. Only a fraction of the parents did. Presumably it is this small section of the community that the principals were relying on to not only pass information about the school but also report back to the principal what is being said about the school in the community.

Since a school cannot exist in isolation it is rather obvious that members of the public would engage in conversations about that school and the principal. Some of these conversations would be based on facts and some not. At the same time objectives of the speakers and listeners could also be varied. Where the conversations are negative or otherwise, principal-friendly community members take upon themselves to inform the principal and if possible set the records straight by offering correct information or referring them to sources where correct information can be sought. It is this need of the principals not only to be aware but also have correct and where possible positive information about the school, students and faculty circulate in the community and the larger society that made Jane say that:

And then another one I think is when they hear something about the school some rumor like so and so is saying ... they come and discuss it with me or they call me and they are like... is it true , have heard of this, is it ... and then we talk .

Principals cannot monitor student behavior away from the school. And it is also this fact that principals indicated a dependence on their part on members of the community to help enforce school discipline and consequently cut down on indiscipline and truancy cases. As most of the schools in the study are day schools, students commute daily to and from home. Along the way, some students engage themselves in activities that portray the school negatively. While in some societies, parents might assume and turn a blind eye on these activities since the culprits

are not their children, all the principals indicated that in the study area, parents do actually follow up these cases with the school. Not only do the parents report the students to the school authorities but some parents have gone as far as reporting these children to the police. These children are arrested before they are handed over to their parents with warnings of fines if they skip school again. As a result, parents have helped improve student attendance while at the same time improving the principal's control over the students and ultimately of the school. Jane shared her experience:

Then another one I have seen, when they realize my student are... Like now the ones from Chebilat, they realize they have seen my student in wrong company or they have seen them in the wrong place and wrong time, they will call me ... they will be like there is this student who is here... are you aware... are they out because of permission or are they skipping school?

Sam also had more or less the same experience which he shared during the interview. He said:

As you have seen my school is located closest to the border market at Kamukunji. On market days most pupils skip classes and spend time loitering around while some engage in petty businesses. Last term, a number of students were arrested at the market and brought to the school. The PTA decided that we suspend them. Since then the number of students seen in the market place has drastically gone down.

In the course of the interviews it emerged that, given the nature and location of the study area, all the principals were in agreement that the general environment along the border could change within a very short time. One minute it would be tranquil and the next minute there would be spears and arrows flying. The principals said that they were always on the lookout for



small tell-tale signs that something is amiss. They all confirmed that there is a feeling of safety when they are at peace with the community around the school. As a result they indicated that they depended on the parents for that general all-round feeling, assurance and confirmation that everything was fine. This general feeling according to the principals was a culmination of the small things and events that transpired when the principal was in the community. For instance being talked to or being greeted well as well as being paid attention to by the parents would elicit this sort of security as opposed to being ignored or people refusing to shake their hands. This feeling of ‘everything is fine’ was necessary according to the principals, because it determined, affected, influenced and enhanced their readiness to carry out their duties. A feeling of uneasiness and restlessness in the self and with the surrounding, according to all the principals made them ‘tired’ (Elijah) ‘unwilling to do anything’, (Jane) ‘unable to think straight (Onyari) ‘a heightened sense of wanting to be with my family (Sam), thoughts of what am I doing here(Mogusii) and a sense of vulnerability (Minuel). In advancing this observation, Onyari further explained thus:

Sometimes your public relation with them might not be so good...Whenever you walk and meet parents, they will either assume you, refuse to shake your hand as in greeting or if they stop to greet you, they will not pay any attention to you.. Sometimes when it is at the extreme, parents might be heard talking to each other or no one in particular about ‘a bad teacher who needs to watch his steps’, or ‘our children are lost in that school...they have no future. It is not a good situation or feeling or even an experience to work in a school where parents don’t trust you. It is a very frustrating as well as a demeaning experience.

It also emerged from the interviews that indirectly, there is another level of dependence between the principals and the parents. The success of the principals in carrying out their duties and the potential to meet parental expectation was directly affected by the level of preparedness of the students in the schools. Consequently, parents apart from paying fees for their children also provided the students with text books, pens and writing books. All the principals indicated that every subject has mandatory text books that have been determined by the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) and upon which the subject curriculums and syllabuses are drawn.

The dependence on the parents is heightened by the fact that the government does not provide funds to buy the textbooks or stationary. In addition, the general preparedness of a learner to learn was also said by the principals to depend on the support of the parent's from home. Children, who came from homes where they were discouraged to learn or where parents talked ill of the teachers, would transfer these negative feelings and perceptions to the school and eventually would hamper their readiness to learn. On the other hand, principals were all in agreement that in homes where parents were interested in their children's education either by helping in their homework (Jane), checking their daily progress reports (Elijah), maintaining a daily communication log with class teachers (Sam), making impromptu school visits to check on possible truancy (Mogusii), or emphasize on importance of getting a good education (Minuel), helped the student develop a positive attitude and an eagerness to learn. Onyari expounded more on this dependence. Onyari:

They also need to counsel their children and prepare them before they come to school; they are also one of major counselors. They need to counsel their children that are another thing they need to do. You see, if students are encouraged from home by the

parents and provided with books, writing materials as well as parents make sure that their children are punctual in school and actually attend school when they are supposed to...

### **Uncertainty**

One of the major functions of the principals in the study area was to ensure that learners are fully engaged both in the classroom and in extra curricula activities with an aim of attaining the pre stated educational objectives by the Ministry of Education of the Republic Of Kenya. Unfortunately as it became evident, most principals had to endure uncertainty in their day to day operations in their respective schools. In the following section, principals share their experience with this uncertainty as it relates to the location of their particular schools.

### **Fluctuating Student Enrolment:**

As a result of the interviews and discussion held with the respondents, it emerged that student enrolment was an important influence on the level of operations in schools in South Western Kenya. It also emerged that the funds available to the principals to use in the running of their institutions was directly related and affected by student enrolment. The importance of having high enrolment is emphasized by Jane:

The ministry condition is that the class has to be forty between forty and forty five for you to be funded. It is my objective to have as many students as possible.

Principals explained that they had two sources of funds from the government. The first was the Free Education Kitty and the second was the Constituency Development Fund. Total remittances from these sources were determined based on individual schools student enrolment. Schools with more students received more money.

It also emerged that student enrolment also determined whether a school should retain its registration and/or continue receiving financial aid from the government or even be closed down. The principals explained that the government had fixed 40 to 45 students per class to be the minimum number of students in a secondary school class to warrant the schools continual registration. Consequently maintaining student numbers not only ensured more financial aid for the school but also it's the actual survival existence. Onyari said:

Numbers in my school are important. I need to have at least fifty students per class in order to be sure that my school will be registered by the ministry of education.

Elijah also had the same experience.

I always worry about numbers. I cannot imagine my population going below the government minimum because if that happens then I don't receive any funds from the state. And am sure you know that if I reach that point, then final closure becomes an issue I have to deal with.

Even though the minimum student enrolment is for all school, principal participant indicated that student numbers keep fluctuating in their schools. According to Sam:

You can never be too sure about your student enrolment to be constant for the whole year. At the beginning of the year you might have a certain number of students but by the end of that year the population will have dropped by as much as fifty percent. During national extracurricular competitions such as the National Music Festival or the National secondary competitions, students' numbers tend to swell if you perform well but seem to dwindle if you perform poorly. Students move to well performing schools with a hope of participating in these extracurricular events.

Minuel shared his experience with fluctuating student enrolment:

During the planting season as well as harvesting season, the number of students fluctuates tremendously on a daily basis. Parents withdraw their students to assist with their labor in the farms during these crucial seasons for the farmers. It is even acute for the Kisii farmers who have rented huge tracts of land from the Maasai and kalenjin and practice large scale farming on them.

It also emerged that principals have no control over cultural events in the communities that also affect student enrolment. All principals confirmed that when for example young men among the Maasai became Morans by undergoing circumcision, enrolment reduced drastically. Minuel:

In my school I have a number of students from the Maasai community. During the circumcision period and immediately after the period, I always lose many students. Some students drop off school to get ready for the cultural ceremonies and once they are done, they never return to school.

Sam offered why there was this drastic drop.

Many students from the Maasai drop out of school immediately after undergoing circumcision because they feel that they are now adults. The girls especially are married off immediately as that is their culture.

### **Eminent Violence Scares People**

It also emerged that when there was an impending attack or when as in 2007, general elections were forthcoming the student fluctuation was more pronounced and long term. Mogusii shared his loss:

Just before the elections, I had students from the Luo as well as Luyhias and Kalenjin tribes attending school here. In total I had close to fifty students. But due to the elections and the talk about impending attacks on people from certain communities, all these students left. Their leaving was also correlated with the departure of their parents who were working in government offices in the nearby town of Kijaur and Chebilat.

For Jane, the pain of losing some of the bright students in her school due to ethnic violence was too painful as she choked in tears while explaining her experience. She said:

The violence we continue to experience here...mainly it affects enrolment and even the kind of staff we get. ...Enrolment in terms of students and you know I have experienced the previous post election violence and I hate to see another one may be after the referendum, I don't know... but I realized from that experience you lose students... good students... parents... I remember I had some bright student a Luo whose father was working in Kisii Town in form 3 at that time. When the student didn't come back I was like God!

Minuel also had a more or less experience in his school.

One effect as I have already said earlier on, we have some other students who come from the Maasai community to this school especially when we have such clashes, usually they run away. Because of that it is obvious you can see that student enrolment goes down and even there are some other students who may be hailing from this community who might be scared and decide to run to other schools which are relatively interior. So in the long run especially in such a period, you can find that the number of students has gone down.

Sam felt that demonstrations held in the community also contributed to a drop in student enrolment. Violent demonstrations held also have the potential of giving rise to violence. He said:

You know this is a volatile area prone to wars sometimes, is prone to all sorts of violence I would say. And when there are such kind's types of demonstration, in fact even the population went down from the students in Transmara... when we had a series of demonstrations like last time the students' population from Transmara had reached over twenty. Right now we are below ten students from Transmara. Why? It is because the Maasai parents have lost trust in us...

It emerged that whenever there was talk of an impending attack, there was a corresponding outflow of families to safer areas in urban areas or to camps established inside police stations for safety reasons. While in the police camps or in rented premises in urban areas, these students were not attending school.

### **Nomadic Students Belong Nowhere.**

Even though there is free secondary education in Kenyan schools, the money from the state is only meant for the tuition of the students. Consequently, the government only pays for a part of the total expenditure per student. The tuition portion forms the smallest part of the total amount a student pays to the school. So when the government's remits these monies to the schools, principals are mandated to charge parents a fee to defray the school's expenses. Unfortunately this fee being charged has also been another cause for fluctuations in student enrolment in the schools along the border. Jane explains:

When I look at the trend of payments of most parents, you realize they give pledges that they are supposed to honor, they don't ...of course most of them, but not all of them but majority of them they pay and pay well and then the others who cannot pay at a particular time when had pledge to pay, they come and explain their situation. If that day reaches that they pledged and they have not paid, they again come back and pledge... they are like you see I had this kind of problem...

For the other principals that I interviewed, it was the same story. Elijah observed:

Even though the government gives us money per student and we supplement that from the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), these monies are not enough to run the school efficiently and service our debts. Parents do pay a portion of these monies. Unfortunately they do not pay this fee when we need them and some of them... most of them if I may add... do come and pledge to pay at a later date. Some of them give pledges to coincide with payments from the milk sales or cattle sales. Most of them assure me that they are expecting some money on such and such a date. When they give pledges, I do not send the children home but rather I leave them to continue learning while waiting for the parents to fulfill their pledge. Unfortunately a fraction of those that pledged come forward and even pledge more, pushing the payment date even further back towards the end of the term. By the end of the term you find that some parents have huge outstanding fee balances. Come next term and these students are nowhere to be seen. They move to the next school leaving me with huge balances.

On the same issue of pledges, Onyari had this to say:



Then there is this challenge with our students whether they are in forms one or forms two. We do not yet have like the American experience you gave me. Our students are nomads. Their parents accept that as in order. You can't believe even with free secondary education funding, our parents, that lunch money and the PTA is an issue. So they are like if a child is here one year, next year Mogusii will be fine. They will take this arrears, go to Mogusii finish another year go there.

This issue of students moving from school to school to avoid paying fees is a common occurrence in the schools along the border zone and as evidenced from the above excerpts. This seasonal movement of students is common both at the end of the term and the beginning of a new term. All the Principals had experienced student numbers swelling at the beginning of the term but dwindling as the end of the term approaches as more and more students opt to move to another school. This is possible because students do not move with fee arrears from another school.

At another level this so called 'nomadism', was also played out when parents brought their children to school to 'chill out' as the parents sought 'better schools'. This situation was noted to be more common at forms one and two levels. After the terminal examination, Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), students move to secondary school. During the grade level changeover, there is movement from one level to a new level as well as from a primary school to a secondary school. And because admission to a secondary school of their choice did not materialize for one reason or the other, most students wait for second selection or intake. This corresponds with the beginning of second term when the re-admission letters are sent out to fill those vacancies not filled by students during the first selection in first term. Consequently student enrolment also shifts as students move in and out of schools. Jane:

In my school, especially in lower classes forms one and two, the students that come, some of them are those whose parents are yet to find ground so they say like this year I can't take you to a better school. I will take you to School Y for first term so that come second term I will take you to a better school. That means that you will have good students in form one first term or even second term. There are some who drop after first term because they came just to stay somewhere as their parents were looking for a better place.

Mogusii shared his experience with students who move in and out of schools thus affecting any definite planning. He explained:

Last year I had very many students enroll in form one. In fact I think they were close to ninety and so we decided to have them into two separate classes so as to avoid overcrowding. We spent a substantial amount of our savings to renovate a class. Imagine my shock this term in January when a quarter of the students did not report. On inquiring I was told that they had been admitted to better government schools in Kisii town

Uncertainty for the principals who work along the border zone of south western Nyanza is also as a result of unreliable cash flows into the schools. To run schools, money is a necessity in securing the resources required in the school. A major source of this money is the community. Unfortunately as was expressed by the participants, principals are never certain that the money will be there when it is required and of the required amount. According to explanations offered by the principals during the interviews was that parents along the border did not highly regard education and therefore did not prioritize it when allocating their money.

According to Minuel and as is evident from his experience, parents located along the border zone are difficult to deal with and do not support the school as much as he would have liked. Minuel:

Yeah... when looking at the location of the school along the border, sometimes we believe that the level of education...it is just low and it appears as if the community not really interested so much about high levels of education and I intend to think that is one basic problem may arise... the community does not really expect so much from their students simply because of the location of the school.

For Onyari, the general low level of education of parents in the community has been translated into lack of no interest in schools. Consequently the parents do not see the need and the urgency of paying fees when they should.

In terms of development, the community surrounding my school seems to be a little bit far behind. When I compare the locality of the school with some of the schools in the urban centers where people are more informed; people in the urban area put much of their resources in the education of their students. They are determined to see that their children have excelled unlike the parents around here .I believe the idea here is students come to school without their parents minding so much what students can get out of it.

The same sentiments were expressed by Elijah but he also introduced another aspect. Parents seem to value agriculture more than education and so they first buy farm inputs before they can even think of paying fees to the school. Elijah commented:

Mr. Abaya, the parents of this region are some of the toughest parents you can ever deal with as a principal We have quite a number of problems which we believe they are

contributive factors to the poor performance in my school as a whole. One being... one major problem being we do not really get the right support from the parents. May be...I do not know because of the influence between the Maasai and the Kisii's. May be it is because of the extensive land which is along the border and...

The lack of regulation in school attendance coupled with parental failure to honor financial obligations to schools in the study area has exposed secondary school principals high levels of uncertainty. This problem is compounded by the principals' inability to control events in the community.

### **Vulnerability**

From findings discussed in the previous section, secondary school principals in south western Kenya along the Rift Valley-Nyanza border, principals discussed their high level of dependence on parents in their schools. Further, uncertainty characterizing this dependence became evident. This uncertainty on the part of the principals was found to be due to the inability of parents to meet their obligation when needed. As a result, the principal's ability to fulfill the parental demands and expectations was greatly affected and consequently they became vulnerable. In this section this Principals share their experiences caused by vulnerability

### **Lack of Commitment**

When principals were asked to list the problems they encountered in carrying out their duties, lack of parental support was listed as a major problem. It was not so much an issue of the parents out rightly refusing to offer their support but rather that parental demands and expectations kept changing.

In the course of the field work, I discovered that some of the schools I visited were located in the middle of huge tea plantations. When asked about the problems he has with the parents of his school, Mogusii confirmed that most of the parents in his school were tea pickers in the adjacent tea plantations. Because most of them were not from the surrounding, they did not show much commitment and interest in the development of the school. They did not feel as though they owned the school and therefore did not take an active role in the school. Mogusii observed:

Most of the parents that I have in my school work in the neighboring tea plantations. They have come from other parts of Kenya and even some from surrounding districts. When it comes to paying development fees to the school they are always reluctant because they say that this is not their school and so developing it is like developing a neighbors garden. In fact they do not even seem to want to know anything about the school in so far as development projects are concerned.

This feeling that one need to develop places where they are assured of long term returns is related with the facts that along the border people have been evicted during the violence. Therefore the fact that these parents are not sure that they will be here for long periods of time plays a role in enhancing the detachment the parents' exhibit towards development projects in the school

In our last general meeting, the board chairman asked the parents who were present why they had refused or were reluctant to support the school. One of the parents argued that it was because they were not sure whether their children would be going to that school in the years to come. They asked the chairman whether he could assure them that they would not be evicted when violence erupts and the chairman was not able to.

### *Turning Farms into Fodder*

Another evidence of vulnerability was offered by Minuel. Minuel informed me that most of the parents in his school had rented huge acres of land and practiced large scale farming in the neighboring Transmara district which is inhabited by the Maasai. Unfortunately, episodes of violence erupting are so common along the border. He said that a month cannot go by without someone being killed along the border. The Maasai's were accused of turning the farms owned by the Abagusii into fodder and allowing their animals graze in the farms thus destroying the food crops. The Maasai argue that it is their land and so have a right to do with it whatever they deem necessary. The effect of this on the Abagusii is the destroying their only source of income and with it the money available to the school. He said:

Mr. Abaya, these people are always fighting. They seem to thrive on violence. You know most of my parents have rented huge tracts of land from the Maasai across the border around ole Melil and are practicing large scale farming. They have planted potatoes, beans and even maize. Unfortunately whenever there is a misunderstanding along the border, the Maasai graze their animals in these farms and even some Maasai go ahead and harvest from these farms. When that happens, I know it is going to be a bad year for me because it always comes back to the school...

### *Frequent Drastic Climatic Changes*

Drastic climatic changes also cause the vulnerability of the principals. Jane and Onyari told me that unlike in urban schools where parents are employed in offices and therefore have constant income; parents along the border are farmers and wholly depend on favorable weather conditions to survive. This point was supported by Minuel, Mogusii

and Elijah .If for instance rainfall was late in coming, the planting season was affected and as such their harvesting season would also change. Ultimately the principals would also have to change their respective plans accordingly. For those working in the tea estate, it meant that there was no tea to pick and therefore no jobs as people were laid off and the factories closed down.

Whenever there is hail, I always feel so helpless. You know the hail destroys the tea completely. And sometimes we even have rains failing to come. Do you remember the drought of 2007 when the rains failed for 7 months? The tea bushes dried up and factories were closed down as there was no tea to process. We were operating at a very low level because the money from the parents dried up.

### *Broken Homes*

Elijah and Sam also presented another angle to the vulnerability. According to them, the violence and the existence of broken homes and marriages along the border had led to high rates of teenage pregnancy.

In my school, nearly fifty percent of the girls have children at home. Out of the fifty 10 percent of them have more than one child.

Sam added:

These teenage mothers present a very delicate situation in the school. For one I have no control over the conditions in the community that give rise to the pregnancy and even after that the student does not pay enough attention to her education to pass well. Most of these girls are too young to be mothers but what can I do? I just watch and feel very helpless since I have really no control in the villages.

Combining these two issues Jane summarized:

It is very difficult to have a long term plan for your school when you have a high population of girls who are pregnant. You know they will drop out but you don't know when. Last year I lost like thirty girls due to pregnancy. Since they leave at different times, I always find myself unable to properly plan because you plan something for next month and when you come to school you hear that ten girls have gone. What do you do? You cannot force them back so you just leave them.

*When will the violence occur?*

Another cause of vulnerability was the inability to foretell the eruption of violence in the study area. All the principals talked of being caught off guard, and being unawares as one factor that cause them a lot of sleepless nights (Mogusii, Elijah). The principals felt that the violence in itself was bad but not knowing when that violence would occur was even worse. Mogusii shared his experience as a result of this not knowing:

When will the violence occur? I don't know. And really no one knows. Otherwise if we knew or if the people along the border knew then we could not lose so much life and property. I always go to bed at night worrying for the safety of my school especially the innocent students. At the end of each day, I always breathe a sigh of relief.

The principals confirmed that the violence in the community affected the availability and willingness of teachers to work in their respective schools. When asked what effect the violence has had on the current and potential teachers, the principals confirmed that the violence had not only reduced the pool of teachers applying for vacancies in their schools but also reduced the total contact hours for their faculties. They explained that for those teachers posted by the TSC



much of their time was spent in trying to secure transfers to safer schools. Minuel had an interesting experience to give. He said:

I have tried to fill the science position in my school to no avail. I have even tried to offer a competitive salary but no one has applied for the position. Last year someone applied and came here and unfortunately after working for only two weeks, violence erupted and the following morning he tendered his resignation. I tried to convince him to stay but his mind was made and he went away even without asking for his pay for the days he had worked. That is how urgent he needed to get away from here.

The story was more or less the same with Mogusii:

In my school I have an opening for an English teacher. But it has proved difficult to fill because most teachers are not willing to work in these places due to the potential for violence. They read about the violence in the papers and so even before they report here they already have a negative perception about the place.

Jane thought that if there had been local applicants may be the situation would have been better:

I think the worst scenario in as far as getting qualified personnel for my school is concerned is the fact that there are very few local youth who are qualified teachers. The few who have gone to college and graduated opt to stay in urban areas or in the city where life offers better and more opportunities. And so I end up with applicants who are either not qualified teachers or those who have been struck off the register of teachers for gross misconduct. And I cannot expose my students to such applicants!

The situation is not any better for the teachers already employed in the schools. They too are affected by the violence and present a challenge to principals. It became apparent from the

principals explanations that the teachers opted to live far away in the towns of Keroka. The schools mostly affected by these were those headed by Sam, Minuel and Elijah. For Mogusii, the school's location deters many teachers because it is located on top of a steep hill and one has to walk uphill for close to 45 minutes before reaching it.

For Sam, he had to contend with teachers commuting to school. He explained:

As you have noticed, my school is right on the border. In fact if you look through the window you can see the other side of the border. When fighting erupts, life takes a turn for the worse as there is no order and all of sudden people you have previously interacted with become your enemies. I am sure you heard how a neighboring school was torched and teachers badly beaten and left for the dead. Such stories coupled with the element of surprise discourage teachers from staying around here. They commute from Masimba and sometimes they don't come to school when there is a transport crisis.

Minuel also shared his experience which was more or less the same as Sam. He explains:

I have no staff houses here and so my teachers are forced to stay in the next town. This commuting at times is not healthy because teachers do not make it to school in time and also have to leave early in order to get a bus home. I am sure even if we constructed houses here, they would not want to live here due to the insecurity.

Elijah added a twist to the experiences:

I think because of constant violence in this place, investors do not want to invest in good housing. It would make a bad investment to have your rental property torched. This has played out by teachers seeking accommodation far from the school.

Principals explained that as a result of the above scenario, teachers were not offering their best service. The teacher's time was divided into seeking a transfer or coming to school late or not coming at all or at times leaving early in order to catch a bus home. This reduced the total number of hours of instruction. Principals were aware of this but expressed that they had no control over it as the teacher's worries are legitimate. According to Minuel:

The teaching staff itself feels threatened hence that can really negate the working spirit within this environment...that makes the level of education to deteriorate drastically because the teachers lack motivation and feel threatened. I tend to think that is really another problem we are really facing here. Unfortunately there is nothing much I can do to rectify the situation. The solution really lies beyond my ability.

#### *Constant Change in Parental Expectations*

Principals also expressed frustration that constant change in parental expectations was another cause of their vulnerability. Immediately before and after the ethnic clashes, people are displaced. Schools in the study area had lost students but at the same time had also received Internal Displaced Persons (IDP's). When the IDP's come into an area, they completely destabilize previous plans and contingent measures are put in place to accommodate the newcomers. Unfortunately these new comers are not here to stay and no one knows how soon they will return to their land. For the principals, this 'not knowing' when IDP's will leave makes it impossible to have long term plans thus the cause of their uncertainty. Mogusii gave his experience as follows:

During the violence, I received very many students whose parents had been ejected from their land in the neighboring communities. My school being the closest to the border was

a natural choice for many parents. Unfortunately these parents come in from varying backgrounds. The students also come from schools that are at different stages in the syllabus implementation. This throws me off guard completely and at times it is quite frustrating trying to meet all these students' needs as well as their parent's expectations for me. Sometimes I divert a substantial amount of money to purchase some science equipment for a new student and as soon as it is delivered, the student who was supposed to use that instrument leaves. At the same times I cannot let students just sit in class just because my school was not offering the subjects they take. Sometimes I have had to hire temporary teaching staff to handle these students.

Minuel's school is located next to a market center. The market center offers refuge for some of the evicted families and their children naturally go to the neighboring secondary school.

He shared his experience:

No one can say or predict how long the violence will last. Sometimes it is over after a short time and sometimes like in 2008 it went on for months. The displaced people end up renting premises in the shopping center. I have always been in dilemma when trying to meet their needs. First of all they have not contributed any monies and when you ask them to pay they say that they are not going to be here for long. If you leave them they end up staying here for months. By the time you make up to demand that they pay fees, they move to the next school or leave for their farms. The parents also are a challenge as they have expectations that we cannot meet given the circumstances.

In summary, the environment in which the interviewed principals work in is characterized by vulnerability. This vulnerability is a reality as confirmed from the stories and experiences provided above by the principals. The changing parental expectations and the

inability of the principals to foretell when the violence will erupt limit their planning range. Vulnerability was also enhanced by the principal's inability to control external conditions or events in the community that ultimately affect and influence his role and functions in the school.

Evidence gathered from the principals stated that dependence and parental expectations were characteristics of the environment within which the principals in the study area worked in. As has been evident from previous statements given during the interview sessions held in their respective schools, all the principals expressed their frustration and perception of the environment working against them. Consequently, the possibility of not meeting parental expectations was high bearing in mind that the support and resources from the parents were also not guaranteed. As a result, the principals described themselves as being frustrated and under great pressure to perform. All principals when presented with the following statement, they all affirmed that it expressed pretty much what they felt in so far as working environment was concerned. The statement was originally given by Mogusii who was the first principal that I interviewed.

This is a huge expectation and at times quite overwhelmed with the magnitude of parental expectations not matched with corresponding parental support... which sometimes means that we fail to meet some of these expectations and when that happens the parents' level of trust in us is shaken and yet it is not our own making... it is as if I am constantly under pressure to maintain and sustain a reasonable level of trust with the parent.

### **PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS**

From the above discussions and as has been explained by the principals interviewed, parents form an integral part of the school. They do, to a large extent influence the ability of the

principal to carry out their duties. Findings from the interviews and discussions with the principals showed that parents also have expectations, demands as well as resources. It is these expectations and demands that principals aim to achieve and are at the end of the day the measure used to indicate their success or failure as principals. Parents would label a principal as a successful one if he or she meets their expectations and demands as best as possible. When this happens, parents are happy and are readily willing to release even more resources to the principals. In the following pages, conversations given by the principals on parental expectations, demands as well as a source of resources to them are reported.

### **Awareness of Parental Expectations**

All the principals interviewed confirmed that they were very much aware of what was expected of them as principals of secondary schools. When further questioned how they became aware of these expectations, some talked of experience (Jane, Mogusii, Onyari) while others talked of observation (Elijah, Sam) and others from various sources during their numerous encounters (all respondents). By listening to past stories about their schools coupled with their professional backgrounds as well as information from school board chairmen all the principals were able to conjure a clear picture of what was expected of them. As well as being aware that parents would use their ability to meet these expectations as a measure of their effectiveness, the principals were further able to identify and differentiate parental expectations about their children, the school and the principal.

In the course of the interviews it emerged that parents expectations can be divided into two groups. Parents have expectations about their children. These expectations are geared towards their success as learners in a competitive environment that schools have become. Parents

also have expectations about principals. These expectations aim at the principal instituting measures that enhance the attainment of the success of the learners.

*Expectations Concerning the Students*

While interviewing the principals, it became evident that of all the expectations that parental have as relates to their children is that they expect the students to learn in a safe environment, pass and qualify for admission to the university and ultimately join a profession that is well paying such as medicine and architecture. It did not matter whether the students finally attained this but the parents still held these expectations and principals were expected to ensure their fulfillment. Elijah summed this expectation by saying:

Parents expect their children to learn while in school, pass their exams and go to college or university, get jobs and be successful/better citizens.

Onyari while supporting the above point noted:

Parents expect that: one if they give you their children, you will mold them into high performing learners as well as well-rounded citizens.

According to Sam, parents knew that if their children passed school they had a better shot at securing a better future. He said:

When the parents give me their children they expect that the children will learn a curriculum that has been developed by the ministry of education and that at the end of the 8.4.4 cycle they will succeed in their exams and be better citizens...

In addition to the parents expecting the principals to ensure that their children passed national exams, they also expected their children to develop morally and physiologically. This

expectation stemmed from the fact that the children are in school during their formative years and therefore it makes sense that principals should play an important role in these stage.

According to Jane:

Parents expect their children to be safe while at school, develop morally and physically, be furnished with progress reports.

The above points were summarized very well by Minuel. In response to my question he responded:

Parents obviously expect that the children should develop good moral standards; should pass well in their final national exams... if the parents knew for sure their children will not pass after form four or wherever grade they get in school, they will not give you their children. But here is a case of parents having expectations on school principals not only to mold their children, but also be well rounded and successful, but also productive community members of their community.

The addition above of parents expecting to be furnished progress report cards is necessary as parents need to know whether their expectations are being met by the principals and if not early intervention should be done to ensure that the learners achieve the expected goals. Principal's explained that if parents were assured that the students were moving in the right direction, they would readily offer their support of any programs offered in the school with the hope that this would enhance the attainment of their expectations. As for the principals, a favorable progress report meant either more funds from the parents or continued support or both and this helped in creating trust.



During their occasional visits to schools, principal also expressed that parents expect to be welcomed in the school, to be attended to promptly and not to be kept for long. This was confirmed by all. Minuel observed:

Parents expect to be respected and attended to promptly when they come to school. This saves them time to do other things.

### *Expectations Concerning the Principal*

From the interviews it emerged that parents expect principals to be in charge of hiring staff. In all the schools that I visited, I was welcomed by a secretary. In another school (Onyari, Mogusii, Sammy) I was made to sign a visitor's book at the main entrance manned by security guards. In all schools except Minuel's, schools offered lunch. In Jane's, Elijah's and Onyari's boarding facilities were offered. As a result a number of non-teaching employees were hired. These included 3 matrons, cooks, staff, secretaries, bursars, guards. Of the schools that I visited, one school (Samuel) had a school van and therefore a driver was also employed. When asked about this expectation Onyari summarized it:

One of the other main duties that parents expect me to perform in this school is in hiring and developing a strong staff. All staff I hire should be of good behavior and respect. I think parents are keen on whom I hire because they do not want their children to be exposed to characters with questionable morals.

When parents visit the school some of these staff are the ones who directly interact with the parents before the parents can visit with the principal. For instance the guards at the main entrance as well as the secretaries play a crucial role in ushering the parents into the school compound and into the principal's office. Behaving towards the parents in a manner likely to

suggest that they are unwelcome portrays the school negatively and may be misconstrued that they have the backing of the principal and this trickle down to the principal. So parents expect principals to employ workers who are of good character and moral standing. Elijah shared his experience:

Okay... there are many things. One, if a parent has come to your school telling a parent welcome... that word welcome, this parent feels... oh yes! Oh... okay, karibu sana<sup>1</sup>. Okay... two, not keeping a parent for long, somewhere without being given direction... that is it. So, when a parent comes you say...Ok... how can I help you? What is it that you want us to assist you? Then you give that parent the particular directions needed, then from there the parent is assisted and he goes away. So, we are talking about the way these parents are received, they can also... trust can also be increased. Three, what about workers... the workers... the kind of workers in school are also important... and can also make that trust to increase or be the way it is. For example, here is a receptionist. Here for example... my typist is here before somebody comes in here the typist must receive this ...

### **PARENTAL DEMANDS**

The relationship between the principal and the parents in the study area was characterized by not only expectations and uncertainty but also by various demands. As per the theoretical framework, parents have demands that need to be met by the principals. The existence of parental demands, according to Sam and Onyari, stemmed from the fact that parents were not hundred per cent sure that the principals would meet their expectations. In other words, according to them, the demands were another way of parents wanting to exert their authority in

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<sup>1</sup> Swahili for welcome.

the school. The other principals, Jane, Minuel, Mogusii and Elijah felt that parental demands unlike parental expectations were put in place by the parents to exert their influence in an attempt to take part in decision making within the school. This position was supported by Onyari when he said:

In my school, one demand that I have always had to deal with relates with the hiring of staff. Parents have made it obvious that any positions that I have in the school, are to be taken up by people from the community. It is a foregone conclusion in that area and I have no much control over that one!

#### *Employ Our Sons Only*

The issue of employment generated a lot of interest and debate among parents and the general community (Elijah). The principals shared of their frustration when they tried to assume this demand and employ staff that was highly skilled but not necessarily sons of the soil (SOS's). The same was experienced by Jane who commented;

When the previous school cooks and matron retired, I wanted to bring in people who are highly qualified from outside the community because none was exceptionally qualifies from the community. I called a parents meeting to discuss among other issues, the employment issue. Many parents turned up and all had only one message; that only community members could work in the school.

In the employment of teachers, parents demanded that 'their sons' be given priority. They argued that the schools belonged to the community and therefore only their children should work. The parents felt hiring from outside the community was taking away from them and developing another community. According to Mogusii:

You know one of the problems we have here is shortage of teachers. So when I was starting the second stream I needed some teachers. Of the four teachers that I hired four two were from another community. The board refused to endorse the two names of the non-community members. Instead the some members of the board suggested names of people they would like to see work in this school. I had no option but to hire the people.

This demand had caused a lot of frustration to the principals as they were forced to hire untrained teachers from the community. The principals felt that this compromised the educational standards in their schools. Sam expressed frustration:

I sometimes feel so bad when I realize that the parents are so focused on sacrificing quality for some tribal demand. I have had to hire a form four leaver while rejecting a trained graduate because the community demands that I hire their children. Why can't they see that it is their children who are in the long run going to suffer?

Other principals talked of their hands being tied and wished that there was some breathing space. This demand was purely on the tribal interests and not taking into consideration the students' interests.

### *Be Lenient To Our Children*

As relates to the students, parents demanded that the principal is lenient (Sam) when dealing with them especially in discipline cases; that students should never be repeat a class even when they are failing (Elijah); be accorded preference when selecting student leaders in the school's student council (Mogusii).

### *Attend To Us Promptly*

As relates to the principal, parents demand that that when they come to school, they should be received promptly and treated with respect (Jane), and should be exhibited by the principal dropping whatever he was doing and attending to them promptly (Elijah).

Sometimes I am amazed that these parents fail to reason that I might be engage with the students. I think it is unreasonable to demand that I attend to them when I am in class teaching a class.

Onyari who has been allocated classes that he teaches also expressed his frustration with the impatience sometimes exhibited by some parents when they come to school.

I was handling a tough mathematical question when a parent came to school and wanted to see me. I told my secretary to request the parent to give me five more minutes as I was in the middle of a class. Five minutes later the parent came knocking at my class .it was unfair for the children as I could not ignore the parent. He was openly agitated and I find this very unfair on the students and if I had a wish I could ask the parents to come during breaks when am not in class.

### *Give Scholarships Only to Our Children*

As relates to the disbursement of scholarships and CDF money, parents demanded that only children hailing from their constituency be awarded financial aid. Mogusii explained:

The issue of CDF funds generates a lot of interest among the parents as well as the area member of parliament. It is a laid down rule that only children who hail from this constituency should be considered for allocations. Unfortunately there are children here

who live with their grandmothers, whose parents hail from a different region here in Kisii. There are also children in schools who are orphans and yet they do not hail from this region. However much I would like to assist these children, my hands are tied by the parents demand that only their children should get the money. Last year someone falsely accused me of having given the money to an ‘outsider’ and there was uproar amongst the parents.

Although the other principals did not directly say that they had also had the above demands from the parents, they did say that when the board sat to disburse the funds, some names from the kalenjin and Kipsigis as well as of those who hail from other areas other than the community were never considered for the bursaries (Minuel, Sam, Elijah).

Early this year, the CDF funds were disbursed to schools and I got a tidy sum. In my school there were a few students who were doing exceptionally well and so I asked my staff what they thought we should do to enable these children finish school and graduate. The teachers unanimously supported the idea of allocating them some CDF money so as to enable them stay in school. When I took the names to the board for the final confirmation, the board outrightly rejected the names and asked for names from the Kisii community.

### **Parents Own Resources**

All principals interviewed confirmed that parents were the majority owners of the resources needed in running the schools. This situation gave rise to dependence relationship between the principal and the parents in the study area. For the principals to meet the parent’s expectation they needed resources. Onyari firmly told me that:

For us principals to effect the changes, we need help and support from the parents.

The following are some of the resources that principals indicated need to run their schools but are held and controlled by the parents. Parents would only release and avail these resources to those principals perceived with the highest ability to attain parental expectations.

### **Financial Resources**

It emerged from the interviews that principals in the study area depend on parents for financial support to run the schools. This assistance from the parents takes various forms. Minuel talked of his experience.

Parents are my main source of financial support for the school. The payments made by the parents are mainly for development. Whenever we have a project in the school, parents always chip in to make it possible. For instance, last term we decided to buy a new computer for the school. We asked the parents to pay and they did. Now we have a computer and it has made our work very easy.

From discussions with the principals, it emerged that parents were the main source of funds for the schools. The CDF money as well as free education money was not sufficient to cater for the demands of the school thus the necessity of teachers to ask parents to support the school. Minuel explains:

The CDF money that we are given does not come at definite times. Sometimes we open school in January and the government, as well as the CDF committees take ages to release the money. Like now you see this is nearly March and we are half way through the term and as yet we do not know when the money will be in our account. So while that is not there we rely on parents for money to keep the school running.

Elijah shared his experience. He had relied extensively on the parents to contribute monies to sustain his projects. He explained:

When I was posted here, the classes were rundown. I remember thinking whether I should give up and quite principal ship. It was not only classrooms but there were not enough toilets especially for the girls. I did an analysis and discovered that we needed a lot of money so as to have the basic and decent classrooms. There was no money in the school as it was alleged that the previous principal had misused school money. What was I to do? I decided to call the parents and tell them my problem. So I called a general meeting and when they came I asked then whether they wanted their children to learn in the open and whether they wanted their daughters to use the rundown structures. This I believed pricked their conscience. Within a week I had half of the money I needed for the new structures.

Sometimes the need for money was immediate and for an immediate need. Parents are also approached to support such needs. Onyari:

The form four teachers decided in the middle of the term that they were to go for a geographical field trip. We had not informed the parents through our newsletters. I did not have money in the school account. I decided to call the parents and explain our needs. The parents came and listened to me. Surprisingly, we had all the money we needed in one day. We were therefore able to take the examination class for that trip.

#### *Parents Volunteer at School*

Another resource that parents had and was needed in school was their time. Principals explained that parents sometimes volunteered in school. For instance, when there was



construction going on in the schools, some parents came and volunteered .Some parents' brought in water to be used in the construction whereas others brought in food stuffs. When I visited Onyari, I came across many parents who had come to school and were busy working at the construction site.

Volunteering also took another form when some parents offered to work at school at no charge. This was necessary sometimes when parents decided that it was easier to carry out say repairs at the school themselves. This saved money for the school. Jane:

Last year just before the long rains, I decided that I should advertise for a tender for repair on the roofs that were leaking. The parents decided to do the work for free and that really saved me some money.

### **Characteristics of Principal**

While in the previous section principals discussed characteristics of the environment where they operate, in this section characteristics of principals were the main focus. When principals were hired, they were assumed to be of good reputation, were competent and had the necessary experience to perform the duties of the principal. It is on the basis of these factors that parents accorded them 'initial trust'. Findings reported in this section relate to the principals experiences and perceptions as well as their opinions about these factors and whether they were evident in their cases. Principals were asked to recall how it was when they first became principals and their experiences in the respective schools. The following are their stories.

#### **Reputation is Due To Many Small Successful Cases**

In the course my interviews and interaction with the principals in the field, it became evident that one's reputation was very important when deciding whether to accept a newly

posted principal to the school or reject and prevent the principal from taking over the school. When asked how principals build a reputation, all principals responded in a more or less the same fashion but Onyari's response was comprehensive and seemed to include all the points given by the other principals. Onyari responded by saying':

Reputation has to be as a result of many small successful cases and not just an isolated case. And at times it will need the individual principal to be on the lookout for situations and opportunities to act in a certain way or talk in a certain in order to elicit a response that is deemed both positive, visionary and progressive by those observing the principal.

Elijah added by saying that:

Principals need to be committed to their duties; that very important; they must be committed to their work and am talking here about professional duties. They must be fully committed. Two, they must give proper guidance to the school. They must be perceived to be honest and caring as well as interested in the parents.

Jane added a human side in building a reputation by the principals.

The principals must be seen to be caring...for instance if a student or a parent is having trouble or dealing with difficult circumstances, the principal should be sensitive towards such cases and at times might be called upon to offer support to the families. This might require the teacher to visit individual homes. When they give proper guidance then the principals are building up their reputation.

And according to Minuel building a reputation did not have to begin and end in the school. He explained:

Principals must relate well with the surrounding. So that their public relationship is good with their surroundings. For instance, let me give an example, where we can find that there is an issue that is involving a small project that is required, either there is a road there is a problem along the road where we need something to be done, you can chip in terms of giving support, you can even engage or when it comes to funerals and other things, as a principal you can attend. Therefore you are building the PR. These children also need to go churches when they attend there definitely you are trying to relate with people around.

Sam brought in the idea of personal character. Indeed a principal can also have a good reputation not only how he does his work but also how he relates with people and how he or she treats them in their interactions:

You become a good listener. You need to be a good listener. When people come to your office or even when you meet outside, listen then judge and do not prejudge any parent. Listen but judgment takes time. Make a judgment let it be seen that is going to bring fruits.

Finally on the question of how principals can build their reputation and ultimately gain the trust of parents in the schools they serve, Mogusii noted that:

I am always fair in my decisions and stick to your decisions. Don't be always saying this today and tomorrow you change. Parents and trust do not like principals who are not sure of themselves. Parents like stable decision makers because it makes them easy to predict or even plan... stability is very important.

In order to get the principals personal stories and experience I asked them whether parents did any background checks on newly posted principals to the schools along the border zone. The idea here is that well before the principal actually takes over, and when there is a confirmation of a new principal being hired, parents make a serious and deliberate effort to learn as much as possible about the individual in question. All principals answered on the affirmative. Minuel offered a very elaborate description of what kind of background check that parents seek.

That is a must. I have to say it is a must. They are more interested in knowing where you come from, which school you are coming from and how your performance has been. One of the points that they are always interested in knows whether you are transferring from your place on a positive note or the parents have rejected you. They are also interested in knowing whether you are moving on a promotion or a demotion. Either way they will decide whether they should welcome you or reject you. If it becomes obvious that you are on a demotion, chances are that they will also reject you coming in. If you are moving on a promotion then they will accept you although they would want to know your history on financial matters. Even if they finally accept a teacher on a demotion to settle in the school, there will be too much negative reputation for the parents to really develop the in and level of trust that can enable the principal work well and be successful. Such a teacher will always be having issues in terms of his past and might be haunted all through. I tend to believe that it would be easy for a teacher with no reputation at all to develop trust much faster than one who has come in with negative or a damaging reputation.

From Minuel parents were interested in knowing where the individual had been and the performance in those stations. Principals coming from stations where they were

alleged to have misappropriated school funds or poor performance were not welcome by the parents in the study area. For the principals on demotion, their tenure at the secondary schools was punctuated with conflicts as parents became over vigilant to ward off a repeat of what might have happened in their previous schools.

When asked why he thought he got the principals position, Onyari clearly indicated that he got the position on merit and because of his strong positive reputation not only as a classroom teacher but also his strong Christian ethics:

I might not be a hundred per cent sure but I imagine there are a few things that might make me the final choice for this position in this school. One; commitment, I was very committed to my duties in my previous school. Everybody knew and they sometimes talked about my high level of commitment to my duties as a professional teacher. It is what I could say my level of competence was quite high and that made me stand out. I never gave up on my students even though there were moments and times that I felt helpless and sometimes toyed with the idea of quitting. But am never a quitter!!I fight till the end and bag the trophy. Two; performance, sincerely performance was here in and out improving steeply, and this also assisted them to see that this one can do good work for us. Am talking about teaching, classroom... My subject showed a steady improvement year in year out, and that is why they identified me as one of the leaders, they saw that I can perform well. I believe a good leader has to be able to deliver and often times this might require going an extra mile. Next; they also saw the qualities that I had, they saw that I had wisdom. And then they also saw they trusted my classes, they say this person can be leader so I was very sincere and honest on my duties. Finally what they also were

able to see that I can also guess it was on my spiritual part of it. I was committed to my spiritual way of life.

It is evident therefore that parents made efforts to find out the past record of new principals posted in their localities. Terms such as ‘commitment’, ‘good performance’, ‘hardworking’, ‘and steady improvement’ and ‘wisdom’ all portrayed a positive perception of a principal.

When I asked Onyari why he thought having a good and positive reputation was important for a principal he stated:

Reputation is a good thing because; it motivates those you are working with such as fellow teachers. Two, reputation motivates students. Especially when you are selling your policies they listen to you, because you have a good reputation. A good reputation gives you command. Once, you call the parents, they readily come because you have the good command. Reputation gives you an edge when it comes to mobilizing people; when it comes to mobilize people, look at where I have a bad reputation definitely even if I want to mobilize people to come it becomes difficult. But when you have a good reputation, a greater percentage is ready to listen to you. I believe reputation is an indication of my competence as a principal and teacher and also my success. Most people would be willing to sit and talk with a successful principal and not the other way round.

It was the same story with Mogusii. He also attributed his appointment and subsequent acceptance by the parents of his school on a good reputation. He used terms such as ‘exceptional results’ as well as his success in extra curriculum activities as having his selling points.

My appointment here was on merit I should say... after working for several years as a classroom, a subject head, and the exceptional result in my subject ... I teach English and literature and my results in national exams had always been exceptional as I had the highest number of A's in any subject in my school. Also I do have quite a number of merit certificates in both curriculum and co-curriculum activities and even my interviewing panel have always been impressed...

From the above experiences as explained by the two principals, a positive reputation was necessary for the principals before parents would accept them in schools. But Jane presented a different scenario. When asked about her experience, she explained that when she got her posting letter, she also did her own fact finding mission about the school she was set to take over as the principal. To successfully undertake this reconnaissance venture she travelled incognito to the school as a parent seeking admission. She explains:

When I came here they did not know me neither did I know them. I have never operated in this area until I became a principal. When I came at that time, in fact I came to know this place then decide whether I am coming to report. You see that day I came like a parent, what do we call it incognito. So I came and saw and decided I can't come here. Something like that. I went back. Then I came. When I came people didn't know me. This area people didn't know me. And they didn't close me out but they were ears and all the students. I think they knew me as I worked but they didn't have something about me before I came.

This idea of visiting a school before hand was confirmed by all the principals interviewed. The purpose of the visit as explained by the principals was to familiarize with the place as well as get 'the feel of the place' (Jane). Even though Jane did not have a reputation as a

successful teacher or a trail blazer in the education field, she did indicate that she was a regular church leader in the local Catholic Church. When pressed further she did confirm that

Okay it is true that I did not have a sensational record or reputation in a school setting but I think the parish priest as well as the Father In charge of education at the diocese knew me very well because I am very active in my local parish.

This strong reputation in church affairs and a strong advocate of the catholic faith was most likely what the church considered in appointing her a principal. Her school is a catholic sponsored school. Consequently even though she did not have a strong reputation in the school setting she did have a reputation. Hinged on this statement is the finding that parents do consider ones past and more so his or her reputation. If one does not have a reputation in the academic sector, it equally is important to have some reputation that is positive that explains your background. A positive and favorable reputation is taken by the parents as a sign and probability of succeeding the school setting. This finding is supported by Sam who also shared his experience with reputation. He said

Yea when you come with some reputation particularly in schools that perform they come to associate a performing center with better leadership. in fact there is that tendency that if school A is doing well then leadership in that school is good and I think that is why we talk of reputation ... you are coming with some if somebody came from one performing school we always tend to associate that with performance and for sure parents will accept him...

For Elijah, reputation also was important when he was appointed to the principalship.



Indeed my reputation played a large role in my getting this position. At my previous school I was a deputy headmaster and had a reputation of being strict and very professional in my work. The level of indiscipline was very low and the parents around that area were impressed with my work, but other than that I also think the church wanted me here. As a strong seventh Day Adventist, my involvement in church activities as well as being the choir master also was favorable to me.

### **What is your Church?**

The involvement of the church in appointment of school principals was also supported by Minuel. According to Minuel and all the principals, there were other factors that were also considered apart from having a good track record in a school or social setting. Minuel expressed that:

However in an area like this I would say in appointment of heads and deputies it is much more of a clan issue and much of politics... much of politics, clan issue and church issue...merit? I remember merit but not particularly in some of these schools...these border schools parents you know the parents if you came here Mr. Abaya they will look at you as a stranger do you know that even when we tell them that you are may be from Alliance<sup>2</sup>

### **Competence**

Another finding from this study was that if parents believed that a teacher was competent, they readily trusted him/her. Because the competence being considered by the parents was in the principals' previous duty station, the parents had to rely on stories and records about their

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<sup>2</sup> Alliance High School is one of the best performing high schools in Kenya.

competency in order to readily offer their trust. During the interviews with the school principals in the study area, it emerged that Competence was an important determinant considered by parents when deciding whether to extend trust to them or not. Further discussion with the principals coupled with their experiences by which their competence was confirmed that, parents gauge the competence of a principal based on whether in their previous roles they fulfilled both their role expectations as well as parental expectations.

### **Fulfilling Expectations**

Since there was no single characteristic or event that parents could use to determine the principals' competence, it emerged that parents considered whether the principals had fulfilled their role expectations in their previous schools. Competence was determined to be the outward overall expression of the principal's ability to deliver on both role expectations and the parental expectations. When asked about their competence, the principals were able to provide their success as a confirmation of their competence. In expressing his competence, Sam talked of the times when he was a deputy principal. During that period, the then principal of their school had problems with the parents. The situation got so bad to a point where her safety was threatened. While investigations were being done, Sam was appointed as acting principal. Despite being the examinations period, Sam was able to hold the school together and keep it running. This is what he said:

When the parents of my school accused the principal of misappropriation of school funds, she was suspended for some time. While she was on suspension I was appointed acting principal. Honestly it was a huge task and there were times that I was at a loss on how to run such a big school; but as time went by I became bolder and was able to hold the school together. I remember hearing some people hinting that the school could collapse

and be closed indefinitely. It did not happen; I managed to keep the school open and running to the chagrin of many!

Sam had never been a principal and in control of a secondary school of that magnitude. The task he was assigned was tough but he succeeded. There were many who thought and even expected to fail but the fact that he was able to fulfill the expectations of those who had appointed him, did prove that he was competent. For Onyari, his competency had been in his class work. As a math teacher, Onyari had the tough task of handling a subject as he referred to it, tough and unpopular. Since many students thought that math was a 'hard' subject, many did not put any effort in it. And so many did not expect Onyari to have any impact as far as the performance or the popularity of math in his school was involved. Here is his story:

When I was assigned a senior math class, I could tell the student's pessimistic attitude was too negative to have any positive impact. I realized that with low morale and lack of interest, I could not succeed. So I laid out a strategy to first of all popularize math by including games and poetry in my lessons. At first the students were disinterested. The more they acted disinterested the more I devised simpler and interesting math puzzles and picture number lines. After a month of slow but gradual interest, the students picked up and...Men... You should have been there...the kids were able to see the connections and basic math rules. The rest is history... That year the mean grade in math rose from D to a B plus. Everyone was amazed and excited. The following year I had so many students registering for my math class that I had to conduct the class in shifts. I had made it! Suddenly math moved from being the most unpopular subject to the most popular subject within one year... That was a record!

To have devised simple and level- appropriate methods of teaching math to the students, Onyari truly instilled in the students a sense of pride never seen before. The success he attained over such a short period of time portrayed a teacher who not only loved his job but did it well. Onyari talked of how he was the talk of town as more and more students talked about the ‘math whizz’ teacher. To have fulfilled the expectations of a math teacher, Onyari proved that he was competent and consequently earned the trust of the parents.

For Mogusii, his competence was put to test when he was appointed a games teacher. The school had a very poor record of success in competitions. This non-performance earned the school titles such as ‘walk over’ and ‘push over’. And because everyone had written off the school team, none of the teachers was willing to be his assistant. They all discouraged him. But within a few months Mogusii, turned the previously ‘dead’ team to the highest levels of performance and excellence in the provincial and national games. This is how he did it:

As they games teacher, I had a hectic time putting a team for any competition. None of the teachers was willing to be my assistance. That’s how bad it was. It took me quite some time to scrape together a team. It is when I decided to put in place a training program. It did not do much and I realized that the students needed some morale booster. So every time we had a training session, I also included a short entertaining documentary hard work, self-drive and success. These documentaries for some reason ignited the student’s desire for success. Slowly but surely, the students picked up and by the end of that semester, the kids were already a force to reckon with in the local sports scene. That year, we went to the nationals and we won all our games. We even made the headlines that day and for a long time, my team always awed everybody with how much they had succeeded. The parents were very happy and I got a huge bonus that year,

Even though there was no team in the school worth talking about, Mogusii took it upon himself to raise a team out of nowhere. With no players or program in place, he soared over all these handicaps and produced some of the best players in the school. For a long time, the team's exploits were the talk of town. By so doing, Mogusii proved that he was competent.

The principals interviewed explained that parents in secondary schools along the border expected principals to succeed and fulfill whatever was expected of their office and positions in the school within the allocated time period. Success for the principals did not require a specific or defined line of action but rather necessitated the use of their personal skills, experience and sheer determination. In places and times where some principals could have given up, those that are competent do not give up. The difference therefore between succeeding and failing was whether one was competent and choice of action.

### **Past Records**

Another measure used by parents to determine the competency of a secondary school principal in the study as explained by the principals was their reputation. As explained in chapters 3 and 4, reputation is a record of an individual's behavior. A good reputation implies a record of good things and a bad reputation would imply a bad record. As principals' engaged in a volatile region, parents were said to be extra keen in each principals past. In case an event in their past records put their repute into question parents with held their trust. The sum total effect of one's reputation as Sam explained was an assurance that the principal would carry on the good and appropriate deeds that he is said to have done in the previous school to his new station.

The respondents were asked to explain what their reputation was in their previous schools. Onyari noted that in his former school, he had a reputation of being committed to his

work and to his Christian teachings. Onyari referred to himself as a ‘being honest, true and staunch Christian. Jane had a reputation of being tough and a no-nonsense teacher. Because of these qualities, she had earned the nickname Margaret Thatcher. Minuel was a morally upright person within the community while Mogusii had the reputation of ‘one who never gives up’. Sam was a hardworking man with ‘strict adherence to the rules of the profession’. These titles and descriptions that the principals had were given by the communities and were thought to be a true description of the person. Since reputation is gained after a long time, the principals thought that these descriptors correctly described them and were to some degree a true reflection of who they were. Consequently, a principal with a good reputation would be accorded trust. A principal with a bad reputation would not be accorded trust as a way of parents registering their distrust on the person.

### **Affiliations and Associations**

During the interview, principals were asked to list possible reasons why they thought parents accorded them trust when they were appointed principals to their current stations. Their responses implied that parents accorded trust to the principals based on their affiliations or relationships. When asked why this was possible, Elijah explained:

I think parents assume that when you are a principal, your way of doing things in the school will be influenced to a larger extent; by your affiliations and associations. The assumption is based on the fact that if you associate yourself with scientists, you will definitely adopt some of their ideologies. On the other hand some affiliations require the attainment of certain conditions before they extend membership to you. When parents become aware that you are a member of a particular professional entity, it signifies to them that you have some level of expertise. With such background information, parents

easily trust principals whose affiliations are thought to uphold qualities that parents assume will enable one to be an effective principal.

By being members of the Catholic Church for Jane and Minuel, parents of their schools easily trusted them. On the other hand Onyari, Sam and Elijah were members of the SDA church. They too were accorded trust by parents of their schools on the same basis. In addition to church affiliations, all principals had been members of the Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association. Onyari and Minuel were members of Strengthening of Mathematics and Science in Secondary Education (SMASSE) which is highly regarded in the preparation of science and math teachers in the country. All the principals had been either deputy principals or heads of departments in high performing senior provincial secondary schools. By virtue of this association and given that the good results registered in the senior high schools, parents extended trust to the research participants when they were appointed in their current stations.

### **Prizes and Merit Awards**

Principals who had won prizes or merited some award previously in their lines of duties, easily gained trust from the parents. Jane observed that when prizes and certificates of merit are awarded on the basis of excellence, they become a fair measure of competence. Being aware that a particular principal is 'excellent' in his duties enhances his likelihood of being trusted. Mogusii explained:

Given a choice between a teacher who carries the title 'the best provincial biology teacher' and one who has no such title, parents would easily trust the titled principal. The reason is these titles are based in all cases on performance. These titles and awards are proof that you are competent.

It emerged that each of principals interviewed had several awards and merit certificates. Some of the certificates were awarded at the district level but there were some who had provincial and national awards. For instance Onyari, besides bagging Best Math Teacher Award for ten years, he also had professional awards and also from the church. Jane had the Best Leadership Award from the Ministry of Education. She also had the second Best Provincial Social Studies Teacher Award. Mogusii had amassed a large number of awards over his long career. He had The Best District and Provincial Language Arts Teacher. He also had the Most Improved Games Teacher Award given by the Kenya National Sports Association in conjunction with the Kenya Secondary Schools Athletics Association. Minuel had several awards in Biology and Agriculture while Sam had awards and certificates awarded in Business Education and Leadership. When I interviewed these principals in their respective offices, the walls of their offices were adorned with some of these certificates. In the process off interviewing them, I had a feeling of being at ease in their presence .Later on I realized it was being aware that they were professionals in their areas of expertise that made me feel at ease and trust their opinions.

### **Experience in A School Setting Is Necessary**

Another finding for this research was that parents take into consideration a principals past experience when deciding to trust a principal. Since principals are expected to work in schools, it was indicated that when considering this factor, parents only considered principals with experience in a school setting or similar positions. Those with experience in other areas but not educational leadership were not considered. To some extent reputation and experience is linked in the sense that one's experience forms also his or her reputation. When asked whether it is necessary for a principal to have had experience as a deputy principal, before ascending to the



principalship, Minuel answered in the affirmative. He thought that period can be used as a learning experience and also get acquainted oneself with the state requirements of the position.

### **Minuel**

Yea...I think it is better to be a deputy principal of a school before you can ascend to the principal ship. It is important you pass through the level of a deputy principal before you become a principal because during that period you get used to the profession of school administration... also in the course of that time you gain some knowledge and expertise on how to handle some of the duties offered by the principal. You can learn a lot during such a period you are in an office of a deputy.

#### *Experience Builds Reputation*

In addition, the respondents also told me that the period when one is a deputy principal is used to build their reputation. As it had been indicated elsewhere reputation is not a one-time single event. It is a cumulative effect over a long period of time. It was also found out those principals who encounter and overcome challenges while working as deputy principals, build a reputation that later on gives them an edge over those who have never been deputy principals. In support of this notion Jane said:

So I really believe it is necessary indeed you work as a deputy principal before you resume an office as a principal because that time you could have learnt and could enable you to get prepared to face some of the challenges you may encounter as a principal during your period. You can also use that time you are a deputy to build a reputation. One's reputation is quite important and so when you are known to be hard working and honest; you carry these characteristics and titles to the office of the principal.

*Experience Improves Tolerance Level*

From the interview responses that Mogusii offered, he was very eloquent in expressing the fact that working as a deputy principal or in a leadership position before one becomes a head of an institution is important because it is during that periods when they can improve their level of tolerance and expertise in delivering their services. In previous exchanges, Mogusii had indicated that working as a principal along the border zone required high levels of tolerance and perseverance. One of the reasons he gave for having succeeded in his school was that parents were impressed with his perseverance. Even though his school had been directly and heavily affected by the ethnic violence and over a long period of time, he never ran away or sought a transfer to a safer place. He had stayed all through and as he put it, 'suffered with the community'. In addition to perseverance, he also felt that dealing with the general environment that prevails along the border required some level of expertise. Here is his explanation:

Very much so ... Am sure if I rose directly from the classroom to the position of the principal I would be performing dismally. Definitely there would be some difference in the level of tolerance and expertise between one who has been a deputy principal and one who has not. And some of these qualities that have helped me perform my duties that I have talked about like perseverance probably could not have been there ...hmm...the perseverance I have learnt, the tolerance...that is and even how to work and how to do things is a sort of my steady rise through HOD to the deputy and to this position I am now.

*Experience Enables Acquire Peers*

Another finding was that principals need support and advice from their peers. One observation that seemed to reflect the perception of all the principals was that in the course of their duties, principals are faced with issues that need consultations and advice from fellow principals. These peers could also be a source of encouragement and also ‘another voice or an alternative voice in the midst of all these wars’ (Jane). A special group of peers that the principals said were very necessary in the performance of their duties were the staff at central office. As a principal and as part of their duties, there are a series of forms that are to be filed at specific times during the course of the year. If one is thrust into the office of a principal, he or she will not be aware of these requirements and there is likelihood that they will not be filed thus possibly earning a reprimanding letter from the central office. All principals were in agreement that working as a deputy principal; you get to know the central office staff and therefore are better placed to discharge the functions of a principal when you ascend to that office. In support of this finding, principals were quoted as saying thus:

When you work as a deputy principal there are people you meet while you are in those positions that prove helpful when you become a principal (Jane).

As a deputy principal, you develop a pool of friends. The pool of friends might be fellow principals, education officers or education staff at the central office. These peers prove a source of valuable support and advice when you become a principal (Elijah).

So as it is the experience you gain when you work in other leadership positions in the school system before becoming a principal is a collection of all these... that is what makes experience... the lessons, the friends, the pains, the frustrations etc and I think the

more of such that you undergo or experience before you become a principal the more your tolerance level increases as well as the depth of your understanding in various issue (Mogusii).

*Experience Builds Awareness of Possible Challenges*

According to Onyari, serving as a deputy principal or in any leadership role in a school setting before one takes the position of a principal enhances one's ability of knowing and enduring possible challenges that might come with that position. Since there are many challenges that principals face in carrying out their duties, Onyari noted that it takes more than the average principal to be able to not only face the challenges but do so successfully. He said:

I normally see it very important, one; if you want to be a principal, start right from being a class teacher, do it as responsibility, become head of department, and serve there because there are challenges in these offices. These challenges will help you to learn, get more challenges as a deputy, see how to overcome them especially in the absence of the principal and therefore this one will help when you are in the higher office, you can understand what happening in the other offices.

Sam also supported the finding that experience is necessary for a new principal when ascending to the office of a principal. He was very decisive in stating that it would be near impossible for a principal who has been recruited directly from the classroom to the principal's office to be successful and effective in the discharging of their duties.

I'll say being a principal you know is an administrative responsibility and as a regular classroom teacher there are certain administrative matters that you would

not be able to be aware of if you are lifted from class to being a principal... being a deputy is very important because it is a transitional process because at the level of a deputy you are able to consult your principal, you are exposed to how finances in the school are handled and you are at the level of making certain decisions. In addition ,you are at the level of supervising others, being in an office of the deputy principal you deal with fee collection, in fact as the deputy you are even interacting with the parents much more and you are able to get much more information....so being a deputy prepares you in a much better way ...so being a deputy is very useful and particularly... ok... environments are different because they have their own challenges by the way yea....you can be a very successful deputy in an area like this and elsewhere you don't...but I would say you are likely to be a successful head by if you became a deputy.

Finally, Elijah also offered some support to this finding. He attributed his success in his current station with his having been a deputy principal prior to his being elevation and subsequent appointment as a principal of a secondary school. He too felt like Sam that being a deputy first before being a principal becomes a transition period. Apparently being a principal and a successful one at that requires specific qualities that can only be developed in a learning environment. These qualities enable one to navigate the office of the principal successfully while at the same time dealing with the parents in a way that is acceptable and respectful to them. Elijah called this period an 'induction period'

In my position here as the head of the school, had it not been that I had gone through the system I could be finding... ok when I started possibly I could have had it rough but you see I started, I came a head right here after being deputy and therefore the position of a

deputy and this other whatever, there is a lot that somebody has to do in preparation for... for this position. This position is not always easy of course right because there are many things that you need to have known how to go about them... before ....some which are inborn and some which you learn and so on. so it is very necessary of course there are born leaders there are people who are born leaders and but not all of them for a born leader it may not be necessary because in any whatever you will always lead. but for somebody who is not a born leader and we have a number of those somebody then should have gone through the system to be inducted to be told this is what is expected this is what you expect... this is what you expect.... this is how you handle people and this is how you handle the staff because there is a lot of it. In fact when somebody enters into headship after the deputy and so on things are easier. He could have known how to go about that somebody he could have known the tricks of administration if somebody comes directly from the class to that, it will take him time to know what is expected to know how to adjust himself, to know how to relate with people... at the end of the day you will find that life will be difficult so it is very true that it is very necessary that somebody first goes through that system.

### **Institutional Supports**

Alongside reputation, competence and experience, another finding from this study was that institutional supports also enabled the principals to be trusted. Put in another way, the belief by the parents that those occupying the principal's positions in their schools were the best qualified made it easier for them to trust them. In my interviews with the principal all of them confirmed that their occupying the principals offices were not by chance. All the principals told

me that they believed they were highly qualified and had met the laid down conditions and gone through the right procedures to attain those positions.

In order to elicit their experiences and stories as regards the role of institutional supports had played in enhancing trust from the parents, I asked the principals to recall how they had been recruited by their respective schools, all principals recalled their application, interview and eventual appointment as principals. All expressed satisfaction that they had met all the necessary requirements set by the appointing authority, TSC.

In recalling his experience, Mogusii informed me that he had to wait for four years in a central pool of potential principals established by the TSC. Right from those invited for the interview to those who finally got appointment letters, a number of conditions had to be met. This is his experience:

I was among those ones who were promoted to the principal position having served as a deputy for three years ...four years ago I went for an interview with the Teachers service commission (TSC) and those of us who were successful, our names were put in a 'name bank 'awaiting openings and our names were put and I was told I succeeded in the interview only that our names were at the bank waiting for an opening. So when an opening arose and this is the one that arose I just found a letter and I am sure then that I got it on merit.

The assertion that he got his position on merit is a confirmation of his belief that he had met all the necessary conditions in order to be a secondary school principal. These conditions are put in place in an attempt by the employer to allow a certain type of person to apply for the position of a principal in a secondary school in Kenya. This point was also supported by Sam

who went a step further and gave me a list of the criteria used to appoint one as a principal in Kenya. And these conditions apply to all secondary schools in Kenya and are not limited to the schools along the Rift Valley- Nyanza border region.

Having served as a deputy principal for more than five years, I decided it was time to move on and become a principal. In order to be a principal in a Kenyan secondary school, one of the most defining criteria by the TSC regulations is that you need to have attained a minimum job group. Even though they have been reviewing it constantly, for example there was a time it was a job group L but these days you need to be at job group M. In addition, you must have been a deputy principal in a Kenyan secondary school or an equivalent for a minimum two years. I do remember, previously they could lift somebody from class and appoint him/her a principal. But these days it has changed and they are stricter. The third requirement is that you should have attended a management course offered by the ministry of education through the Kenya Education Staff Institute (KESI) which has a core mandate of promoting and carrying on the work of Management Development in Kenya.

### **OTHERS**

In addition to the above, other factors were equally important and were taken into account by the parents in making a decision whether to trust the high school principals in the study area.

#### **Interests of the Sponsor**

As earlier on stated, some schools in this study were sponsored by either the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) or the catholic churches. It emerged principals working in church-sponsored



schools were expected to meet extra requirements and conditions before parents in such schools could offer their trust. Schools that were SDA sponsored in this study were three, catholic sponsored two and one school was a District Education Board (DEB). These extra requirements ranged from being actively involved in church activities to openly confessing the faith. Even though there was this disparity, it emerged that principals working in church sponsored schools must have done a church wedding and must have only one spouse.

Minuel noted that in some cases it took more than reputation and experience for principals to be accorded initial trust. His opinion is best captured in the following response that he gave when I asked whether there were other factors that were considered in addition to the above:

With reference to schools located in this area, yes, sometimes it is possible you have situations where such a kind of criteria is over looked .For instance we have schools like my school here which is a catholic sponsored school or a DOK school. Sometimes the church gets involved in choosing a school administrator. And another aspect which is considered especially in the locality where my school is located is political influence. So there is that kind of manipulation and it may give somebody a ticket to move right away from a classroom to a level of an administrator like a principal. Such situations are there.

When I asked all the principals whether they were aware of any principal who had been appointed as a principal directly from the classroom without fulfilling the conditions laid down by the TSC, they all answered Negative. Even Minuel who had alluded to that factor also answered negative but insisted that it was always a possibility.

I asked Onyari whether the church had been involved in his selection and he answered affirmative. As to why the church should be involved in the selection of principals, he explained:

You know some of these sponsored institutions... institutions which have been sponsored by the church for instance the Catholic Church or Seventh Day Adventist church; they feel that what they have sponsored belongs to them. It is their property and they feel that it is their responsibility in seeing who takes over the administration of such schools. These churches also expect principals who head their schools to be of their faith. This is based on the need to further the teachings of the faith in question. For instance if a school is catholic sponsored, it is expected that the principal must adhere to the catholic teachings while at the same time passing the same teachings to the students. I tend to think that all this is an attempt at control the resources such as the schools within the community.

When asked what conditions the church requires a principal to meet, Jane said:

You need to be a member of that church... a registered member... an involved member of the church and there are certain doctrines you know which are usually attached to these churches , like may be to be a principal you have to have one wife , a principal who has done a church wedding . Such issues are taken into consideration.

Sam who heads an SDA sponsored school felt that parents and the larger community had so much power on the life of the principals in the study area a situation he felt stifled him and limited his creativity as a leader. This he said could be traced to the policies that govern the constituting of a school Board. The law requires that community, church as well the local politicians interests are taken into account when selecting a school board. He explains:

Yea the parents as well as the community always have their own way. Normally when it comes to headship of secondary schools, the boards have the final say but these boards derive their authority from the policy that governs how they are formed and who becomes a member of the school board. You know the way we choose our boards ...we say that the community interest, church interest, and the politicians' interest are considered when choosing members. But in church sponsored schools, church interests are paramount.

The above factor was supported by Elijah who heads an SDA school as well as Minuel the principal of a catholic sponsored school. They all agreed that for a principal to be accorded trust and support by the parents they have to meet the church requirements in addition to the general conditions as laid down by the TSC.

### **Political Interests.**

When asked what role the politician played in initial support to the principals, Sam noted that in some situations, the TSC is limited in terms of the final say as to who becomes a principal partly because the appointment of secondary schools has been decentralized and is fully controlled by individual schools boards and also because, as he put it

Now I would say the TSC may not do that because of politics... you know headship is partly about politics, partly clan issue, partly a church issue. So these three parties must agree. So if TSC sent any principal directly to the school, the politician may not be happy, the church may also not be happy ...yea like that ...so that is why it has to start from the grassroots...

In the study area, politicians are involved in the selection process of a high school principal albeit indirectly. Most parents would readily offer support and trust to a principal

whom they know has the ears of the local politician. Many parents would think twice before turning down their member of parliament's appointee.

The local MP is very influential because they control the CDF funds as well as are actively involved in fundraising. We all try to be in good books with the local political leaders' because they can make your life miserable and even initiate moves against you within the community.

To Mogusii, having the local MP on his side had proved very helpful because of the resources that the MP had brought to the school:

Yes I can assure you that having the local MP on my side is definitely a positive factor. Many parents seem to respect their leader's choices and so they would support and trust you once they know that you are in good books with the local MP. I was lucky to know the local Mp because as you can see for yourself there are several buildings going up at the same time. The local MP helped in funding these projects. He actually brought his friends and some business men and you can see how far he has helped this school

It also emerged that politicians were using these positions to reward political supporters. In explaining this point, the principals tied it with the fact that few teachers were in their current positions as a result of having been rewarded. Minuel gave scenarios and examples where certain principals owe their positions to political godfathers. But he insisted though that these godfathers rewarded only those individuals who were qualified as per the laid don conditions and not just any teacher. The principals were quick to add that this was more rampant in bigger schools although it was also present in some schools along the border zone.

Yeah... with politicians... personalities who support these politicians, the politicians feel that once they have succeeded in achieving their goal , it is necessary for them to reward whoever backed them in their political pursuit. That's how politics finds its way into institutions. I know quite a number of principals in this region who owe their positions to politicians.

As earlier stated, principals who were perceived as having a close connection to powerful local politicians were highly regarded by the communities. Parents seemed to perceive such principals as conduits through which politicians would use to channel funds to develop schools and in the process benefit the community. Such principals seemed to garner trust from the parents.

### **Community's Interests.**

Another emerging theme from this research showed the level of trust they were accorded by their respective communities was affected by whether they were regarded as 'a son of the soil' (SOS). In explaining what and who was a SOS, the principals used terms such as member of the local community (Onyari, Jane, Mogusii) and a clan member (Elijah, Minuel, Sam) were used. When asked whether they regarded themselves as SOS, all the principals answered in the affirmative. The implication is that they considered themselves part of the communities where they serve. It should be explained here that being an SOS has nothing with hailing from the immediate community. When asked where they hail from, none of the principals hailed from the immediate vicinity of the schools. But they had some strong links either by virtue of the fact that they shared same roots with the community or were linked by marriage to the communities where they serve. In The following excerpt, Elijah explained this connection:

Sometimes they can have a say ...like now... another interesting scenario we have especially for schools along the border and some communities feel that may be since the institutions within their community, such an institution ought to be administered by a son of their own; that is son of the soil.

Sam felt that for a principal, it would be to their advantage if they hailed from the community.

It is definitely an advantage to hail from the community. You don't have to be from the immediate surrounding community but it pays to be perceived as one. When parents perceive you as one of their own they readily accept you and trust you.

Being a SOS could also be extended to women married into a community. When asked whether she was an SOS, Jane answered:

I don't think I consider myself as a son of the soil by birth but I am sure if you take into consideration that my husband hails from the community, may be that could make an SOS.

Mogusii was denied vehemently being labeled an SOS.

No, I don't think I can consider myself as one. Yes I am a member of the surrounding clan but my actual home is very far from here.

Although none of the principals openly admitted that they owed their positions due to their being SOS, when asked to give a few examples of principals along the borders who they think had an advantage because they were SOS, some names of the participant principals were mentioned thus effectively and conclusively determining that they were SOS. In addition, a close

scrutiny of each participant and the location of their schools exposed a close link between the person and the clans where their schools are located. When asked to explain why communities wanted an SOS to be principals in local schools, the response resembled the argument put forward by the church in support of their faithful leading their schools. According to Onyari:

The argument here is they view the institution as their own institution interestingly they narrow down a certain institution belongs to them. It is their property. So they feel that if their own son is given that opportunity to head a certain institution, they feel that they have achieved greatly on that rather than somebody coming from another different community. I tend to think that it is also based on the argument that a school leader is an important position in any community and that whoever is in charge of a school is in charge of the future of the community. Based on this argument, most community members would be uncomfortable having someone from a different community being in charge of their school... there is always an element of suspicion and a possibility of sabotage...so they insist that one of their own should be in charge because they believe that one of their own cannot sabotage them. After all the learners in that school are members of his extended family... And family members don't destroy their own people!

### **Summary of Findings**

Chapter four has focused on characteristics of school-community context in the study area and how they affect the provision of initial trust.

The first characteristic of the study area found in this study was dependence. It was found out that in the study area, principals depend on parents to provide students, equip them, counsel them as well as supplement the school financial resources through the payment of various types

of fees levied by the school. In addition principals depend on the parents not only for support in decision making but also for the safety of the students, faculty and staff.

The second characteristic of the study area found in this study was the prevalence of uncertainty. The uncertainty experienced in the schools along the border is caused by fluctuating student enrolments, lack of assured safety and student who move from school to school all year round.

The third characteristic of the study area found in this study is vulnerability which is mainly caused by unstable sources of income, instability in the homes and changing parental demands and expectations. As a result of this instability, principals can no longer predict or plan for long term periods.

Another finding in this study was that parents have both expectations and demands that principals working in the study area are expected to attain. These expectations are based on what parents expect for their children as well as the principal. Extending trust to the principals would depend on whether these expectations are attained or not.

Another finding in this study was that principals who work in the study area need to have experience in a school setting, competence in attaining expectations and reputation before they can be accorded trust.

In addition in this study it was found that besides having a good reputation, competency and experience, there are other very important factors that parents consider when extending initial trust to principals. This factor involves the interests of various interested parties. These interested parties are the sponsor of the school, the community and the politicians. Interests of



each of these groups are important and are considered by the parents before extending initial trust to secondary school principals in the study area.

### **How High School Principals Build Trust with Parents in South Western Kenya**

In chapter four, six principals shared their experience working in an environment characterized by dependence, instability and vulnerability. The principals experienced frustration in their places of work as their inability to attain parental and educational objectives was heightened. The principals thus expressed a strong desire to reduce the effects of these characteristics. In this section, principals share their deliberate efforts to initiate, improve and sustain trust with parents.

#### **Conceptualizations of Trust**

Establishing how principals conceptualize trust provides a benchmark against which to determine whether what they have attained through their efforts is what they had perceived trust to be. To elicit the principals' constructions of the concept trust, they were asked a general question to explain what they thought trust was.

During the interviews, it emerged that the principals conceptualized trust in various ways. Some principals conceptualized trust as a feeling (Elijah. Onyari), good working relationship (Minuel and Jane) while others saw it as the presence of certain desirable characteristics (Mogusii).

#### **Trust Is When Expectations Are Fulfilled**

According to Elijah trust is a situation characterized with expectations. Consequently, trust is present in a relationship, according to this conceptualization when the party with the onus of meeting the expectations does so. He said:

Trust is the ability of somebody to have a feeling that what he expects comes from the one he is to trust ... you see.... Ok... for example you are talking of us as principals and the parents. These parents have expectations... right... they expect me as the principal to attain some things in the school. The parents will therefore trust me if I meet their expectations. If I fail to meet the set of expectations that the parents have for me, they will not have trust in me as the principal of this school.

To Elijah, then parents have expectations that they expect the principals to attain. Trust between the principal and the parents would be present when the parents become satisfied that the principals have met these expectations. According to Elijah, principals are responsible for the existence of trust. As long as the principals attain the parental expectations, trust will be guaranteed as principals' count on the parents to offer their trust unconditionally.

### **Trusts are Conditions That Characterize a Relationship**

According to Minuel, trust refers to the conditions that characterize a relationship. Consequently, trust is present in a relationship when that relationship exhibits certain characteristics. Accordingly Minuel defines trust as a sound working relationship. Minuel;

I can define trust as that sound working relationship by the members of the teaching staff, the community, the students and other stake holders who are involved in the educational pursuit within the institution and even outside.

This is a wider view of trust and does not limit trust as a relationship between two parties. Including all stake holders widens the responsibility of those who are not only interested in developing trusting relationship but also those who are held responsible for developing it. When

asked to elaborate on what he meant by a sound working relationship, and to limit his definition to principal-parent relationships Minuel answered;

When I talk of a working relationship, am accepting that as a principal I have a relationship with the parents that I serve. And so the main question I would strive to answer is whether the relationship I have with the parents is a positive one that helps me achieve my objectives for my school and at the same enables or helps the parents achieve their expectations for me and the school and more so for their children... a good working relationship therefore between me and the parents is one that is characterized with acceptance, respect, honesty, openness and commitment.

According to Minuel principals and parents are both responsible for the building and growth of trust in their relationship. By defining a good working relationship as one that is characterized by favorable conditions as respect and openness among others, Minuel directly implies that any other relationship that is not characterized by these factors cannot and should not be construed as trust. Consequently trust should enable the principal to meet his leadership roles for the school while at the same time enabling him to meet parental expectations as regards their children and the school.

Mogusii, who falls in the same category as Minuel, used the terms such as 'mutual relationship' to describe his construction of trust. Mogusii felt that principals have been given a responsibility as holders of leadership positions in schools. Trust is possible when principals fulfill the attainment of parental expectations. According to Mogusii, parents have given him their children and consequently can only trust him when he achieves whatever the parents expected him to achieve in them. He insisted that the end result of a trusting relationship is

always good and it is that 'good' that people strive to achieve in a trusting relationship. But the 'good' should be mutual.

Trust is a mutual relationship between two parties... such that in case you are entrusted with a given responsibility you carry it out as per the expectation of the other party ... so that is what I think trust is.

### **Trust Is Having The Ability.**

The third set of trust constructions according to Jane and Sam is that of ability. According to the two principals, trust is built when parents have faith or believe that the principals in question have the ability to meet the role and positional expectations. This construction assumes that the parents have prior knowledge of the ability and competence of the principal and so based on their past performance (reputation); parents extend their trust and hope that the principal will continue with the same streak. According to such a construction, the onus of developing and cultivating trust is on the principals. Parents become the judges to determine who should and who should not be trusted based on their performance.

When parents bring to me their child or children, they have faith in us that this kid that we have been given by the end of the fourth year will be transformed. They expect the child to have a good grade which will enable many for future placement or training. So that is why we associate trust with the faith in that it is hope that you are not seeing now but will be realized in future so what will keep our relationship with the students, our relationship with the parents, is that promise that at the end of the day they will have faith that we have been promised this and at the end of the day this is what we hope to realize.

The promise that Sam talks here is one that is given by the principals to achieve parental expectations:

Jane also constructed trust as ‘ability’. But unlike Sam, Jane extended it to include all people. She also introduced another angle in which trust also entails ‘taking care of each other’.

Trust... I look at it as eh...the ability of people to believe in each other, to listen to each other, to take each other’s interests ...

When asked to refine her definition of trust and relate it to the principal-parent relationship she responded;

When I talk about the principal and the parents, if parents have to have trust in the principal, they have to know that the principal has their interests at heart. And as you know the main parental interest is their children.

According to Jane therefore, principals can only be accorded trust when they have the interests of the learners as their guiding light. In such a scenario, the onus of developing and sustaining trust is on the principal.

### **Trust Is a Behavior**

The last and final construction of trust is one that was presented by Onyari. According to him, trust as expressed in behavior. According to Onyari, trust is when the person in the relationship behaves in a way that instills confidence in the other. Put another way, parents can only trust principals when principals behave in certain ways that portray them as having likelihood to succeed in meeting pre-established parental conditions or expectations.

Trust is what the principal portrays so that his behavior makes parents to have confidence in him. Once parents have confidence in the principal, through his actions and words, then parents perceive him as being honest. For parents to reach this level they will seek answers to ... are you very sincere in your duties, are you committed in your work....if one is committed, sincere, honest, and reliable and caring, parents will note the good deeds that come out of him and they will trust him.

By defining trust as a set of behaviors, Onyari effectively holds the principals responsible for the level of trust that might develop between them and the parents. Once parents perceive the principal as committed, sincere, honest and reliable, they will trust him. Therefore, for the principal to be trusted, he has to be seen to be honest, sincere, reliable and also committed to his work.

In conclusion, even though the principals constructed trust differently, they were in agreement that trust involved the change of behavior and attitude with the attainment of parental expectations being the objective. Failure to which then trust is withheld by the parents and no longer becomes guaranteed.

### **Is Parental trust important to a high school principal?**

The principals were asked whether they thought having a positive and trustful relationship with the parents characterized was important. In response, all principals answered in the affirmative. Mogusii attributed the smooth running of a school to high levels of trust with the parents. He said:

Trust is the first phenomenon or requirement in carrying out any business ...trust is what actually makes any business run smoothly. Since our business is teaching, we can have a

smooth sailing or a successful learning experience for our students when our relationship is characterized with high levels of trust with the parents.

Extending the same argument Onyari referred to trust as 'Fundamental' without which success would be elusive in a school setting. Without trust in a school setting, Onyari added life would be intolerable due to constant conflicts. Onyari:

Trust is very important for a school principal and for a principal to be successful trust is one of the fundamentals that he needs to have for him to succeed. Trust is fundamental to the life of the school and the principal in a school. Trust is essential. If they cannot trust me, life becomes intolerable—a constant battle against each other.

To Minuel, lack of trust between him and the parents spelt doom and possible death for the school. It is the continuous presence of trust between the parents and his person that ensures the continuous survival of his school. Minuel:

Trust is important. It is actually important because minus trust it is hard for the institution to survive. That is minus trust I don't think we can perform our work effectively and... it will appear we are working out of fear of not knowing what could happen minus the parents I really doubt whether we can go really far.

According to Jane, operations of the school would grind to a halt if there was no trust between the parents and the principal. Jane:

It is quite necessary for there to be trust in a school for the school to continue operating. There is no way a school can survive or operate minus trust.

Careful analysis of the above responses, confirm that all the principals are aware of the necessity and importance of having a relationship with the parents characterized with high levels of trust. During the interviews it emerged that the role of parents in a secondary school in south western Kenya could be divided into three main categories. These categories developed by the researcher are only applicable for the purpose of this research. Principals indicated that when their relationships with the principal are characterized by high levels of trust, parents become a source of inputs to the school, play a regulatory role in the school and finally the safety role. A few extra advantages of trust also emerged and were grouped and presented as ‘others’

### **Parents as Source of Inputs**

As sources of inputs for schools, parents play an important role in the success of the school. Using Mogusii’s construction of schools as businesses or production units, it implies that without raw materials, production units would cease to operate. This is a skewed construction of schools because of the assumption that schools are engaged in producing only. Other than its narrowness, the construction also fails to explain how to tell whether production has occurred since in schools no physical products are produced. But it helps in explaining the need and the importance of raw materials in any operation that involves any transformation. Consequently, we can assume that students are the raw materials needed by schools in order for the schools to remain operational. Indeed during the interviews the principals indicated that they heavily relied on parents to provide them with various inputs but most of all their children. It would be impossible to imagine a school as a school minus students.



*Parents Give Us Children and Money*

School attendance in the study area is liberalized and parents are solely responsible in choosing where their children attend. In choosing which school to send their children, parents give their children to the principal they trust. To this end, all the principals expressed the importance of having trust with the parents. In support of this notion, principals were asked whether it was necessary that parents have trust in them (principals). Minuel:

We need the parents because, one, they give us their children. We cannot have a school if there are no learners.

When asked the same question Jane noted that parents would readily release their children to the principal perceived as best placed to meet their expectations.

Yea, I think so. Very important because when you want to talk of numbers in a school parents will not give you children if they don't trust you. Whatever they are looking for, if they feel you are giving it, they will give you their children.

Sam explained that the reason why his school's enrolment had gone up and was steadily improving was because parents were starting to warm up to him. Apparently the previous principal had run down the school and with Sam's efforts the school was picking up. Consequently, when trust improves, so does enrolment.

Hmm...enrolment... well you know in a school we measure the growth of the school... the growth in terms of size. I told you last year we had 265 but because of the problems that we had with my predecessor, there was a drop in enrolment. I told you it came from 265 to 170 but earlier this term we started receiving new students... you know when you

receive new students it is an indicator that their trust is coming back. When there is trust, parents will always readily give you their children.

Elijah insisted that trust is a necessity ingredient between parent and school principals. Likening students as customers, Elijah concluded that only those people perceived to be honest in their businesses would attract customers. And since parents are the sole determinants as to where to send these customers, it means that parents would release their children or customers (for this analogy) to those principals who are highly trusted. Elijah:

You look at the number of customers that come... and now for us, the customers are the students. I am telling you if you are not trusted you can't receive students that are one because to have a school of this kind now because I think the classes are more it is because of that... yeah... They are saying now if the students go there, well and good.

During the interviews, it emerged that there are two reasons why students are important to a principal in the study area. Other than giving life to a school, students also pay tuition. As explained by the principals, the government has fixed a minimum number of students per class in order for it to be registered and to qualify for State funds. Consequently, through payment of fees and other levies parents become a major source of financial support for the schools in the study area. More importantly so because as explained, the bursaries remitted from the government is tied to student enrolment. Indirectly, parents take part in fund raising events organized by the principal and if they don't trust the principal they will not contribute generously. According to Mogusii:

Sometimes the government does not release the free education money in a timely fashion.

At such times we ask parents to contribute generously to the school. Sometimes we hold

harambees and sometimes we ask parents directly for money. In this case trust becomes imperative because if parents do not trust you as the principal, they will not give donations to the school

Onyari too noted thus:

The parents are also doing something; like now they are giving finances in form of fees and other monies to you as the principal and they expect you to be in charge faithfully.

Trust therefore becomes a very necessary ingredient in a school because without it schools risk closure, or amalgamation.

#### *Parents Support Projects In Schools*

Another finding from this research was that trust is important in a school because when parents trust a principal they would support projects initiated by the principals in their schools. According to Minuel, when there is no trust, suspicion abounds. Minuel said:

Well I think that is also important because ...eh... if you don't have the parents support and you come up with a project, however good that project is and if the parents don't trust you, don't have any trust in you, they will not support you because they might think that you cannot handle project of that nature or if they don't trust you, then they think that this project you are starting is for personal gain...is for personal gain and so they cannot even support you.

Minuel further shared a personal experience.

When I was still new in this school, and after seeing that students were suffering I decided to initiate a lunch project. You see when students come to class on an empty

stomach; chances are that they do not pay attention. I wanted the students to be eating lunch in school. But because I had hired someone who was not from the community as the cook, the parents withdrew their support. No one brought in foodstuffs and no one paid .So I had to shelve that project.

Supporting projects initiated by the principal is important because those projects are intended to bring about positive changes in the school. The projects are used as a measure by the parents to determine the level and rate of development for that particular principal. If the principal has not initiated any development projects in the school, the parents might perceive him as being a failure and this might lead to further withdrawal of their support. When I visited Onyari for the interview, in his school he had initiated a costly project. He had initiated construction of a wonderful modern two storied administration block. He explained to me that he had been able to implement that project because he had the parents backing. Onyari explained:

Another thing they have done, to show that they support this school, is when there are projects; there are projects coming up in this school...Just like the one you see out there... they have always supported them by either financing them or coming to do the work physically by volunteering their time and energy.

Parental resources are not only limited to finance but even with their time. While in the school I witnessed parents helping out in the construction site. Some parents were fetching water from the river using donkeys and wheel barrows while some were involved in the actual construction of the building. Others were just milling around offering encouragement to others.

*Parents Support Policies in Schools*

As principals make a conscious and deliberate effort to meet their personal as well as professional goals, there might be need to either introduce or relegate some policies in the school. Parental support in policy development in schools in the study area was necessary since without policies, schools would not function optimally. Some policies might generate debate if perceived to be ill conceived. But even when a policy is deemed controversial, if parents offer their support, there is a high probability that it will be implemented. Consequently Onyari equated success of policies in school with parental support:

When there is trust between the parents and the principal, they will support the principal in decision making. When it comes to policies developed and introduced by the principal, their eventual implementation and success lies on the support of the parents. So in decision making, the parents are very vital, they need to support.

One of the most controversial policies Mogusii introduced in his school was the retention of students in a grade level if established that they had not fully mastered that level of instruction. The students' threatened to demonstrate and picket against the principal. The principal approached the parents and explained why he thought it was necessary to promote those students who were proficient and succeeding as indicated in their end of year promotional examinations. The parents bought the idea and the following day a general assembly was called where parents openly supported the principal and asked the students to return to class. They asked the students that instead of picketing they should be in class and protest the retention by working hard. The protest fizzled out and the policy was implemented. In view of all these Sam declared:

So it may be very difficult for the principal to implement his strategies if that trust is not there.

*Parents are Sources of information*

When the relationship in a school is characterized with high levels of trust, the principals indicated that parents become an important source of information. Principals need to keep themselves abreast of any and all developments in the community. Since he cannot be everywhere all the time, parents become a valuable source of information for the principal. But parents cannot offer this service to the principal if they do not trust him. It becomes even more a question of trust when the information is sensitive in nature. Sam expounded on this:

They are ready to come and give us information so that we can adjust; you know we are human beings who can make mistakes but when you see parents readily coming and sharing such information to you, oh mwalimu<sup>3</sup>, this and this is going wrong.

Mogusii:

They come to you and also if they have heard something that is not so good about the school they are always ready to come and tell you...oh mwalimu... we have heard this and that... to me surely this indicates that they have trust in you.

As in the above case sometimes parents offer advice and suggestions. The intention and purpose is to improve the school and ultimately maximize learning for the students. Sometimes, parents do come across in the community information that depicts or portrays either the principal or the school in bad light or negatively. This information might be pure propaganda. If parents

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<sup>3</sup> Swahili word meaning Teacher.

trust the principal they will take it upon themselves to immediately inform the principal and initiate damage control measures.

### **Parents Enhance School Operations**

In addition to parents being an impeccable source of inputs for the school, also they play a regulatory role in the school. By regulatory role, is implied that parents play a very important role in either enhancing or slow down learning. As opposed to the previous role, this is an indirect role. After the interviews and discussions with the principals, it emerged that parents can and do influence indirectly learning. By offering their support to the principals, parents could play an enabling role. If they withdrew their support, learning in the schools could progress at a slow pace or stop altogether. This role is further explained below.

#### *By Paying Monies Promptly*

Previously, the principals had indicated that parents pay money in form of tuition to the school and as such they are an important source of monies used in the school. Principals interviewed said that paying money to the school was not enough. What really mattered was paying in a timely manner. Doing so, the principals noted saved time and enabled long-term plans as well as make monetary commitments as they were assured of monies being paid.

Asked to give her experience with fee payment, Jane said that she had noticed an upsurge of payments from the parents. She also explained the role trust had played in the increased payments from the parents.

When I look at the trend of payments of most parents, you realize they give pledges that they honor, majority of them pay and pay well and then the others who cannot pay at a

particular time they come and explain their situation and ask for an extension...At the end of that extension, they always pay as promised.

From Jane's experience, there is an element of certainty. If as a principal, you know for certain that parents will pay in a timely manner and those with pledges will honor them, nothing will prevent her from initiating long term projects. This upsurge in payment of fees on the part of parents was explained by principals as an expression of increasing trust.

When asked about his experience with parents in terms of fee payment Onyari responded:

They are prompt in fees payment. That is why I was able to plan for the construction of the building you see out there. A project of this size and value, suppliers and contractors require that you make a payment schedule before they can even sign any paper work or supply you with material. It was easy for me to commit myself because parents in my school pay when they say they will or when required.

He also explained that he would with a near hundred percent predict how much money he would have in the school account. This he said was important when budgeting. He also gave an experience he had had with the parents early this year.

Early this year, the form four teachers felt that it would be of educational value for the form four students to have an educational trip to the Rift Valley. Unfortunately we had not budgeted for it and we had not informed the parents in advance. The staff mandated me and the subject head to call the parents and explain to them what the trip was all about and then make an appeal to them to pay. We called the parents and after talking to them, they all paid- I mean all of them paid there and then.

Sometimes it is not only in monetary terms. Elijah had the following experience.



We were running out of cereals for our lunch program. There was none in the market and so I made an appeal for any parent to come forward and bail the school. Believe it or not within an hour I had so much that I had to ask them to stop bringing. We got more than we had anticipated.

In playing out this role, the emphasis is on promptness. Parents are willing to offer whatever it takes in support of the principal. All the principals confirmed that this was a confirmation that parents had trust in the principal. It emerged therefore that when a relationship is characterized with high levels of trust, parents will honor their commitments and pledges in a timely manner.

#### *Parents Attend Meetings*

In the course of the school year, principals summon parents to school due to several reasons. Principals might call parents to inform them of impending changes in the school, a curriculum shift or seek their opinion on a number of issues that affect the school. Since schools in the study area are considered as community owned, there is a heavy involvement of respective communities. Principals in explaining this point noted that they need parents to attend these meetings. If they do not attend, the principals end up at cross roads as lack of parental or communal input in projects he intends to initiate in the school might be opposed on the same.

Minuel said that whenever he summoned parents to school, they turned up in large numbers, in a timely manner and actively participated in the meetings that he called in his school. He said it was in these meetings where he got feedback and used it for future plans or to effect changes in the schools.

Whenever I call parents to any meeting in my school, they always turn up in a timely manner and in good time. I greatly value their contribution especially even in attending all the meetings I call them to the school. Their showing up alone can be indicative of their level of trust they have in me... If a few parents turn up for meetings, it is a sign that I have this support of many parents.

Of the six secondary schools forming this study and I visited to conduct interviews, Onyari had the biggest project going on in his school. As a matter of curiosity, I asked him how he intended to complete the project given the huge amounts of money required. Onyari confidently assured me that whenever he called parents, ninety nine per cent turned up. I asked him whether this was estimation but he assured me that he had real figures and he would prove it.

Once I call the parents to come to school, for consultations, their attendance is 99 per cent. The one percent that fails to attend always notify me of their absences in advance. But also they have passed in their meetings that whatever resolutions are passed in their absence are binding to everyone even those absent.

This figure and percentage seemed quite high. So I asked other principals whether there was any principal they knew who achieved near perfect parental attendance in school functions in the study area. All the principals corroborated Onyari's information and even though they did not have the percentage, they confirmed that it was a well-known secret that Onyari was a popular principal and his parents loved him.

In discussions that I held with Elijah, he indicated that the best way to prove that parents trust you as a principal is to call them for a meeting in school. He said:

Another indicator that trust is there from the parents is when you call them. Do you want to know whether these parents have trust in you? ...you, call them.... If you don't see them then, be assured that they feel they are only wasting their time by coming to see you ....for others, once you call them ,they say ok ... lets hurry up and go...for him to call us then there is something very important. Let us go and support him. Then you see parents coming...in their numbers, you see them coming.

On Further discussion with the principals in the study area, it was emerged that being mainly rural folks, the parents were always busy conducting their agricultural activities under a tight schedule. To take time off and attend a meeting called by the principal, the parents should perceive that meeting to be of some value. Consequently, if principals expect to host the parents in their school and actively involve or engage them in development projects in the school, they have to build high levels of trust.

#### *Parents Purchase Textbooks and Uniforms*

Principals stated that learning in schools was greatly enhanced when the students have necessary text books and stationary. It also emerged that every grade in the Kenyan educational system had compulsory text books as well as set books that are mandatory. For Kiswahili and English literature, the need for set books and study guides was imperative. Unfortunately, the principals explained, monies remitted by the government to schools do not cover text books as well as instruments necessary for effective student engagement (Elijah, Jane). The responsibility for acquiring these necessary text books is left on the parents. In Minuel's and Sam's schools parents had passed a resolution that any new student admitted was to buy two sets of the textbooks, a desk and a chair,

Mogusii also explained that stocking of the libraries as well as laboratories is a parental responsibility for the schools in the study area. In addition, Kenyan secondary school students are required by law to wear school uniforms which are used not only to identify but to also differentiate each school from the next.

If for some reason learners fail to acquire the above necessary items, their progression towards graduation may be disrupted as learning is discontinued to give time to the students to acquire them and attainment of educational objectives is not realized. The role of parents therefore is to step up and make sure that their children have the right as well the necessary school uniform, ensure that every school has a well-stocked library and a functional science laboratory.

According to Minuel, his immediate needs for his school were desks. Because of the heavy costs involved, he requested each parent to buy a desk and a chair for use at school.

An institution there is a lot we expect from the parents. They need to provide for their students. For instance in my school we needed the parents in conjunction with the building committee to get desks for the students. Even though they were expensive, the parents mobilized the whole community and within no time we had enough desks for all the students.

Minuel explained that the parents were so cooperative that some brought more than they were required to bring. In this way, even the kids in the school whose parents could not afford a desk, were taken care of. But he also added that:

The parents in my school especially in the example that I have just given you did so because of the trust they have in me. They do not doubt or wonder why I am asking them to bring desks. There is a trusting relationship between me and all the parents in my school.

In conclusion, the principals explained that parents take up the responsibility of meeting the above requirements in a timely manner when there is trust between the parents and the principal. In an environment characterized with high levels of trust. Parents are actively involved in finding out what is required for next year well before hand. They do not wait to be ambushed by the students when they are sent home.

### **Parents Enable Positive Learning Environment**

Even though buying books and desks for their children enhances learning, another finding was that parents prepare the students for learning by offering encouragement, speaking positively about school and counseling their children as need arises.

#### *Collective Responsibility*

According to principals, the inter-ethnic fighting along the border had led to the emergence of a learning environment that was poisoned and not conducive for learning. With kids from families involved in running feuds and constant conflicts, schools were becoming fertile ground for breeding and spreading prejudicial sentiments. Principals felt that such an environment hampered effective learning as there was so much fighting and counter fighting amongst the students going on. In order to limit and eliminate such a situation, parents became strong advocates of peace and harmony. This was achieved from home by involving individual parents. Here is how Sam did it:

In my school I have students from across the border. Due to the ethnic clashes, negative feelings and the desire for revenge have entered my school. The effect is small issues mutate suddenly into huge fights and sometimes my kids are seriously. Last year what I did is that I asked every parent to talk to their children and encourage them to tolerate each other even though we are from different and sometimes opposing sides of the border.

Mogusii and Elijah used the same approach but varied it slightly.

I was worried that one of these days the students were going to arm themselves and attack each other. You know these kids have grown here and they have witnessed fighting like since the day they were born. Anyway I decided to invite parents from both sides of the border to come and give talks to students. I allowed the parents one hour each day three days a week for six months. I am glad that I did it because soon you could tell it was working as students started tolerating each other and even sharing classes.

The principals explained that when they involved parents in peace efforts in their respective schools, the students listened because the speakers were their parents. The best part was that the parents had all shown some commitment and continued to talk to their children in their respective homes. For Sam, Onyari and Minuel, they opted to use the local government administrators to preach peace. The principals liaised with groups of parents from each side of the border and conducted collective 'peace preaching'.

Because of the animosity in the school, I decided that enough is enough when a member of the Kalenjin tribe was nearly beaten to death for skipping a lunch line. With the help of the local administrators a peace committee was formed comprised of parents from both

tribes and we did a rotational visit. We visited two schools per week. Our message was simple; we are all Kenyans and killing each is like killing Kenya. The impact was positive. Violence cases drastically reduced and I am glad to note that for quite some time now we have not had any cases of fighting.

In all cases and examples as shared by the principals, what emerged was that the parents had all resolved to help in bringing about peace and tranquility in the schools. Their argument as Jane put it was that schools should be safe havens for all children and no child should ever feel threaten while in the safe house .The driving force in all these peace missions conducted by the parents was because the parents valued their schools and did not want to see them destroyed. Likewise they also valued their children and wanted them to have the best of education in a safe environment. These positive engagements by the parents not only improved the learning environment but also instilled in the students a sense of pride and a willingness to learn. This was possible because as all principals agreed, due to high levels of trust prevailing between the principal and the various school committees.

#### *No truancy*

Principals noted that Truancy had a negative impact on education since it takes away the pupils from engaging in the learning process. It became a waste of time as more time was spent on revising or repeating a lesson already covered. Principals explained that they were unable and could not monitor all the students while out in the community. The decision to attend or not to attend class was decided away from school and principals had no means of tracking all their students. One point that seemed to exemplify this situation was when Onyari shared this experience:

I am always in school from 6am to 10pm. I cannot tell what my students are doing out there. But parents can and so it is their onus to ensure that their children come to school when they are supposed to.

Sam also shared his experience:

When the students set out of home to school, somewhere along the way they do detour to places where they are not supposed to. Sometimes they come late and sometimes they don't come at all. In my school I used to have problems especially on market days .Most students would abscond school and idle around the market place. But that no longer happens. Because of the nature of the relationship I have with the parents, there is no way anyone in school uniform would be out there during school hour. They will not allow it!

Sam shared of a hilarious experience where a younger brother to one of his students had worn his sibling's uniform. The parents were not amused and amidst his protest that he was not a student, hauled to the nearest police station and demanded that he be locked up until they established his claims. With such stories, no student dared be seen in the market place during school hours.

When parents of a school make it their responsibility to ensure that none of the students is out in the community during school time, the rates of truancy decline steadily thus ensuring that students are in school at all times. As it emerged and confirmed by the principals, parents can only take this extra responsibility when their relationship with the school and the principal in particular is characterized with high levels of trust.



Jane shared her experience how parents helped her eliminate the truancy menace in her school. Next to her school is Chebilat town which is a hive of activities. Entertainment spots for the youth abound and had been an issue with students absconding school and spending hours on end playing computer games, engaging in drinking and use of drugs. During her early years at school, she would hear stories of her student's exploits which sometimes overflowed into school leading to gang related wars. She later appealed to the local police department to assist her for assistance by enforcing laws discouraging school children using the slot machines during school hours. This did not augur well with the business community. Facing a daunting task, she decided to send an appeal to the parents of her school. She informed them that it was their school and their children as well and all she was trying to do was to help them indirectly by helping the students pass. The parents were impressed and given the fact that they knew of her genuine interest and desire to excel in her work, pledged to offer all the necessary help she needed to make sure that she succeeds and have all the students in school when they are supposed to. She gave them her personal telephone number and asked them to use it. She explained:

It did not take long before my efforts started paying off.... Like now the ones from Chebilat, they realize they have seen my student in wrong company or they have seen them in the wrong place and wrong time, they will call me ... they will be like there is this student who is here... are you aware... are they out on permission or are they skipping school?

The act of giving the parents her personal phone number she thought is probably what made the whole exercise such a success. It showed that she trusted the parents and in return the parents also trusted her. There was mutual trust and as she said, this would never have succeeded if the parents did not trust her.

### **Parents Enhance Safety**

Another theme that emerged during the interviews was that when the principal-parent relationship is characterized with high levels of trust, parents make it their responsibility to enhance the safety of and in the school. Security and safety in the study area are huge issues due to constant real and potential threat of violence. A tour of Chebilat, Kijauri, Ole Melil, Sotik, Ramasha and other major towns in the study area, one will notice that every male member carries a weapon. The most common ones are a sword fashioned as a walking stick or *njora's*<sup>4</sup> and additional one or two batons tucked under their pants or back pockets. This is a manifestation of people's jitteriness with safety and their readiness either to attack or defend themselves in the event of violence erupting.

#### *No conflicts*

In explaining this role, all the principals expressed how ethnic violence and the misunderstandings in the community had trickled into and caused havoc in schools. Minuel talked of unruliness during committee meetings. Other principals used terms such as 'noisy', 'they come near blows', 'shouting matches' or 'sheer chaos' to describe scenarios in meetings held in their schools. But with time and as each principal got to know parents and get to be known, they observed a change in attitude in the parents and an upsurge of tolerance amongst the parents.

Minuel, basing his opinion on personal experience, talked of his earlier years when he was perceived as a stranger by the parents. As a newly appointed principal, the parents expressed

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<sup>4</sup> A short sword.

their mistrust by putting in place a requirement that he should seek their approval before committing himself financially. This appalled him. Minuel shared his experience:

When parents insist that I seek their permission, it kind of undermines not only my authority but also my capability as the principal of the school. They are making a statement that they don't trust me to make the right choices or decisions.

After he had been in school for some time and interacted with the parents, and they got to know him, their perception changed and he said there was some semblance of peace harmony as trust developed in their relationship.

When parents have trust in my ability and capability there is harmony and agreement in the school and there are very few fights and conflicts in the school. Complaints will also diminish as parents shift their focus from scrutiny and judgmental to acceptance and support. Meetings in my school are always peaceful and we always start and end with a prayer as well as share a meal at the end.

To Minuel, even for the parents to accept to pray together at the commencement of a general meeting in the school and share a meal at the end of the meeting was a complete transformation from his earlier experience. He referred to the atmosphere in his meetings as 'pleasant' and 'collaborative'.

In the case of Elijah, the conflicts he witnessed in his school were the catholic parents fighting the SDA parents over control and ownership of the school. His experience was that when parents do not agree, conflicts abound. He said that sometimes the conflicts were on matters that did not even involve the school. When parents fight in the community, they come to the school meetings with these divisions and there can be no deliberate positive discussions or

concessions between them. Each parent becomes suspicious of the other and any suggestions whether positive will be contested. But once there is trust in the relationship, Elijah said:

...you will have very few problems to handle ...conflicts ...none ... you won't see or have any conflicts through the PTA. I find that the PTA, the class representatives that have been chosen, and parents from both sides of the border and even the Catholics and the SDA's are peaceful as they become focused on developing the school and not working for its downfall. If you attended some of these meetings, you will find that when they come they have very few things to argue about because they don't have problems.

When I asked Sam his experience he answered;

I experienced a lot of conflicts in my school here. The Maasai's felt that the Kisii people were too harsh on their students. The Maasai demanded that their children come to school late and leave early. The Kisii... the list is endless but this is what I found out...For you to have stability in the school that requires quietness and enabling environment for learning trust and lots of it has to be present.

### **Parents Provide security**

All the principals acknowledged that insecurity along the border was a real issue. The fear of attacks and counter attacks were very real. When there was an impending attack, the communities 'could tell' that someone was amiss. Unfortunately, the principals limited experience in 'using their sixth sense' to tell of an impending attack always exposed them to potential danger and death at worst.

### **Building Trust with the Parents.**

From the above discussion, it became apparent that parents play very significant roles in the schools that formed part of this research. Consequently principals, who had the trust of parents in their schools, enjoyed a significant boost towards meeting their role expectations. Unfortunately as expressed by Mogusii, this trust was not a guarantee and was not built over night. It took a while and principals interviewed confirmed that they all had made concerted efforts to initiate, sustain and improve trust levels between them and the parents.

In the course of conducting this research all six principals confirmed that working in a violence prone environment was never their dream duty station. For them to have lasted this long, they had to shift their personal perception and outlook of their professional expectations. To do so, they each developed a personal philosophy on education and leadership. As explained earlier, working in violence prone environments presented challenges to the principals and the likelihood of failing to attain the predetermined objectives and parental expectations were real.

But by developing these personal philosophies and statements, the principals underwent personal metamorphosis whose ultimate goal was to rationalize their deployment and in so doing accept their postings. Doing this became a healing process as it enabled them to move to the next stage in working in violence prone locations; to forge meaningful relationships with parents, thereby developing a joint effort in improving the provision of education services to the learners. The following is only part of these efforts as principals share their experiences and stories. Building trust with parents in South Western Kenya, as determined by the findings of this research involved on the one hand closing the gaps between community and school; and closing the gap with the parents and changes in their personal and professional conduct on the other.

### **Closing Gap between Community and School**

One of the findings of this research was that in an attempt to build trust with parents in their schools, principals made a deliberate effort to close the gap between the school and the community. In explaining this finding, Elijah and Sam noted that sometimes schools exist in isolation from their surroundings. This is possible when there is no connection or link between the two communities. Jane gave an example of a situation where ‘the school pulls west and the community pulled east’ as a classic example of such a scenario. When asked to give their experience on the same, Mogusii and Minuel said that such a scenario is likely to occur when ‘one cannot answer the; who, what, when, how, and why about the other person’. In order to avoid such a detestable situation, principals freely talked and shared their experience in using the following acts/activities to bridge the gap between their schools and the communities they served.

#### *Chief's Baraza*

In South Western Kenya, local chiefs are required by law to hold weekly public meetings where matters affecting the community are discussed. These meetings are called Barazas in Swahili. All members of a community or clan are required by law to attend these weekly meetings as this forms the very first level where conflicts and issues affecting the community are discussed. And cases involving land is discussed by the community publicly and any decisions arrived at are binding to all. All principals indicated that they had used these meetings to sensitize and inform the public on various aspects of education. Minuel:

When outside the school... as a principal I can even try to attend such kind of meetings... I use some of these barazas as a means or a forum to sensitize the community members on what we expect from them as a school if they want to see us achieve.

For Jane, she never waited to be invited to address these communal gatherings. Instead she made it a point of rising up and addressing the community members whenever an opportunity arose.

I always make an effort to attend the barazas. While there I make a point of addressing the barazas... and that's when I take the opportunity to educate the parents of my expectations. I always start off by asking them whether they last visited the school and whether they are aware of our immediate needs as a school. By the end of the meeting parents have always indicated their appreciation by coming to school more often.

Elijah used the chief's meetings to inform the parents about what he expected them to do for the school.

Sometimes being a principal is not all about meeting the parents' demands and expectations. I also have expectations. I always make an effort to attend the barazas and inform the parents what I need, my worries and any issues that affect the school.

One of the accusations that principals leveled against the parents is their general lack of interest in school and school issues. Principals thought that maybe the parents were too overwhelmed with other family matters and demands to a point of never getting around considering or acquainting themselves with issues relating to the schools. The effect of this was a disparity of information between school and the parents. And one of the reasons the principals gave for attending these barazas was to sensitize the parents and at the same time make them aware of their role as active partners in education.

Because barazas are held on both sides of the border, some principals indicated that they had ventured across and attended barazas on the other side. In addition to informing the parents

of their roles in assisting the principals, the principals also took time to enhance reconciliation between the two tribes. By attending these meetings, principals were also accorded an opportunity to assure the parents of the safety of their children. By venturing across the border, the principals passed a strong message that they too believe and are a testimony that it is safe to go to schools located across the border. Minuel was one of the principals who went out to talk to the principals across the border. He said:

Bear in mind even the Maasai community is part of the school. However far from the border, I always make an effort and attend to some of their activities and get involved. Through this I have succeeded in getting the parents to not only offer more support but also get involved in the school activities.

Mogusii who also attend meetings in the maasai community was interested in reconciliation.

I do this as an effort towards bringing reconciliation between the two communities, so that, the parents and the two communities do not perceive each other as enemies thus reducing the tension between them.

Another accusation the principals leveled against the parents was that they had overburdened the girl child with chores leaving her no time to concentrate in school. The argument put forward by the parents to justify this archaic behavior was that girls whether educated or not would end up in the kitchen, cooking for the family. This age-old misconception has been bolstered by lack of role model women in the communities. Jane took advantage of this and turned the barazas as a springboard to launch 'save the girl' talks aimed at giving the girls the same chance as the boys. She became a powerful advocate for girls because she also served as a role model.



Whenever I attend these barazas, I have made it a point of initiating dialogue with the parents on the rights of girls. The belief that girls cannot go to school is out of date. We want to see more girls in school. We want girls to be given the same opportunities as boys. And we also want to end this discrimination. So far in my school, the number of girls registering has risen steadily as a result of these efforts.

The use of this method to bridge the gap between communities and schools was noted by all principals as a powerful method of getting parents to develop positive perceptions about schools and in so doing feel obliged to offer support in different ways. These meetings were also held in churches whenever the principals were in attendance.

*Being active in Social-Cultural events in the Community.*

Bridging the gap between the community and the school was not limited to barazas and occasional church meetings. Another finding for this study was that principals also made a deliberate effort to attend social and cultural events held in the community. Events that principals talked of included burial ceremonies, weddings and church sponsored camp meetings.

Burial ceremonies in the community signal a loss of a loved one. All principals stated that when there was a burial in the community they made an effort to attend. No reason was good enough for not attending. When asked whether it was important to attend, all the principals stated that it was a cardinal offense for one not to attend. Onyari insisted that as a leader he had an obligation to attend. Elijah stated that 'rarely' did he miss attending such an event. What if you fail to attend? Elijah responded:

They (the community) will not take it lightly because the children you are teaching are their sons and daughters....the same people mourning their dead, this is their school...

they feel that this is our school... and our school should give us the respect that we deserve... and the respect we deserve therefore is the principal calling the day off and allowing the students and the entire staff and faculty to attend the funeral... you (the principal) also must be there.

Jane had thought of sending students to attend the funeral ceremony while she remained at school but she soon realized that this did not work. The community expected her to attend in person. She said:

If I do not personally attend but instead send the students a question mark will occur... or it could be the genesis of something worse. The parents will be like... why is the principal sending only the students here? You see, if you do not attend they take it as though you never sent anybody... but if I attend minus the students they will say well done mwalimu<sup>5</sup> ! Thank you for coming... our children are busy but you are with us here we want to thank you for coming. So the thing is eee...the thing is, they value the position so once they have seen me in attendance, the community members are satisfied and feel that by my attendance everything is now in order.

By attending the funerals, the principals were being benevolent conveying a message of unity. This, the principals noted drew the community closer to the school. Whenever there was a wedding being celebrated in the community, the principals confirmed that they also made a point of attending. The principals, though did clarify that comparatively speaking, attendance in a burial was taken more serious whereas that of a wedding was optional although it would be nice if one attended.

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<sup>5</sup> Teacher in Swahili.

Mogusii thought it was better to attend a bereaved family and share their loss than attend a wedding and celebrate.

I have also attended a number of wedding ceremonies in this community. The mood is celebratory and honestly no one would notice if I fail to attend. I think people are lonelier when faced with death than when celebrating a wedding.

Unlike attending a barazas, attending a funeral ceremony did not involve any lectures or discussions. It only required the principal to be in attendance. By attending, the principal strongly conveyed a sense of togetherness in suffering and this acted as a bind that tied them together.

#### *Offering service to the community*

Another method used by the principals to strengthen the links with their community required them to render service when necessary. For example when floods occur, the principals close schools and allow students and staff to assist in the evacuation. If a fire occurs in the community the principals send students to offer assistance. When I went to conduct the interview I witnessed students of Mogusii School not only patch up the path leading to the school but they also offered to slash and clear the vegetation along the main road. Mogusii told me that since schools were part of the community, there was no way the school would be running normally and the community was flooded or dealing with fires. That would be like the proverbial ostrich that hid its head in sand. Assisting the community effectively proved a bonding event and exposed the human side of the school.

### *Use of School Property*

Another method used by the principals in the study area to bridge the gap between school and the communities was by allowing the community access to school facilities and amenities.

Elijah allowed the community to hold social events in the school. Elijah:

I always avail the school facilities and amenities to the community. For instance last week we allowed them to hold a wedding reception in the school hall. I remember a few months back the pastor conducted a wedding in the same venue.

The list of amenities availed to the community by the school was impressive. Sometimes the intention of allowing the community to use school equipment was to cut costs for the community. Minuel shared his experience and opinion on the same:

Remember for example I always let them use the school's sound system for free whereas out there, they would have paid a fee for hire. By allowing them use of the sound system, it saves money for them and I think it also closes the gap between the community and the principal and this tends to build trust. Allowing the community unlimited access to the facilities is a powerful a public relation.

Elijah also confirmed that during the august holidays, the neighboring church holds SDA camp meetings. These camp meetings are held within the school compound. Those conducting these camps are allowed to board in the school while at the same time using staff bathrooms as well as other staff and faculty amenities in the school compound.

### **Closing the Gap between Principals and Parents**

The principals also explained that in an attempt to build trust with the parents, they had to close the gap between themselves and the parents. Due to the nature of their jobs, school

principals spend most of their time within the school compound and venture outside when on official functions or en route to other destinations. The principals explained that seldom do they socialize enough with the parents. As rightly pointed out by Onyari, there is a possibility of the two being perfect strangers. The situation was aggravated as parents did not make social visits to schools. Minuel and Jane observed that parents come mostly to school when summoned and leave within the shortest possible time. And even when they come to school, mostly they are served by the office staff and rarely get to visit with the principal. It is this 'distance' both social and personal that principals explained, they aimed to reduce so as to build trust with the parents. Mogusii, Minuel and Sam called this process 'demystifying the principal'. The principals interviewed explained how they achieved this demystification of their person.

#### *Knowing the Parents*

Principals shared their experiences by noting that due to the nature of their work and the number of students in their school as well as the delegation of duties in their respective schools, knowing each and every parent was near impossible. Each parent is unique, has a different story to tell and have different perceptions and expectations. Yet as a principal one is presented parental expectations as though they were uniform. Throw into the mix the fact that the study area is inhabited by different ethnic groups each with a unique culture and thereby a unique perception and expectation of the principal and principal ship and one begins to comprehend the possible extent of this gap. All the principals confirmed that they did not know all their parents and commented that it was next to impossible to do so. But they all agreed that they never gave up trying and so improvised various ways they thought would diminish the gap and bring them closer. Sometimes to know the parents you just have to make it a habit of talking to them.

Here is how Jane put it;

I never lose an opportunity to talk and get to know my parents. Whenever I meet them, I ask their names and introduce myself. I believe when I show them that I am available, they get to relax and be comfortable with me. I am sure through this way they find it easy to approach me whenever they need to in future.

Onyari had learned early in the profession the power there is in knowing the parents. He said:

This is something I learned early in the profession. That it is very important to know the parents you serve on a one to one basis. I greet them wherever I meet them and they always stop me wherever we meet. Most times its only just chitchat about nothing really but this builds up our relationship.

Mogusii said that sometimes knowing parents would involve spending more time with them and getting to know their background and their respective family situations. The realization that some of the problems students had in school had their roots at home made it the more reason why this is important. Once principals know a parent's background they become better placed to offer both appropriate and necessary assistance to their children at school. Knowing each parent beyond their official names was what Mogusii had tried to do. Here is his experience:

I have taken the time to know each and every parent whose child is my school and I have even gone a step further and tried to understand each situation in each family. It is always easy to know their stories because they are always willing to talk. So even by finding time and listening to them, at times a healing experience to some parents. Such parents end up trusting me because they know I value them and do not take them for granted

As noted above, getting to know the parents might be the only chance they will ever get to offload their stresses and frustrations thereby doubling up as a healing process. Just by being

there and initiating the exchange, it builds up a relationship because as expressed by Sam, it portrays that you care and value their comfort. On this note, the principals expressed the ruling that in getting to know the parents, do not discriminate lest you will be branded a ‘snob’ or ‘so and so’s’ principal. Talk to all the parents was their advice. In deciding who to talk to and who not to talk to Elijah offers the following advice based on his experience.

Of course as a leader, you talk to everybody... talk to everybody that is another method I adopted when I came here... I do not discriminate who you attend to. I talk to the Kisii; I talk to the Kalenjin talk to the Maasai and every parent in my school. I talk to those who are having trouble to pay tuition, I talk to those who do not may be support me... I talk to everyone... in this position, I mean you cannot afford to discriminate who you talk to... you learn and start to relate with everybody because even the one you think has no value also deserves your time in equal measure.

In the study area, it was established that people when greeting each other value handshakes. A hello, unaccompanied by a hearty handshake is of a lesser value than otherwise. Sam shared that one of the accusations leveled to his predecessor was that she never shook hands. This was construed by the parents to mean that the locals are ‘dirty’. This back fired badly on the principal and she was never able to redeem this misconception. So Sam learned early and resolved not to fall in the same pit.

They could accuse the former principal that she was aloof and could not even shake hands with them. As for me, I recognize them and I just shake hands with them ...this has really improved the interpersonal relationship with them really by building trust... so... yea the personal relationship with them is good ...shaking ones hands is not much and

does not require any technique. It is a simple gesture but the effects are far reaching. So these are the little things that I call bricks that you really need to build that trust. It works!

Knowing the parents is not just by their first names. It involves making efforts to get to know them, their unique problems, their immediate needs and much more and them getting to know the principal. If handled properly, this can and has reduced the gap between the principal and parents thus is one of the methods principals in the study have used to build trust.

### *Being Open to the Parents*

In the course of their duties, principals initiate situations and events aimed at achieving educational objectives. These changes could be sudden or cover a longer period. Some could require huge sums of money and sometimes not. When parents hear stories about the school or projects initiated by the principal that are shrouded in mystery, seeds of discord and conflicts are sown. All the principals interviewed confirmed that they had witnessed in previous situations where lack of information generated into serious conflicts with the parents. To avoid the same situations all the principals confirmed that they were always sending information home to the parents about what went on in the school. Information they sent home included but was not limited to date of closing and opening of school, monies collected, financial expenditures, projections for the future and much more. Minuel used the meetings to pass this information to the parents. He said:

I invite all parents to school meetings so that they can be a voice of the community when we plan for developmental projects in the school or when we are trying to initiate changes in the school.



Instead of ambushing the parents with agendas, Elijah made a habit of asking the parents to suggest items to be included in the agenda.

A month before a general meeting in the school, I always send out circulars to parents inviting them for the meeting and also give them a tentative agenda with a request for them to suggest any issues they would like discussed in that meeting.

The principals explained that the reason they invited all parents to meetings in school was to ensure that their input was considered. It was important that parents be aware of what was going on in the school and to know that whatever was being done had the community's blessing. The parents did not want to be ambushed as it were. Giving a months' notice enables parents to manage their schedules well in advance. Elijah confirmed that no suggestion was small or immaterial. All suggestions made it to the agenda and were deliberated by the parents.

Mogusii tried to be honest in his dealings with the parents. Honest was especially an issue when dealing with school finances.

Another thing that I have come to realize that I use in building trust with my parents is being honest in how I handle school finances. Honesty in handling finances... you know they are really very keen... they are very keen on finances anything talked negatively about misuse misappropriation of funds they go mad ...they go mad.

It was found out that the one issue that had generated so many conflicts with the parents was the use and managing of school finances. Principals noted that it was necessary for parents to know how money was spent and being very open about it was helpful in creating trust.

Lack of information on financial expenditure had the propensity of fuelling violence as parents and the community at large cried foul. Sam shared how parents in his school came baying for his blood and how he handled it.

Early this year, we used text book money to pay for the school van. We had not paid for the previous month and since this was our last payment, we stood to lose if the van was repossessed by the bank. We had hoped come time to issue text books we could have received the Free Education money from the ministry. Unfortunately this was not to be and when the time came to issue books, we did not have any books. It became a hot topic with some parents accusing me to have misused the school funds. Because it was taking a bad turn I decided to call the parents and explain what had happened. I showed them all the receipts and accounted for all the monies. I asked them what they could have done if they were in my shoes. Let the van be reposed or reallocate the money as I had done. They all agreed that I made a wise choice and by the end of the day I was their hero!

From Sam's experience, an above board expenditure can be misunderstood if not carried out openly. Withholding information conveys a negative connotation. Parents have a right to know how money is spent because it is their money. Parents also need to know what is going on in the school and they too need to have some input. Principals who are generous with information readily realize that this has a positive effect on their relationship with parents and bolsters levels of trust.

### *Seeking Parents Opinion*

Another method that principals used to build trust with parents in the study area was involving parents when making decisions about the school. Apparently parents apart from knowing what is going on in the school also feel respected and valued when their opinion is

sought. In expounding this method, every principal seemed to have used it at one time or the other in their schools. Because some decisions involved some technical knowhow, the principals said that they involved those members in the community who possessed the type and kind of knowledge the principals sought. Informing the parents about any investment is okay but it is necessary that as a principal you involve experts in whatever you are doing. Jane talked of avoiding being labeled as a 'lone ranger'. Seeking a second opinion is perceived as ones way of acknowledging others.

Jane always sought advice and help whenever she encountered a problem shoe answer she did not possess. She did not discriminate against the sources of information. Here is her experience;

When am not sure about something, I consult before I do it. Where you get it advice and help from does not matter but finally what matters is that the final decision is mine. May be I would have gotten it from say a priest , a neighbor principal, a parent who has experience , a friend of mine, whoever . Really I wouldn't care how people look at seeking help. The important thing is that I have solved the problem ...there after you know am going to say it is going to be my thing...am going to own it.

The perception that parents and the community members at large would despise a principal if he sought help did not matter to Jane as expressed above. She was focused solely on solving the problem. It helped a lot when searching for help to approach people in the community who had relevant experience. Such advice would elicit respect from all and sundry because of the respectable source. Sometimes in seeking these professional and technical advisors in the community, it might be necessary to do it privately and in confidence. This is how Minuel did it. He said:

There are times when you get a problem or an issue you are supposed to solve but you don't have the answers immediately. So what do I do? Some people will act you know whichever way. It might not end well. Me I decide well to keep it low as I consult. I might call somebody, I might... whichever way but I would ask anyone with experience by asking... Do you know such what do I do? Once they advise me, once they tell me, I use it and assume responsibility of that choice or decision.

In seeking consultation, all the principals suggested that it is also important to seek it from respectable members of the community. There are certain individuals who command great respect from the people. Before they tried this method, the principals had to spend time to seek out and identify opinion leaders in the community. According to the principals, it was easy to identify them due to their popularity and respect. Such people interact widely and their ideas are normally ideas of many and it is imperative that you listen to him. Onyari said that such a person talks for many in the community. When asked to name some of these people, retired teachers, civil servants, retired police officers, business men both current and retired all made to the list. Prominent personalities were also included. Elijah:

We have people who are so much respected in this community That if you go against their wishes you cannot survive... that is a point that I have gotten that is very true ...right... am telling you that there are people here who matter if I can use that word... the first thing you need to do as a principal if you want to stay here comfortably, is that you must make sure that your relationship with this people is good!

Other than being in good books with the opinion leaders, the principals also said that they at times used to invite them to school for impromptu talks with the teachers and the students and

even during special functions in the school. By offering them chances to talk, this build their ego and turned them into powerful allies. Sam thought using opinion ideas was a great idea. He said:

When parents hear that so and so has offered support for a particular project in my school, chances are that they will also offer support. This is because they respect the decision of the opinion leader and such people are perceived as wise and knowledgeable. Seldom do you find a parent opposing popular leaders.

For Minuel:

The community is made aware of the cordial relationship you have with the person and so many will be slow in opposing you as they might assume that the opinion leader has already blessed the issue.

Seeking advice and being seen to making use of it became a powerful method used by the principals interviewed in building trust with parents. When parents perceive that you value them by asking for their help or know that you have involved their leaders in whatever decisions you have taken, they are more likely to offer their trust in return. It also becomes a communal project.

### *Listening To the Parents*

Another method the principals used in building trust with the parents was listening to the parents. The kind of listening the principals were involved in was more than looking and seeing. The listening discussed by the principals went beyond the casual act of merely making out sounds and words. According to Mogusii, listening to the parents involved appreciating their unique situations and responding appropriately. When further pressed to give an example he posed this question.

Mr. Abaya, listening is not just hearing the sounds made by the vocals of the speaker. Listening here involves delving below the mere words and search for the unspoken messages and voices. Sometimes it is not what they say that is important but what they don't say. For instance if I came and told you that; if I had money I could have gone to Nairobi. How would you respond to my statement? Acknowledge that am broke so I should forget about Nairobi or help me get to Nairobi? Obviously the appropriate response would be by those who not only listen but listen with their inner ears!

He then went ahead and shared his experience as follows.

When parents come to my office with problems, I always try to understand their individual situations and either offer moral support and encouragement and at such times I avoid bringing up the fees issue because by doing so I would be aggravating an already grave situation. And sometimes I just sit there and offer them my time. As a principal I have come to appreciate the true value of listening and even communicating effectively without uttering a word.

Listening to the parents in their respective localities according to the Sam required developing a genuine interest in their stories and plights. It also required desisting from unnecessary interruptions when they talk and also avoid belittling their problems. Listening required that the principals detect early enough talks initiated by parents that are divisive and discourage them. Sam also discouraged any talk that was not professional. According to Sam:

When parents come, I always get interested about their plight, their problems and mainly as relates to their students.... I listen to them and serve them well and with respect. I

never initiate any discussion that may be divisive and if the parents initiate such talk, I always deviate and discourage it.

When asked to share her experience, Jane said that in her school, she had in many occasions dealt with parents who could not pay fees. Reasons for this inability were many and it was up to the principal to ensure that parents felt satisfied that they had been understood by the principal as they leave your office. The parents should have the satisfaction of knowing that the intended message had been passed on to the principal for the necessary action and reaction.

There are some parents who will come to school and say they do not have money to pay or ask for more time to pay. And yet you know that these parents never get to pay and are just buying time. You as the principal, you have to listen to them as they expect you to listen to them.

When faced by such parents, Jane said that she became tactical in expressing her displeasure but the bottom line is she listened and served them well.

Sam basing his opinion on his experience within his school noted that even if he knew that some parent was incapable of honoring their promises; he still had to be patient with them and accept their pledges. When parents know that they can come to you in their times of economic hardships, they tend to trust you.

In a school environment such as here in my school, I would say that for parents to have trust in you as a principal number one is you really have to be patient with them. Being patient with them may mean allowing them more time in order to meet their pledges. Being patient means that I understand what they are going through and I also believe in them to meet their pledges.

Onyari thought that sometimes it was necessary for a principal to be proactive. Onyari believed that since most problems originated from the community, solutions could also be found in the community. For this reason, therefore he said that whenever he noticed or became aware of a problem touching the school, he nipped it early before being blown out of proportion.

Onyari explained how pro-activity worked for him:

I never wait for problems to go far. Whenever I hear even a rumor about my presumed incapability or problem in the school, I invite all the parents. Once they have come, they are at liberty to air their problem either in my presence or if they request in my absence. I always tell them...please go there and talk about where I have gone wrong and what has gone wrong with the school... you know what, if there is a real problem or problems they will talk about them... possibly I am not attending them well, possibly teaching is not going on well, possibly they think I am misusing school money. Then I ask them ...Now what do think we have to do concerning these problems? How can we solve them? They will tell you this is what you have to do and I do exactly as they have suggested if it is possible or workable...and then you win them onto your side.

The principals said that to initiate talk with the parents in order for you to listen to them, it did require admit inadequacy by the principal. Doing so did not in any way lower their stature but had a positive effect as it portrayed the principal as a human being and not some demigod who is always right and a 'know it all' kind of leader. Minuel used this method and it worked well.

I have always believed that parents need to know that I do not have all the answers. And that sometimes I am just like them. So whenever there is an issue here that I know



nothing about, I always remind them that I am new here. I do not know as much about this place more than them. I then plead with them...Please tell me more because I am sure you know a lot about this place. Where is your problem? What is the problem and why can't we sit and reason together? Trust me. They will come and tell you the problem.

Listening is more than being able to discern sound. It requires as explained by the principals responding appropriately and in a timely manner. The only sign confirmation that a principal has been listening and heard what the parents was saying is when the conversation illicit an appropriate and acceptable response from the principal. As a result of listening, parents were encouraged to be more open and bold when dealing with the principals. In the long run the principals confirmed that the trust levels in their relationship with the parents improved. And just like Onyari said, parents will trust and support a principal because their voices have been heard.

#### *Attending To the Parents Promptly*

Principals said that when parents come to school for various reasons, it is safe to assume that they have other activities going on that require attention. With reference to the study area, the main economic activities were agriculture. Major crops included Irish potatoes, beans and corn. These crops were labor intensive. For parents to create time and attend either meetings or summons by the principals required a sacrifice. As a result, all the principals noted it was imperative that parents be attended to promptly and efficiently. A common saying echoed by the parents and which seemed to underlie this argument was that 'time is money'. Elijah noted two things that should be observed when a teacher comes to school; being welcomed and being attended promptly

First, if a parent has come to your school telling a parent welcome... that word welcome, is important....this parent feels at ease... oh yes! Then you listen and say...Oh... okay, karibu sana<sup>6</sup>. Okay... two, not keeping a parent for long, somewhere without being given direction... that is it. So, when a parent comes you say...Ok... how can I help you (Elijah)

By likening parents as customers, Mogusii explained that there was no way a business man could keep his customers sitting outside the shop on hour's end without attending to them or without selling to them. Likewise, parents as the principal's customers, keeping them waiting for unnecessarily long periods of time seated outside their offices is tantamount to killing their businesses.

Another thing is how are these parents received when they come to school for whatever reason... much of receiving a parent is important because they become at ease and are easy to deal with. How do you attend to them when they are in your office? Do you hurry them through? Do you keep telling them that you are a busy man and end up making them feel as though you are doing them a favor by attending to them? Are they valued or do they come and they are seen as if they are nobody's? No! A parent is a customer and given that a parent is a customer, he or she is supposed to be attended to promptly and made to feel pleasant and appreciated. A visit to your school should not be torture to the parents. It should be a pleasant experience for the parents.

Parents do not have to be kept waiting for long periods outside the principal's office. It is a waste of their time. If the principal is not in, they should be told so and be informed when he is

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<sup>6</sup> Swahili for Feel welcome, welcome.

likely to be in the office. For those principals who keep a diary, they should honor their diary. Minuel keeps a diary.

If I have an appointment with a parent say at 10.00am, when that time comes, I always drop everything and attend to the parent. Even if I don't see the parent, I always wait for them even up to thirty minutes because you might find that they had transport problem. If I have to cancel a meeting, I personally make a phone call and explain why I have to cancel the meeting while at the same time offering or asking for a possible future date.

The extra effort by Minuel to ensure that a parent does not get to school only to be told that the principal is not in shows an element of not only respect for the parents time but also an element of caring. Principals also do visit offices and sure enough they would be extremely angry to travel to say the city only to be told that the officer they came to see is on vacation.

Sam thought that to offer better services to the parents, he should make his diary public so that parents will know well in advance his whereabouts. This point ties well with availing information to the parents who enable them not only to plan their future but do so with the assurance that they will be attended to.

One thing I have discovered is that parents do not like coming to school blindly. They like to know in advance that they will be attended. So I always make my bi weekly schedule public .If I plan to travel for long periods, I always inform the parents through a newsletter and invite them to come forward in case they have urgent issues that they need me to attend to. This way parents do not feel rushed (Sam).

According to Jane, the quality of service accorded to the parents when they come to school, is a mirror of how the principals rate them. A shoddy treatment might be interpreted by

the parents to imply that the principal of that school does not value or respect that particular parent. By attending to the parents promptly, not only does it save time but it becomes a pleasant experience. There is a likelihood that if summoned again, they would readily avail themselves because they know they are valued and their visit won't be a waste of time and ultimately money since as earlier on stated, 'time is money'

### **Personal Conduct**

It was also found out that principals in the study area build trust through the way they conduct themselves. According to Jane, parents seemed to have a very clear mental picture and perception of how a principal ought to behave or carrying themselves in school or while out in the community. Consequently, it was the responsibility of principals to acquaint themselves with these expectations and mental pictures and then deliberately attempt to realign who they are in real life and who the community perceives them to be. According to Sam, trust was then achieved when the principals lived and carried themselves close to how the parents expect them to conduct themselves. Having realized thus, the principals shared how their conduct helped build trust with the parents within the study area.

#### *Being Available in School*

When principals are hired, parents rightly expect that they will be at school between 8am and 4pm when the work day officially ends. Unfortunately, this expectation is based on the assumption that principals' work is confined within the school compound. Unfortunately as the principals explained during the interviews, their work day starts much earlier than 8am and extends way beyond the official end hour. Sometimes as Mogusii explained, their duties take them to the city where they spend days or even weeks pursuing school matters. Unless informed

of the principals' whereabouts, continued absence from the school is construed negatively. Elijah explained that not being in school had been the reason given for rejection of his predecessor. To avoid the same pitfall he decided otherwise.

So for example let me say here, when I took over the problem was.... the head teacher is not in school. For example, now what did I do, I became present there is no more problem... They told me mwalimu welcome here, but we want to see you here. We would want to see you most of the time here ....what did I do, I rented a place and settled here. And now most of the time you will find me in the school. In fact I am in the office quite early and am the last to leave. That is why you have found me here today very much around.

Elijah's explanation of the tribulations of the former principal and his eventual rejection by the community on the basis 'of coming to school on Monday and Friday' or at times 'to pick the days fee collection' is true because I was working at the same school during the that period. Parents need to have express access to the principal whenever they need assistance. Elijah decided to be in school and indeed he has a reputation of being 'the first to arrive and the last to leave'. Elijah settled in the school and was both visible and available to the parents. He explained that living around the school had made it easier to bond with the parents as sometimes they approached for assistance after school and occasionally over the weekend.

When the principals were asked about this demand by the parents, they confirmed that they were living in the school compound because they felt a need for their constant presence and visibility in the school. Jane, Onyari, and Sam were living in the staff quarters within the school compound. Minuel and Mogusii were living in rented quarters close to the school. When asked why she opted to live in the school Jane explained that parents view the principals' constant

presence in the school as a sign of commitment, interest in his work as well as a priority. Jane explained:

When I came here, I decided to move into the school compound even though there was no electricity or piped water. Because this is a community school, parents are very keen in monitoring the principal whereabouts. If they don't see you say in three days they will say you have deserted them. If they come to school and find you are absent they will also complain. I think when parents know and see you at work they feel that you care about their children and also value your work.

Minuel noted that when parents fail to see the principal, they may assume that he is engaged in his personal business instead of the schools and that may not augur well with the parents. Mogusii supported this point by adding that since principals are allowed to use school monies to cater for their travelling, frequent absences from school might be interpreted by the parents that the principal is somewhere squandering school money. In order to avoid all these misconceptions and also bolster trust with the parents, the principals opted to live in or within the school vicinity and also be available when needed by the parents.

### *Having a Good Dress Code*

During the interview, Jane shared her experience based on her school years;

When I was in high school, our principal used to dress so shabbily that we nicknamed him 'Mitumba'<sup>7</sup>. I remember during the parents day one parent stood up and addressed the other parents by saying that they were tired with Mitumba people and it was time for fresh blood. The parents were disrespectful as well as the students because he used to

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<sup>7</sup> Swahili word for Second Hand; demeaning; derogatory

dress really shabbily. It's because of that reason when I became a teacher and a principal I promised myself never to be a Mitumba principal.

This long time experience impressed on Jane a desire to be smart. When I visited her, she was dressed in a smart trouser suit.

Even though there might be no direct link between one's attire and actual job performance, Elijah offered a possible explanation as to why being smart and dressing smart is very important for a principal especially if he or she desires to command some respect and ultimately trust from the parents. He observed:

How you even dress to work is very important...even the way you dress is important because you convey confidence and organization. I also believe that when you are smart you also confirm that you value and respect your job as well as position. That is why I wear suits everyday... you cannot just wear anyhow under a T-shirt.

When I asked Mogusii why a dress code is important for a principal he posed this question.

Have you ever seen a policeman report to work wearing a T-shirt or any casual attire? Can you imagine a banker going to work in a T-shirt? It would never happen. These professions convey to the customers the importance attached to them and those who are engaged in it. That's why they are always in suits because their jobs demand it. Likewise for a principal, by virtue of his position in the school he has to dress smart. By being smart, a principal shows respect to his position and his role in the school.

Other than the demands of a profession to look smart and be presentable, Sam insisted that as principals they are the face of the school whoever comes to school has to deal with the principal. In order to present a good picture to the public as well as the school community, he

noted that their positions demanded that they not only be smart but also dress smart. In fact he suggested that they should be the best dressed members of staff! Jane in offering support to having address code summarized;

How can I command respect for myself and for my position if I am unkempt and shabbily dressed? How can I conduct myself in the school when am dressed shabbily? I am always role modeling to the students and teachers. And as a teacher or principal, wherever you are there is always somebody observing at you. We do not just see teaching as on chalk board, you know that. Our profession is not only about concepts. When you go to class, the students are not just looking at the concepts you are teaching them. They are also looking at how well or badly I am dressed and that's teaching them without you telling them. And so even through your dress code, you are teaching them.

Having noted the importance of being smart and dressing well or smartly as the principals put it, they all agreed that this had improved their relationship with the parents. A well-dressed principal commands respect, conveys organization, seriousness and success. Such principals are a joy to approach and interact with and easily build trust with the parents as was proved by the principal's experiences and stories.

### *Exhibiting Good Personal Ethics*

In the course of the study it emerged that apparently it is not only a clean and smart self as well as a good and appropriate dress code that improves trust with the parents. The principals noted that they had improved their trust levels with the parents by conducting themselves in a respectable manner befitting their high social positions in the community. Sam observed that while in the community, principals are expected to exhibit some mode of decorum that befits



their position in society. He said that there are some activities and even a language that a principal can never use. Elijah in sharing his experience noted that there are places that as a principal he could not venture.

When you are in this position there are things you are not supposed to do... there are places you are not supposed to be or venture into... For example the community does not expect you as the principal of the school to be seated in a bar drinking and making a lot of noise in the surrounding.

For Mogusii, his school was located in an area inhabited by casual laborers who work on tea plantations. One notable characteristic of the place was the prevalence of promiscuity. As a leader Mogusii clearly stated that the community demanded that he avoid engaging in such activities.

There is no way as a principal I can live a promiscuous life. Other than the obvious negative effects of such a life, the community and my students would assume that I am encouraging such a lifestyle. I avoid such liaisons because they can cost your respect and place in society. I am sure parents here respect me the way I have chosen to live.

One notable point raised by Sam and Minuel was that a principal's conduct and behavior was under scrutiny twenty four hours seven days a week. For instance, they said that a principal could not choose to be promiscuous at night and the opposite at day time. In addition, ones conduct away from the school was also under scrutiny and principals noted that they were all careful in what they do; say or where they go when away from their schools. Sam said that even when away from school; say far away in the city, he was always careful how he conducted himself. He said:

Just because I am away in the city, does not mean that I should engage in socially unacceptable behaviors. Word travels fast is always my caution. You would be surprised how many people keep a record of our whereabouts and what we have done. So whether in the vicinity of the school or in Nairobi, I am always very careful because you might never know who is watching or whom you will meet.

Even when away from school or engaged in personal pursuits in distant cities, Minuel learned the importance of holding high moral standards. Minuel shared with me his experience. He said:

Last year we took a trip to Mombasa. While there some principals decided to sample the night life of that place. I am told that some went as far as engaging the services of prostitutes. I do not know the truth about it but rumor has it that when they were leaving the following morning , one of the principals came face to face with a waiter who hails from where he was teaching. Imagine the awkward silence that ensued and am old within ten minutes the whole village knew about it. Worse still he was a married man. Thanks to modern phone service, information moves faster than a plane. Since then, I have always be cautious because you just never know... you just never know (Minuel)

When a principal engages in socially and professionally unacceptable activities, they stand to ruin their reputation. Reputation is important in building trust because parents need to not only know but be sure that they can trust you.

### **Maintaining Good Professional Conduct**

In every secondary school parents have a set of expectations that a principal needs to achieve in order to be successful as a principal. At all times parents are keen to know whether the

principal is working towards achieving their expectations or against them. Parents feel encouraged when they see a principal engaged in activities, which according to their perception; enhance the realization of their expectations. It is these activities that Jane, Mogusii and Elijah talked of when I asked them how they built trust with their parents. Sam and Minuel noted that principals who deliberately organize their schedules around achieving not only parental expectations but also professional expectations stand a better chance of having strong relationships anchored in trust.

### *Being Competent At Your Work*

For principals, competence in how they conduct and lead their schools is very important. In our interviews and follow up discussions, all principals agreed that no single item conveyed a principal's competence but rather a series of activities as well as their lifestyles. When I asked them what they could do to express their competence, the principals gave several responses.

Onyari answered that a good sign of a principal's competence is his commitment to his work. He noted that a principal who is committed is one who is always at school, attends to his duties and is happy when carrying it out. He also insisted that a committed principal is one who is engaged in actual teaching. Sitting in the office alone is okay but also doing the actual teaching in class is important as it brought the principal closer to the student. In addition, he added that when the academic performance of the school was good or steadily improving, they could actually claim to be responsible. Basing his record from the previous school Onyari said:

Commitment is a sign that one is competent. Commitment in my work can only be noticed depending on how I carry myself while doing it. I mean, I cannot say that I am competent when I am always late in school, when the school is disorganized or when

students are failing. Competence to me and commitment by extension is only possible when I am good at what I do and that is being a principal.

I was very fully committed to my duties in my previous school performance were. Am talking about teaching, classroom... My subject showed a steady improvement year in year out.

Sam also supported this idea of the principal being allocated some lessons and actually teaches them.

Assuming that performance is a measure of competence just as Onyari had said, it implied that for that performance to be actualized, teachers were necessary. Performance was based on the examination results posted by the students, which also depended on syllabus coverage. In view of this then, the presence or absence of teachers to handle the syllabus became an important determinant in the eventual success of the students. As such, Elijah explained that he had made an effort to ensure that there were enough teachers to keep the students engaged. He said:

I have also ensured that I have enough teachers to cover all subjects. When the government fails to give us, I have gone ahead and hired teachers for each subject keeping our students engaged. No teacher misses his/her lesson and students are happy that they are enjoying and are doing their curriculum activities and that they are going beyond district and provincial levels in

Having the students gainfully engaged is thus a sign of competency. Having enough teachers for each and every class is also a sign of competency. But above all monitoring to ensure that actual teaching as explained by Onyari was a sign of competence.

Unfortunately, in all schools I visited, there was an acute shortage of teachers hired by the TSC. To counteract this shortage, Jane used the CDF funds to hire qualified graduate teachers to cover the shortfall. Jane showed competence in her handling this problem. She explains:

I could not just sit there and hope that the government was going to send me teachers. I had to do something to make sure that learning went on smoothly. And that is why I had to hire teachers using the CDF money allocated to us.

According to Sam, he exhibited competency by being present in the school. The day to day running of a secondary school especially in areas as those covered in the study area, require close monitoring.

another, thing you really have to be hard working in class ...you have to be hard working so that as a principal in fact you have to be normally like the last... the other principal who was chased from here they said he was never present in school he did not even go to class. So, I think that one made the parents lose trust and say this one is not serious with our students

#### *Ensuring the Safety of Learners.*

It emerged that a major determinant of successful curriculum implementation in the study area was the nature of the learning environment. For learning to be carried out successful, the environment must be safe. During the interviews, the principals indicated that they were aware of the importance of securing the learning environment in their schools. Sam commented that the reason the parents were ready to release their children to school was because they assumed the safety of their children. He said:

One of the reasons that I am sure the parents in my school have no problem sending their children to my school every day is because they are assured that they will be safe. If parents suspected that their children's lives will be threatened in this school, they will not send them to me.

The parents from across the border had withdrawn their children because they had not assured of the safety of the children. In as much as the parents have a desire that their children acquire a good education so as to qualify either join the university or even get a job, their safety is paramount. Sam noted:

Whenever there is violence along the border here between the Kisii and the Maasai, most parents from the Maasai said withhold their children.

Mogusii while also expounding on this point added:

There is no way effective learning can take place in my school if the students don't feel safe. They would be so unsettled that even teaching or communicating with them would be impossible. But once you assure them that all is well and that they have no cause for alarm, learning becomes quite productive and you have their total concentration and attention.

The realization by the principals in the study area that trust was an important ingredient in their schools, made them initiate safety enhancing measures in their schools. The objective as the principals said was to assure the parents that their children would be safe while in school. The logic given by the principals for effecting changes in the schools that enhance safety was that it was part of their professional responsibilities and duties. As explained by Jane and supported by all the principals:

One of the most important roles of a principal in the school is to ensure the safety of the school as well as the staff.

Consequently, principals introduced measures that improved the safety of the students thus in the long run earning the parents trust. Some principals had hired security guards to control entry and exit from the schools. As one entered the school compound, he was required to sign a visitors book in which he indicated his personal details, purpose of visit, person to visit and the duration of the visit. I encountered this at Onyari and Elijah's school. In explaining why he hired a guard Elijah said:

You know a while back I had issues with students coming to school and attending one or two lessons and then sneaking out of school. Some of these students engage in criminal activities during school days but you know at times we were unable to know because they could sneak in again without detection. To arrest such a problem, I had to fence the school by using a wire mesh. Now we only have one entrance and the problem of children sneaking is no longer a problem.

Other principals had hired extra security guards (Minuel & Jane) to patrol during day time. These guards were given cell phones for quick communication. The insistence of Mogusii to change his school uniform was also a measure aimed at ensuring that there is proper monitoring of students while at school.

As you have noticed or even through your experience, you know that most schools here have grey trousers and white shirts as their official uniform. With so many students around the market place it became difficult to monitor my students because a student might engage in a criminal activity and say he is from my school but in reality he is not.

With similar uniforms the students can lie. That's why I decided to change, my uniform to blue trousers and blue shirts as well as green sweaters and a red ties. My students stand out and now it is easy to differentiate my students from the rest. There is a great decrease in the number of fights students.

The introduction of closed campus in all the schools also improved the security of the school tremendously. From their explanations no student was allowed to go for lunch in the market place during break or lunch time. Elijah explained:

In my school, once the students enter in the morning, they are not allowed to walk out or venture out of school for whatever reason until at the end of the school day or term. I have told the parents and they are aware, if a student has to leave school before they are released, then we insist that a parents should pick the child. That way we are able to monitor our students better.

Safety of the students is important. It is important to protect the students against external disturbances or aggression as well as from within. Principals in the study area realized this and instituted measures to improve the safety and security of the students. The effect was to maximize learning and consequently this improved the parental trust.

#### *The school should grow*

Another finding from the study was that principals who had instituted development projects in their schools seemed to command more trust from the parents. When asked to explain this relationship, all principals explained that a growth in the school was taken positively and portrayed the principal as a positive minded person who had the interest of the school at heart. Jane said that:



When parents see buildings going up in the school, be they laboratory or a new class room, they take that to mean that the principal is using their money wisely. The worst scenario is where a principal is spending money and there is nothing to show for it.

Parents will not be happy if that happens.

She further added that this is why she had started a new administration block. The selection of what structure or development project to initiate in the school in the study area was sometimes determined by what the principals thought was required in the school. Thus the choice of what project to initiate was important as it showed a high sense of discerning and perception of not only the present but future needs of the school. For Mogusii, it was a laboratory. He said:

For the few years that I have been here, I have managed to put up a laboratory. Even though it is not stocked with the latest gadgets and chemicals, at least it is functional and our students are getting valuable knowledge in them- I have also rehabilitated all classrooms, painted the whole school with a new coat of paint.

For Elijah, his school needed toilets and some extra classes. When I asked him what the parents consider in according him trust he answered:

The parents are very much interested about the physical nature of the place... For instance they always want to know ...does the school have the necessary things such as classrooms, desks, library...how about the environment... what does the environment lack and what plans do I have to meet the demands of my school? How are the classes organized? Are they congested? Parents are interested in all these things and the more positive answers they receive for each of them the more they trust the principal.

Of the all the principal who initiated the most expensive project, Onyari beat them all. He had embarked on an ambitious project of constructing a two storied complex. When I asked him the effect of such a project on the parents he said:

To have started such a huge project, it took a lot of convincing. But I assured the parents that it could be easier to have all the school in close proximity and in modern classrooms. As you can see the project is up and running and am sure it will soon be completed. Once it is completed it will be the most modern educational complex around here. The parents.... Well they are impressed and they are quite happy about it because they see it as their school and besides they can also see where their money is going.

Growth was also achieved by introducing extra services or the students as per individual school needs. Some principals such as Jane and Elijah had introduced boarding facilities. Their argument was that while at home students did not spend enough time to read. All the principals had introduced a lunch program. This reduced the time students went out of campus in search of food. The extra time would be spent in class.

### **Mindfulness**

According to the conceptual framework and based on the literature that formed the foundation of this research, it had been stated that mindfulness and trust formation always go together. The basic assumptions of mindfulness according to the cited literature were that principals should have the ability to break set, are accorded situations where they are not afraid to make mistakes and lastly are free to experiment.

Unfortunately principals in the study area did not have choice to break set. Instead they were confined and conditioned by the demands of the social environment of the study area. They

might have expressed a wish to be free of any requirements but the extent of their operations and choices were curtailed by the controls put in place by the community, the politician and the church.

In the course of this research, principals clearly stated that they could not afford to make mistakes. They did not have the luxury of making mistakes. If that happened, the parents would be quick to withdraw their support and demand that the particular principal be transferred. The principals were aware of this pressure that was exerted on them by parental expectations and demands. Lastly, however creative the principals were, they did not have room for experimenting within the school. This could be a limit imposed by lack of funds but also by the lack of expertise to carefully gather data and keep records of the past events to be used for future decision. None of the principals interviewed kept a record of such.

In view of the above, and since mindfulness is based on the western culture and schools whose foundation and sources of funds are different to those in the study area, mindfulness did not manifest itself in the study area. The level of freedom of choice and capital outlay required to successfully undertake mindfulness, are non-existent in the study area.

### Summary of Findings

While difference existed in most categories of interview questions, the findings indicate some trends that help answer the research questions underlying this study. Participants' were high school principals deployed along the borders of Rift Valley and Nyanza provinces. A summary of the findings are as follows:

Despite the different conceptualizations of trust held by the principals in the study area, it was found out that trust with the parent is important to the principals. When parents trust

principals, they readily support the school by promptly paying fees, attend meetings when called by the principals and the level of conflicts is reduced in schools where there is a high trust relationship with the principals. Parents also enhance learning in school as well as provide for the school and its property.

Another finding for this study was that principals deliberately conducted themselves in such a way as to build trust with the parents. This was achieved through bringing the community and the school closer as well as closing the gap between the principal and the community. In closing the gap between the community and the schools, the participation of the whole school in the activities within the community were sought. These included offering service to the community, allowing the community the use of school property and also through sensitization of the parents through community meetings on their role in education.

It was also found out that principals use several methods that bring them closer to the parents. Methods commonly used by the principals included getting to know the parents well, preferably by name and their background, being open and provide information and data to the parents when dealing in financial issues, respecting the parents at all times by seeking their advice, and also listening to them as well as attending to them readily. Listening to the parents required being able to understand and interpret parents conversations and then respond appropriately

Another finding for this research was that the principal's personal conduct while in the community as well as away from the community, such as being smart, being available in school and good personal ethics were used by the principals to build trust with the parents in the study area. By observing these personal ethics, parents readily trust the principals.

Finally it was also found out that maintaining good professional conduct while at school or away from school helped build trust. By securing the learning environment, or by engaging in development projects in the school as well as being competent in their duties, principals were able to build trust with the parents.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The idea that a school's success is at least partially dependent upon the existence of strong relationships among members of a school's community is not new (Eccles & Rena , 1996; Swap, 1993). However, too little research has investigated just how these relationships take shape. The purpose of this research was to investigate and understand as well as describe how secondary school principals in South Western Kenya build trust with the communities in which their schools are located.

My goal for the study, guided by three research questions, besides understanding the important role that parents play in schools in the study area, was to inform educators and other stake holders of the need to have and maintain strong and positive relationships between school principals and parents in an attempt to inform better future home - school relationships and implementation efforts.

Further, the recommendations found within this study are inspired by the lived experiences of six high school principals who were heavily impacted by the emergence of ethnic violence along the Borabu-Sotik border in South Western Kenya.

While generalization of findings is not possible through the experiences of only six individuals, it is the hope of the researcher that district and building administration will evaluate current practices and consider modifying principal support practices during similar circumstances.

The secondary school segment in the education cycle in the Kenyan society is important for three major reasons: a) It de-links one from elementary (primary) learning. b) It provides a chance for one to complete the cycle for basic education. c) It anchors as the springboard to either tertiary or higher learning (Achoka J., 2007). Consequently, the realization of these objectives has often been used as a measure of the success or failure of the Kenyan educational

system. Even though the formulation of a relevant curriculum is important, it is those who are responsible for its implementation in schools that ultimately influence the success or failure of the whole system. A major feature of the Kenyan secondary schools and more so those that are located within the study area is community financing (Olembo, 1986; Mwiria, 1990). Indeed Harambee schools cater to more than one-half of the country's secondary school population (Mwiria, 1990). Local communities are responsible for fund-raising, recruiting teachers, and other school-related functions. In such contexts, it becomes imperative that secondary school principals maintain high levels of trust in order to tap community resources. But in return, secondary principals are expected to meet communal demands as well as expectations. Unfortunately in the face of the uncertainty caused by ethnic violence, principals become vulnerable as the attainment of parental expectations and demands become potentially unattainable.

The conceptual framework discussed in chapter two defines successful trust formation consistent with the above factors; both being addressed through professional development activities and other support structures. The conclusions that follow below will highlight those areas, supported or refuted by the literature presented previously.

### **Contextual Characteristics of School Community Relationship**

Undoubtedly, parents and other interested members of the broader community have much to contribute to the articulation of the school's values, vision and purpose statements. Broad-based consultation that includes all stakeholders is imperative if a school is to serve its community effectively (Hulley & Dier, 2005), p.167). Researchers have increasingly recognized the importance of relationships that connect families and schools (Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001). Indeed, several studies have suggested that strong school-family relationships matter to student achievement (Bank & Slavings, 1990; Garner & Raudenbush, 1991; Jones &

Maloy, 1988; Lareau, 1987; Lee & Croninger, 1994; Sui-Chu & Douglas, 1996). Further relationships between families and schools are also the focus of federal and state educational policy. For example, in the United States of America, the (National Education Goals Panel, 1995) stated that, "If the National Education Goals are to be achieved, families, schools, and communities must work collaboratively to form strong family-school-community partnerships" (p. 63).

**Trust involves dependence.**

Schools are part of a larger social system, and as such, they depend on community cooperation for effective performance (Adams, Forsyth, & Roxanne, 2009). Because schools are socializing agents, there is need for a close relationship between the two. The formulation of socialization process is determined in light of societal expectations. Consequently, at this very basic level schools are said to be dependent on parents to come up with their expectations which in turn become the educational objectives of the schools. Kessler (2000) insists that ‘...we must work with parents because families are the first and the most important sources for students’ joy, creativity, purpose and all the other gateways to soul in education. Parents’ wisdom and modeling continue to shape these young people throughout their lives...a strong foundation from which to launch (p.165).

Within research regarding formation of trust, it is stated that trust involves dependence on another party. In fact a number of researchers refer to trust as dependence (Atwater, 1988; Dobing, 1993; Lewis & Weigert, Social atomism, holism, and trust, 1985b; Scanzoni, 1979); Dobing, 1993; Lewis & Weigert, 1985b; Scanzoni, 1979) or reliance (Giffin, 1967; Good, 1988; McGregor, 1967; Ring & Van de Ven, 1994) upon others. If one is not required to depend on the other, one does not need to trust the other. Astley & Zajac (1991) point out that Emerson defined



dependence as the "obverse of power." That is, one who becomes dependent on another party places the other party in a position of power over her/him (pg.399).

Two parties are said to have a relationship when they are behaviorally interdependent. This means that each is dependent on the other (Brehm, 1992; Berscheid, 1994), and each recognizes that dependence (Berscheid & Graziano, 1979). Interdependence means that one party is not able to fulfill its function or achieve its objectives without action by the other party (Mishra, 1993; Thompson, 1967). In this situation, each party desires assurance that the other's actions will enable their interdependence objectives to be met. Data from this research indicated an extremely high level of dependence by the participants on the community.

Even though, research literature confirms the existence of a dependence relationship between those that are involved in a trust relationship, it fails to highlight on the level of dependence. For instance, the level of dependence on communities by say high school principals in the USA is not the same as that within the study level. Principals within the western world have mechanisms and government policies that ensure a continuous supply of resources as opposed to those in the study whose operational budget is shouldered by the parents. Participants in this study consistently stated that 'we cannot do without the parents' and 'without the parents, we cannot run the school'. As a result and in an attempt to capture and retain resources from the community as well as support, the principals deliberately set out to 'catch the parents eyes' as it were and proof to them that they were worthy of their trust. While this is desirable, it gives rise to a number of issues that need to be delved further if the inter relationship between a principal and parents is to remain ethical. For instance, would the principals behave the same way if their need for resources is met from a different source? Secondly, this introduces a possibility of being manipulated by the parents to accept their demands in order to get their support. Thirdly, the creativity and authority of the principal is compromised as his decisions are

scrutinized and questioned by the parents. And this is the biggest difference between the western context and the context within the study area. Being 'owned and controlled by the parents in the study area gives the parents' immense power over the principals as opposed to principals operating in the western world. It would be unheard of in the USA for instance for a parent to walk in the school anytime unchallenged and withdraw their students and take them to neighboring school. Participants in this study unanimously agreed that for them to be more professional and exert their professionalism there was need for schools to limit their degree of dependence on their respective communities.

**Presence of uncertainty requires trust.**

Research and literature on trust and trust formation also points out that uncertainty must prevail before two people can develop trust. According to Schmitt (1958) mobility and concomitant change in communities accentuates the problems in school-parent relationships. As social and economic conditions and situations continuously change, many parents find themselves in an almost continuous state of adjustment with new school situations. In Schmitt's (1958) study of one large community, 25 percent of the people replied that they were living in different houses than a year ago.

Data from the study as captured by the responses of the participants confirmed the presence of uncertainty as a contextual characteristic in the study area. Due to the fighting in the study area, many families had changed their residence. Some families had moved out of the study area whereas other families had moved into the study area. In addition, the major economic activity in the study area is agriculture which solely depended on favorable climatic conditions. This affected the ability of parents to pay fees in a timely manner. The uncertainty faced by the principals was manifested by the potential not to realize both educational and parental expectations. This possibility of failure and prospect of negative consequences is what according

to research make trust important (Bonoma, 1976; Gambetta, 1988; Good, 1988; Luhmann, 1988; Mishra, 1993; Zand, 1972) and in some literature has been referred to as risk (Coleman, 1990; Giffin, 1967; Johnson-George & Swap, 1982; Luhmann, 1991; Scanzoni, 1979; Shapiro, 1987a; Swinth, 1967), while others describe it as uncertainty (Deutsch, 1973; Gambetta, 1988; Schlenker, Helm & Tedeschi, 1973) . Whether referred to as risks, negative consequences or uncertainty, scholars believe that when negative results are possible, successful interaction requires trust.

Uncertainty in the study area was also evident from the data collected. All the participants noted that the possibility of violence erupting any time and their inability to foretell when the violence would erupt increased the level of uncertainty. Unfortunately, the uncertainty in the study was caused by external factors beyond their control; the participants noted that it was difficult to effect any changes in the school that required huge capital outlay or long term commitment as the community members were reluctant to commit themselves. Indeed Mogusii observed that since most of the parents in his school were workers in the nearby tea plantations, their commitment to the school was always shaky as they never felt that they ‘own’ the school.

Climatic hazards also affected fee payments as the tea dried and the workers were laid off indefinitely. The principal’s inability to control these external factors exposed them to a uncertainty about their future actions and choices in their respective schools. To complicate their uncertainty, the principals were not even sure nor could they completely safeguard their reactions to these external situations. Barbalet (1996) noted that, ‘what weighs on all social systems and what all social action must deal with is the unavoidability of the unknown future’ (pg. 84).

Even though uncertainty as per the conceptual framework in chapter 2 and Barbalet (1996) weighs on all social systems, data gathered from this research confirmed that the uncertainty as explained by the research participants was as a result of forced migrations, as well

as an over- dependence on agricultural economy. Much of the population movements noted by Schmitt (1958) were voluntary and involved individuals changing residences to better their status. The risks present in much of the literature on schools in the West are not a possible failure of the whole system as is in the study area. When there is drought, the whole tea plantation or estates as they are referred are closed down thus cutting off the livelihood and source of income for the principals. Fortunately for the principals in the western world, they do not depend on parents for money and even if they did, the manufacturing as well as the service industries that employ most of the parents is more stable and less prone to climatic changes.

### **Vulnerability creates possibilities to injure**

The idea of vulnerability implies a situation where an individual has no choice but to do what they have to do despite the potential of failure or negative consequences. Kollock (1994) observes that individuals can not adopt a ‘wait and see’ stance. Due to several circumstances, they are made to act, to commit themselves in spite of the conditions of uncertainty and uncontrollability (Sztompka P. , 1999). According to Kollock (1994), ‘...situations in which we can be taken advantage of are pervasive in every realm of our lives’ (p.317).

In chapter 2, and according to the literature review, trust requires vulnerability to further good causes, it creates opportunities for those one trusts to injure what one cares about (Baier, 1986, p. 236). Where there is no vulnerability, there is no need for trust (Scanzoni, 1979) and consequently an individual must be placed in a position of risk to trust. With reference to research data, vulnerability formed part of the contextual characteristic of the study area. The principals confirmed that due to the uncertainty prevailing in the area they had no choice but to make the best of the situation and ensure that learning occurred as well as all the expectations were met. Elijah talked of having been advised to seek transfer to a safer and stable environment. Jane also encountered a similar situation where the instability and uncertainty coupled by the

unpredictability of the study area made their roles and job performance risky. Given the prevailing conditions, the principals, in some quarters were expected to fail. Yet they did not give up nor seek transfers to 'safer places' but rather took the risk and soldiered on.

Most people would be reluctant to engage or invest in ventures that are faced with uncertainty. People also tend to avoid situations where they are vulnerable. Trusting becomes the crucial strategy for dealing with uncertain and uncontrollable future. Thus trust becomes ' a simplifying strategy that enables individuals to adapt to complex social environment, and thereby benefit from increased opportunities( Earle and Cvetkovich,1995, p.38).Working in the study area, one of the research findings was that for the principals to have acted in uncertain and uncontrollable conditions, they took risks. As part of their professional duties and may be personal ambition, they exposed their vulnerability to failure. Indeed Mogusii when asked why he did not choose to move to a more secure and stable environment responded that, you do not run away from situations. You stay and fight. It also emerged that the principals exuded a sense of patriotism when deciding to stay in the study area. All the principals felt that they were Kenyans and belonged to the local tribes and running away would have been constructed and perceived as deserting their people during the hour of need. The saying that a man does not run away when his house is on fire featured a lot in explaining they decision to stay.

### **Parental Characteristics and Their Influence on the Urgency of Trust Formation**

Research data from this study indicated differences in parental characteristics. In discussions with the participants, it became evident that parents from different sides of the tribes exhibited different characteristics and responses to the same situations. These different characteristics were as a result of cultural differences as well as differences in the perception and construction of not only education but also its role in their specific society. The most salient

characteristics that were a focus of this study and had been identified by the conceptual framework included parental expectations, parental demands and ownership of resources.

**Parental beliefs influence Parental expectations.**

Dewey (1916) explicitly identifies shared goals as a foundation of a strong relationship between parents and school leaders. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Some researchers have found out and recognized that some parents may reject and rebel against progressive constructivist educational practices and advocate a return to the traditional practices with which they are familiar (Casanova, 1996; Dillon, 1990; Dow, 1991; Konzal, 1996; Mirel, 1994). The refusal of these parents is hinged on their familiar way of doing things even when there is reasonable need for change. As a result of this there is need for educators to consider the content and basis of parent beliefs about schooling and learning (Shumow, 1997).

Data from this study clearly brought out such a scenario. When Minuel was asked whether all parents supported development projects in his school he answered that he had trouble with parents from the Maasai tribe. He explained this apparent disinterest to be a result of the Maasai perception and construction of schools. He said that the Maasai's view a school as a sort of care center where children pass time and learn social skills that will enable them lead a nomadic life. The girl child in the Maasai culture is in school so as to mature physically and be ready for marriage. They are not here to learn. And so once a Maasai girl attains puberty, she is married off. By constructing a school as a 'maturing center' and not a center of academic excellence, the Maasai parents were reluctant to invest in schools. Consequently, their expectations of what their children should attain in school and consequently the role of the principal were equally affected.

On the other hand parents from the Kisii community actively participated in development projects and closely monitored their children's academic progress. To the Kisii parents, schools were viewed as a spring to better life opportunities. The Kisii parents expected the principals to ensure that their children performed exceptionally well in their terminal national examinations and acquired the necessary grades to gain admission to university and other tertiary institutions of higher learning.

One of the reasons why parents trust principals in the study area is when the principals attain parental expectations. By extension, the nature and level of parental expectations is thus directly a function of how parents construct school and schooling as well as role performance for the principals. Previous research has positively linked parental expectations to their children's plans for attending college (Davies & Kandel, 1981; Hossler & Stage, 1992) as well as to their actual college enrollment (Conklin & Dailey, 1981). Data gathered from this research also confirms this assertion. Consequently, principals were expected by parents to be competent in their professional and role performance as well as ensure the safety and security of the school. As positive role models, the principals were expected to enhance and uphold highest standards of morals and set good examples within and outside the community.

### **Parental demands often cause conflicts**

Data from this research confirmed that some parents tend to be more controlling by exerting certain demands on the principals. Data collected from the field indicated that parents demanded that only members of their communities be employed in the schools. They also demanded that they should be consulted extensively when making decisions in the schools. Demands were anchored in the belief by the parents that the schools belonged to the community and as such they had a right to exert control. Demands are important contextual characteristics

because parents could potentially withhold their support from principals who failed to meet these demands.

Data gathered in this research confirmed that parents in the study area imposed several demands on the principals. For instance, parents demanded that only those people hailing from the community should be employed at the school. Jane gave her experience whereby she had to hire less qualified teachers in order to meet this demand. Mogusii and Elijah both expressed their frustration in their attempts to offer scholarships and bursaries to needy bright students. Unfortunately, their efforts were thwarted by the insistence of the bursary allocation committee that only students hailing from the community should be awarded. Consequently, names of 'outsiders' were struck off the list of those recommended by the staff for consideration.

Available literature on parental demands in schools labels such parents as 'controlling' and are not representative of most parents, but are a major source of conflict in some schools (Casanova, 1996). Such parents are always outspoken opponents of the school and try to undermine principal's decisions to ensure full control over the school. Unlike parental expectations which provide the principal with an opportunity of freedom, parental demands are limiting and are an indication of low levels of trust and competing interests. Consequently, "parent participation is theoretically a good thing, but not if it does not contain a fundamental acknowledgement of trust in the teacher and principal, and their right to steer a course for the school based on their experience and knowledge" (Edge, 1996). Parents who want to control schools should create their own with private funds. Only then can they dictate the 'who, what, and why' of what goes on in the school (Casanova, 1996).



**Parents own resources.**

Research data gathered indicated that the principals acknowledged their need of resources to run the schools. The principals indicated that they required money and other physical inputs. Due to the limited and unreliable external sources from the government, the principals relied mainly on the parents to support the schools in meeting their financial obligations. Principals also needed to attain a minimum of enrolment before their schools qualified for state funding, and they expected parents to bring their children.

The need for these resources motivated the principals to make an effort and form trustful relationships with the parents so as to warrant the release of these necessary and much needed resources. The refusal of parents to release the resources could spell doom for both the school and the principal with imminent closure and lose of employment.

In comparison, parents in regions where there is state funding exert little control on the resources available to the principals. For instance in the USA, the Federal Government as well as the State governments are wholly responsible for the financial needs of the schools. Attendance regions are demarcated and determined according to predetermined criterion. Consequently principals do not have to worry about where to get students or whether the state will release funds in a timely manner. The limited role that the government plays in funding secondary education in Kenya has given rise to a situation where parents play a determining role in the schools.

**Importance of High Levels of Trust to a High School Principal.**

Given what is known about the importance of trust for a school principal and its place in improving the learning and life of students, it is important that we understand where beginning

principals are coming from (Walker & Qian, 2006). Initial trust between parties will not be based on any kind of experience with, or firsthand knowledge of, the other party. The likelihood that trust would be present in new relationships is low because of the limited interaction upon which to justify taking a risk (Adams & Christenson, 2000). Consequently, new principals are expected over time to initiate interaction with the parents and through those interactions offer enough justification upon which the parents can make the decision whether to trust or not trust them. Holmes and Rempel (1989) viewed trust in such a relationship as would be 'reflecting confident expectations of positive outcomes' (p.188).

According to trust literature, the origins of trustfulness or suspiciousness are not epistemological but rather are derived from past history of relationships pervaded with trust or distrust (Sztompka P. , 1999). Data from the research indicated that all the principals had been accorded initial trust when they were appointed to their leadership positions. This initial trust, according to the research data was based on their previous reputation, competence, experience and support from institutions in place used to recruit and maintain their jobs. Such an initial trust rooted in one's reputation requires an equal effort of confirmation. According to Luhmann (1979), initial trust opens more opportunities for more extensive action but which commits the person to a trustworthy self-presentation, from which one can only escape with great difficulty.

All the principals were appointed to their leadership positions based on their good reputation in their previous schools. The principals described themselves as hardworking, honest, focused and even God fearing. The major question in such a situation was whether the individuals could be counted on to deliver on the parental expectations and demands (Wilson, 1993) in their current schools. The fact that they were hired was a confirmation that the hiring authority believed that the principals would carry on with the previous record of good works and

extend it to their current schools. Earning a reputation is an arduous and protracted process (Sztompka P. , 1999) because as Chong (1992) puts it, once earned, it is a precious and ‘fragile commodity’ (pg. 699). Reputation and the trust that comes with it as in the appointment of the principals to their leadership roles, constitute a kind of pre-commitment, obliging them to behave impeccably also in the future. The principals noted that they felt under pressure to perform and maintain if not improve their previous good reputations even when there was a drastic change in the context. Consequently, in spite of its value a trust based on one’s reputation, as the research data confirmed could become a burden .And as Merton (1973) puts it, the reward system based on recognition for work accomplished tends to induce continued effort...such social pressure do not often permit those who have climbed the rugged mountains of scientific achievement to remain content’ (pg. 442).

Research findings as well as research literature on trust confirmed that competence was very important to the parents when making the decision whether or not to trust the principals. Research supports the notion that competence, defined as the ‘execution of an individual’s role responsibilities’ is imperative (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). The principals stated that they had posted impressive results in their former schools. For those who had previously been in leadership positions, being in charge and executing their duties diligently was used as evidence of their competence. In some literature, competence is referred to as ‘performance’ and it implies actual deeds, present conduct, currently obtained results (Sztompka P. , 1999). As a basis for determining whether to trust, competence rests on the assumption that the individual has the ability to perform expected role responsibilities. In addition to possessing this ability the individual must have proof that indeed they can deliver and meet their expected targets.

Unfortunately, displaying competence can be daunting, given the ever changing context of schooling and the multiple aims that typify the education process in the study area. Data gathered from the research indicated that a good reputation, prizes, affiliations and awards were outward representations of competence. Unfortunately, such parameters were not standardized thus giving rise to a situation where one is awarded a merit award that might not be acceptable by all. Despite this hurdle, all the principals agreed that in the context of accountability, producing results was often seen as the best determinant of competence (Shaw, 1997).

Data gathered from this study also indicated that experience of the principals prior to their being appointed leaders were important in the development of initial trust. The principals pointed out that reputation and competence were directly linked with experience. This was because it was in the process of gaining experience that principals developed a reputation by expressing their competence. Since there was no special training that potential principals underwent before assuming their leadership roles, experience gained in their capacities as deputy principal, heads of departments as well as teachers proved immensely useful. All the principals indicated that they had been deputy principals for a number of years before they became principals. As deputies, the principals said that they had gained experience and skills in leadership roles.

In many contexts institutional bases of trust (e.g., the confidence associated with professional certification, ethics, and training) can generate positive beliefs about a group's trustworthiness. Institution-based trust researchers maintain that trust reflects the security one feels about a situation because of guarantees, safety nets, or other structures (Shapiro, 1987a). Data collected from the study confirmed that parents willingly and unquestioningly trusted the principals if they had university education and were registered and licensed by the Teacher's

Service Commission. As the sole employer of teachers in the republic of Kenya, TSC has monopoly over the registration and licensing of teachers. In addition, to maintain this registration and license the TSC had put in place stringent requirements to be met by the principals. One very crucial requirement noted by the principals in the field was the requirement by the TSC that one had to undertake a mandatory leadership induction course offered by the ministry at the Kenya Institute of Administration .Data from the research also indicated that for an individual to be eligible for leadership position in a Kenyan secondary school, they were required to have attained a particular job group. This requirement ensures that those promoted to leadership roles have been in field for a given period of time since a teacher has to be a given job group for a minimum number of years before they are eligible to move o the next job group. All these were institutions put in place to ensure that quality is maintained.

The use of institutional bases of trust is not limited to the Kenyan context but all over the world. In the USA, most school districts have a set of minimum requirements for those seeking to be principals. The requirements may range from attaining a certain certification to having acquired some minimum level of education as well as being conversant with certain policies. When parents are aware of the stringent exclusionary conditions in place for one to be a principal, they derive comfort from the knowledge that those hired as principals have attained a particular level of education or experience. This enhances their willingness to extend trust to the individuals. Unfortunately, data collected indicated that, due to the fact that some of the institutional bases of trust are monitored by the ministry of education and away from the public domain, parents in the study area did not use them as a basis or foundation of their trust on the participants. Secondly, the certification and licensure process was done at and a personal level and parents had no foolproof system of confirming the potential principal's certifications. Unlike

in the USA certification bodies have a national or state outlook, those in Kenya are local based thus diminishing their influence. And because communities play a tremendous role in the choice of a principal, there is a possibility that some school boards might overlook this requirement and instead recruit a teacher say from their community even when their choice is not certified.

### **Interpreting Trust**

With foundations of trust present in the study area as well as the presence of interdependence and risk prevalent in the study, it became imperative to seek out what and how trust was constructed by the participants of this research. The reasoning behind this assertion was that even though there was a high level of interdependence in the study area between the parents and the principals, the subjects of this study were the principals. Therefore, their perception of trust was important because the means they were to use to build trust with the parents were largely a function of these conceptions. How they went about building trust with the parents would depend on their own personal interpretation of what counted as trust and what did not.

Despite its common usage, most researchers note that trust is a difficult concept to adequately define, particularly for research purposes (Adams & Christenson, 2000). Rotter (1980) defined trust as 'a generalized expectancy held by an individual that the word, promise, or statement of another individual can be relied upon' (p.651). Deutsch (1973) defined trust broadly as a 'confidence that one will find what is desired from another, rather than what is feared' (p.148). Despite these conceptions of trust as expectancy and a confidence, or an emotion, definitions of trust have become a "confusing potpourri," (Shapiro, 1987a: 625), a "conceptual confusion" (Lewis & Weigert, 1985a: 975). Trust has been defined as: a behavior (e.g., Zand, 1972); an attitude (Kegan & Rubenstein, 1973); a confidence (Cohen, 1966); an expectancy

(Rotter, 1980; Scanzoni, 1979); a belief or set of beliefs (Barber, 1983; Bromiley & Cummings, 1995; Rotter, 1967); a dispositional variable (Rosenberg, 1957; Rotter, 1967, 1980); a situational variable (Johnson-George & Swap, 1982); a structural variable (Fox, 1974; Lewis & Weigert, 1985a,b); a social agency relationship variable (Shapiro, 1987a); and, an interpersonal variable (Rempel, Holmes & Zanna, 1985).

Data collected from the field showed that the principals constructed trust mainly in four ways; as the fulfillment of expectations, as conditions that characterize a relationship, as ability and as a behavior. Even though the principals did not agree on one definition, their different definition is a confirmation of the confusion that literature has previously talked of. A lack of a definite definition of trusts among the principals was not a unique incidence but a common one in trust literature. No wonder Lewis & Weigert (1985a) called trust a highly complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon. For the purpose of this research the researcher adopted a definition of trust that involved a deliberate change in behavior and perception with the express aim of achieving parental expectations. Embedded in parental expectations were the ultimate success of the learners in school and the attainment of educational objectives.

### **Is trust important to a secondary school principal?**

Research confirms that school leaders need to build trust with parents because they depend upon it (Hoy & Tarter, 2003; Smylie & Hart, 1999). To find out whether principals in the study area depended on trust, they were asked why they thought it was necessary to have a high trusting relationship with the parents. Data collected from this research clearly confirmed that the principals found trust a necessity giving rise to the need for the principals to make attempts of improving their relationship with the parents. When asked of the advantages of having high levels of trust between them and the parents, the principals gave many reasons clearly confirming parents played a crucial role in the life of their schools within the study area and as

such it was near impossible for a principal to run a school without parental input. The principals indicated that parents were a source of inputs for the school, provided security for the school, and were an important source of support. Principals also stated that when there was a high level of trust with the parents, most conflicts in the schools diminished as parents became more accepting and agreeable towards the principals. They also added that flow of information was better and more reliable. In conclusion therefore, trust as explained by the principals was a vital element in well-functioning schools. These findings from the research were corroborated by literature on trust. Indeed trust between parents and a school leader is a vital element in building and maintaining a positive family-school relationship (Adams & Christenson, 2000). As it was stated in the study area, schools have always relied on the input of parents in the process of educating and socializing children. Gareau and Sawatzky (1995) viewed schools as ‘natural extensions of the community’ (p.464).

There is little dispute that school and parents share the common task of educating and socializing the children (Coleman, Families and schools, 1987; Pianta & Walsh, 1996). Litwak and Meyer (1974) conceptualized school personnel as being responsible for the formal educational opportunities and families as being responsible for the informal learning and motivation-to learn tasks. Failure to provide experiences in both realms was proposed to lead to a disintegration of the process of successfully educating children. According to noted parents provide the prerequisites necessary for children’s success in formal educational settings. Trust also reduces uncertainty and predisposed people to cooperate (G.Jones & George, 1998; Krishna & Uphoff, 2002; McAllister, 1995; Uphoff, 2000; Zand, 1971)

Research also suggests that trust in a relationship promotes exchange of essential information (Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2002; Lin, 2001; Serageldin & Grootaert, 2000);



individuals who feel trust in those with whom they interact are “more likely to disclose more accurate, relevant, and complete data about problems” (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000, p. 581). Trust also acts as a support for conflict resolution. When individuals trust one another, conflict resolution is made “easier and more productive” (Lewicki & Wiethoff, 2000, p. 101). Similarly, Jehn (1997) concluded that when trust is present and valued, group “members may disagree in ways that are based on intellectual arguments rather than attacking issues on a personal basis” (p. 96). Trust is necessary for the effective co-operation and communication which are the bases for productive relationships (Baier, 1985). It is the “mortar that binds leader to follower”, and forms the basis for leaders’ legitimacy (Nanus, 1989, p. 101).

Trust has been described as “a remarkably efficient lubricant” that reduces the complexities of organizational life and is increasingly seen as a vital element in well-functioning organizations. Trust is necessary for the effective co-operation and communication which are the bases for productive relationships (Baier, 1985). It is the “mortar that binds leader to follower”, and forms the basis for leaders’ legitimacy (Nanus, 1989, p. 101). Trust has been described as “a remarkably efficient lubricant” that reduces the complexities of organizational life and facilitates transactions far more quickly and economically than other means of managing (Powell, 1990).

### **Becoming a Trustworthy High School Principal in South Western Kenya**

A high school principal sets the tone of the school. The principal’s behavior has a significant influence on the nature of the relationship he develops with the parents (Tschannen-Moran M. , Trust matters:Leadership for successful schools, 2004). If schools in the study area are to reap the rewards of a trusting principal-parent, it is the principal’s responsibility to build and sustain trusting relations (Whitener et al., 1998).

Research confirm that trust is particularly relevant in conditions of uncertainty with respect to unknown or unknowable actions of others (Gambetta 1988b). Two parties are said to have a relationship when they are behaviorally interdependent. This means that each is dependent on the other (Brehm, 1992; Berscheid, 1985), and each recognizes that dependence (Berscheid & Graziano, 1979). Interdependence means that one party is not able to fulfill its function or achieve its objectives without action by the other party (Mishra, 1993; Thompson, 1967). In this situation, each party desires assurance that the other's actions will enable their interdependent objectives to be met. According to Vosler-Hunter (1989) this relationship would be based on two-way communication, cooperation, coordination, and collaboration. Within a collaborative relationship, parents and teachers 'share joint responsibilities and rights, are seen as equals, and can jointly contribute to the process' (p.15).

Data gathered from the field confirmed that there was interdependence between the principals and the parents in the study area. Principals had visions and roles to perform as well as parental expectations to meet. Unfortunately due to the ethnic violence witnessed in the research area the parents become wary of anyone and demand higher levels of accountability from the school leaders. As owners of resources parents are reluctant to release them to school leaders who in turn become vulnerable. The parents demand an assurance that the principals will meet their role expectations while on the other hand principals demand active participation of the parents in schools. The only way that principals have to provide this assurance is to deliberately engage in activities that build confidence in them. The more they interact with the parents, the more the parents recognize and discern sincerity, honest, reliability among other characteristics in the principals. As a result parents become partners and not competitors in the education of their children. Consequently collaboration develops between the principal and the parents.

With respect to the study area, the contextual characteristics of the study area coupled with the effects of ethnic violence, presented the principals with a potential impediment to the realization of a relationship such as the one Vosler-Hunter (1989). The existence of parental expectations and demands in the study area acted as pressure on the principals to deliberate and engage in activities that would in the long run enable parents release the resources in their possession and in so doing enhance the achievement of pre-determined educational goals in the study area. Having realized that no leader can long survive the demise of trust (Tschannen-Moran M. , Trust matters:Leadership for successful schools, 2004) the principals were given an opportunity and discussed how they had developed trust with parents in their schools.

For instance principals attempted to reduce the communication, cultural and social gap between the Community and school in general and, the principal in particular and parents. Each of the six principals had different perceptions and dreams for the schools where they had been hired. On reporting, the principals discovered that the parents had very high expectations and many demands for them to meet. The principals, some of these expectations and demands became a reality check and suddenly they realized that they have to rearrange and reorganize their personal ambitions and expectations for the sake of the whole school. The violence in and around the school community compounded the whole situation as principals were given a myriad of expectations and sometimes competing demands as each community made an attempt at exerting themselves with an aim of controlling the school. With each community possessing different expectations, principals were forced to merge these competing expectations and demands in order to develop a composite list of expectations that were for the best of the child.

Data collected from this study indicated that principals deliberately and actively engaged in various activities that helped build trust with the parents. Some of the methods adopted by the principals in the study to build trust with the parents include the following:

- i. Mediating: As a result of the ethnic violence in the study area, the principals found themselves at cross roads as conflicts found their way into the school meetings and events. Indeed even most trustworthy school principals have to deal with times of conflict and betrayal in the school compound (Tschannen-Moran M. , Trust matters:Leadership for successful schools, 2004). In the study area, the principals tried to deal with conflict and repair trust amongst the different groups of parents through mediation. As indicated in their responses, the principals in the study area stood for something different from the conflicts in the communities. They told the parents during the village Baraza's<sup>8</sup> and community gatherings, that conflict, betrayal and even violence were not necessarily the last word. The principals played the role of mediator between the tribes. Research confirms that trustworthy leaders are not only skillful in conflict management strategies, but they also create the structures and provide the training for others to improve in this realm (Tschannen-Moran M. , Trust matters:Leadership for successful schools, 2004). Such skills in a school leader help in building trust between the principals and the parents as was evident in this research.
- ii. Modeling: Data from this research showed that the principals not only knew how to 'talk the talk' of trust but also they knew how to 'walk the talk'. The principals were aware that discontinuity between word and example would quickly erode their ability to lead thus create distrust with the parents. Research has proved that setting

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<sup>8</sup> Assembly, Committee, Council

examples is not to be flaunted and that skillful principals build and earn trust by leading quietly (Tschannen-Moran M. , Trust matters:Leadership for successful schools, 2004). The principals in this study confirmed that they combined humility-exercising restraint and modesty-with tenacity and the professional will to see that tasks were accomplished well (Collins, 2000; Fullan, 2003) in their schools. The principals in this study modeled norms of conduct that promoted the well-being of the whole students and the parents and invited others to abide by those norms as well. In parents meetings, the principals spoke the truth in ways that showed they cared. The principals also modeled neutrality and fairness in their dealings with the parents. The likelihood of being seen as biased by the different groups and tribes in the schools was real. In order to be fair and be seen to care and value all members of the different tribes, the principals never took sides nor encouraged talk that was divisive or a situation where one group discredited the other group.

- iii. Participation and Supporting community events: Parental participation and support increases when such participation is promoted and encouraged by the principal. Principals encouraged collaboration by eliciting and understanding parents' perspectives and expectations. Principals took genuine interest in the triumphs and tribulations of the community. The principals confirmed that they viewed themselves as part of the community where they worked. Consequently, they actively participated in activities in the community and by so doing, identified themselves with the communities. They took part in weddings and attended funerals. This was a positive move as it endeared the principal to the parents. By participating in putting out a fire in the community or by clearing roads during floods was perceived positively by the parents thus creating a strong positive connection with the parents.

- By actively participating in the socio-cultural events, the principals showed support and acknowledged that they were part of the community. As a result data indicates that the Principals fostered an open dialogue between home and school.
- iv. Working with families from diverse backgrounds: Families in the study area especially those affected by the ethnic violence, exposed learners to negative situations that affected their performance in school. As an attempt to minimize these negative effects the principals introduced programs such as feeding, counseling and boarding programs for these students. These programs by their very nature required parental support in order to succeed. The principals worked tirelessly with all students and parents without considering their tribal affiliations or situations. By taking into consideration the home situation the principals working relationships with the families improved and as a result all families benefitted. The principals also deliberately collaboration with the parents to offer the necessary needed support students from different ethnic groups and situations. Families come in many shapes and sizes with multiple perspectives, expectations, and communication styles. The principals encouraged understanding and celebration of diverse family forms, cultures, ethnicities, linguistic backgrounds, and socio-economic status. This was said to be important by the principals because they saw diversity as strength.
- v. Supervision: One of the professional roles of a school leader in a school is that of an instructional leader. Principals in the study area gave examples of previous principals who had been demoted for ignoring this very important duty. Because this is carried out in the school, teachers and staff need to have trust in the principal's supervision and in staff performance evaluations. When staff perceives the principal as fair, they accept evaluations and aim at improving where necessary. In a study of perception of

fairness of performance valuations, the level of trust in the supervisor was deemed important (Fulk, Brief, & Barr, 1985). As a result, principals were actively involved in greater inspection of teachers' classroom practice. Data from this research confirmed that this supervision was practiced in such a way that the greater attention was perceived as increased care, thus giving the principals an opportunity to demonstrate their competence and expertise. This led to improved instruction and better performance by the learners. Also the principals initiated changes on the self and in their respective schools that increased their competence and degree of professionalism. Some principals were in class teaching whereas some took part in extracurricular activities. For instance the principal made sure that there were enough teachers in the schools and learning occurred.

- vi. Managing: This was another method the principals used to build trust with the parents. In addition to being instructional leaders, principals are also charged with the responsibility for management and administration (Tschannen-Moran M. , Trust matters: Leadership for successful schools, 2004). Principals said that they at times delegated control to other staff and is they were bound by the need to do everything themselves. As they cultivated trust with the teachers, the need for rules and rigid procedures to ensure that teaching is going on in their schools also diminished. And as they fostered a strong sense of trust with parents and their communities, they found that they spent less time explaining their actions. The principals noted that they were not manipulative at all. The never avoided conflict in their schools by lax enforcement of school rules. They found the right balance in their handling of school policies, rules and procedures in their respective schools. They did not abuse their power through manipulation or over reliance on a strict interpretation of rules. Instead

- they demonstrated flexibility by focusing on possibilities and solving problems than control. Data confirmed that principals in the study area saw rules as means to an end rather than as an in themselves (Tschannen-Moran M. , Trust matters:Leadership for successful schools, 2004).
- vii. Free flow of information: Data from this research also confirmed that when information and data is readily available to the parents, conflict incidences diminish. Principals confirmed that the issue of finances was a thorny issue and parents required that they know how their money was spent. Parents' seemed to support a principal who was seen to invest and spend the money wisely and who was willing to explain his expenditures. Any expenditure shrouded in secrecy was viewed negatively and were a catalyst for constant conflicts. As a result the principals embarked on initiating development projects in their schools. All the data and information as relates to the projects from the initiation stage through the implementation stage was made available to the parents. Thus being open and development conscious was another way through which principals build trust with the parents.

Trustworthy leaders are at the heart of successful schools. Trustworthy leadership gets parents on the same team, pulling in the same direction. With parents having a high trust level in them, principals can celebrate that fact and take action to strengthen that trustful relationship, thereby fostering even greater levels of trust. The more trustworthy the principals become, the more confidence the parents develop towards the ability of the principals to meet their demands and their expectations. As a result, the parents relax and become more engaged in the school activities. As evidenced from this research, the parents became more supportive of the principal and consequently gave them more resources, support, and autonomy in the running of the school.



Furthermore trust has been identified as a vital component of effective school-community relationships (Dunst, Johanson, Rounds, Trivette, & Hamby, 1992). Resources that provide guidance to educators interested in building trust with parents are available (Margolis & Brannigan, 1986); Unfortunately studies that have investigated building of trust in circumstances and contexts similar to those in south western Kenya between school leaders and parents are rare in the educational research literature.

### **Implications for Research**

Trust has been identified as a vital component of effective school-community relationships (Dunst, Johanson, Rounds, Trivette, & Hamby, 1992). Resources that provide guidance to educators interested in building trust with parents are available (Margolis & Brannigan, 1986); unfortunately studies that have investigated building of trust in circumstances and contexts similar to those in South Western Kenya between school leaders and parents are rare in the educational research literature. The issue, then, that needs to be explored is how principals build relationships in contexts similar to those in this study.

Secondly, one of the issues that emerged in this study is the degree of dependability of the principals on the parents for inputs and resources that are necessary for the smooth running of the school. When the degree is high, principals are disadvantaged as trust then translates itself from a natural occurrence to a mandatory occurrence from the principal's perspective. This might not be an issue in environments where the control of the resources as well as its supply is guaranteed and monitored by state organizations. In a situation where parents are fully in control of the school, principals are left at the mercy of parents and as such there is possibility of manipulation by the parents. What then should be further studied is how this dependability and vulnerability of principals can be minimized in contested environments.

Thirdly, trust develops between groups of individuals. For this study, it was between principals and parents. The findings in this study focused only on the principals and the input and role of parents was not highlighted. There is need for further research on what role the parents would play in developing a strong bond with the principals in contested areas.

Fourth, the focus of this study was secondary school principals. Because of the unique contextual characteristics that the principals face in the study area, there is a possibility that principals working in areas where ethnic violence is not prevalent might face different demands and expectations especially bearing in mind that the construction of school and schooling directly influences parental expectations. And since it is the attainments of these expectations that determines in some way whether parents will trust a principal, a more inclusive study covering other contexts should take place.

Fifth, this study was limited to six principals of public schools. But the effect of ethnic violence as well as the need for trustful relationships between principals and parents is not limited to the six principals. There are many schools located in the study area. For example, primary schools, private secondary schools as well as boarding schools. It is likely that other schools are experiencing similar contextual characteristics. Future studies should be conducted at the primary school level, in particular, to compare the consistency of these results.

Finally, expanding this study to include other geographical region, besides contested areas, would further benefit administrators. There exists a substantial amount of research regarding the importance of trust. The conclusions from this research, however, were produced from a relatively unique contextual environment. There exists no research on building trust with parents in contested areas. The data, therefore, is unique. The findings of further study could be

compared and contrasted with the findings in this study to develop a framework for administration to work with for future trust building efforts.

### **Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to find out how secondary principals in south western Kenya, along the borders of Rift Valley and Nyanza province build trust with parents. Considering the amount of suspicion and uneasiness caused by the emergence of tribal clashes in the study area, the participants were generally candid about their opinions. As a prerequisite, the questionnaire was developed but once in the field the researcher discovered the inapplicability of the document due to inconsistencies between western constructions of trust and trust development. Albeit this setback, all of the interviews conducted proved unique and enlightening in their own ways. The level of interest in the questions asked during the interview led the interviewer to believe the topic is relevant and requires further investigation to definitively conclude 'best practice' for the future.

The research study was initially grounded in three research questions, all dealing with how principals build trust in contested areas. Unfortunately, question two and three were found to be inapplicable in the field because they were based on a literature review that had been conducted by the researcher. Much of that reviewed literature did not take into consideration contextual differences. Consequently, the first question based the foundation of this study with other supporting ones emerging from the responses of the participants as the interviews progressed. The following sections will discuss these supporting questions separately.

The first research question asked participants what the term trust meant to them. The data indicated, each of the principals had an idea of what trust was. Trust was when the principals

fulfilled expectations or when they behaved in an open manner devoid of any mysteries or inconsistencies. Trust was also defined as having the competence of carrying out a given duty.

The second research question asked principals what role parents played in their schools. The data indicated that parents are important to high school principal in the study area. Parents are a source of inputs for the schools; they enhance school operations as well as safety of the school. The principals also indicated that parents enable a positive learning environment.

The third question asked participants unique contextual problems they encountered working in contested areas. The participants confirmed that working in a violence prone environment has its own unique problems. The data indicated that principals faced uncertainty due to fluctuating student enrolment and lack of assurance of their safety. They were also vulnerable due to lack of commitment by parents towards educational endeavors in general. The students also came to school with social problems such as broken homes as well as child abuse issues especially due to the instability caused by the ethnic violence. Working along a contested area, the principals had to deal with parental demands such as reserving jobs for community members only. In general, data indicated that principals were overly dependent on the parents.

The fourth question required participants to reflect back to when they hired and explain why they think they got their current positions. The data indicated that competence, experience and institutional support were important in ascending to a leadership position. In addition, the principals indicated that interests of the sponsor, local politicians as well as community interests were important and considered during the interview process.

The fifth question asked participants about their efforts in building trust with the parents. From the data gathered, it is evident that trust is built when the social distance between the

principal and community as well as the parents is closed or minimized. This is possible first by being involved in social and cultural events in the community, offering service to the community as well as attending village meetings and contributing where necessary. Secondly, to close the gap between the principal and the parents, one has to know the parents by name, be open to the parents, seek their opinion, and listen to the parents as well as attending to them promptly when they come to school. Thirdly, data indicated that trust could be built through an improvement in the principal's personal conduct. For instance, by being both visible and available in the school compound, a good dress code as well as maintaining high moral standards both within and outside the school. Finally, trust can be built by maintaining good professional conduct such as being competent in ones work, ensuring safety of the learners and initiating development projects in the school.

In conclusion, it is clear from this research that the process of building trust between a principals and parents is a complicated endeavor, worthy of further investigation. It is also clear that principals in this study value highly trustful relationships and the findings clearly support previous research regarding the importance of trust in the success of schools.

When I began the journey of narrowing a dissertation topic, the literature led me to the topic of trust. Reading the literature, I thought, qualified me as an „expert“ on the topic. Now that I have conducted research on the topic, however, I realize I have more questions than answers. The reality of trust and trust building are complicated and enlightening. Personally, as well as professionally, I have come to four conclusions:

1. Trust, regardless of the contextual characterizes is a necessary ingredient in any meaningful relations. Indeed trust is so common that we fail to appreciate the tremendous role it plays in our daily lives. It is impossible to imagine a life without trust. Such a life

would be full of conflicts and development would be impossible as people become reluctant to expose themselves to risks. In schools and organizations, trust is important as their survival is hinged on developing trust.

2. Security and safety of everyone is not negotiable. Having worked in the study area and studied abroad, I realized how disadvantaged our people are. I realized that even though we belong to different political parties or ethnic tribes, when trouble comes, it does not discriminate. We are all affected in equal measure. When a people take arms against each other, it gives rise to distrust and this eventually affects schools as social ills filter in the school compound. Consequently, schools are not islands and there is need for people to develop communal policies that are pro trust and pro schooling.
3. Students irrespective of whether they are in Kenya or elsewhere in the world, have the same needs. To be socialized into the community and the world in which they live. Even though societies might differ, giving rise to different parental expectations, children in any society have the same needs. To be educated and acquire the necessary skills to succeed in the wider society. Consequently, all the stake holders need to be more focused and develop strategies that will ensure the success of all children.
4. School principals at whatever level need to develop trust with the parents and the communities they serve. Even though, the degree of control and influence of parents in schools located in different geographical locations might fluctuate, the need for the principal to initiate and develop trustful relationships with the stakeholders does not waiver. As part of their roles, principals are required to develop and maintain good public relations with the community they serve. Parents need to be on board in order to ensure the success of the learners. Parents might not have the same control over principals in

America, but they have an important role to play at home in preparing their children for learning.

It is my belief that trust and trust building is an important topic, particularly in schools where trusting relations have been linked with successful schools and schooling. I hope this research adds to the growing literature regarding trust and successful school leadership. Further, I hope the conclusions that emerged from the data will help leadership advance their practice and improve the reality of parents, teachers and students.

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## APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

### SECTION A: Personal Data

1. What is your name?
2. How long have you been a secondary school principal?
  - ✓ Stationed anywhere in the republic of Kenya
  - ✓ In your current school
3. Briefly explain how you were recruited as a principal in your current school
4. Briefly explain your duties prior to becoming a secondary school principal.

### SECTION B: Data on Trust

1. How would you define trust?
2. Is it necessary for you as a school principal to have high levels of trust with the parents in your school?
3. What are some of the common issues that you deal with, related to students who come from the areas surrounding your school?
4. What challenges do you face in maintaining the trust of parents from this environment?
5. What are some of the unique characteristics of the parents in this area that you wouldn't find in say areas that are further away from the border?
6. Do you think it is important that the parents should trust you?
7. What kind of support do the parents give you as the principal of this school, which if they lose trust you won't have
8. How will the withdrawal of parents trust in you as the principal affect how you run the school?
9. Do you think that trust is important for a high school principal, why?

10. How would you know as a school principal/leader that you are trusted by the parents you serve?
11. What would you do as a high school principal to try and earn that trust and if you already have it, get more of it?
12. How would go about gaining that trust?
13. So can you focus on those bricks and tell me some of those bricks you would use to build trust in a school?
14. Do you have... would you say certain people whom you would consult and don't you think if you do that some quarter of the parents would feel that probably you are not in control and that somebody is in control?
15. What are some of these challenges that make it so impossible for you to attain the expectations or next to impossible?
16. With specific reference to this environment, what challenges do you face in maintaining the trust of parents?
17. Do you think the environment in terms of being located along the border and especially a border that is not very stable do you think that could also another problem?
18. Why do you think the parents were attracted to you as the principal?
19. Do you think it is easy to build trust in a school that is located in an unstable environment or a school that is well established in a stable environment?
20. Where is it easier for you as a principal to work and take fully control of an institution, in stable or unstable environments?
21. Is it easier to form trust with the parents in a stable school or an unstable one?
22. Do you think marital status of a principal influences the readiness with which parents form trusting relationships?



23. Do you think parents will be more comfortable with married or an unmarried principal?
24. Given for example a male principal or female principal, who among the two would the parents find it easier to develop trust
25. Do you think being a male principal is easier than being a female principal in this environment?
26. What is the importance of availability and flow of information in the formation of trust between the parents and the principal?
27. Do you see any connection between lack of information and the level of trust between the principal and the parents?
28. Do you think too much trust can be harmful?
29. Is there a point you think too much trust becomes a problem?
30. Say there was a burial next to the school compound .What are the expectations of the parents and how will that affect the trust the parents have in you?

**APPENDIX 2: RECRUITMENT LETTER**

September 9, 2010

Subject: Participation in an interview in research project  
Dear [Participant],

This letter concerns a request for your participation in a research project entitled **“How High School Principals Build Trust in Kenyan High Schools.”** This official letter is to inform you about that project and request an interview at your school. We are interested in understanding how school administrators in the south western border provinces are responding to trust formation and parental expectations in an era characterized with Ethnic tensions. The information and insights you could provide through the interview would very helpful in understanding the current trust challenges facing educators in Kenya and elsewhere at this time.

The interviews would take place at your school some time from January 2011 to March 2011 at a time convenient to your schedule and availability. Your participation is completely voluntary and all information provided would remain confidential.

We hope you will agree to participate in this project. If you have any questions, please contact the research team by email, phone or the address below.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jeffrey S. Brooks  
Associate Professor, Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis  
Editor, Journal of School Leadership  
University of Missouri  
202 Hill Hall  
Columbia, Missouri 65211  
Telephone: 573.882.3371  
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### **APPENDIX3: RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF HEAD TEACHERS**

**(Head Teachers Manual, Ministry of Education, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)**

- They are expected to promote and provide for the needs of learners in accordance to schedules of responsibilities and duties as outlined by the TSC
- Planning, budgeting and ensuring proper appropriate use of all teaching and learning resources
- Supervision of curriculum to ensure effective teaching and learning
- Financial management to nurture goodwill for continued support by all stakeholders
- Management of staff to sustain high morale, motivation, high integrity, and appropriate work ethics
- School community relations, health, security and welfare for harmonious working and peaceful co-existence, based on acceptable conduct and behavior amongst students, teachers, non-teaching staff, parents and all stakeholders.
- To recruit and employ registered teachers, assign teachers employed by the commission for service in any public schools, promote or transfer any such teacher, to terminate the employment of any such teacher, and to exercise the powers conferred on the commission by the code of regulations published under section 6 of this Act
  - To delegate any such person or body, with the consent of the minister and subject to such conditions as he may impose, any of its powers under paragraph (a) above of this subsection
  - Responsible for the overall running and control of the school and for the maintenance of the tone of the all-round standards
  - He is expected to appoint head of departments and subject heads as well as delegate duties to other members of the teaching staff
  - Should make regular visits to laboratories and workshops and other special rooms to ensure safety precautions are put in place
  - Responsible for all revenue and expenditure
  - Must ensure that the office is run in an orderly and business way
  - Responsible for the selection of the subjects appearing in the school curriculum
  - He is the linkman between the TSC and the ministry
  - As a secretary to the BOG he is responsible for writing and distributing minutes of the Board's meetings
  - He is expected to teach a reasonable load in order for him to be in touch with the actual teaching/learning situation in the school
  - He should facilitate and encourage the establishment of PTA's and to cultivate good relations both with parents and the local community

**APPENDIX 4: HEAD TEACHER'S APPOINTMENT IN KENYA**

| <b>Category in the Scheme Of Service</b> | <b>Promotional Grade</b>   | <b>Job Group</b> | <b>Possible Deployment Positions</b>   |
|--|--|------------------|--|
| IV                                       | Graduate/Approved Teacher 1  | L                | Head of department in a secondary school with 9-14 classes<br>Deputy head teacher in a school with 9-14 classes<br>Head teacher in a secondary school with 5-8 classes |
| V  | Senior Graduate/Approved Teacher   | M                | Head teacher in a secondary school with 9-14 classrooms  |
| VI                                       | Principal Graduate/Approved Teacher 1                                    | N                | Head teacher in a secondary school with 15 or more classes<br>Deputy head teacher in a national school   |
| VII                                      | Principal Graduate/Approved Teacher 11                                   | P                | Head teacher in a national school, teachers colleges or polytechnics   |
| VIII                                     | Senior Principal Graduate/Approved Teacher (Presidential Directive,1994) | Q                | Head teachers of a national school, national polytechnics  |
| IX                                       | Chief Principal Graduate/Approved Teacher (Presidential Directive,1996)  | R                | Head teachers of a national school, teachers colleges, and national polytechnics.  |

*SOURCE: TEACHERS SERVICE COMMISSION, 1998*

## **APPENDIX 5: A SCHEME OF SERVICE FOR KENYAN SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**

The TSC implemented a scheme of service for Graduate/Approved Teachers of August 1988 TSC Circular No.9/88 Ref .TSC/ADM/192 A/Vol. V/79/ dated 15<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1988 -was approved by DPM and used in the selection, recruitment, deployment and promotion of teachers in public schools including the head teachers

Grading structure

Untrained Graduate Teacher, Job Group H

Graduate/Approved Teacher 111, Job Group J

Graduate/Approved Teacher 11, Job Group K

Graduate Approved Teacher 1, Job Group L

Senior /Approved Teacher, Job Group M

Principal Graduate/Approved Teacher 11, Job Group N

Principal Graduate/Approved Teacher 1, Job Group P

Senior Principal Graduate/Approved Teacher, Job Group Q

Chief Principal Graduate/Approved Teacher, Job Group R

### REQUIREMENTS

For one to be considered as a secondary school principals they have to meet the following

- A Bachelor's degree from a recognized university with at least one teaching subject as a major
- A Bachelor's degree in education from a recognized university
- A post graduate diploma in education from a recognized university
- A Master's degree in education from a recognized university

## VITAE

Joel Ondieki Abaya undertook his doctoral degree at the University of Missouri in the department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis (ELPA). He holds a bachelor of education (Arts) majoring in Economics and geography from the College of Education and External Studies (CEES), University of Nairobi, Kenya. He also holds a Masters of Educational Administration from the University of New Brunswick-Fredericton in Canada. He has worked as a high school teacher for many years in Kenya and as a long term supply teacher with the Columbia Public Schools in Columbia, Missouri. He hopes to get a faculty position in research University. His research interests include: Leadership in contested areas; managing school-community relationships, effects of ethnic violence on schools and school leadership, and effect of culture on parental expectations.