



## **‘Arming the Rebels for Development’: Parental Involvement among Fishing Communities in Tanzania**

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### **Abstract**

The reality of life for children in the fishing villages of Tanzania’s inner lakes is: the father (or the head of the family who often happens to be a man) is fishing the whole night and sleeping during the day. The mother sleeps during the night and is either selling fish in one of the markets or is working on the land during the day. This circle often knows no weekends or public holidays and allows little room for contacts between parents/guardians and children, forcing children to morally and emotionally raise themselves or/and attach themselves to any other available authority. These children do not attend any formal schooling and are often are labelled *watoro* (absent from school) or ‘rebels’. While the formal education system demands that children of school-going age be at school, the fishing community’s social organisation and the labour market follows different patterns that do not really allow for optimal presence of parents to raise their children. This paper looks at the present state of families with school-age children in rural Tanzania and the problems they face in engaging fully in their children’s lives. Using the theories of Parental Involvement (PI) and Cultural Capital (CC), a survey carried out for this study found out that being present or absent from school for the children is not always a question of lack of time; it has often to do with what is considered important in the society on one hand and the demands exerted by the nature of income generating activities such as fishing, business and farming, on the other.

**Key Words:** Socializing low-income children; Economic incentives for schooling; rebel children

### **Résumé**

Les enfants des villages de pêcheurs situés dans le voisinage des lacs intérieurs de Tanzanie sont confrontés à une dure réalité. En effet, le père (ou chef de famille, qui souvent est un homme) passe toute la nuit à pêcher et la journée à dormir. Quant à la mère, elle dort la nuit et vend du poisson au marché ou

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travaille la terre le jour. La plupart du temps, ce cercle vicieux ne connaît ni weekends ni jours fériés. Il laisse peu de temps aux parents/tuteurs et enfants d'avoir des contacts, obligeant ainsi les enfants à s'assumer tout seuls moralement et émotionnellement, ou à se rallier à toute autre autorité disponible. Ces enfants ne sont plus scolarisés normalement. On les surnomme en général des *watoro* (ce qui signifie absents de l'école) ou « rebelles ». Alors que le système éducatif formel impose à chaque enfant en âge d'aller à l'école d'être scolarisé, l'organisation sociale de la communauté des pêcheurs et le marché du travail suivent un modèle différent qui ne prévoit pas véritablement la présence optimale des parents pour assurer l'éducation de leurs enfants. Cette étude examine la situation actuelle des familles ayant des enfants en âge de scolarisation dans la zone rurale de la Tanzanie, et les problèmes qu'elles rencontrent à vouloir se consacrer à la vie de leurs enfants. Utilisant les théories sur l'Implication parentale (IP) et le Capital culturel (CC), une enquête conduite dans le cadre de cette étude a établi que la présence ou l'absence à l'école des enfants n'est pas toujours liée au manque de temps ; il relève plus souvent de ce que l'on considère comme important dans la société d'une part et des exigences liées à la nature des activités génératrices de revenus telles que la pêche, les affaires et l'agriculture d'autre part.

## Introduction

'My father leaves for fishing in the evening and comes back in the morning. He then takes a rest before he starts preparing his fishing gear for the evening's fishing round. My mother collects fish from the landing site and goes on to sell it to one of the markets here or to the next village. She does this the whole day.'

This statement is from fourteen-year-old Evelina Ntabona of Mwakizega village in Kigoma region, western Tanzania. The statement reflects the reality of life for many young people in fishing villages in and around the inland lakes of Tanzania. Evelina goes to the local primary school and has three more siblings. Her family depends entirely on fishing. The reality of life in the fishing villages of Tanzania's inner lakes is: the father (or the man in the family) is fishing the whole night and sleeping during the day. The mother sleeps during the night and is either selling fish in one of the markets or is working on the land during the day. Many young adults join this business as well either because they have to help their parents or they do this to earn some money. This circle often knows no weekends or public holidays, except for nine to ten full moon days. Apart from fishing many families engage in other socio-economic activities such as farming and petty trading. This labour organisation means there is often minimal contact between children and their parents leading the children to either morally and emotionally raise themselves or/and attach themselves to any other available authority.

## **The Rebel Context**

Among fishing communities in Tanzania, owning one's own fishing gear is the important thing in the industry. While other activities such as attending school are considered of some relative importance, few invest time and money in them. 'Rebel' is a term used here to denote children who leave school due to the lack of proper parenting, counselling and encouragement. These children drop out in order to pursue other goals in life and quite often end up on the streets in the nearby towns or join the labour market at an early age and without any proper education. And yet for many children, attending school is part of the compulsory system of the government, consequently putting children at the crossroads of two systems operating along each other: the formal education system where a child should attend school during the compulsory education age and the social system where achievement is measured in terms of social representation and material gains such as housing, fishing boats and the number of people in one's family, irrespective of one's age.

Most parents engage fully in fishing/farming activities and have no time to participate fully in their children's upbringing. The choice is then often left to the children: go to school (where you do not see a future in it) or join the 'production activities' such as fishing, farming and handicraft (and be called a rebel by the formal education system). Why are the parents not there then to help children choose where to go? There are many factors contributing to this situation and the big question is whether these can be reconciled with the way of life for many fishing communities in order to provide these children with the skills they need in life. This paper looks at five fishing villages of Kigoma Rural in western Tanzania in order to try and understand the reasons behind poor parental involvement and the culture surrounding the provision of education to the children.

## **Livelihood in Fishing Villages along Lake Tanganyika**

Lake Tanganyika lies at 773m above mean sea level; has a length of 673 km and a surface area of 32,900 km<sup>2</sup> with a maximum width of 48 km and maximum depth of 1,470 m, making it the second deepest lake in the World (Bilame 2011; Jorgensen et al., 2005). The lake has an average depth of 570 m and the water volume stands at 18,800 km<sup>3</sup> (Coulter 1966). The fish catch from the lake contributes up to US\$ 26 million to the economy for the countries in the basin (Bilame 2011; FAO 2000). The lake basin has very fertile soil and many subsistence agricultural activities take place here as well (Mung'ong'o 1999).

There are about ten million people living within and around the Lake Tanganyika basin, many of whom engage fully in fishing activities and almost entirely derive their livelihood directly from the basin (Jorgensen et al., 2006). The lake basin supports a wide collection of subsistence and commercial activities and has a colourful assemblage of tropical flora and fauna (Mung'ong'o 1999), including highly diverse populations of endemic fish (Bilame 2011). Fishing and agricultural activities have a similar pattern among rural communities who share the lake. There are four countries sharing the lake basin in terms of surface area: Burundi (8%), DR Congo (45%), Tanzania (41%) and Zambia (6%). Among these countries, the population obtains about 25 per cent to 40 per cent of the protein needs from fish (Jorgensen et al., 2005). The most known species, the 'Tanganyika Sardines' (*Stolothrissa tanganicae*, locally known in Tanzania as *dagaa*) makes an important part of the economic activities in these four countries. Tanganyika Sardines account for between 55 per cent and 90 per cent of all commercial fisheries which mainly feed the export market and between 80 per cent and 99 per cent of traditional artisanal fishery (Rufli 2001) that supports both local commercial activities and local consumption. The second highest catch per annum is the *Luciolates stappersii* (locally known in Tanzania as *migebuka*) which is sold fresh as well as smoked and twisted to form a circle before being packed for transportation.

Traditional and artisanal fishery generally uses three types of boats: the dugout canoe, the planked canoe and the catamaran, with the planked canoe (57%) being the most frequently used (Leendertse and Horemans 1991). These boats are basically made in many villages and can be customized according to the fishers' needs. The fishing gear is often determined by the kind of boat used for fishing. The three common types of gear used are beach seines, scoop nets and lift net. Other types of fishing gear used to a lesser extent are the gill netting and hook. These types of gear are local in nature and entirely used for subsistence (Kigoma Socio-Economic Report 2006). The major crops that are cultivated include palm trees, cassava, beans, maize and bananas. These crops provide local households with subsistence food with the surplus being sold to earn money for buying other households needs such as kerosene and foodstuff. The palm tree is the most multi-purpose agricultural plant with a divergence of products such as palm oil (known as *mawese* in western Tanzania), the extract of which local beer is made (*malovu*), soap and fodder. The tree branches are commonly used for house construction and the trunk provides the major source for cooking charcoal, fuel wood for smoking fishes and other indoor uses.

Other livelihood activities in and around Lake Tanganyika are trade and travel where several commercial and passenger ships ply their trade from

Bujumbura in Burundi to Mpulungu in Zambia and Kalemie (DRC) to Kigoma in Tanzania. Tourism activities have substantially increased, especially on the Tanzanian and Zambian sides where the Gombe Stream, Mahale National Park (Tanzania), Kasaba Bay and Ndole Bay (Zambia) attract a number of tourists every year. Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi and Uvira and Kalemie (DRC) have tourists attractions as well.

### **Conceptual Framework: Parental Involvement (PI) and Cultural Capital Theory (CCT)**

In order to understand the underlying factors regarding the importance of parental involvement in the general development of their children, two concepts have been used that particularly suit the fishing communities surveyed. They are parental involvement (PI) and culture using the Cultural Capital theory. There is an abundance of literature on PI in the education of children and the effects that this involvement has socially. Research on the effects of parental involvement has shown a consistent, positive relationship between parents' engagement in their children's education and student outcomes (Epstein 1995). Studies have also shown that parental involvement is associated with student outcomes such as lower dropout and truancy rates. Whether or not PI can improve student outcomes is no longer in question (Sui-Chu & Williams 1996 in Kloek 2007). While PI in children's education is often seen as a natural responsibility (Dermirbas et al., 1995, in Kloek 2007), there is a shortage of literature on parental involvement, especially away from school including when children are at home or at any other place besides school or other matters outside of those concerning schooling.

PI in the child's education comes in many forms and shapes. Basically it means 'an active involvement of the parents in the education of their children' (Peters 1974: 27) and can be seen as institutional and non-institutional involvement (Smit 1991). Institutional involvement depicts how a parent is involved in the running of the school by joining in parental organizations and school councils while non-institutional involvement is more concerned with the creation of the right environment for the child to be able to learn. Such an environment might include things such as a keen follow up of what the child is doing at school and helping him/her with homework (Peters 1979) and creating a learning space at home where children can comfortably focus on their education (Lareau 2000; Epstein 1995).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) further discuss the theory of PI away from school by arguing that PI is a function of a parent's beliefs about parental roles and responsibilities, a parent's sense that he/she can help his/her children succeed in school, and the opportunities for involvement provided

by the school or teacher. It is here argued that PI should be the choice of a parent in the first place and that the school and/or teachers can offer opportunities for the parent to participate fully (Harber & Schweisfurth 2002; Davies & Kirkpatrick 2000; Moggach 2006, in Mncube 2009). The idea that PI is a question of belief derives from the notion that when parents are involved fully in what is happening to their child's education then the children's schooling is affected through the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and an increased sense of confidence that he/she can succeed in school (Epstein 2001). However other studies have suggested that PI is not always a question of choice. Sometimes the role of education and the presence of facilities on offer from the school play a major role. In a study in one of the fishing villages along Lake Tanganyika, Mung'ong'o (1999) discovered that while there was a small number of students who went on to join secondary school after primary education, the general mood among parents was that education did not really matter much as there were no positive examples of those who went through the primary education system (p. 8). Mung'ong'o noted that at a primary school with an annual intake of 453 pupils, there were only six teachers leading to overcrowded classes. Many parents see more problems at schools in rural fishing villages than advantages and as a result provide their children with fishing skills and farms to eke a livelihood. Children are needed by their parents to help out with fishing activities rather than staying at school where the future is never secure.

Studies have consistently shown the positive side of education involvement arguing for the link between a child's achievement and the parents' keen involvement. Among these studies are those that show that children whose parents are involved in their education, achieve higher grade point averages (Gutman and Midgley 2000), are less prone to dropout (Rumberger 1995), often do not need or get into retention and special education placements (Miedel and Reynolds 1999). Other studies have shown a visible improvement in writing skills (Epstein, Simon and Salinas, 1997), in mathematics (Izzo, Weissberg, Kaspro and Fendrich 1999 in Mncube 2009) and an increased reading capacity (Senechal & LeFevre 2002).

Epstein (1995) distinguished six forms of PI in their children education as: (i) Parenting, (ii) Communicating, (iii) Volunteering, (iv) Learning at Home, (v) Decision-Making, and (vi) Collaborating with the Community. Parenting refers to parents' actions that foster the children's learning and cognitive development, not necessarily tied to school. Communicating covers all home-to-school communication regarding children's academic development and other academically relevant information. Volunteering includes parental attendance in a variety of school events ranging in scope from classroom activities to school-wide events. Learning at Home is more schoolwork-

specific than Parenting (form one). It involves assisting with homework, encouraging hard work in school, and emotionally supporting the child in her/his academic challenges. Decision-Making reflects how much parents advocate for their children's interests and influence the school environment. Collaborating with the Community refers to the degree to which parents know about and use community resources that support children's learning (Epstein 1995, 2001).

PI thus requires a full understanding of parents' responsibilities towards the child's education (Demirbas et al., 1995) and the community participatory disposition that allows for parents to believe in the effects of involvement for the future of their children (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 1997). The involvement of parents with their children's education, though starting fundamentally at home, can be enhanced through active participation at community and organizational levels. This is because parents who participate in the decision-making process on how schools are run and how their children are being prepared for the future, experience greater feelings of ownership and are more committed to supporting the school's mission (Jackson & Davis 2000). This ownership reflects Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997)'s idea of participation by belief. Once parents understand their part in their children's consequent future careers they develop a greater appreciation of their role (McBride 1991).

The discussion above assumes that the environment at school and at home is conducive for parents to get involved and that pupils and teachers communicate well enough to allow parents to understand what is expected of them. However there is little research on parents' involvement at home. Many studies show the effects of parents involvement at home in relationship to education achievement (Epstein 1995), but observation shows that especially in fishing communities, the relationship of the parents and children at home is defined by culture. The culture at home however is not always what the children are taught at school, creating disharmony in the child's learning process (Ringenberg, McElwee and Israel 2009). Labour organisation among fishing communities means boys go with their fathers to fishing activities and girls join mothers. In this situation one could speak of full parental involvement in imparting to their children's economic activities skills and knowledge. The problem of this style of involvement is that parents do not often have time for their children. In studies conducted in South Africa, for example, parents (especially male parents) spend much of their time away, working on mines and other income generating activities. The result is having fathers who are gone for most of the year and mostly interact with their families by bringing a remitted share of their meagre pay. These fathers do not and cannot offer regular guidance or love as the children grow (Sparks

1991). Among fishing communities 'fathers' are away fishing for most part of the year (October-March) and slow down during low season (April-September). The low season is equally busy as they often combine subsistence farming with fishing (Bilame 2011). Since there are no other means of income sustainability, work on both fishing and agriculture is constantly being done, leaving little room for parent- child interaction in other areas than fishing or farming.

Fishing is strictly divided along gender lines, causing problems for parents to be involved in their children away from school. If fathers are mostly out of the home and only have a chance to interact with their children minimally during the low season then we can assume that such interaction often happens during farming and that such interaction is restricted to boys due to gender segregation in farming practices. According to reports by the Government of Tanzania on education (URT 2005), girls perform better than boys at school (Mbelle 2006). This comes as a result of a girl-friendly school environment, counselling and a special encouragement to female pupils to join and stay at schools (URT 2004). The big question here is whether these girls get the girl-friendly environment at home in order to pursue their education undisturbed. This is a cultural phenomenon whereby boys are traditionally given the role of the bread winner from an early age on. Previous research on Tanzanian girls' performance both at home and at school have consistently shown that girls are affected by the way they are valued, encouraged and advised at home. It has been shown in Tanzania that girls receive negative expectations about their studies, from teachers, peers and the community at large (Malmberg and Sumra 2000). There is a relation between school achievement and self-concepts. Studies have shown that high-achieving students at school have a more positive academic self-concept and higher self-esteem (Skaalvik, Valfins & Sletta 1994; Korpinen 1990), relating to parents being involved in their development (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 1997).

### **Cultural Capital Theory**

Cultural Capital Theory (CCT) refers to Bourdieu's (1983) theory explaining the relationships of the specific background of an individual to that of the environment in which they find themselves. Although in essence CCT is a very general theory and proves difficulty in pinning-down the relative influence of particular cultural factors among fishing communities, it is useful for the general concept of the cultural sphere of influence for the children in the surveyed area. The theory specifically uses the concepts of field, *habitus* and cultural capital (CC), which will be applied here in order to conceptualize the role of culture in the involvement of parents. Because

the theory is applied in relationship to PI in education, the field will represent the school and the environment and the norms that are expected and valued within that operational environment. Habitus includes the individual's values, the lens through which the individual sees the world, and one's consequent actions. Habitus is home to one's mind. The degree of fit between the field and habitus determines the level of cultural capital the parent has within that particular field (school). The more the habitus differs from the field, the greater chance there is for misunderstanding, suspicion, and a devaluing of the individual (Ringenberg McElwee and Israel 2009). Education (school field) among fishing communities often feels disembodied from the actual habitus.

While it is understood that parents in fishing communities understand the importance of education (Regional Socio-economic Development Report 2006), the actual environment (habitus) differs directly with that of the school (field). In a community where status and security defines the person's well-being and is shown in the possessions people have (Mung'ongo 1999; Bilame 2011), the value of education is seen as secondary to more urgent matters at hand. Whether gender bias plays a part on whether girls and boys will get an equal chance at an education depends on community cultural views on gender. It now comes down to how much parents value education or are educated themselves. These studies have established that the higher the educational level of parents, the higher their children perform at school and the more the likelihood of pursuing further studies (Malmberg and Sumra 2000). However these studies have not been very specific to, for instance, community-specific labour organization such as that of fishing communities. They also fail to capture the consequences of cultural practices to the degree to which socio-economic activities and education are valued. In Tanzania, for example, the educational level of parents has an impact on whether students apply for non-government schools or government schools, whether the child receives individual classes (tuition, as they are known in Tanzania) from the teacher after regular school hours, or whether the child is assisted doing homework (McGillicuddy-DeLisi & Subramanian 1994). This could be due to parents' ignorance of the system or the lack of resources. Added to that are the parents' attitudes and involvement towards their children's learning which often vary considerably according to educational levels (Malekela 1994; Mganga & Mizambwa 1997 in Malmberg & Sumra 2000: 208).

### **Primary Education Delivery and PI in Tanzania**

The structure of the formal education and training system in Tanzania uses a 2 - 7 - 4 - 2 - 3+ system, meaning there are two years of pre-primary education (year 1 and 2); seven years of primary education (divided in

standards I-VII); four years of secondary ordinary level education (divided in forms 1 to 4, also known as O Level); two years of secondary advanced level education, known as A Level. From this level students can join a college or a university for three or more years of education. The official school attending age ranges from 5–6 for pre-primary, 7–13 for primary, 14–17 for lower secondary, 18–19 for upper secondary and 20–24 for university education (MoEVT 1995).

The general guidance for the provision of education in Tanzania is stipulated in the National Education Act of 1978. Primary education is mandatory in Tanzania and every parent is under the legal obligation to ensure that his or her child attends school without failing. The 1995 Education and Training Policy provide an overall outline for the delivery of primary education (Mbelle 2006). Enrolment is predominantly primary in nature (87.5%) while other enrolments are from pre-primary at 6.8 per cent, secondary level 5.3 per cent and 0.4 per cent from teacher education (URT 1995). Primary education is grouped into pre-, a two-year education at home or at a nursery or kindergarten and takes the age group of four to six years. After this period, pupils join primary school for seven years of study. From 2007, every primary school should have a pre-primary school (MoEVT 2008) to allow access to education for many more children. While this looks like a good plan, its implementation has proved elusive especially among fishing communities due to the nature of their socio-economic activities.

The government is the principal provider of primary education with a 99.1 per cent of all enrolled pupils (URT 2005), leaving the private primary with a 0.9 per cent enrolment. Private providers of primary education are entirely found in towns where facilities such as transportation and electricity are available. This means for many villages in Tanzania the government is the only provider of primary education and often with only one school and heavily under-staffed. Although the Education and Training Policy (1995) states clearly that the objective of primary education is 'to lay the socio-cultural foundation and to prepare every citizen for lifelong education and learning process' (p. 4), this objective seems to conflict with the actual situation in the field, in reference to Bourdieu's (1983) Cultural Capital theory (see, Lee & Bowens 2006). Generally the cohort wastage (dropping out) problems have seen primary schools efficiency called into question. While the second Millennium Development Goal (MDG) calls for full completion of primary education for both genders by 2015 (UNDP 2003), completion rates have been worrying in Tanzania. In 2003, for example 27 per cent of pupils dropped out of school, meaning a quarter of all enrolled pupils in 1997 did not complete the full cycle (Mbelle 2006).

In June 2002 the government launched the 'Primary School Compulsory Enrolment and Attendance Rules 2002' that made it a criminal offence for parents not to enrol any seven year old into the first year of proper primary school. The rule prescribes several possible punishments for parents who allow their children to drop out of school before completing the full primary school cycle (seven years). The sentences range from a fine of Tanzanian Shillings 30,000 to 50,000 (about \$20 and \$32 respectively in 2011) which were at the time equivalent to half a minimum of the average monthly salary for civil servants. These fines could be substituted by a jail term of up to nine months or both fine and jail term for the failure to enrol a child, with an increment of 40 percent of the fine and up to nine months jail or both for allowing a child to dropout of school. The fact that many studies still point to cohort wastage in primary schools and the lack of evidence that parents have actually been punished and the effectiveness of such a punishment, if any, shows the weakness in such regulations (Mbelle 2006). The regulation does not take into account the actual circumstances and the labour organisation of different communities, making it ineffective in some quarters like in fishing villages. A wider approach that would fully involve parents or create an environment where parents can fully participate would be more effective than the financial punishments.

In 2002 the government started to implement a five-year Primary School Education Development Plan (PEDP) aiming at encouraging more girls to access a free and compulsory primary education. The question here is whether parents are involved and how much importance is accorded to education.

### **Background to the Study**

This study looks at the involvement of parents in the upbringing of their children among fishing villages along Lake Tanganyika. Among other work, Bilame's 2011 study showed how gear owners and fishers together accumulate wealth, but paid little attention to their children's education (Bilame 2011). The study makes an inventory of parent's participating, not only financially, but to a large extent emotionally and morally to the well-being of their children. The word 'parent' is used synonymously with (biological) parent, guardian, or any other older person (legally or circumstantially) taking care of a child effectively up to eighteen. The five villages researched along the lake are Ilagala, Bulombora, Mwakizega, Muyobozi and Kaseke. All of them share common characteristics as they are all primarily fishing villages with agricultural activities coming a distant second and chiefly occupied by women. The inhabitants of these villages comprise diverse ethnic groups with the Ha as the largest group, averaging between 60 percent and 70 percent of the total population. According to the

Kigoma Region Socio-economic Report (2006) this area is further populated by the Bwali from DRC, Wiremeni and Watongwe.

There is an active movement of people across social and geographic boundaries caused by the nature of fishing activities such as landing at a site other than one's home village (Reynolds et al., 1999) and establishing a semi-permanent home there and the frequent political unrest in neighbouring DRC and Burundi. There are no records that exactly show the beginning of these settlements, but the available village data show that as early as the nineteenth century there were settlements here that were only created in their present state in the 1950s and 1970s (Mung'ong'o 1997, 1998, 1999). This survey was conducted on the villages in Kigoma Rural. The 2002 census data show that there are about 450,000 people living in Kigoma Rural District with 72,085 households averaging 6.8 inhabitants per household (URT 2002). This is an increase of 4.1 percent compared with the national census of 1988. The district has 75 villages with a further total of 471 sub-villages. The sex ratios stood at 93 males for every 100 females, a decrease at a rate of 0.02 in comparison to the census of 1988 (Regional Commissioner's Office, Kigoma 2006). The district has a dependence ratio of 1.09:1, which looks low, but varies largely from one household to another. The well-to-do families have normally a low dependence ratio.

### **Aims and objectives**

The study is undertaken to understand how parents among fishing villages of Tanzania' inner lakes can be involved in their children's upbringing. The study aims at establishing a common ground where parents, educators and village leaders can operate on a platform beneficial to the future generation: the children.

### **Research Methods**

#### ***Sampling***

This research was conducted among 50 households and 50 rebels'. The households were selected according to the following criteria: (i) number of people in the household (using the 2002 national census data and current village records), (ii) presence of school age children and (iii) at least one person engaging fully in fishing. The 'rebels' were divided into two: those now living in urban centres and those engaging in fishing or farming. All villages are found along the same coast with relative proximity and it was hoped that trading among them would offer an interesting perspective in other economic activities. Transport issues were as well considered in choosing villages lying along the same route. Although Kigoma Rural has

many more villages ('Background to the Study'), the other villages are predominantly farming villages.

### ***Data Collection***

Interviews were conducted with family representatives (often the head of the family), and individual rebels. Using ranking preference method, participants ranked what is important to them in relationship to PI and CCT. Many interviews were semi-structured and the settings were often informal at home, recreational and social meeting areas known as *vijiweni* and at economic and business meeting points such as at landing sites and at the local markets. This was because landing and initial transactions often take place early in the morning. The rest of the data were from primary schools, regional and village governments and religious institutions' records.

### ***Limitations and Quality***

Although the data were verified more than once using a feedback loop and cross-checks, there are several weaknesses which can be observed in the data collected. First, the age of respondents or other family members among surveyed household may not always be accurate. Birth and marriage data from religious organisations made a useful estimation where age did not exist at all. Certain cultural practices were a barrier to properly collecting data. People who had passed away and extended families beyond the current ones (*nyumba ndogo*) for example, were included in respondents' responses even though they culturally should not form a subject of discussion. Over-emphasizing was another problem. Respondents often gave large figures of the sizes of catches (fish), field sizes, number of domesticated animals, number of children (especially in polygamous families) and incomes, but after cross-checking, there was less than what was previously mentioned. There was, however, no evidence found to suggest that there was deliberate manipulation of the figures provided; it is more down to the respondents' illiteracy and, at times, incomprehension of the specific information required.

## **Results**

### ***Social Infrastructure***

#### ***Education***

All five villages have a primary school averaging 450 pupils per school. The gender parity does not show a big gap between boys and girls at an average of 45 percent females to 55 percent boys (compared to the national 51.1 percent for males and 49.1 percent for females). Data from the 50 households surveyed show that the majority of the respondents (70%) had finished

primary school and only a few had managed to continue to secondary school. Although respondents did not want to mention whether they left school earlier than the needed seven years, present data show that cohort wastage is still a problem. The data available from school records (year 2010) show that at some villages, cohort wastage was as high as 44 percent. The regional data estimate that the district dropout rate in the year 2006 was 50 percent (Kigoma Socio-economic Report, 2006).

Dropout rates are even more alarming when pupils complete primary school and join secondary schools. In 2005 there were 4818 pupils who sat for their examination among whom only 35 percent was selected to join public secondary. The following year represented a significant increase where among 4821 pupils; 51.2 percent was selected to join secondary schools (Kigoma Socio-economic Report, 2006). The school enrolment rate is at an average of 95 percent for school age children. Pre-school education is limited in availability and, except for a few religious centres children often stay home up to the age of seven and sometimes at nine before they start primary education. Kigoma Rural had in 2004 a total of 51 pre-school facilities of which 17 were owned by the government and the rest were run by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO), mainly religious organisations. In a complete reversal, the district has 219 primary schools and none is owned by an NGO (Kigoma Regional Commissioner's Office).

This survey did not establish immediate reasons for the delay to start with primary school or the dropout except for the demands of fishing activities that involve every member of the family. Boys had generally a higher dropout rate compared to girls. This is often explained by the fact that boys were more likely to take over their fathers' work. Other factors are the presence of intensive Islamic schools known as *madrasat* which are attended often by boys. A study conducted in a nearby village in 1999, showed that as many as 50 pupils from every intake dropped out before finishing the seven years of primary education as a result of lack of school fees, household demand of labour for fishing, and Islamic demands on the youth to attend madrasat (Mung'ong'o 1999: 8). The government has however made some effort to offer primary education for those who did not have it, a project called MEMKWA (*Mpango wa Elimu Maalum Kwa Watoto Walioikosa* – The Primary Education plan for the children who missed it).

### **Health and Sanitation**

The inhabitants of these villages have access to primary health facilities. Survey shows that health and sanitation facilities are available with villages recording averages ranging from 90 percent to 97 percent accessibility by the local population. The facilities here included pit latrines, clean drinking

water (boiled water) and health personnel. There is often an acute shortage of medication and health personnel rendering the present facilities not very useful. The Kigoma Socio-economic Report (2006) shows that Rural Kigoma has only 4.8 percent of water tanks at primary schools, a massive shortage of 95.2 percent (10 tanks out of 220) of the needed water tanks. There is a 24 percent shortage of pit latrines for primary schools as well, meaning that there are schools without proper toilets. This survey did not visit all villages, so the actual number of tanks in 2011 was not yet known.

Although those interviewed said that there were health services, many of the households (75%) had had someone in the family referred to the regional Maweni Hospital in Kigoma town due to lack of proper facilities and medical personnel. Similar researches have previously shown that in fishing communities the use of pit latrines is limited and people often defecate, wash clothes, wash farm produce and clean boats, fishes, fishing tools and household appliances in the lake (Mung'ong'o 1997). At the same time, the lake is also the major source of drinking water. Education and health information generally does not reach fishing men, especially because they often do not attend these meetings. In a study on health and sanitation in the region Mung'ong'o observed:

Women in particular were observed bathing and washing clothes and dishes in the river from which drinking water is taken. Most households (97%) do not boil their drinking water, due to fuel wood shortage, lack of proper filtering equipments and an age-old belief that boiled water tastes different from 'natural' water. The frequency occurrence of diseases such as diarrhoea, bilharzia, malaria and cholera especially during wet seasons could be explained by this phenomenon. The most common complaints result from the lack of proper sanitation (Mung'ong'o 1999: 6).

### ***Household Characteristics***

Families are typically headed by men, with a few exceptions of widows and divorced women. The survey shows that among the 50 households interviewed, 96 percent were headed by men and not always the husband, sometimes an elder son (20%), an uncle (15%) or an elderly family member (3%). The system of extended families is widespread and the well-to-do can afford to take care of more family members which may explain why they were larger than the poor families. Typical well-to-do families were as well characterised by polygamy, although the exact numbers of wives or husbands could not be established.

Fishers are almost all men, aged between 16-50 years. Although household interviews show that almost all respondents had completed formal primary education, the rate of school dropouts would suggest otherwise. These fishers use different landing sites according to the catching season

and they have a permanent family in one of the communities. The dominance of men in the fishing industry has consequences on how families are organised. Often the man sleeps during the day and is awake around three in the afternoon to start preparing for the next round of fishing. For some Muslims, fixed prayer times mean they take a rest and wake up for prayers. In well-to-do families, there are often more children, both relatives and employees (house girls and houseboys) who often do not go to school.

### **Labour Organisation**

Fishing was found to be the biggest income generating activity (81%), although respondents also mentioned farming (51%) as an important source of income. Men mentioned fishing as their main activity while women often do a combination of both, except actual fishing. The fishing industry is an intensive business in Kigoma rural and often a family-run activity. This means that while the actual fishing (going with boats to the open water and casting nets or using fishing rods) is undertaken by men, the other activities are often left to women and children. These include collecting fish at landing sites, smoking or drying fish and selling it on local markets, as well as packing the fish for transportation to markets in other villages and towns away from the lake shores. As the government report for the region shows:

Small-scale operators who are sometimes the fishermen themselves and their families carry out-processing. The losses incurred through these rudimentary processing methods are rather high in that they may reach the 15–20 percent level especially during the rain season. (URT, Kigoma Region 2006:60).

Male children often help their parents disentangle fishing nets, clean fishing boats as well as transport fishes to selling points or to the next means of transport. Girls often help their mothers clean up and dry the fishes as well as stand on marketplaces or at a stand at home selling the fish. Both boys and girls often do this in combination with schooling. This arrangement neither offers children a chance of attending formal education nor does it leave parents with enough time for their children's academic needs.

### **'Rebels'**

Of the 50 interviewed dropouts (rebels), only 20 percent still lived at home, the rest were either working in the fishing industry with different landing sites, married or had moved to nearby Kigoma urban in search of jobs. The phenomenon could be explained by the fact that people who leave school without completing carry the label *watoro* (AWOL, where the term 'rebel' is derived from) and it is thus often the case that the 'rebel' does not remain in the same household. The group coincided with the low education of the parents and most significantly 87 percent of this group said both parents

were fully engaged in fishing and farming activities. There are a few school dropouts (21%) who hail from wealthy families such as gear and shop owners who basically were never encouraged to continue with schooling because 'there was enough to do at home'.

For those who went to urban areas in search of jobs, 56 percent said they are from a fully fishing and farming family and the rest came from a combination of fishing-farming-business families. Often these young people did not get any formal skills in life except for the learning-by-example style. Since labour is almost exclusively divided along gender lines, there is little interaction with between mothers and their male children and fathers (for girls). Even in well-to-do families, male heads of families were more concerned with their investments while letting 'the money take care of the family'.

Asked as to why the parents did not see the importance of constantly being involved in their children's education, the interviewees agree that education does not help their children cope with life. Culturally, owning a fishing boat, size of the family, owning palm oil trees and/or a shop ranked higher than education. Education is clearly not seen as one of the vehicles towards solving problems related to the improvement of the livelihood of the people in the study. The importance of moral and emotional support as well as imparting basic life skills ranked as high as 89 percent among households respondents, although rebels deny having been properly guided during upbringing.

There was good news from the side of the 50 young people (rebels). Seventy-eight percent said they now understand the importance of education especially that they have seen people who are educated getting good jobs often in urban areas. This group of young people is in favour of labour diversification. Those who left for urban centres unanimously agree that education is the solution for their labour woes. This could be a result of the example they see in towns and the diverse of activities, which is a sharp contrast to the localized view of life framed by fishing activities back at home. Rebels also were typically raised by individuals other than their own parents: 25 of them were raised by grannies while the rest were either roaming from house to house or went to live with other relatives away from the village of birth. They also indicated that school environment was not conducive to stay there: overcrowding, lack of attention from teachers and parents, lack of money for school uniform and books and lack of transportation (for those living in small communities without own primary school).

### **Discussion and Summary**

Households, regardless of their income generally seem to be run on a recognizable pattern. Clearly, two things have a bearing on whether parents will be there or not: culture and fishing. While fishing communities engage at times fully with fishing for all able-bodied, PI is often left for women to do, who too are busy with fishing activities. Fishing activities have odd cycles: happens often in the night, while transactions happen during the day. This means by the time children wake up in the morning, the one is either at the landing site already or at the market and the other is pulling ashore readying himself for sleeping (for households with two parents). By the time children go to bed, the cycle of activities for parents is then completely reversed. These cycles can be broken by labour diversification, improved means of fishing, availability of education for adults and importantly a change in the rigid school times, since these times do not allow parents to be there when needed. Other factors influencing PI include education of the parents and attitudes towards education.

The Poverty and Human Development Report of 2009 for Tanzania shows that overall results for the education sector continued to expand in access to pre-primary and primary education. For the surveyed villages, however the expansion is not more than an existential upward push for gross enrolment rates, while nothing is done on cohort wastage, effectively educating equally few people. The involvement of parents in education (adult education and lifelong learning) would help the parents understand the importance of getting involved in their children's education. Studies have consistently shown that parent involvement at home has a more significant impact on children than it does in school activities (Christenson & Sheridan 2001; Hickman, Greenwood, & Miller 1995; Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprow, & Fendrich 1999; Trusty, 1999). Still this is almost unachievable if the parents and indeed the community do not see the importance of being there for their children.

The lack of PI among fishing communities is thus not always the question of lack of time or money. This research shows that parental preferences more often lie elsewhere than being there for the children. Also culturally, mothers are seen as having the sole responsibility of being there for their children. Where mothers engage in fishing and farming, there is often no one at home to give guidance to children. It is a vicious cycle: on one hand parents have to work hard to earn a living, but on the other they should be there for the children as well. One fishing boat observed in Mwakizega was written: 'Kushindwa shule siyo kushindwa maisha' (Kiswahili for: failure at school does not spell failure in life). This sums up the general view of education, while giving a hint on the present substitution to schooling. Since

social organisation in the five villages is collective in nature, parents who do not seem to be fully involved in their children upbringing in some areas, are actively there in other areas considered important in the eyes of the community (ownership of property and transferring their skills and resources to the children). Although the incomes may seem stable at times, fishing is seasonal and there are examples where families fell in abject poverty when there were changes in income generating activities such as the loss of boats through piracy, the death or departure of the breadwinner, extended dry periods and poor catches in some seasons.

### **Policy Implications**

*Fishing.* While owning more boats seems to be the most attractive thing to do, fishing is monotonous and unstable. Re-investments of the fishing proceedings in order to diversify both labour and sources of income would help many parents be there for their children. Fishing activities are so labour-intensive that investment in new fishing ways, other sources of livelihood and in education would provide a relief for many interviewed households. This may need education and training and the availability of financial assistance.

*Education.* Both the local communities and the government need to see education as a vehicle towards the search for solutions for some of the socio-economic problems. If education remains a distraction instead of the goal in itself, few parents will advise their children to attain it. The study shows that many parents are lowly educated themselves, making it important for the investment in adult learning, which corresponds with the fishing community's way of life. There should be training to fishing villagers on the importance of education, improvement of education facilities and investment in social infrastructure. The government needs to make a follow up on regulations listed in the Education Act, 1978 and the 1995 Education and Training Policy.

*Culture.* The culture of fishing communities is based on the rigid times fishing activities take place, the household organisations (having a man as head of the family) and the culture of here and now. Education seems to be good for long term investment, but few parents are willing to take on that journey. It has been observed during this survey that respect from peers and the community comes from owning fishing boats and palm oil trees. Only when PI attains the same status can parents fully engage in their children's lives.

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