YOUNG CHILDREN'S OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN IN RURAL SOUTHERN TANZANIA

By

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ABSTRACT

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"Human beings, and learners, exist in a cultural context."
Paulo Freire (1970/1995)

Young children's opportunities to learn are complex and multifaceted. Opportunities for young children to learn in Tanzania vary widely. Within the NGO and scholarly communities focused on early childhood initiatives in Tanzania, there is an appeal for descriptive information to better understand the opportunities to learn for young children in specific contexts. There are limited studies that examine and seek to address an understanding of what opportunities exist for young children to learn in rural Tanzania.

My study is a response to this appeal and presents a focused ethnography of young children's opportunities to learn in rural southern Tanzania. I designed the focus of my study to explore and develop a detailed description to examine the sociocultural contexts and opportunities to learn for young children in the village of Ndogo and its surrounding villages.

This study collected data addressing the following questions: What are opportunities to learn for young children in informal and formal contexts in the home,

the community, and the Ndogo school? Where, how, and with whom are these opportunities to learn?

I collected this data through semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and focus groups conducted with students, teachers, parents, and village members. I also examine influences on these opportunities from outside the community including from the national government and international donor organizations.

The findings of my study examine the multiple and diverse opportunities for young children to learn in a variety of modalities. The complex issue of languages is addressed with divergent opportunities between the home, the community and the school. I examine the sociocultural aspects of these opportunities for young children to learn.

This study adds to the literature that addresses the nuances, ambiguities, and complexities of the opportunities for young children to learn in and out of formal school in a specific context. These complex descriptions of young children's opportunities to learn could provide data for future research as well as provide additional information to contribute to and inform decision-making by NGO and government initiatives in Tanzania concentrated on early childhood education and development.

Lovingly dedicated to the best family ever!

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CHAPTER 1

MAPPING THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE STUDY

Introduction

In the rural southern Tanzania village of Ndogo, a father, Hakim, shares the experience of many rural Tanzanians. He has eight children with two wives, Hashima and Aysha, who live in separate villages close by each other. This is a Muslim community with local spiritual practices and traditions. Most men in this area have more than one wife; wives only have one husband and numerous children. Hakim and his family live right outside the village and cultivate the land nearby, and typical for this area, they live below the United Nations (UN) definition for the poverty line. Like many people in Ndogo and surrounding villages in southern rural Tanzania Hakim and his wives are instructing their children in knowledge about life skills and local heritage. In addition to young children's learning at home, children are required by Tanzania's laws to attend primary school. Violation of this law is punishable by fine or imprisonment; however, the law is rarely enforced. Many parents said they feel that schooling could lead to earning a higher income than without formal schooling but this possibility does not necessarily apply to their children because their children are only able to attend school through Standard I[1], similar to the parents' experience. Hashima, went to school for a short time but the rainy season soon prevented her from walking

[1] Standard I is the first grade in the Tanzania school system. See Appendix C for an outline of the Tanzanian school system and levels.

through the deep mud to the village where the school was located. Hakim's other wife, Aysha, never had the opportunity to go to school, but Hakim attended school from first to fourth year. He said he felt there was no connection in his school experience to his own life or to what his home and community wanted. Hakim quit school because it was too expensive, and he stayed in the area to cultivate the land, like his parents and grandparents before him. Hakim said he wanted his children to go to school in order to learn how to read and write but he will train them to cultivate the land so when they can no longer go to school, which he thinks is inevitable, the children will have a livelihood.

When I met Hakim, he was walking home from his fields with his two-year-old daughter. He invited my translator and me to his home and he shared stories with us about his life. Hakim and others in the village whom I interviewed asserted they wanted their children to experience, at minimum, a cursory level of schooling. He did not refer to pre-primary schooling, only that he wanted his children to learn to read and write and know their numbers from school. The focus of our conversation then centered on the opportunities for his children to learn outside of school. This conversation occurred in the midst of an exploration to understand more about opportunities for young children to learn in this area of rural southern Tanzania.

My first trip to Tanzania was in January 2013 with Dr. Phinny. She was influential in my introduction to the country and establishing initial points of contact

with individuals in the Tanzanian capital Dodoma, Dar es Salaam, and Stone Town in Zanzibar. What I discovered on this initial trip became the impetus for this study. A Tanzanian early childhood education scholar I spoke with on that trip articulated the need for more information to understand how communities educate young children formally and informally. His concern was the lack of understanding about what learning is happening for young children at home. He pointed to the need to discover what is being taught to young children and the methods of learning, both in the home and the community.

This Tanzanian scholar told me, "They [the international community] came along and told us we were doing education for young children wrong [because we did not have pre-primary schools]; now our children are in pre-primary school and they are telling us we are doing it the wrong way." He went on to express concern regarding the predominance of national and global influences at play on young children's education saying, "We need more attention to what happens at home and in the community. There is a lot of early childhood education going on there." He continued:

> What amazes me is children's ability to move from one environment to another. Children are so active at home. They are always moving around. Then, when they enter school, they are expected to just sit there, in their desks or on the floor. No movement at all. And they are silent. This transition really amazes me. How do they suddenly go from a place where they are learning from their environment, using their creativity, doing things that are of interest to them, to putting them into a situation where they just sit and listen? (L. M., personal communication, January 4, 2013)

Opportunities to learn for young children in Tanzania vary widely. This conversation with the Tanzanian scholar motivated me to design the focus of my study to explore and develop a detailed description to examine the local setting, contexts, and practices for young children's opportunities to learn in a specific location in Tanzania; the village of Ndogo and its surrounding villages. In the rest of this chapter, I explain a rationale for the study and give background information on Tanzania. Next, I describe the social and economic demographics of the Ndogo and surrounding area. Finally, I preview the dissertation chapters and conclude.

Rationale for this study

In areas in Tanzania such as Ndogo, the national government relies in many cases on NGOs to provide early childhood education (ECE). In Tanzania, Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Development (ECD) is overseen by five government ministries. Significant competition exists for government resources to fund ECE and ECD. Primary and pre-primary share one budget line; there has been no dedicated budget for pre-primary.

The 1995 Tanzania education policy stated, "It does not appear economically feasible to formalize and systematize the entire pre-school education for this age group" (0-6 years old) (p. 3). The government acknowledged its limited financial ability to serve the needs of young children in rural areas; however, the government maintained

influence as a gatekeeper for all initiatives. The national government of Tanzania continues to seek assistance from NGOs to "complement government efforts in provision of social and economic services to the community" (Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children, 2005).

While there is no official ECE policy in Tanzania, NGOs recently worked with Tanzania government officials, such as the Ministry of Finance, to collaboratively provide input to the creation of the Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) policy (2010). Although never signed by Parliament, the Tanzanian government verbally accepted the policy. This document provides NGOs and government insight into ECE in Tanzania. The IECD policy document names government offices responsible for nursery and pre-primary schools along with NGOs as the main stakeholders and main implementers of "integrated early childhood development policies and programmes at different levels" (personal communication, copy of the IECD draft policy, January 4, 2013, p. 6). Early childhood education is an element of early childhood development.

Within the NGO community focused on early childhood initiatives in Tanzania, there is an appeal for detailed information to better understand the opportunities to learn for young children in specific contexts. The heightened interest in ECE globally is in part due to the United Nations initiative Education For All (EFA) (1990) with a 2015 completion target. EFA Goal One focuses on increasing access and quality of early

childhood education and care for disadvantaged children around the world.

A number of NGOs are partnering with the Tanzanian government to meet the needs of young children's early childhood development. The consortium Early Childhood Development (ECD) Partners Tanzania is comprised of six NGOs operating across the country that work collaboratively to address issues for young children in Tanzania.

> Given the Government of Tanzania's aspirations for Early Childhood Care and Education as the first step towards Education For All and findings from current international research, the ECD Partners Tanzania group, supported by the Bernard van Leer Foundation, recognize that in order to plan effectively, we need to learn more, from diverse perspectives, about what the key issues, challenges, and opportunities are regarding young children's readiness for success in school and life, and schools' readiness for supporting young children's early success & relationships between them. (National level situation analysis, ECD Partners Tanzania, 2009, p. 120)

IECD policy states the need to "conduct various studies to gain more knowledge and understanding of the situation of children in Tanzania" (p. 4). This need was echoed in conversations Dr. Phinny and I had in Tanzania with NGOs and scholars such as HakiElimu, Save the Children, Children in Crossfire, Catholic Relief Services, TECDEN, UNICEF and Aga Khan Foundation. In light of the information I gathered from the government and these NGOs, the importance to understand what opportunities currently exist for young children to learn became apparent. This appeal for detailed description was again confirmed by NGOs at Aga Khan University's 2013 research symposium on ECD in Tanzania, where I was invited to present my initial

findings from my first trip to Tanzania. During the presentation representatives from many of these same NGOs affirmed the call for the type of information I was gathering in this study.

My study offers research to inform the Tanzanian ECE conversation and initiatives. The study presents a focused ethnography of the opportunities for young children to learn in rural southern Tanzania in the Ndogo village and surrounding area. The purpose of this study is to understand multiple opportunities to learn for young children in the home, the community, and the school. Specifically, this study addressed the following questions:

- What are the pedagogies and modes of young children's opportunities to learn?
- Who are the people involved in opportunities young children have to learn?
- Where are the places young children have opportunities to learn?
- What do young children have opportunities to learn in informal and formal contexts in the Ndogo community in rural southern Tanzania?

In this study, I examine opportunities for young children to learn in Ndogo and the surrounding villages in rural southern Tanzania. I found rural southern Tanzania to be an appealing location for my study because it is the most economically disadvantaged region in Tanzania with minimal involvement by NGO's. Information gathered from people in the Aga Khan Foundation, Project For Tanzania, and other

NGOs indicated that the area where Ndogo is located has limited government or NGO projects due to its remote location and the limited natural resources in this area.

As a research assistant at Michigan State University in the Project For Tanzania (PFT), I was involved in the early childhood initiative in Ndogo with Dr. Phinny. Project For Tanzania (PFT) is a non-governmental collaboration between universities in the US (Michigan State University) and Tanzania (several institutions including University of Dar es Salaam and Aga Khan University). PFT works in connection with the national government in two sites in Tanzania – one in the north, in Naitolia, and the other in the south, in Mwenye, including the school project outside Mwenye situated in the village of Ndogo. PFT led the initiative to build the school in Ndogo and collaborated with the national government to get permission to build the structure and to secure from the government a teacher and a salary for the teacher. This is the first school and major government intervention situated in Ndogo and the surrounding villages.

In this focused ethnography study I conducted observations and interviews that shed light on the range of learning that exist in the home and the community of Ndogo and surrounding villages, as well as in the Ndogo school. I collected data through semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and focus groups with students, teachers, parents, and village members. I describe in depth in chapter 3 the methods I used.

There has been limited systematic effort to understand what opportunities exist for young children to learn in rural Tanzania. This study adds to the literature that addresses the nuances, ambiguities, and complexities of the opportunities for young children to learn in and out of formal school in a specific context. These complex descriptions of young children's opportunities to learn could provide additional information to contribute to and inform decision-making by NGO and government initiatives in Tanzania concentrated on early childhood education and development.

Notes on names and language

Throughout this study, there are intentionally placed Kiswahili and Kimwera words to describe and emphasize a concept. The Kiswahili and Kimwera words are italicized in the text. The meaning of the concept or word is provided in English in the text and also in a translation glossary in Appendix A at the end of this document. When I refer to the people I spoke with in the community, I use the convention that is used in this place: people are addressed by their first names. In no way do I want to suggest undue informality; rather, I am trying to portray the conversations as they occurred. At the same time, I refer to the teacher of the Ndogo school as "teacher" or "the teacher" because in these communities, this is the manner in which he is referred. As a sign of respect, in my conversations with him I, too, addressed him as "Teacher".

The terms "minority world" and "majority world" are used in this study to recognize that there are significant global inequalities and imbalanced power interactions between significant parts of the world (Pence, 1998). The term *majority world* acknowledges that the majority of the people live in economically challenged places and the term *minority world* recognizes the minority of the people in the world live in wealthier nations (Punch, 2000). The use of majority/minority is helpful term to discourage merely geographically grouping people and recognizes social and economic influences. Binary terminology, however, is limiting and does not take into account disparity within countries.

In the next section, I present historical and demographic information. First, I discuss a brief history of Tanzania, then, I introduce the location of my study, Ndogo and the surrounding area. I explore the community of Ndogo, then the home environment, and finally the Ndogo school.

The United Republic of Tanzania: A brief history

Tisa, a woman in her sixties who lived in Ndogo, only had a small window for formal education in her youth. She undertook domestic studies under Father Titus, a German Catholic Bishop in the area. The foreigners who came to the area were mainly religious people who employed and educated Tanzanian people to do translation work for them and to serve as their bodyguards and help convert others to Catholicism. Tisa

said, "Bishops came here to convert people to Christianity. They offered food, education, clothes, and employment to entice people to convert and then gave extra benefits to those who did convert." Tisa went on to describe her schooling opportunities and experiences in rural southern Tanzania during the colonial period and the time period immediately following the 1961 independence:

> He [the bishop] taught me embroidery because the government gave them permission to teach local people. I was about 15 to 17 years old. Father Titus tried to convert me but I did not. I did not go to Father Titus for the purpose of being converted. I just went there to learn. In that time, parents could not afford to send us to school, so the bishop trained us. The purpose of his school was to train us to do domestic skills. It was the only education I could get.

Tisa's story, and those of other people who spoke with me, reflected the diverse and complex history of Tanzania including both the German and British colonial eras. This is also documented in literature about the history of formal schooling in Africa. Vavrus (2003) wrote that "During the colonial era, schooling was used in different parts of Africa to draw converts to Christianity and to produce 'modern' citizens with favorable dispositions toward colonial social and political-economic policies" (p. 45). This occurred in Tanzania.

What follows is admittedly a cursory picture of the history of Tanzania, but one that gives some broader context for understanding the local site, which was the focus of my inquiry. The land that constitutes the current day Tanzania was settled over time by diverse groups of people, including migrants from western Africa and groups from India and the Near East. During pre-colonial times, various people groups on the

mainland (called Tanganyika at the time) and on the islands of Zanzibar ruled over the geographic location that is today known as Tanzania. One of two current national languages of Tanzania, Kiswahili, (the other national language is English) originated from the Bantu language family. More specific discussion about languages will continue in chapter 6.

The current day country of Tanzania historically experienced several outside occupiers and influences. In the eighth century Arab occupation on the coastal region of what is now Tanzania was instrumental in the development of inland trade routes, which allowed the spread of outside ideas such as Islam. In the fifteenth century, the Portuguese conquered southern coastal areas within current day Tanzania. At the end of the nineteenth century, 1897, Germany had established Tanganyika (mainland Tanzania) in its colonization of East Africa. Britain sought a stake in Tanganyika as well. In 1922, after Germany lost the First World War, Great Britain assumed governance of this area. In 1961, under the leadership of Julius Nyerere, Tanzania achieved independence from the Great Britain's colonial rule. In 1964, Tanganyika joined Zanzibar to form the United Republic of Tanzania.

From the 1960s through the 1980s, Tanzania had a socialist government under President Nyerere. In 1967, Nyerere delivered his Arusha Declaration proposing African socialism, which has become known as *Ujamaa*. This concept drove his economic and social policies with the aim of developing the nation. During the

decolonization movements of the 1960s and '70s under Nyerere, schooling was an important focus for social transformation and international development assistance. Nyerere articulated his perspectives on education in a publication, *Education for self-reliance* (1967). He created policies that brought groups together into a nation state and advocated compulsory primary education using a common language, Kiswahili.

Nyerere instituted a single political party, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), which over time resulted in limiting political and economic growth in Tanzania. Nyerere retired in 1985, handing power over to Ali Hassan Mwinyi who served as president of Tanzania until 1995. Tanzania experienced many policy adjustments after Nyerere stepped down allowing for more democratic rule and multi-partyism. However, the same political party has been in power since independence, even as its power weakened after Nyerere. Even though the national government has weakened, it maintains considerable influence, though moderated by the lack of resources.

The most recent population census information, from 2012, placed Tanzania's population at 46.2 million people with 28.2% of the population at or below the poverty line, as measured by the World Bank. The specific social context of Tanzania reflected in the listed statistics impacts opportunities for young children to learn. Conditions in Tanzania (national/overall) according to the Imperial College London (2014) include the following:

- 60% of the population lives on less than $2 per day.

- About 20% live on less than $1 per day.
- Ranked 164th out of 177 countries in the U.N. Human Development Index.
- 39.9% lack the money needed for basic medical treatment.
- 37.6% are unable to travel the necessary distance to receive medical treatment.
- Only two doctors for every 100,000 people.
- Approximately 80% of the population lives in rural areas where water is not easily accessible.
- 54% lack access to improved sanitation.
- In 2004, only 64% of the population survived past the age of 40.
- 92 out of every 1,000 children die before the age of 5.

Together, these conditions shape the specific social context for education in Tanzania at the time of my study. In the data chapters 4, 5, and 6, I examine the opportunities for young children to learn in context of these factors.

Ndogo: the community

The capital of Tanzania is Dodoma in the interior of Tanzania, but the major metropolitan business city of Tanzania is in the coastal city of Dar es Salaam. My study takes place roughly 320 miles southwest of Dar es Salaam in the village of Ndogo and surrounding small villages of the Mwera people. Ndogo is considered a sub-village (direct translation) of Mwenye, the county seat that is in Lindi Rural district in the Lindi

region. Below is a map of Tanzania with the regions noted. Lindi is in the southern coastal area.

Figure 1: Map of The United Republic of Tanzania

Source: eMapsWorld, 2014.

Tanzania is divided into 30 regions, one of which is the Lindi Region in the southeastern coastal area, located in a remote and largely rural region, with a population of 864,652. The region has the highest population in Tanzania below the food poverty line as defined by the World Bank (Tanzania Household Budget Survey, 2007). The birth rate from the 2002 census is 1.4%, which is higher that at the time of the

1988 census at .7%. The Lindi region ranks second from last in population growth and average household size, which indicates a large migration of people exiting this region. The Lindi Region also has the lowest population density per landmass in the country at 29 per square kilometer of land per person. There are 92 males per 100 females (The Lindi Regional Government, 2013).

The Lindi Region is divided into six districts. (See table 1 below for population details of the 6 districts). My study was located in the Lindi Rural district (or Lindi District Council, Table 1, number 2), which has the largest population of the six districts in the region.

Table 1: Lindi region 2007 census information

Population of Lindi Region by Sex, Average Household Size and Sex Ratio

Serial No.	District/ Council	Population (number)			Average household Size	Sex Ratio
		Total	Male	Female		
	Region Total	864,652	414,507	450,145	3.8	92
1	**Kilwa District Council**	190,744	91,661	99,083	4.4	93
2	**Lindi District Council**	194,143	91,647	102,496	3.7	89
3	**Nachingwea District Council**	178,464	86,382	92,082	3.7	94
4	**Liwale District Council**	91,380	44,027	47,353	4.3	93
5	**Ruangwa District Council**	131,080	63,265	67,815	3.5	93
6	**Lindi Municipal Council**	78,841	37,525	41,316	3.5	91

Source: Ward Executive Office, 2007.

Mwenye is the county seat of the district, with approximately 9,500 inhabitants (Ward Executive Office, 2007). (See table 2 below for additional population details). Mwenye has one secondary school that serves a large area and two primary schools. Lindi is a low socioeconomic area, with 29.4% of the households in Mwenye living beneath the poverty line, earning less than 100,000 Tanzania shilling (roughly equivalent to $43 USD) per year. 87% of Mwenye's population engage in subsistence agriculture (The Lindi Regional Government, 2013). This area has been documented as having poor nutrition, disease, and a lack of access to health care. Poor nutrition is attributed to lack of access to food. It is also related to the lack of available protein and foods high in nutrients.

Table 2: Mwenye 2007 census information

Population of Lindi District Council by Sex, Average Household Size and Sex Ratio

Ward	**Population (number)**			**Average household Size**	**Sex Ratio**
	Total	**Male**	**Female**		
Lindi Total	194,143	91,647	102,496	3.7	89
Mwenye	9,616	4,486	5,130	3.4	87

Source: Ward Executive Office, 2007.

Mwenye, population 9,615, is a village approximately ten kilometers away from the Ndogo village and the surrounding Mwera villages in my study. Mwenye is the Ward capital or government seat. Mwenye is divided into Mwenye A and Mwenye B. The surrounding villages such as Ndogo are considered sub-villages and have a total

population of 651. As in many parts of rural Tanzania, Ndogo and other villages are without electricity or running water. Prior to the new school being built a year before this study in Ndogo, young children living outside of Mwenye had to walk approximately six to ten miles in order to attend school in Mwenye.

There are distinct differences between Ndogo and Mwenye A and B. As an *Ujamaa* village, Mwenye (A and B) is a trading town with a mixture of people from different people groups who were forcibly moved to Mwenye from the surrounding areas. (The term *Ujamaa* is described further in chapters 2 and 6). In the Mwenye area, there are two major ethnic groups, with other ethnic groups represented in smaller numbers. The first major ethnic group is the Mwera, with whom I spent time, who speak the Kimwera language. The Wamwera (plural of Mwera) are a matriarchal society in which both boys and girls inherit land from their parents. When a couple is married, they go to live near the wife's family and the wife's uncle is the family decision maker. The Mwera live in Ndogo and the surrounding ancestral land.

The second major ethnic group in the Mwenye area is the Ngindo, otherwise known as Ndonde, who speak the Kingindo language. There are also small numbers of people from ethnic groups with peoples from different areas include the Yao, who speak Kiyao, and the Wamakonde, who speak Makonde from Mozambique and Mtwara further south in Tanzania.

Below is a table with the most recent census demographics of Mwenye villages Ndogo, Wimbwi, Nahoro, and M'kalakacha where I spent time interviewing people. The table demonstrates from the census that there are 651 people, of which 311, just under half, are children. There are slightly more women than men. These areas are remote; some villages are unreachable by vehicle. The places I conducted my study include Ndogo, Nahoro, Wimbwi, and M'kalakacha, which were connected by footpaths through brush and traversing hills. They are Mwera villages and the people speak Kimwera, their local language. Many people in these villages send their children to the newly constructed Ndogo school.

The first village along the road south from Mwenye B is Ndogo. It consists of mud houses scattered around their farmland. The next village, which is not accessible by vehicle, is called M'kalakacha and is situated ten minutes' walk west of Ndogo village. Next is Nahoro, which mainly has houses along the main road and some off the path, approximately a 30 minute walk further south from Ndogo. The other main village is called Mng'ukule close to Wimbwi, about 45 minutes' walk east of Ndogo. Below is the most recent population census data of the Mwera villages in which I conducted interviews including M'kalakacha, Nahoro, and Ndogo.

Table 3: 2009 Census data for Ndogo and surrounding villages

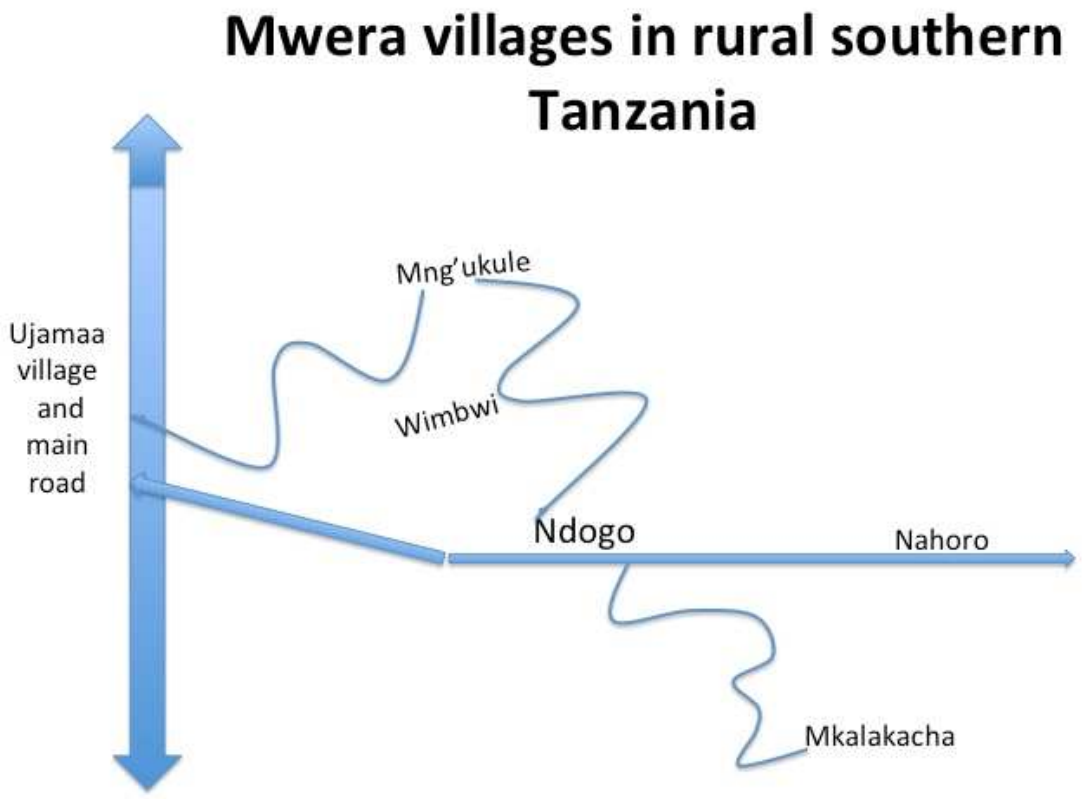
Mwenye	**Number of Households**	**Employable**		**Children**		**Elderly**		**Disabled**		**Total Population**
		M	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	
M'kalakacha	97	91	102	71	84	5	7	0	0	360
Wimbwi, Nahoro, and Ndogo	79	57	65	75	81	5	3	2	3	291

Source: Ward Executive Office, 2013.

No official map of the Ndogo area could be located by myself or by any government official I asked. The people with whom I spoke who participated in my study developed the following map. It was first drawn in the sand and I transferred it to paper. The thick straight lines represent the dirt roads, which vehicles can travel. The squiggly thinner lines indicate the walking paths that connect the villages where most of the houses are located. It is approximately six plus miles from Mwenye to Ndogo and a number of miles between other villages through the bush.

Figure 2: *Map of Ndogo and the surrounding villages*

East



West

Source: Mwenye and the sub-village members, 2013.

Ndogo: the homes

Ndogo is a very old village and people said that it was founded before their recorded history. The people (and those in the surrounding area) are agriculturalists. The majority of the people self identify as Muslim and also practice animistic traditions.

The village collapsed in 1974 after the people were sent to Mwenye by Nyerere's government during the time of *Ujamaa* villages. According to the villagers, in 1985,

when the new regime entered the government, President Ali Hassan Mwinyi permitted people to return to their native lands. It was at that time that the majority of the villagers in Ndogo decided to return to their land. It has not been without trials. One issue people recounted was the difficulty of living without a reliable water source and the amount of time and effort it took to walk the distance to the spring to collect water. However, people choose to live in the Mwera community and they want to farm their own land.

Families operate together within the context of the community, and children are expected to participate in the rhythm of the community. The pattern of daily life includes men going to cultivate when the sun rises in the morning in order to avoid the heat later in the day, while women fetch water and prepare food. The community eats what they grow, which includes maize, cassava, and yams. Rice and chicken are reserved for celebrations. Mothers wash the small children, and the older children wash their face to get ready for the day. Often, grandparents who are too old to go to the fields every day stay at home and sometimes help to watch younger children. Notice that life is a communal effort for survival. Young children are important components of the family. Parents and community members invest in their young children; more description of these opportunities to learn are found in chapter 4.

Ndogo: the school

In the Mwenye area, villages such as Ndogo had no record and people had no memory of there ever having a formal school. For years, villagers said they had requested a school from the government. In January 2013, a government pre-primary school was completed, funded by an international donor organization, Project For Tanzania (PFT), with funds from additional NGOs. PFT, (a project for which I was a graduate research assistant), is a joint international development collaboration project between universities and NGO's. Some of these include a private trust, Michigan State University, University Dar es Salaam, and the Aga Khan Development Network.

In my role, I participated in many projects and had the opportunity to travel three times to various places in Tanzania to collect data. As part of the PFT, I also helped apply for an external grant from the TAG Philanthropic Foundation, which funded building materials and school furnishings as well as paid for some construction of the Ndogo school.

Prior to the creation of the Ndogo school, if children wanted to go to school, they had to travel in excess of ten kilometers into Mwenye, which during some seasons was not traversable. Village members cited the hazards of going to school for young children, including dangerous wildlife and the lack of all types of resources.

The school building was built with international money. PFT's stated desire was to invest in creating a sustainable school and so required members of the community to

contribute labor to build it. The Tanzanian government selected the teacher and provided the teacher's salary, additionally making commitments for future resources that at the time of this writing have yet to be fulfilled. The school building was built on a one hundred-acre parcel of land donated to the community by an elder in the Ndogo village.

The designated pre-primary school quickly became a combined classroom fro pre-primary and primary despite the original intention to educate only the younger children. The Ndogo school currently offers pre-primary and the first grade, Standard I (Chapter 5 discusses the environment of the school in more depth). The grade levels in Tanzania follow the British school system. Students who wish to study Standard II and beyond (see Appendix C for a school calendar and table of the Tanzanian education system structure) must travel to Mwenye on foot for one and a half to three hours journey depending on the location of the child's home. Most parents do not send their children to the school in Mwenye because of the distance and danger as well as the road conditions, which become impassable even on foot during the rainy season, which lasts half the year.

Parents are responsible for buying school uniforms and exercise booklets for students. There are no textbooks or books to read for the students because the government has not provided the promised funds. The school garden, run by parents,

grows food for the children, and the kitchen, constructed by the parents, makes it possible to provide porridge for students during school hours.

Rigid social boundaries exist between the village people and the teacher; however parents and community members demonstrated deference for the schoolteacher and the school lessons. Parents said they made certain their children completed the tasks that teacher gave them. Community members also participate in school activities. Even those who do not have children in school participate by helping to build the school kitchen, contribute money for a watchman who takes care of the school at nights, and cultivate the school garden. The women from the village take turns fetching drinking water in buckets from a spring at least an hour's walk away, carrying it on their heads to the school.

The teacher volunteered to take this post and he does not skip school, a contrast to monitoring reports in Tanzania about extensive teacher absenteeism and lack of motivation (Bennell and Mukyanuzi, 2005). The teacher of the Ndogo school acts as a representative to the NGO's on behalf the people in Ndogo. The parents said they worked with the schoolteacher on a couple of occasions to help them communicate to the international organizations and government representatives regarding community needs, such as access to water. For instance while I was in Ndogo, the villagers gathered to discuss what they wanted to communicate to PFT, the teacher wrote it down, and then he had each villager sign the document. As this suggests, there is a complex

connection between the school and the parents and community. Each influences the opportunity for young children to learn in various ways. I will focus on the opportunities for young children to learn in the school and the home and community and describe the overlap and divergence of in the coming chapters.

Preview of Dissertation Chapters

The findings of my study address young children's opportunities to learn in a cluster of rural southern Tanzanian villages. I sought to understand the landscape of Ndogo from its history, heritage, and educational practices. In this chapter, I provided the context of the study location and presented a brief overview of Tanzanian history.

In chapter 2, I explain the conceptual frame of the study that provides a backdrop for the design of my study. My study addresses the range of opportunities that exist for young children to learn, and in this chapter I offer a macro-view of outside influences in Tanzania along with an overview of Tanzanian education and statistics. I also introduce literature on sociocultural approaches to learning and how it connects to my study design.

In chapter 3, Mapping the Methods of the Study, I describe and discuss the planning, data collection, and analysis I used in this research project. I address my data collection plan, including participant selection in the first and second data collection session, interview questions, data analysis, researcher positionality, and study

limitations. I also examine the lenses that I drew on in my research questions and analysis.

Chapter 4, Informal Education of Young Children, centers on the informal education of young children that occurs in the home and community in Ndogo. There is a dearth of information and literature about young children's education outside the formal classroom in Tanzania. I begin with informal learning to provide a backdrop of what occurs for the majority of young children's time. As I discuss later, the home is where young children learn about life and who they are as individuals and a community.

Next, in chapter 5, Formal Education of Young Children, I examine what occurs in the Ndogo school. I describe opportunities to learn in the formal pre-primary school context. I discuss my observations and conversations with students, the teacher, and parents. Opportunities for young children to learn specific things through formal schooling emerge as a salient issue.

Chapter 6, Between Home and School: Opportunities to Learn Language, takes a closer look at language learning as an example of opportunities for young children to learn in the intertwining of the formal and informal opportunities to learn in the home, the community, and in the school. I examine young children's opportunities to learn language in order to understand how the role of languages is approached across settings.

Lastly, in chapter 7, Insights from Young Children's Opportunities to Learn, I provide an overview of what I gleaned about opportunities young children have to learn from across all of the chapters. I sought not to oversimplify or create false dichotomies between categories or terms such as formal and informal. I discuss the diverse knowledge and skills that the young children in Ndogo have the opportunities to learn with various people and places. I discuss suggestions for future research and tie these into a discussion of these significant influences on young children's opportunities to learn.

Conclusion

Poverty, inequities, and the limited resources in Ndogo and the surrounding remote area of Tanzania affect both the quality and the opportunity for formal schooling. The 2007 EFA report argued "By neglecting the connections among early childhood, primary and secondary education and adult literacy, countries are missing opportunities to improve basic education across the board and, in the process, the prospects of children, youth and adults everywhere" (EFA, 2007, p. 1). Overall, the situation of formal schooling in Tanzania is grim.

The national government in Tanzania relies on NGO initiatives to provide services such as early childhood education, particularly in remote areas such as Ndogo. NGOs, such as Children in Crossfire and Aga Khan Development Network, are acting

to influence policy and programs for young children. I heard an appeal from NGOs to contextually understand opportunities for young children to learn in particular locations in Tanzania because information about particular contexts is not widely available.

In this chapter, I mapped the environment of my study including the history and demographic characteristics of Tanzania. I also addressed the Ndogo community, home, and school environments in my study. As an outsider to Tanzania I do not have the deep knowledge of an insider, however, I can bring a fresh observations and insights regarding education for young children in Tanzania and Ndogo. I hope to illuminate aspects an insider, because of familiarity, might not notice. I construct questions and seek to participate in a reflective process to understand the knowledge and skills that young children have the opportunity to learn in formal and informal education in Ndogo. My study seeks to hear from local people to help fill a gap in scholarship about what opportunities exist for young children in rural southern Tanzania. My study uniquely addresses opportunities for young children to learn in rural southern Tanzania, with a focus on the community, the family and the school, in a location that has not been not widely studied. I sought to provide complex information about young children in a specific context to contribute to the call from NGOs in Tanzania to understand what is already happening with young children. In the next

chapter, I detail the conceptual frame of my study. The concepts set the groundwork of placing social and cultural context at the center of the observations and interviews.

CHAPTER 2

SITUATING THE STUDY

Introduction

My study addresses the context and content of young children's learning opportunities in the Mwera community of Ndogo, where learning occurs, who is involved, and how it unfolds. I describe and synthesize what I discovered through interviews and observations with the Mwera people in Ndogo regarding opportunities for young children to learn.

For the purpose of my study, I concentrated on a particular group of people, the Mwera, in a specific place, the village and surrounding area of Ndogo. I bounded the scope of my inquiry to Ndogo and the other surrounding Mwera villages west of Mwenye in the Lindi region of rural southern Tanzania. In this study I sought to understand the people and their experiences in Ndogo and the surrounding Mwera communities while not intending to create generalizable or replicable findings.

The focus of my study is the opportunities for young children to learn in Ndogo. Even though learning has occurred for a long time, schools are a modern phenomenon and in the context of rural Tanzania, the phenomenon of pre-primary school is very recent. Pre-primary schools are commonly formal institutions where young children begin to learn to be appropriate members of their society. Tobin (2009) wrote that pre-primary school was developed as a place "where child rearing meets education; where

the world of parents and home first meets the world of teachers and school"(p. 2). This is the case in the Ndogo community as well. However, in my study I examined the pre-primary school in Ndogo and the community opportunities for young children to learn. I refered to young children and their opportunities to learn in order to move away from the assumption that early childhood education is limited to institutional settings. I wanted to draw attention to aspects of the education and care of young children that are not commonly included in the conversations about early childhood education. I designed my study to incorporate the community, the home, and the school. I assumed opportunities to learn exist in each of these contexts. As I discussed in chapter 1, identifying these opportunities is important because it can lead to understanding better how and where young children are already learning.

In this chapter, I explore the social and cultural context of the influences on young children's opportunities to learn which are outside the immediate vicinity of Ndogo; that is, the national government and various global influences that impact opportunities young children have to learn in this area of Tanzania.

I then lay out a conceptual frame for my study. I explore the pieces of this framework that include sociocultural learning as well as the funds of knowledge concept. Together the concepts set the groundwork for placing the local Ndogo social and cultural context at the center of the observations and interviews in my study. Like a quilt pattern, the concepts that make up the framework informed the questions I asked,

the way I designed the study, and assisted the way I interpreted my observations. The study design is found in chapter 3.

Influences on young children's opportunities to learn

Many factors influence young children's opportunities to learn in Ndogo and the surrounding area. This study was prompted by my conversations with scholars, government and NGO officials focused on early childhood initiatives in Tanzania appealing for detailed information to better understand the opportunities to learn for young children in specific contexts. I examine the sociocultural context in Ndogo within the homes, the community, and the school and recognize the multiple and complex influences on these opportunities. In this section, I explore two major categories of influence as a background to understand the context of my study.

The primary influence, other than the family and community in Ndogo and the surrounding villages, was the national government. Secondarily, there were various global influences. I base this claim on markers of influence in what I examined as observable everyday social practices in Ndogo. What follows is an exploration of these influences.

Tanzania: National government influences

The national influence in Tanzania is multifaceted and includes concepts, policies, and program implementation within the national government. There are two main national influences in Ndogo I discuss in this section, from the past, the national *Ujamaa* policy and from the present, the early childhood policies.

The national government developed past policies that influence the lives of the people in Ndogo (Vavrus, 2002). Following Great Britain's colonial government rule of Tanzania, President Nyerere based his administration on ideological principles of ancient Swahili collectivism. Nyerere's ideological impact and thus the national government influences are still evident in the village of Ndogo. This includes the strong legacy from President Nyerere about what it means to be a responsible Tanzanian citizen; this is accomplished, in part, through school. The two central aspects of Nyerere's *Ujamaa* policy were economic development and unifying cultural perspectives across Tanzania.

The Ujamaa policy, which began implementation in 1967, forced village people to move from their tribal land in Ndogo to Mwenye, which previously was a trading post. Mwenye became the government-designated Ujamaa village for this area. Mwenye is now the ward seat within the Lindi rural district of the Lindi region of Tanzania. *Ujamaa* was the most comprehensive national government initiative to affect the people from Ndogo, even though the village location was not included in the

initiative and thus received no services. Over time, the geographic location of Ndogo and surrounding villages continued to be excluded from government water or health programs that the government implemented in Mwenye. One father, Bakari, said, "The government does not help us (in Ndogo), because we are in a rural area and the government isolates us." Another father, Juma, said "If Tanzania were a cow, Ndogo would be its tail." After 1985, the Mwera people, who formerly lived in Ndogo, returned to the location of the Ndogo village in order to farm. They told me that Mwenye was too far away for them to safely travel (due to wild animals and the rainy season because they were usually limited to walking as their mode of transportation) for regular school attendance or to receive medical care. This was the perspective of the village people. However, the government had a different viewpoint.

The omission of social services to the location of Ndogo, according to the Mwenye Executive Officer, is a result of the Tanzanian national government's perspective that the people from Ndogo elected to leave Mwenye and return to their land. The Executive Officer said that the government did not want to encourage people to leave *Ujamaa* villages such as Mwenye, so the government chose not to offer social services to the non-*Ujamaa* villages. The government expected the Ndogo people to come to Mwenye if they wanted services. The Mwenye Village Executive Officer said, "If people in Ndogo want running water, they should move back to Mwenye. In 1967, we had the villagization policy that brought people from the farms and villages into the

Ujamaa village so they could receive social services. However, some of the villagers refused to stay in the larger towns, such as Mwenye, and they went back to their villages, like in Ndogo, so that is why they do not have water. It is their problem."

An aspect of economic development and unifying cultural perspectives across Tanzania included enacting free and mandatory primary school in Tanzania with the intention to "sensitize them [the Tanzanian people] to the principles of *Ujamaa* and the creation of a Tanzanian rather than tribal identity through means such as the use of Swahili" (Taire, 2014, p. 2). This was performed through various methods. The venue for creating a singular cultural perspective was school.

After independence from Britain, schooling was more readily accessible but the post-colonial education was distinctly shaped by the British education system (see Appendix C for a breakdown of the levels of schooling) (Vavrus, 2002). Today, there continues to be limited access to formal schooling for many young children in rural Tanzania, and those that attend school rarely complete it. Only 25% of youth in Tanzania attend school beyond the primary level. Of those who do, only 19% are in rural areas such as Ndogo (Education Policy and Data Center, 2014). The GDP per capita was $417 (USD) with education expenditures at 3.3% of GDP. The 2011 GNI per capita was $1,500 (USD) and GDP growth was 6% (World Bank, 2011). As of 2012, the gross primary enrollment rate was 93%, missing the EFA mark of 100% (World Bank, 2012). Starting in 2005, there was a steady increase in primary school enrollment

through 2008, and then a decrease in 2009 and 2010. Data from 2010 demonstrated that there was a slightly higher enrollment of females at 33% in comparison to a slightly lower 31% of male students in school. The following statistics paint a picture of Tanzania with a large population in poverty, general success at primary school access, but lower pre-primary enrollment.

Table 4: Tanzania National Statistics

2012 Tanzania census	47.8 million
2011 GDP per capita (US dollars) ranked 199th in the world	$417
2011 GNI per capita (US dollars)	$1,670
GDP growth	6%
Education expenditures	3.3% of GDP
Population below the poverty line	33%
2011 primary enrollment percent	73%
2006 pre-primary enrollment percent	4.6%[2]
2012 Tanzania life expectancy	61 years old

Source: UNESCO, 2007.

The 2000 net attendance rates for pre-primary programs in Tanzania for children age three is unavailable; age four was approximately 1%, and ages five to six was 4.6% in organized care and learning programs (UNESCO, 2007).

The national government is the gatekeeper for international policy initiatives such as the United Nations' Millennial Development Goals (MDG). Progress made in

2 UNICEF, Division of Policy and Practice, Statistics and Monitoring Section, www.childinfo.org

Tanzania toward the MDG, for instance increased primary school enrollment rates, does not extend to EFA Goal One, to provide early childhood education, care, or learning programs. The international community posits that the "degree of preschool access reflects how much emphasis localities or nations place on incorporating all young children into a richer educational environment" (Carnoy & Marshall, 2005, p. 242). UNESCO (2007) documents show that only 2.6% of students who enter primary school attended any form of pre-primary education in Tanzania, while the 2007 UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report stated that the pre-primary gross enrollment ratios were 4.6% in Tanzania.

The Tanzanian government has not allocated resources or demonstrated prioritization of the EFA goal 1, to provide early childhood education (Mtahabwa, 2010). There are a number of reasons for the lack of priority for pre-primary schooling. One reason Mtahabwa (2009) reported was the lack of visible short-term benefits from pre-primary school. Another was that the government education budget line is allocated for primary school, and while it includes pre-primary schools, education officials in interviews with me reported that in most cases not enough money is left over to put into pre-primary school. The result is written commitments to national and international goals for pre-primary education that are often not carried out.

In 2013, only 33% of new entrants in Standard I (primary school) entered with pre-primary education (UNESCO, 2013). The number of Tanzanian young children

enrolled in pre-primary education was higher in urban areas (United Republic of Tanzania, 2010). The government reported that the qualified teacher to pupil ratio was only one teacher to seventy-one students (United Republic of Tanzania, 2010). Concern has been expressed that although the government pledged to provide teachers, teaching materials, and other resources, they have not followed through (Mtahabwa & Rao, 2010). In the meantime, the Ministry of Education and Culture in Tanzanian has called for "sensitization on importance of Pre-Primary Education" (PEDP, 2012, p. 3) as a means for improving access to early childhood education.

Studies by Villegas and Irvine (2010) and Mtahabwa (2009) demonstrated that pre-primary schools in Tanzania are characterized by shortages of teaching and learning materials, and by poor teaching and learning environments. In Sub-Saharan Africa, pre-primary enrollment ratios of 17% are the lowest in the world (UNESCO, 2010). Although significant research and policy language support early childhood education and care, in Tanzania specifically, obstacles exist to moving early childhood education policies forward, and economic demands prevent resource allocation for increased program implementation.

Access to early childhood education in Tanzania is concentrated in urban centers and limited in rural areas, and there is a lack of training and materials for pre-primary teachers. The 2007 UNESCO report stated the factors that contribute to the low pre-primary enrollment rate include an inadequate policy framework, the cost of pre-school

attendance, inadequate funding, unclear implementation strategies, too few and under qualified teachers and staff, lack of materials for teaching and learning, and poor facilities. Due to these issues, vulnerable children are most likely to be excluded from institutional early childhood programs such as pre-primary school. It is difficult for children and families in rural communities to receive comprehensive services and access to quality care and schooling particularly in rural areas (UNESCO, 2007).

Significant inequities in pre-primary school enrollment and achievement exist in Tanzania, based largely on socioeconomic status and access to pre-primary institutions (Buchmann & Hannum, 2001). The ability to attend pre-primary school, which in Tanzania is called nursery school or pre-primary school, requires economic and social capital because most of these schools are in urban areas and are fee-based. Often, only families that have economic means and access send their young children to these schools.

Regardless of the child's economic or geographic situation, nursery and or pre-primary schools serve to prepare young children for primary school. This can provide the cultural capital that may help students stay in formal school. Parents in Ndogo expressed that if their young children attended pre-primary school they hoped they would complete more years of schooling than they would without it. However, many students who attend pre-primary school in rural or under resourced areas do not necessarily gain the same experience that young children in urban areas obtain through

pre-primary schooling. Many young children are not able to achieve continued levels of education due to the cost of school supplies, distance from school, responsibilities outside of school, lack of teachers or teacher absences, shortage of instructional time, and so on (Benavot & Gad, 2004; Hunt, 2008).

Although significant research and policy language supports early childhood education and care, the economic demands on a poor country such as Tanzania prevent resource allocation for program implementation. The Tanzania government relies on NGO initiatives and programs to provide services to the wider population. In the 1990s through the present, there have been a number of poverty-alleviation and economic development initiatives from such entities as the World Bank and the United Nations. Tanzania received development aid, some allocated specifically for early childhood education, from international donors.

The relatively high primary enrolment in Tanzania compared to other African nations is due in part to former President Nyerere who went to great lengths to construct schools, although only in the *Ujamaa* villages. After President Nyerere retired, the same political party has continued in power to this day. Although the government in Tanzania weakened, the assumption continued that the government could influence people through school. Bruce Fuller (1999) wrote about the ways that a weak state relies on an education system to carry out its agendas, such as setting the language of instruction in school. The government penetrates communities through the education

system and thus exerts a strong influence on particular aspects of society without a lot of enforcement. In Tanzania, this is demonstrated through language use in schools.

Children are required to use Kiswahili in primary school because it is the language of instruction. English as a language of instruction in secondary school is a barrier for most people, keeping them from being able to enter and function beyond primary school. National policy, through *Ujamaa's* moving of communities and a formal attention to education, even economically, affected people in Ndogo.

However, as Fuller documented in his research and as my interviews suggest, the government's reach is constrained. It can influence such issues as language use through schooling but it is quite limited in its ability to control the people outside school. For instance, and as I discuss in chapter 4, in Tanzania, even though local doctors are banned, they continue to practice and are supported by local communities.

The Tanzania government acknowledged limited finances to allocate for education and insufficient resources to provide services in rural areas (MoE, 1995). The national government in Tanzania relies on NGO initiatives to provide services yet retains significant outside influence in Ndogo because it acts as a gatekeeper for organizations and projects that reach Ndogo and thus mediates the influences of the NGOs. For example, PFT went through a vetting process with the government to get permission to proceed to work with any Tanzanian villages. In addition to required approved application and annual fees, NGOs must provide the Tanzanian Ministry of

Community Development, Gender and Children a report of activities and audited financial reports. There is a 2008 Code of Conduct that all NGOs must abide by as an accountability measure from the Tanzania government (Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children, 2005).

Thus, the national government in Tanzania has the greatest influence in the Ndogo area in terms of Ndogo's inclusion in as well as its exclusion from government-led and government-allowed initiatives. The national government mediates the access and program implementation that international organizations have in Ndogo. Examples of this influence in the Ndogo area include the fact that the national department of education in the regional government selected the teacher for the recently created Ndogo school. It also funds the salary of that teacher. The national government also dictates the curriculum used in the Ndogo school.

Teachers become institutional actors of the national government in various ways. For instance, teachers in government school must complete government teacher preparation programs. Until very recently, the government would not employ teachers who completed teacher training at a private institution such as Aga Khan University. Another factor is that the Tanzanian government assigned teachers to their teaching posts (Bennell & Mukyanuzi, 2005). As a result, often teachers are placed far from their home districts. The teachers are positioned at the center of the implementation of government concepts through school in areas such as language of instruction and

curriculum content. In the next section, I examine additional influences on young children's opportunities to learn that originate from outside of Ndogo that includes the NGO involvement in Tanzania.

Tanzania: Global influences

In this context, when I refer to global influences, I mean concepts, funding, policies, and programs outside the boundary of national government, that influence decision-making and program implementation both within and across national boundaries. Global influences are secondary to the national influences, because, as stated earlier, the national government is the gatekeeper of influences.

The intersections of national and global influences, however, are complicated and converge on many levels. An early childhood scholar in Tanzania related to me that his framework of decision-making in the classroom and his interpretation of children and parent behaviors were filtered through the Developmentally (In)Appropriate Practices (DAP/DIP) framework (Bredekamp, 1986). The majority of early childhood educators use this framework because it has been considered the gold standard for early childhood education in the United States (Van Horn, Karlin, & Ramey, 2012). Transnational research and literature, and mainstream global child development concepts and perspectives, such as Developmentally (In)Appropriate Practices (DAP/DIP), influenced Tanzanian national government in the policy creation process.

Global influences are mediated by the national government's gatekeeping function. For example, the national government may allow aid money for increasing resources for education, such as classrooms, textbooks, desks, etc., but not provide aid for teaching a curriculum that may be regarded as a threat to the nation-building agenda of the national government. An example of the convergence of national and global influences includes PFT, as it brought together Tanzanian national level officials and resources and NGO/international resources.

In my interviews in Tanzania, professors, NGO leaders, and government officials voiced concern about small children not attending pre-primary school; they also voiced criticism regarding pre-primary education merely mimicking primary school in Tanzania, thus not being developmentally appropriate, and therefore often not achieving critical engagement with children (Mtahabwa, 2010). NGOs were concerned about the paradigm of early childhood education in Tanzania because, as an official from an international NGO said, "Pre-primary classrooms right now are just primary classrooms in disguise" (personal communication, 2013). As discussed earlier, NGOs are requesting information gathered from the community and home life to understand young children's connections to learning in school.

NGOs often work in tandem, or work through one another. An example is the partnership between Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) and MSU through PFT. A strong NGO presence exists widely throughout Tanzania with a stronger concentration in the

north than the south. This is due largely to the national park locations, which are in the north, bringing more international visitors and tourist's money than the south generates. NGOs are involved in southern Tanzania including Mwenye and the greater Lindi District. Apart from PFT's involvement, however, Ndogo has no other NGO involvement.

PFT has influenced Ndogo in a concrete and visible way through the support and funding of the new pre-primary school building and with promised funding for the teacher's housing. The national government enforces strict guidelines for global entities such as PFT that require them to comply with the national government and to obtain government permission to work in the country. Additionally, government permission is required to travel outside of urban areas; again pointing to the greater influence the national government has in its gatekeeping role over external influences, particularly in rural areas, such as Ndogo.

Interviews with early childhood educators in Tanzania revealed the importance of considering how to improve the enrollment rates and decrease the dropout rates of primary school through increased pre-primary school initiatives; they suggest that current education systems set students up for future failure in school (Sylva, 1994). NGO representatives indicated that the significant disconnect between the learning at home and learning at school could contribute to this set up for failure. The current

structure does not bridge the significant rural and urban divide, gender issues, and socio-economic gaps.

International organizations affect Tanzania in more ways than material. Global ideologies are found in the national government's first pre-primary curriculum developed in 2005. Following one of my stays in Tanzania, I shared the Tanzania national pre-primary curriculum with several preschool directors of early childhood development centers near Michigan State University. I asked them to examine the curriculum and share their reaction to the Tanzanian curriculum. The resounding response was that the Tanzania curriculum followed the same framework that they used in their preschools in Michigan. This shows similarity between the knowledge, skill, and behavior objectives of the curriculums.

Due to the history of the country of Tanzania and the global movement of people, ideas, and technology there are a number of potential ideologies at play in the village of Ndogo. These influences are not directly observable, making it complicated to identify origins or draw distinctions between influences. For instance, concepts such as Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) informed the national teacher educators, such as the scholar I described earlier. This raises a series of questions, for instance: are these practices implemented in schools, do these influences exist in the Ndogo school, do these influences exist in the Ndogo community, and are they consistent with the Ndogo culture?

Notions about what is conceptualized as quality early childhood education vary according to context. Pence and Nsamenang (2008) reiterated the need for the "Minority World to help the Majority World in its quest for child well-being, by supporting Africa's efforts to hear its own voices and seek its own way forward" (p. v). For instance, Tobin (2009) described two preschool contexts, one in Japan and the other in France. Viewed from the National Association of Early Childhood Education (NAEYC) quality standards, both of these systems fall short, in particular the model in France. NAEYC standards, such as the Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP), state best practices for preschool/pre-primary schools. These practices do not match diverse cultural contexts or perspectives. However, concepts such as DAP are used on an international scale to make recommendations for early childhood education and care globally.

Tobin (2005) argued that "Attempts to come up with universal, decontextualized, external standards of quality are conceptually flawed, politically dangerous, and often counter-productive" (p. 425). The issue is what practices are best in any given context. Tobin (2005) goes on to state that "Knowing how children develop does not automatically suggest any particular best practice" (p. 426). New possibilities must open up about how young children's school and care practices are conceptualized at the international and national scale. Gruenewald (2003) articulated well that "At the heart of our concern is that the polyphonic diversity of childhood globally is not being heard,

and that homogenizing forces are increasing in strength and reach" (p. 2).

Scholars of early childhood education, Kessler and Swadener (1992) contended that "If knowledge is power ... the nature of knowledge, as well as the practices that are valued or privileged in the early childhood curriculum, must be examined within a number of larger contexts as well as from multiple perspectives" (p. 293). This reminds us of the need to re-conceptualize what is considered best practices for young children in ways that are informed by local contexts. Along with Dahlberg, Moss, and Pence (1999), I am "not arguing, however, for the replacement of one dominating language (about early childhood education) with another" (p. 2). Rather, I aspire to introduce a hesitation into the dominant conversation about visions for young children's education.

What I refer to as the dominate conversation, in the mainstream child development literature, suggests "best practices," also referred to as Developmentally Appropriate Practices, are primarily about the setting of the classroom (Bredekamp, 1986). An additional example of a mainstream child development concept in the 2005 Tanzania national pre-primary curriculum is age-appropriate instruction. The Tanzanian national government exercised its gatekeeping influence when it allowed global ideologies to influence the creation of this curriculum through the involvement of international NGOs, such as UNESCO.

Another example of a global ideology influence is how education is perceived as a panacea for social ills (Vavrus, 2003). This was evident in Ndogo through commercials

on the radio encouraging parents to send their children to school because, according to the advertisement, "Education is life." Parents were encouraged to send their young children to school with the message that it will make them more successful in school and help them have a better life.

The World Bank states that contributions to early childhood education will lead to "full cognitive and emotional capacity and to economic well being and future financial contribution" (Alderman, 2011, p. 3). NGOs articulated that Tanzania's human capacity is compromised because most young children are not attending pre-primary school. The NGO Children in the Crossfire (2013) stated in a report, "Key stakeholders do not appreciate the economic return on investment in early childhood development (ECD) and so they do not prioritize it… Unless investments are made in young children, the workforce to deliver a middle income economy will not exist" (p. 5). Stakeholders were described as the national government as well as parents and community members. NGOs around the world, as in Tanzania, are promoting early childhood initiatives with families and communities to improve the education of young children and provide greater access to formal early childhood education.

Some NGOs such as Children in Crossfire said that most early childhood interventions in Tanzania ignore or do not include parents and community members in the conversation about what is best for young children. Save the Children along with other NGOs expressed the need to focus on understanding what is happening at home

and in the community for young children's opportunities to learn. A large supporter of this concept in Tanzania is Tanzanian Early Childhood Development Network (TECDEN). TECDEN is an NGO in Tanzania that advocates for early childhood education and development (ages 0-8). Its mission is to bring together all of the NGOs in Tanzania concentrated on early childhood education. NGOs members of TECDEN are from 14 regions of Tanzania, but they are not yet in the region where Ndogo is located. TECDEN seeks to help communities mobilize around early childhood development issues and connect them with funding from NGOs interested in early childhood education initiatives. Largely the goal of TECDEN as well as other early childhood education focused NGOs is to maximize the impact of initiatives for young children.

NGOs and scholars in Tanzania acknowledged that global organizations measure the effectiveness of initiatives according to mainstream child development frameworks such as Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP). Mtahabwa (2010) cited a concern about pre-primary school because of the "lack of stakeholder awareness about the importance of pre-primary education, specialists in early childhood education, policy specificity and implementation guidelines could inadvertently lead to the promotion of inappropriate pre-primary education practices" (p. 228). Mtahabwa as well as others expressed a need to discover contextually appropriate practices that

could help NGOs conceptualize more applicable initiatives for young children in Tanzania.

In summary, the Tanzania national government and global ideologies both have influence in Ndogo; however, the national government has more control as the gatekeeper of policies and therefore has a larger influence. This is especially evident in terms of the social services provided to Ndogo (e.g., schools, healthcare, roads). It is not uncommon in under-resourced majority world countries that their governments may nod to the ideologies of the donor dollars in order to receive the funding, but the implementation of the said ideologies may not follow, thereby weakening the influence of the ideologies (Vavrus, 2002).

Although not an "outside" influence, it is important to also note when the national government attempts to impose practices, policies, and programs on the local level, there is still another mediating influence, which is the local people themselves. The local people are also gatekeepers about what is happening in their own community, about what opportunities to learn in which they participate and those in which they do not choose to participate.

Power and influence is not one-way. Local people have influence on practices, policies, and programs by their choices to become involved or not involved. The intersection of global, national, and local is complicated and there is convergence at many levels. The local people have agency in these matters as well as the national

government. Power and influence operate in a web-like network with movement in both directions. Dictates can come down to the village from the national government. The national government may allow influence from global ideologies. These can also be diverted at multiple levels by various means, including by the people who are the objects of the influence.

Sociocultural Learning

Using a sociocultural approach in my study, I assumed that the people and the contexts involved in the learning process are significant. The sociocultural approach to learning asserts knowledge and skills occur within social interaction and are situated in context, which includes people and places. Implicit in my study are assumptions from sociocultural learning theory, mainly that the tasks, skills, or other general knowledge that children encounter matters to the learning process because present learning builds on past learning. In addition to people and experiences, the context of learning also includes historical and cultural settings. Interactions between people create a social environment that influences the learning process. This sociocultural learning concept frames the foundation for my study.

The examination of young children's learning in a particular location can reveal the way that young children have opportunities to learn in a sociocultural context. People construct meaning from their experiences and this is enhanced when people

make connections from new learning with previous learning (Borko & Putnam, 1998). As I discuss in chapter 4, observations of the local forms of pedagogy in Ndogo include learning from the environment and in social situations learning from one another.

Learning occurs in a complex web of social and cultural contexts with multiple influences and varying impact. Various opportunities to learn in the home and in the school exist at the same time. Students have opportunities to learn in the home and when they begin school those opportunities to learn at home do not end as other opportunities begin.

In the following section, I introduce sociocultural perspectives on learning. There is extensive scholarship regarding sociocultural learning, however, current literature does not address sociocultural learning in the context of young children in southern Tanzania. Therefore, in the next section I describe scholarship that attends to sociocultural learning of older children and communities in northern Tanzania, which has significantly more NGO and international involvement that in southern Tanzania, and I include sociocultural theories of learning in early childhood education from other parts of the world. I then explore the connection between the funds of knowledge concept and the design of my study. Finally, I address the connection between my study research questions and sociocultural learning. In later chapters, I elaborate more sociocultural concepts such as Lave and Wagner's legitimate peripheral participation concept, and make connections to these with the data from my study. I interweave the

literature and conceptual discussion in the relevant sections of upcoming data chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Sociocultural scholarship in Tanzania

Sociocultural approaches to learning are powerful frames scholars use in addressing issues about education. In Tanzania this approach is lacking in its application to early childhood and the study of young children's learning. Much of the scholarship about education in Tanzania tends to be from the north of Tanzania and most of the scholarship in Tanzanian education focuses on secondary education, some on primary school, and very little on pre-primary education. Moreover, there is a lack of research in education that combines in-and-out of school opportunities to learn for young children in Tanzania, which is the focus of this study. I draw on education research from northern Tanzania that is grounded in sociocultural concepts. Examples of sociocultural approaches to research design in Tanzania include work by Fran Vavrus, Amy Stambach, Ladi Semali, and Lyabwene Mtahabwa.

Vavrus' (2002) scholarship on secondary formal education in northern Tanzania seriously engages the context and sociocultural influences on learning. Vavrus acknowledges and explores the context of how secondary students have opportunities to learn. In 2013, Vavrus joined with Lesley Bartlett to study teaching pedagogies in northern Tanzania secondary schools and found that for teachers a tension was created

when they tried to implement imported student-centered instructional methods, pedagogies advocated in much of the minority world.

Another scholar, Stambach (2000) examines the intersection of religion and formal education in northern Tanzania. Stambach employed a sociocultural approach to her work as she explored social values and cultural rites in northern Tanzania and their effect on secondary schooling. Stambach's work examines both formal and informal educational settings, as does my study.

Another body of work addresses sociocultural learning in Tanzania by developing a framework to think about "local" or "indigenous" which "denote the knowledge that has evolved in a particular societal context and which is used by lay people in that context in the conduct of their lives" (Semali, 1999, p. 80). Semali's (1999) scholarship focuses on science curriculum in the Tanzanian secondary classroom and contextualizing the ways of knowing that students bring to the classroom. The pedagogy is grounded in a local space, such as indigenous language and heritage, and is rooted in holistic learning. Semali's (1999) work sheds light on the community and caregivers of young children as the educators.

Mtahabwa's (2009, 2010, & 2011) groundbreaking work in Tanzania in early childhood mainly concerns access to pre-primary schools in Tanzania's urban areas. He documents barriers to pre-primary enrollment and retention. He also examines parent and community awareness of early childhood education initiatives. Mtahabwa's studies

examine pre-primary school and do not examine opportunities to learn in the homes or communities. His work also discusses Tanzania national government policy and implementation of early childhood education, however his work is not from a sociocultural framework.

Much of the scholarship in Tanzania with sociocultural approaches to learning is focused in the north of Tanzania, in urban areas, or with older children. Thus, my study meets a gap in the literature with its sociocultural framework focused on opportunities for young children to learn in rural areas of southern Tanzania.

Sociocultural scholarship in early childhood education

Sociocultural scholarship that pertains to young children in other contexts influenced the design of my study. There are numerous examples of sociocultural scholarship regarding issues of early childhood education; however no significant focus of this type of research has been conducted in Tanzania.

Although Paulo Freire (1970/1995), a theorist in sociocultural scholarship, was not concentrated on young children, he attended to all ages of people in his work. In particular, Freire asserts in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* that "Human beings, and learners, exist in a cultural context" (p. 3) and emphasizes the importance of place. Freire's ideas were influential in my thinking not only about my study design but also the analysis of the information I gathered.

In their research, scholars such as Dahlberg (2008), Moss (2008), and Pence (1999), work to introduce a "stutter" into the mainstream narratives in early childhood education by contextualizing the study of young children and examining people and places that are often left out of the conversation. Similarly, this study offers a shift in the mainstream dialogue about early childhood education by relying on sociocultural approaches to exploring young children's opportunities to learn.

Joe Tobin, an educational anthropologist and early childhood education specialist cited earlier in this chapter, examined preschools in different cultural contexts and writes extensively about quality in early childhood education. Although the focus of my study examines both informal and formal settings, Tobin's work informed the design of my study's awareness of culturally appropriate practices and the influences of various entities on the opportunities for young children to learn.

I contend that education occurs in and out of school. Education is contextually oriented and provides a lens to focus on the family, the child, the community, and the school in Ndogo. Throughout the presentation of my data I include connections with the sociocultural approach to learning. A significant sociocultural concept of learning that is connected to the opportunities to learn for young children in Ndogo is "limited peripheral participation." Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991) wrote "A person's intentions to learn are engaged and the meaning of learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in a socio-cultural practice" (1998, p. 3). I describe

limited peripheral participation in more detail and give examples from Ndogo in chapters 4, 5, and 6.

When I speak of opportunities to learn in this study, I refer to the spaces and places of the intentional or unintentional pedagogical work of parents, peers, teachers, and other community members, including other children, both in and outside of schooling. I collected information from people involved in young children's opportunities to learn formally and informally. I defined "formal education" as the category of opportunities to learn provided by or connected to government officials, NGOs, school administrators, teachers, and academics. I defined "informal education" as the type of opportunities to learn provided by all other sources, such as the places and people associated with young children, the parents, other children, extended family, and community members. A significant element of my study is examining young children in the context of the school classroom as well as in the home and the community.

Sociocultural learning and funds of knowledge

Experiences and knowledge outside the school classroom are valuable. Features of young children's learning in Ndogo and surrounding villages include opportunities to learn skills and gain knowledge from parents, children, teachers, community

members, and elders. I explored opportunities for young children to learn from the point of view that funds of knowledge exist.

The concept of funds of knowledge refers to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that children acquire outside school. This concept assumes that young children have valuable skills and experiences that they can bring to the school classroom. It posits that "People are competent, they have knowledge, and their life experiences have given them that knowledge," and they take it with them to school (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005, p. x).

Students are not empty vessels for teachers to fill with knowledge. Cummins (1996) said, "Our prior experience provides the foundation for interpreting new information. No learner is a blank slate" (p. 75). Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti (2005) asserted there is value in what children bring with them to the classroom, because the "educational process can be greatly enhanced when teachers learn about their students' everyday lives" (p. 6). These experiences and skills young children discover become their funds of knowledge that come with them to school. I designed my study to examine these intertwining and overlapping opportunities.

Opportunities to learn involve knowledge, skills, and dispositions that occur across the boundaries of the home and the community. The process of learning occurs in context. In this study, the context includes the people, spaces, material constraints as well as the common identity of the people living in Ndogo and surrounding villages

belonging to the Mwera people group. "For indigenous peoples themselves, their systems of knowledge creation and transmission are worthy of study in their own right, and must be part of what is worthwhile to learn in schools" (Thaman, 2000, p. 54). In chapters 4 and 6, I describe and discuss young children's funds of knowledge in Ndogo and the surrounding villages.

To summarize my assumptions, I consider that children's opportunities to learn occur in sociocultural and contextualized settings. A sociocultural approach to understanding early childhood education is helpful because my research focuses on rural southern Tanzania where the government is responding to international pressures to increase preprimary enrollment. Formal education for young children is a recent concept and advocated for by the international donor community. I seek to understand better not only what occurs in formal schooling for young children but also what opportunities to learn occur out of school in the community and the home.

Sociocultural learning: the study research questions

An assumption from sociocultural approaches to learning, which I include in my study, is the idea that context is a significant factor in understanding opportunities to learn (Borko & Putnam, 1998). My study seeks to illuminate the context in which opportunities to learn are present for young children in Mwera villages in rural southern Tanzania. I deliberately chose to use the phrase "opportunities to learn"

because I did not have the information to enable assessment of what young children actually learned in the breadth of these opportunities. I use the UN definition for young children, which includes children from the ages of zero through eight years old. Although my study does not address infants, I do examine opportunities to learn for young children approximately three through eight years old.

As I sought to discover the opportunities young children have to learn in the home, the community, and the school in Ndogo, I invited people in Ndogo to share their observations and examples of young children's opportunities to learn. My research questions which came out of the sociocultural framework discussed previously, include:

- What are the pedagogies and modes of young children's opportunities to learn?
- Who are the people involved in opportunities young children have to learn?
- Where are the places young children have opportunities to learn?
- What do young children have opportunities to learn?

These questions are conceptual and allowed for descriptive data collection. The way the questions are framed with attention to the context of young children's opportunities to learn such as people, place, and modes arose from the sociocultural assumptions about learning and knowledge described above.

Pedagogical sites of knowledge creation are important because the spatial, historical, and cultural facets of a location influence what and how young children learn. The strength of such an approach is that it can reveal the context — what those with the most at stake in educating young children (as well as those charged with its undertaking), such as parents, teachers, and older children, observe and describe about young children's opportunities to learn. I acknowledge that there are additional factors influencing young children's opportunities to learn, which I discuss next.

Summary

In their seminal work, *Africa's Future, Africa's Challenge: Early Childhood Care and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa*, scholars in early childhood education described the great need for even more research to examine issues within and concerning young children in Africa (Garcia, Pence, & Evans, 2008). The majority of education scholarship originates from the north of Tanzania and focuses on older children. Much of the work on pre-primary school in Tanzania is in urban settings. Thus, it is important to investigate and understand rural pre-primary education as well as opportunities for young children to learn outside of school.

Approaching this study from the framework of sociocultural learning provides a focus on the context of young children's learning in Tanzania. As established in chapter 1, educational scholars and organizations focused on initiatives for young children in

Tanzania are calling for this information. This study addresses opportunities for children to learn in rural southern Tanzanian, which will contribute to this understanding. The design of the study is framed by sociocultural approaches to young children children's opportunities to learn in all formal and informal contexts, in the home and the community and in Ndogo school.

In the next chapter, I discuss the methods and the design of my study. My research took place from July-August and from October-November in 2013 in rural southern Tanzania. I describe what I did and how I made my plans and what I did during the periods between trips, including how I analyzed data, transcribed interviews, and consulted with my Tanzanian collaborators.

CHAPTER 3

MAPPING THE METHODS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

In this chapter I describe how the background from chapter 1 and the conceptual framework from chapter 2 led me to develop the design of this study. With the intention to contextualize the sociocultural aspects of young children's opportunities to learn, I desired to understand how the people of Ndogo and the surrounding area were thinking in addition to understanding the national and global influences described in chapter 2. Thus, my translator and I spent time with the people of Ndogo, in their daily lives including parents, the teacher, elderly people, and observing and playing with young children.

In order to situate the methods of this study, this chapter describes focused ethnography as a research method and how it informed my study design and data collection. I present the research and data collection plan, describe my research approval process and interview questions, examine how I selected participants, and how I approached data analysis. I also describe in more detail how I used the time in between my data collection trips. Finally, I share my positionality as an outsider and I bring to the forefront of my study the possibilities and constraints of my position and the study limitations.

Research Design

To design a focused ethnography, I used a variety of data collection techniques in this study to describe the opportunities for young children to learn. Focused ethnography is "the work of describing culture" (Spradley, 1979), using a "process of learning about people by learning from them" (Roper & Shapira, 2000). In line with ethnographic methods, I sought to better understand the complex social phenomenon of young children's opportunities to learn in the context of Ndogo and the surrounding Mwera villages.

A unique component of a focused ethnographic study includes short-term field visits instead of the traditionally long-term field nature of a traditional ethnography. Another feature of a focused ethnography is that it answers similar questions of a traditional ethnography, but requires more intense preparation for the trips and work between trips. The shorter length of time in the field is compensated by the intensity of data collection and data analysis, which produces large amounts of data (Higginbottom, Pillay, & Boadu, 2013). My study included data from interviews, focus groups, observations, and photos over the course of my visits. I used this data to examine the context from multiple approaches.

My study builds on the assumption that there are opportunities to learn about early childhood education occurring in local-level formal and informal education of young children. I sought to discover the nature of the opportunities, and the multiple

influences and desires for early childhood education in a rural Tanzanian village. I traveled to Ndogo, Tanzania two separate times in 2013 to collect data specific to this study in July-August and October-November. Between the two trips to Ndogo and the surrounding area, I accumulated two months of contact time in Ndogo and the surrounding villages.

I employed grounded theory to systematically describe the context of young children and their opportunities to learn (Glaser & Strauss, 2009). For the purpose of this study, education for young children is defined as caring for and teaching children in formal and informal settings. The terms preschool and pre-primary school are interchangeable. Preschool is commonly used in the USA while pre-primary school is the term used in Tanzania; therefore, I use the term pre-primary school to be consistent with the Tanzania context.

There are many ways to approach a focused ethnographic study. To examine my questions about young children's opportunities to learn, I engaged the assumptions I drew on from sociocultural framework to create open-ended interviews, observations, and focus groups asking descriptive and operational questions. I presumed young children had knowledge, skills, and dispositions in each of their life experiences. I examined opportunities for young children to learn in their social context that included family, peers, community members, the teacher, and so on. This was key to shedding light on the complexity and fullness of the opportunities young children have to learn

which allowed me to glimpse a more complete understanding.

I wanted to understand the opportunities, the places, and the people involved in learning activities for young children in Ndogo. I designed my study to obtain observations and interviews with numerous people to shed light on the various and diverse opportunities young children here have to learn. The framework of sociocultural learning concepts described in chapter 2 guided my research questions. Thus, I developed interview questions and participant observation in order to shed light on the opportunities for young children to learn, both informal, including the care taking and child-rearing that takes place in the home, neighborhoods or communities, and formal education in the pre-primary Ndogo school. In addition to in-depth interviews, the focus groups I created allowed me to see and listen to people in conversation with each other. Participant observations allowed me to observe naturally occurring events, and people doing everyday activities. Together, this data collection provides nuanced insight into young children's opportunities to learn.

Research approval

Focused ethnographic research involves people and their lives, thus requiring research approval and clearance. Intentional ethical practices are also important. My study received IRB approval for exempt status from Michigan State University. I also received a letter granting permission to do research from University of Dar es Salaam

(UDSM) and the required research clearance from the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH).

When I arrived in Dar es Salaam, I met with contacts in Dar es Salaam at Aga Khan University (AKU), Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), and the University of Dar es Salaam Department of Education (DUCE). I also met with Claude Mung'Omung'O and Mary Malekela, who are the coordinator and the officer of the Project For Tanzania (PFT), which is located at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM). They generated the paperwork necessary for my formal introduction to the necessary government entities. I took an eleven-hour bus ride from Dar es Salaam to Lindi Town (the district capitol). When I arrived, I met with government officials at the regional level including the Lindi Rural Executive Officer, the Lindi Rural District Education Officer, Assistant Lindi Rural District Education Officer, and the Lindi Rural Community Development Officer. My visit with these government officials served as a gateway for me to go on to Ndogo after these officials permitted my travel and approved my plan. To protect the identity and confidentiality of the people participating in this study I use pseudonyms for their names and the names of the villages.

I then traveled from Lindi Town to Mwenye on a five-hour bus ride. I stayed at the only for-profit lodging in Mwenye because Ndogo does not have any commercial guest accommodation. This area does not have as many NGOs and foreign nationals as the northern part of Tanzania as evidenced that I was the only foreigner I saw on the

streets in Lindi Town, Mwenye, and Ndogo, excluding a German-born doctor in Lindi Town who has been a long time resident of Tanzania. Upon my arrival in Mwenye, I met with the Ward Education Officer and the Mwenye Village Executive Officer, called *munyakiti* in Kiswahili. I received approval from both of these officials to conduct my research. In each government office, I was required to sign the government registration books. This series of meetings and signatures of permission allowed me to then proceed with my research, spending time in Ndogo and the surrounding villages.

In addition to formal approval from MSU and the required various Tanzanian governmental agencies, I indirectly sought the approval of the village people who worked with me. Given my desire that this research positively impact the lives of young children, and for this experience to be a productive and fruitful experience for the community, I consulted with my community connection, Juma, who was from this area of Tanzania. Juma suggested I give gifts to the school instead of directly to families to avoid jealousies between people. In my first trip, I asked families and the schoolteacher what they would like to have at the school. Per their suggestions, the next visit I carried carefully selected relatable picture books with me. The schoolteacher and I passed them out to the young children at the school. I also brought school supplies such as pencils and soccer balls to the schools at the end of my second trip. An additional benefit to the community was a meeting I facilitated to bring together the concerns of the community, which they then prioritized and provided suggestions for solutions to the major

community concerns. I wrote the letter they dictated, had it translated, then delivered it to the Project For Tanzania (PFT) (as mentioned previously, I was employed with PFT and they are development partners with the community).

Data Collection

Participants

This study focuses on the home, the community, and the school environment. The people in my study were men, women, and children in Ndogo and surrounding villages, the schoolteacher, government officials, and members of the PFT organization. While the government and international organizations are not discussed in chapters 4 and 5, they are discussed in greater detail in chapters 6 and 7. I was able to meet with Tanzania government officials from the district and ward levels as well as with both PFT Tanzania and PFT US partners. I held informal interviews with detailed/extensive conversations about their experiences, background, and their work.

The 2009 government census cited 651 people living in Ndogo and neighboring villages. I talked with 144 people including the schoolteacher, young children, older children, mothers, fathers, and community members. Of those interviewed 48 were formal interviews and 26 were informal interviews. 59 people participated in focus groups. During the time I was in Ndogo I spent a total of 30 days observing in the school. After school hours I walked into the villages to conduct interviews, either to

begin new ones or resume interviews from the day before. The chart below breaks down the number and type of interviews, observations, and focus groups.

Table 5: Study Participants

Location	Type	Source	# of people
Ndogo, Wimbwi, Nahoro, and M'kalakacha	Formal Interviews	Men, women, and children	48
	Informal Interviews	Men, women, and children	26
	Total Village people		**74**
	Focus groups	4 groups	59
	Daily observations	50 days	
	Total people interviewed in Ndogo area		**133**
Ndogo School	Formal Interviews	Schoolteacher (a series of 4 interviews)	1
		Students formal interviews	10
	Observations	30 days at Schoolhouse	
	People at the school Total		**11**
Tanzania Government	Informal interviews	Lindi District	5
	Informal interviews	Mwenye Ward	4
	Government people Total		**9**
NGOs	Informal interviews	PFT	6
	NGO people Total		**6**
Total people interviewed in this study			**159**

Source: Laura Edwards, 2013.

The location of the interviews and observations was mainly in the sub-villages of Ndogo, Wimbwi, Nahoro, and M'kalakacha with men, women, and children who lived

there. We met in a variety of places, on the road, at their houses, in their fields, at the water source, and additional places. This was partly by design and out of necessity, to avoid interruption of the work in which people were engaged. I conducted informal interviews while we fetched water and peeled cassavas. I also conducted formal interviews with the many people I met while we worked together. I would thank them for allowing me to join in their tasks and I asked if I could come back in the evening to talk further. In the evenings I would sit face to face and talk with them through my translator.

When I was in a situation when I could take notes, I wrote down everything I could as precisely as possible. I always carried a small, inconspicuous notebook in my pocket and avoided using a large notebook, which may have seemed more intrusive to the conversational style I was attempting to maintain. Prior to the trip I practiced note taking while talking to someone, writing as much as I could, including the key words or phrases, while I focused on their face without looking down at the paper. During interviews, if I felt I did not correctly understand the meaning of what was being said, I made a note of it and when there was a break in the conversation, I asked my translator, Iddi, a question in English to clarify or provide a follow-up question.

I conducted four in-depth interviews with the pre-primary schoolteacher. I asked the teacher about his background, education, and vision for his new school. I asked him about his observations and thoughts about what opportunities young children have to

learn at home and at school, how those opportunities are different and what they have in common. We also talked about the purposes of formal education.

It is important to note that the number of people interviewed or who participated in focus groups does not reflect the number of interviews I conducted. I interviewed a number of people multiple times and spent extensive time with three families in their daily activities. The number of interviews was determined by the time I had in the village. During my first trip, I attempted to obtain a broad range of interviews because the people involved in young children's care and instruction have various perspectives. This diversity of interviews increased my understanding of the context and the topic I was examining. It also served to identify persons from initial interviews with whom I conducted more in-depth interviews on my second trip.

In my second trip, during October-November, 2013, I was able to re-interview 15 of the original people with whom I had previously conducted formal interviews. I was also able to meet and interview 35 new people as well as able to cover more geographical distance starting at the far end of the community and spending all day walking back to Mwenye, stopping at every house along the way. I was able to gain a fuller picture of people's perspectives due to the additional interviews with villagers and an increased depth of follow-up interviews.

Participant selection

There was not a list of people I could choose from, thus, the only way to know people was by walking down the paths and introducing myself so I worked to find people by word of mouth. Due to the circumstances, and because there was no other adequate method for obtaining people to participate in my study, I used a snowball method (Atkinson & Flint, 2001; Streeton, Cooke, & Campbell, 2004).

I did not find any scholarly literature written about Ndogo, so one of the first things I sought was to observe and ask questions about the village and the people. To better understand the dynamics of the community, I looked for variations that existed between people in the villages. This was important so I could understand what divisions were significant in this community, such as the economic state of the villagers (like wealthy or poor), identifying people's education and Kiswahili literacy level, the size of the household, polygamy, religious affiliations, and what made some families more central and others more peripheral to village power. This provided a broad contextualization of the community.

In order to understand more about young children's opportunities to learn, I observed people and interviewed a wide cross-section of ages both young and old, including students from the school, as young as age four, and the eldest man in the community whose age was eighty. I intentionally sought out people who may have various viewpoints such as people with children and people without children as well as

younger and older people. Because I was examining opportunities for young children to learn I was looking for as extensive as possible description of opportunities. This lent itself to diverse and varied reports but I did not encounter people who disagreed with each other regarding opportunities for young children to learn.

I conducted second and third interviews with any people that were willing. It took time to build trust and relationships with people; in my second visit, I was able to conduct deeper interviews with a number of people allowing me to press beyond the information gathered in their first interviews. I interviewed as many parents as possible who had pre-primary school aged children and chose to send their children to the new school. I also sought out interviews with parents who did not choose to send their pre-primary aged children to the school. Over the course of both trips, I had 74 individual interviews and 59 parents and communality members participated in focus groups in Ndogo and the surrounding area.

I looked for opportunities to play with young children in the village, without having specific expectations. I also had formal interviews with young children engaging in play activities in multiple places. I used an opportunistic selection of people to interview because I had access to people who were home when I stopped by their house. Most of the houses I walked to had some members of the family home. I only stopped at two houses where no one was home. Due to time constraints, people I did not get to speak with lived in the houses I was unable to get to because the houses were

further from Ndogo, and the villages do not have a center so outlying houses are scattered for miles in thick vegetation.

I interviewed the mothers who brought water to the school, the school committee of parents, and the chairpersons of each of the villages. I also interviewed families I met walking deep along footpaths into the "bush." (The "bush" is a direct translation from Kiswahili, which was used by people in the area to refer to dwellings that were situated off the main road and accessible only by waking paths). Often the village chairperson, Hasan Ali, walked with Iddi, the translator, and me through the bush on footpaths to make introductions with the people whom I interviewed.

I also paid attention to how gender played a role in my data gathering and analysis. I am a woman and many of the people in power are men, even though the Mwera is a matriarchal people group. I felt very respected by the men in the community and they were eager to speak with me. I observed that women would defer to their husbands if they were in an interview together. To obtain the perspectives of women, I was intentional about seeking time alone with women in informal settings. Individually, women opened up and shared personal things sometimes, such as their feelings about an unmarried daughter with a child. In a group without men, women were very jovial and enjoyed laughing together and interrupting each other. However, due to my language constraint, Iddi was with me, and as the only male in the setting, he most likely impacted the interviews. However, this impact was hard to determine

partially because Iddi, though he is my age, seems boy-like in his appearance and because he is unmarried, his status in this culture is less than as a married man's status.

I offered to carry water or cook with women in order to facilitate same-gender conversations without men from the community present. I identified myself as a mother with two young children and shared photos of my children, to develop a connection with the mothers in the community and I became aware that a mother has higher status in the community than a woman without children. Sharing about myself with people participating in my study helped me develop questions that were more genuine and demonstrated my own vested interest in the well being of young children.

Interviews

Interviews were key to my study because the information I gathered centered on how people described opportunities for young children to learn. I focused my questions to encompass the different aspects of the opportunities. Thus, my research questions address how children had opportunities to learn such as observing and imitating. I examined who was involved in the opportunities young children have to learn and asked questions about who spent time with young children and what they did together. I also asked about where and what the opportunities were for young children to learn. To better understand these questions required numerous conversations with a variety of people.

I created a semi-structured interview protocol for my first trip to Ndogo and the surrounding area. The second round of interviews was informed by the first set of interviews and so on. Each interview did not necessarily address every question because I was in the area for an extended time and had multiple interviews with most of the participants. I was able to ask a range of questions to the same person at various times.

The formal interview questions are listed in Appendix B. These open-ended questions did not fit into a standardized interview protocol or survey, as survey questions inquire about quantifiable things such as "Do you teach your children to cook?" I also did not use questions created by other researchers. Rather I chose to develop interview questions from the context I was examining. I developed questions to inquire about young children's opportunities to learn to provide "access to the practices (the words, the actions, the personally appropriated signs that mark one's place in social space) of social actors" (Simon & Dippo, 1986, p. 198).

The descriptive questions I asked inquired about people's experiences, daily activities, and viewpoint about opportunities for young children's learning. An example of a descriptive question I asked is "Tell me about what you and your family, including your young children, do each day." I listened and then repeated what the person said and subsequently used operational questions to ask about their responses to the descriptive questions. An example of an operational question is "Tell me about

opportunities you see for young children to learn in your family."

Interview questions originated from my research questions and also evolved over time to include information I learned during interviews. Some of the questions that were the focus of conversations were informed by my assumptions about young children, for example I asked people questions about what young children play and what opportunities young children have to learn through the play. I chose to ask these questions because it is a central topic in early childhood education in the minority world (Singer & Singer, 1990). This was intended to be informative to contextualize play in this location. I asked what type of games children play, followed up with asking what materials they used, and then I asked who instructs or engages with children learning how to do those activities. This opened the door for me to ask questions such as "What do children learn from the activity? Why? How? What do you think about children's playing? How much play is okay? When is it not a good thing?" I asked these questions to ascertain opportunities for young children to learn as well as to discover what these people consider learning.

Some interview questions were formed from information I received during interviews. For instance, sex education is not a common focus for young children in the minority world. But in Ndogo, young children from six onward participate in initiation rites that contain a great deal of sex education. Thus, I added questions to understand people's viewpoint on how, when, with whom young children learn about sex

education.

In order to understand how people in the community drew distinctions about young children, I asked questions about gender, age, labor, etc. This helped me conceptualize how a "young child" is defined. I also sought to observe how people identified what young children should learn in the home, in the community, and in the school. I asked questions around where and how young children are equipped to learn in the home, the community, and the school.

As an entry point for conversations to understand better opportunities to learn, I asked families that had older children about their daily activities and chores. I asked additional questions to understand what young girls are expected or asked to do and not to do. I also asked parents when they have fears for their daughters about sexual assault or sexual activity during household labor, such as collecting firewood, etc. I then asked questions about younger aged children, to tease out how these concerns change with age. I also sought to withhold judgment statements, not saying things such as, "I do not do that with my children" or "That does not make sense to me." Instead, as people were talking, I affirmed the answers that people gave me. For instance I said, "Ok, tell me more" or "Yes, help me understand that better."

I created concrete hooks to start conversations, because in my experience in Tanzania, people tended to be indirect in their conversations. For instance, when I asked a father in the community, Kurwa, an abstract question about violence against

women, he said "I would not know things about women." In another interview, I used a concrete example to prompt Hassan to answer my question. I illustrated a story about a woman in Mwenye that a man had raped. I asked Hassan, "How often do you hear stories about things like this?" The conversation flowed from that point and Hassan talked about violence against women and shared details about how the community handled these instances.

At times, people did not understand what I was asking. In one case, Issa told me "What you are asking is too abstract." I gave an example then Issa said, "Now I understand." I learned people often felt more comfortable sharing their thoughts if I provided an illustration. Sometimes, I started questions with a story from my own life with young children, or an observation I had from watching young children in the village. So as to create tangible examples, I would say, for example, "As a mom, I want [this] and [this] for my children. What do you hope for your children?" Providing an illustration or short story was very successful for eliciting responses during interviews. I pressed further in conversations to find out the priority that people in the villages placed on what young children should learn and how that relates to what would help children to become competent, functioning adults in the community.

Multiple situations presented themselves that provided vital data collection but they were not formal interviews. These informal interviews also provided an environment to work alongside people as we talked when appropriate, including

fetching water, holding a baby, playing with young children, or peeling cassava. In these instances I did not take notes in order to allow me to be a full participant in the activity and not obstruct the conversation. When the activity concluded I would take a moment as I walked along the road in route to the next house to stop and sit down to write on paper as much as I could recall.

When I took out my notebook, people did not seem to take much notice. Adults did not comment on the notebook or ask what I was writing down. That did not mean that they did not have an opinion or reaction to my note taking just that it was not expressed. A couple of times, I read back to a person what I wrote down and showed a diagram or drawing based on what someone said, and I asked them for confirmation. It appeared as though I was perceived as an enthusiastic learner of their customs and life. People seemed to want to share what they knew and expressed pride for their customs.

Children, in contrast, were very interested in my pen and paper. Primary students, but not the younger children, in the school had sheets of paper bound in a notebook for their exercises and used pencils. I did not ever see pens or papers in homes I visited. Children wanted to hold and try writing with my pen in my notebook. One mother commented that her daughter of five had never seen a paper and pen before. The mother thought it was curious that her daughter was trying so intently to write something on my notebook.

The language people used in the interviews to describe their observations and thoughts were important. I attended to the associations of the words used as part of my analysis. For example, when people talked about the teacher, they did not call him by his first name or last name but by his title: teacher. I interpreted this to indicate the importance of the teacher's role and that he was defined by this role in the community. I discuss how I handled the interviews and observations despite a lack of language fluency in the translation section of this chapter.

No one refused to talk to me but some interviews were shorter for various reasons. For example, occasionally the conversation would be going well and then neighbors would show up and join the conversation, which interrupted and/or distracted the line of thinking the initial person I had been interviewing was discussing with me. People were able to have longer conversations particularly if the interview was conducted away from the house or if we were engaged in work together. On average, interviews lasted one hour.

Observations

Observations are central components to focused ethnographic research (Creswell, 1998). The purpose of using participant observations is to describe patterns of every day life. I conducted ongoing daily participant observations over the fifty days I was in this village. The observations lasted throughout the day. Sometimes I was able to

take one-hour intervals to sit in a common area or in a family home and remove myself a bit from the activities and observe. Other times I was actively involved in tasks and could only take rudimentary notes. Here also I tried to take unobtrusive notes to remind myself what to write about later in the night when I was alone.

In my study, I wanted to understand people's experience and thus not make assumptions about what I observed but to use the observations as prompts to develop questions. As I got further into the interviews, observations were vital to the interview process.

I worked to create an environment in which people "participated in the research process with the participant's experiences being placed at the center" (Glesne, 2005, p. 99). As I mentioned, I spent time with families in their daily routines such as fetching water, preparing food for cooking, and so on. I noticed people were more open with me when we worked together. I showed interest in what they were doing and what they thought. I took cues about the appropriateness of pushing further and asking deeper questions. For instance, in an informal interview, if a child was crying and a mother could not continue the conversation I attempted to make myself useful and did not press the conversation until we could pick it up later.

I took a broad approach to document everything I could manage to write down, such as information about crops, obstacles to farming, marriage practices, etc. that were not directly related to young children. Later, I sifted through my notes to eliminate

things that did not connect with my research questions. Using my observation notes, I also discovered things that, while at the time I thought were insignificant, made more sense upon reflection and I found connections with my research. An example was the way that numerous and different types of people were involved in young children's learning processes. I documented the activities of the days and later noticed the vast number of people interacting and instructing children and the diversity in the type of persons from parents, to other adults, and other children.

I completed 30 school observations, which lasted approximately two to three hours each. I did not participate in instructing children at the school. I sat in the back corner of the room and took notes throughout the school period. Before and after school or during recess I would move around with the children and talk with them through my translator.

Another strategy I used was to develop questions from daily observations of interactions between people. For instance, I noticed that Aysha's four-year-old daughter, Bina, wanted to help her wash dishes so Aysha let Bina take over. Later in an interview, I shared with Aysha what I noticed about Bina washing dishes. I asked Aysha, "Did you have to re-wash the dishes or did Bina get the dishes clean like you wanted? How did you know Bina was going to be able to wash the dishes? How did Bina learn how to wash dishes?" Adding observations to interviews helped to create connections and generate additional questions. This added nuance and depth to the

interviews. Observations also provided additional information about how people interacted with young children.

Focus groups

The purpose of holding focus groups was to create an environment where people could share insights and others could contribute their observations and thoughts to generate a rich discussion. I held four focus groups, which included parents as well as members of the wider community, and both with and without children. I conducted gender-segregated focus groups, which was recommended by the village elders. The first focus group was with 19 women and another focus group with 21 men. Many but not all of these people were parents who had children at the school. Some of the parents were on the parent committees for the school. The third focus group was with 11 young boys from the community who ranged in age from seven to eighteen. Some of them attended school, but most of them had never attended school. The fourth focus group was with 8 young girls who were attending school.

With the intent to be sensitive to cultural norms, I did not press people for answers to questions they did not answer readily within the group conversations. I listened and asked follow-up questions but noted and saved questions I noticed that people were not readily answering. An example was when I asked the focus group of men how many wives and children they had. People answered how many children but

did not respond to how many wives. I waited until I was in an individual conversation to re-ask the question and this approach seemed to work well because people then opened up and shared the information individually when they had seemed hesitant to answer it in the group. Not pressing for answers in a group setting could potentially have limited the type of conversation I had with people. However, because they were usually personal questions, such as how many wives do you have, it did not affect the answer and it built trust establishing that I was respectful because I demonstrated cultural sensitivity.

Translation

The interviews were not only filtered by my understandings but also by the translation of interviews from Kiswahili into English. I collaborated with Tanzania colleagues to create and engage in culturally relevant interview questions. When I arrived in Dar es Salaam, I met with colleagues to finalize my itinerary and interview protocols. These relationships were established earlier in the year with faculty at Aga Khan University (AKU), Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE), and staff at the Aga Kahn Foundation (AKF). I also worked with a translator in Tanzania, Mr. Iddi Haji, who interpreted and conducted the interviews with me. He and I worked well together on my first trip to Tanzania in January 2013. He was a Tanzanian translator fluent in Kiswahili and English and had previously worked with two

anthropologists in their research projects.

Iddi's role was to provide a literal translation of the interviews from Kiswahili to English during conversations in either formal or informal interviews. I worked closely with him before, during, and after the interviews, to align what we were looking for and what we heard. Before I began the data collection, Iddi and I met to discuss my research questions and to translate them into Kiswahili. By doing this in person, we talked back and forth about what the question was or meant in Kiswahili, and what I was intending to say, until we felt satisfied with the list of questions. Prior to and during the data collection, we had conversations about what we were going to ask in the interviews. We also discussed what we should listen for in the interviews; I gave him input about what I wanted to understand, and he gave me ideas about how to put that into a question.

Iddi has a cultural understanding about economically disadvantaged communities and rural areas lacking water or electricity. This was based on his own experience growing up, on a farm in Zanzibar (a different region than Ndogo). Iddi is Muslim and without planning for it, his connection with Islam and the fact that both he and I fasted for Ramadan while we were in Ndogo provided a strong connection point with the people in the study. While Iddi was an insider relative to such issues as religion and living without electricity, he was still an outsider in the Ndogo community. This affected the interview questions in both helpful and in challenging ways. It

assisted the development of the interview questions because he was familiar, for example, with *ngoma* ceremonies and initiation rites (discussed in chapter 3), but on the other hand he did not know the exact practices of the Mwera yet he assisted me to develop informed questions.

It was also challenging because Iddi was not aware of the information insiders would know, such as people's reputations in the community and so on. This meant that, for instance, we had to ask many people the same questions to start to understand the patterns of how the community interacted. Another challenge was that soon after arriving in Mwenye and Ndogo, I found out there were active local languages that I had not been informed about, which I explore in chapter 5. This was a challenge because Iddi did not speak Kimwera, the local language. With Iddi's help, I was able to conduct interviews in Kiswahili with most people. Adults with children were the most proficient bilingual speakers and spoke both Kiswahili and Kimwera. When I interviewed the elders in the community, the chairperson, Hassan Ali, accompanied us within the community. He was a proficient bilingual speaker in Kiswahili and Kimwera and translated for us when Kiswahili was not useful.

In subsequent chapters, I include words from Kiswahili and Kimwera to draw the reader into the context of the interviews and observations. These words are also listed in a glossary in Appendix A. I include words that give validity to the concepts I describe.

Time between data collections

I had prior experience in Tanzania, which informed this research, but for the purpose of this study, I made two trips to Ndogo and surrounding Mwera villages in southern Tanzania. The first trip was in July and August and the other in October and November in 2013. I spent the majority of those two visits in Ndogo over a total period of two months.

Before and after my trips, I used the time to build relationships with my translator and academic collaborators in Tanzania through Skype calls and e-mails. I also transcribed interviews, studied literature on Tanzania and in early childhood education, analyzed data to prepare for the next round of interviews, and arranged for travel and organized my next trip.

Because I did not use a tape recorder due to the constraints posed by bringing technological equipment into my interviews, I also spent this time making computer typed documents of my notes from my first visit. My translator did have a camera, and people often asked him or me to take their pictures. Pictures were taken only with the expressed desire or permission of the person in the photograph. After we took the picture I asked the person if it was okay if I kept the picture, if I could show it to other people, and if I could use it in the paper I was writing. I took copies of all the pictures that were taken in the first visit back to the community in my second visit and gave

them to the people who had been photographed. These photos were received with delight.

In between my first and second trips, I determined how many interviews needed to occur, and with whom, based on the initial information I gathered. I also examined what questions had not yet been addressed and what the answers gathered from the first trip had suggested for additional inquiry.

I thought about the frameworks people were using when they talked about descriptions, thoughts, and illustrations about what opportunities young children have to learn. I wanted to challenge my assumptions and look beyond the surface. For example, I presumed that parents and teachers viewed the significance of pre-primary education as a pathway to pass primary school exams and gain entrance into further education or secondary school. I thought if children get a head start on their education, then they are more successful at learning. However, this is an urban perception so I was sensitive to examine the Ndogo context, which is an economically disadvantaged and rural one. I found that people wanted their children to go to school and learn how to read and write but they did not have hope that they would be able to finish school or get a good job. So I concentrated questions not only on opportunities for young children to learn but also what they were intentionally preparing them for and specifically how people were going about this.

After the first trip, I reviewed my interviews and examined the data to determine

what appeared to be important to the people with whom I spoke in the community. I discovered in particular that people in the community shared a lot about their daily lives and the history of the area and the Mwera people. I also asked a lot of questions about adults' desires for young children at present and as they got older. I noticed that I needed to go back and focus more on how those concepts were transferred to young children. For instance, I knew that young children were expected to learn how to cook but I wanted to understand how people communicated and instructed young children about how to cook, where to cook, when to cook, etc.

The focus of my interview questions shifted from the initially proposed study that emphasized discourses and policy to exploring what the actual pedagogies, process, and opportunities were for young children to learn. This occurred as a result of the type of data I was able to collect and the topics that people wanted to share and talk about. I used those themes to form the next round of questions used in my second trip with interviews with new people and to also go deeper with previous interviews and those individuals.

Data Analysis

In my analysis, I employed grounded theory to code the information from the interviews and allowed what I observed to devise a frame of the findings. I discuss the

themes that developed and the process of categorizing and making sense of the information.

The interview questions I asked were subjective in nature. The focus of the conversations was about what young children have opportunities to learn. This allowed parents and the teacher to speak about young children in the context in which they lived. Britzman (2000) expressed how participants in a study "may well be the tellers of the experience; but every telling is constrained, partial, and determined by the discourses and histories that prefigure, even as they might promise, representation" (p. 32). Given this caveat, I focused my attention on personal stories, observations, and descriptions while steering away from mass generalizations or characterizations. I noted how the people in my study described their practices. Due to the limitations of my study, I was not able to capture their practices but only to observe them. For example, due to the limitations of my study I cannot say, "[This] is the way a parent disciplines their child in this community." Rather this is a descriptive study and I retell what I heard other people say about their experiences and share what I saw.

Each time I returned home, I transcribed conversations on my computer from my numerous handwritten notebooks where I had initially recorded the interviews in the villages. I formed themes for analysis after each visit to Tanzania and allowed the development of my interview questions to be informed by the data I was concurrently collecting and analyzing.

I worked with my translator, Iddi, to think about the linguistic analysis of the interviews. I consider my conversations with Iddi as early rounds of data analysis because I was not fluent in Kiswahili. I asked questions about what words in Kiswahili were used and what meanings the word could have (or be associated with) in Kiswahili, and then in English. For example, I examined the words people used for teaching. The words for "teaching" or "training" in Kiswahili are different. I asked Iddi what word parents used to describe teaching their children. I then used that information to ask clarifying questions the next day about what the parents thought their role was in opportunities for young children to learn. I noticed that parents used the Kiswahili word for training to indicate teaching young children to obey. However, the word for teaching was used to describe imparting knowledge to young children, such as teaching them how to cook. This information assisted my categorizing information.

When I completed each visit to Ndogo, and all the interviews were transcribed, I began assigning names to the themes I identified in each of the interviews and observations. I then examined them as a whole. I read through field notes and interview transcripts, and I examined materials multiple times to gain perspective on them as a whole. I then went back through to group themes in order to refine them (Glesne, 2005). I looked for patterns of similar or dissimilar reports from people as I built criteria to understand the findings. I looked for refuting evidence from diverse parties such as

parents, young children, the teacher, and the community members, to gain alternative explanations about common themes.

I created groups with emergent themes within the interviews and my notes, then collecting and arranging them to examine and reexamine the data for interrelated concepts (Charmaz, 2004). Themes were developed from patterns that described opportunities for young children to learn. I observed significantly divergent opportunities for young children to learn in the home and the community from the Ndogo school. This provided the impetus to divide the chapters to examine the home and community in chapter 4, then the Ndogo school chapter 5, and finally across both the home and community and the school in chapters 6 and 7.

Within those divisions I began to notice themes that I noticed from the interviews and observations. I sought to connect the various interviews through the common themes. For example, I saw that when I asked about young children's opportunities to learn, people talked not only about what young children had opportunities to learn but also who and where this occurred. I started to realize that different people in specific contexts described particular ways of instructing young children as well. I organized passages from interviews by theme to conduct initial analysis of the data.

As I systematically coded information, I returned often to my transcripts using a constant comparative approach to grouping concepts. I identified my preconceptions as I constructed themes. For example, I believe corporal punishment is not a helpful tool in

training children. However, I allowed the notion that it was an appropriate that this part of the Ndogo culture come through in my data. Another preconception I have is that schooling is beneficial for children. I wanted to allow the teacher, parents, and community members to assign their own perception and describe what opportunities young children had to learn in formal school.

I went through a process of increasing awareness regarding the assumptions I was making about the people I talked to and observed. I intentionally sent out to uncover the assumptions by going into the situation acknowledging that I was an outsider and I needed to learn everything about the situation. I tried to keep an open mind and hear from as many people as possible on each topic before I made an interpretation. Still there were some interpretations that I overlooked until colleagues or other people pointed them out to me.

A primary example is my initial view that the people in Ndogo were possibly being neglected by the national government because there had not previously been a school and there was insufficient access to water. As I pushed my assumption through interview questions and the literature I read, I came to also see the constructive intentions of the government to unify the country albeit at the cost of some of the ethnic group's loss of language and culture. Scholars agree that the heavy hand of the Tanzanian national government has led to relative peace in a region with much ethnic and religious conflict. I also came to realize the agency that the people of Ndogo

exercised was more than I initially perceived. As I spent time with people in Ndogo and the surrounding area, I realized that people chose to return to their land of their own free will and even though the national government refuses to provide water or healthcare nearby, so acquiring the school was a point of great pride for the people. Some of the people in Ndogo advocated for a long time to receive support from the national government and eventually from global donors to have a primary school. To note, there was no request for a pre-primary school, although this is what they received. Also, by returning to their land, the Mwera people of Ndogo and the surrounding area had greater agency to maintain their language, Kimwera, and practice other customs such as the initiation rite for children in to the community. This example illustrates the reiterative process I used to challenge my assumptions. The information about what I learned is discussed in greater detail in chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7.

I looked for links between what I discovered and aspects of the conceptual framework. An important aspect of seeking to understand what I heard and saw in Ndogo, I kept central to my reading of the information I gathered the scholarship of education scholars from rural areas from different countries in Africa such as Ladislaus Semali (1999) from Tanzania, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1994) from Kenya, and A. Bame Nsamenang (1992) from Cameroon. In the following chapters, I discuses these links and the themes that emerged from my analysis with the finer differentiations I discovered.

Study Limitations

The limitations of my study include my connection with the donor organization, PFT, which funded the Ndogo school, the translation of the interviews, the assumptions and position that I brought to each aspect of the study. Even though I had been to Tanzania before as a research assistant, I had limited knowledge of or experience in Tanzania. Language was the biggest, most obvious limitation I encountered. Before I began my research, I read widely about Tanzanian history, mainstream texts in early childhood education, and scholarship in development theory, ethnographic methods, and work that was currently being undertaken with young children in Tanzania. I talked to as many people as I could, to gain a comprehensive look into the topics in my study and the context of the people who participated in my study.

Another limitation I experienced was in interviews when I could not get clear answers to complex questions. An example is when I asked if people could tell me a story about their childhood, or if there were stories they told their children. I received a blank stare. Another time I asked, "Are parents the first teachers to children?" A man said "It is such a hard question to answer because we do not have broad knowledge to evaluate questions like that…educated people can understand quickly your questions and be able to evaluate things." I examined this methodological challenge and worked with my translator to ask the question in different ways, but to no avail. I changed the

line of questions and created more concrete objectives that were more successful at eliciting responses.

It is important to examine my assumptions for the decisions I made in the study because it sheds light on my paradigm for understanding the data. I chose to examine only one community and not to do a comparative study due to constraints of time, travel and money. Thus, the size of my data collection is a limitation. The data I present is my subjective perspective about the findings and are thus not generalizable to other contexts and cannot be replicated. As Firestone (1993) pointed out, "Generalizing from data is always problematic at best" (p. 16). Case-to-case transfer could be a way that the findings from this study are helpful to others, with the transferability of the findings left to whoever identifies similarities between cases and contexts as they read (Firestone, 1993), such as the data gathered from Ndogo informing the case design or comparison of differences and similarities in another people group or regional area of Tanzania.

Researcher Positionality

Data is presented through the lens of a researcher's perceptions. I brought my own thoughts and background into this study, and thus influenced the process and the outcomes of it. Power relationships must be critically examined in any research context. As the researcher, I am responsible for the collection and write-up of the research and I worked to find ways to hold myself accountable in precisely representing the data I

collected (Sultana, 2007). I went to significant lengths to overcome the limitations and obstacles I encountered, some of which were planned and others unplanned. I was sensitive to limits about what I could understand and I acknowledge there were possibly things I did not pick up or understand particularly because of my confined language skills.

In order to not be too closely associated with donors and government officials I purposefully arrived in Ndogo with as minimal formality as possible. Every day I rode a motorcycle out of Mwenye on a dirt path to Ndogo about ten kilometers, which government officials or donors do not usually do. I spent the whole day meeting people along the road, talking, and getting to know people. I did not go to the Ndogo school until a week into the process of the interviews, in order to align myself first with the community, so that I was not perceived as a government representative since I was connected with the Project For Tanzania (PFT). I did not hide from people that I was associated with in PFT; however, I attempted to build rapport by visiting people's homes and greeting them first. I received feedback that people said they were so glad I cared about their everyday lives. They said no one from PFT had come into the actual village and visited anyone at or in their home. People from five families told me they were glad I took the time to come and see them.

It was important to me to be aware of and monitor my subjective thoughts with the intent to be conscious of how I influenced the process. According to Glesne (2005),

subjectivity of the researcher is essential to address in a study. It is not possible to control subjectivity, thus acknowledging and naming it was important. Informing my position in this study were my interests and concerns as a researcher, a mother, a US citizen, a human being and a member of the funding organization for the Ndogo school. As a mother I am concerned with the growth and health of my children and I hold assumptions about what my children need and what I need to do for them. An example is my assumption that young children require significant supervision while playing outside, which is in contrast to the minimal supervision of young children in Ndogo as described in chapter 4.

A significant aspect of my positionality was my relationship to the new school in Ndogo through PFT, which I described in the previous chapter. The filter through which I reflected on my experience was shaped by my own power, privilege, and perceptions. "Scholarship is not the mere production of knowledge about a certain subject. It is a directly political and discursive practice in that it is purposeful and ideological. It is best seen as a mode of intervention into particular hegemonic discourses" (Mohanty, 1986, p. 334). My lived experiences influenced the data I collected from the people in my study. For instance, as a pre-primary school and kindergarten teacher I was schooled in the best practices and standards of early childhood education from the minority world, for example the Developmentally

Appropriate Practices discussed in chapter 2. There are also ways in which I am not aware of how my position influenced interviews and analysis.

My intent in this qualitative study is to focus significantly on the process, not just on its findings. My reflexivity includes reflection on one's self as the researcher and the way the data is represented (Glesne, 2005). I am an outsider who was associated with the international donors that funded the school building project. There is a power differential between me and the people in my study, and thus I sought to ask questions and participate in activities that reframed our relationship. As an "insider" of the project but an "outsider" to the people who participated in my study, I saw that there were some benefits and limitations to my position. For example, as an insider I have background knowledge and an understanding of the project; however, I was limited by being so close to the project that I could potentially miss important issues. I realized that by being affiliated with this project, I had to work hard not to be identified with other people from PFT who visited this area. I did not assume that I understood how the people in the village perceived the PFT initiative.

I continuously sought to understand and practice culturally appropriate ways to relate to the various people I met and spoke with in the villages. I was aware of what clothing I wore, therefore, I wore traditional clothes that were commonly worn by the women in the community. I noticed right away that people do not touch each other in public. In the US I might touch someone's hand or arm as we talk, but people do not do

that in Ndogo, so neither did I. People were very hospitable toward my translator, Iddi and me. I asked one person what people thought of us. She said, "Because you go everywhere together, people think you are together." I asked, "Is that a good thing or a bad thing?" She laughed and said, "It is good because you wear our clothes, you try to speak our language, and you always have a Tanzanian with you." It became obvious that always being with a Tanzanian gave legitimacy to my inquiries.

Who I am as a researcher and my identity, as a female from the US, conducting research about males and females from backgrounds different from me, affected my relationships with the people in the villages. As a *mzungu*, a white foreigner, I had more economic advantage and a different type of power than the people in the Ndogo community. At the beginning, people were more formal with me but over time people became less formal as we worked together and opened up more in conversation, however, I was still a white woman asking them questions. Over the course of my work, I became aware of people's perceptions about my status or power. One person in the village told another woman that if she received me, a white foreigner, it could make them poor because I was exploring some areas for my own benefit. The woman I was interviewing defended me to the other village woman saying, "See, they brought us the school – we are hoping for other things to come. She only wants to help us." I observed that people saw me as someone that could be helpful or useful for them.

I strove to find ways to reduce my limitations. There are a couple of ways I tried to facilitate expanding the different roles in which people saw me. As I have already described, I chose to wear clothes that covered my body well and were made from local fabrics and I participated in daily chores, such as carrying water with the women. Juma, my consultant from the area, suggested that I join people in what they were doing, to show that I am ordinary and simple. As I demonstrated a genuine interest in their lives this could help to set aside people's worries about me. Also, by actively giving back to the community with such things as the books or soccer balls for the school, I tried to express gratitude for people's participation in my study, without showing favoritism for one family, but instead giving a gift to the whole community. Without fluent Kiswahili there were limitations about how I could communicate with people, but I made myself vulnerable and laughable, which put people at ease, such as laughing at myself with a mistake in Kiswahili, or as I tried to help carry water. Making light of myself seemed to open up the conversation, and it helped me gain acceptance with the women.

To address some issues of my positionality, I discussed interview questions and research plans with my colleague, Maregesi Machumu, from the University of Dar es Salaam. Machumu also joined me to conduct his own research at the beginning of my first round of data collection in Mwenye. I asked him about his extensive experience in research projects in Tanzania and in early childhood education. I spoke with Juma,

who, as I mentioned, is from the area where I conducted my study. I asked him about how to dress and how to engage with both older and younger people, and about the customs I needed to be aware of in the village. I learned quickly that I needed to greet anyone older than me with, "*shikamoo"* and respond to younger people by saying, "*marhaba*." I worked on acquiring basic Kiswahili language skills, to aid me in becoming familiar with the words I heard in the interviews, and more importantly to genuinely greet and engage appropriately with colleagues and people in my study. It was important to me that my genuine interest showed and I made the effort to learn as much as I could about Kiswahili and the Mwera way of life.

My positionality also affected the analysis I carried out on the data I collected. I am limited by my experiences and this shapes the way I categorized and organized the information I gleaned. For instance, as an early childhood educator in the USA, I have experience with cultural norms that value play as a way for children to learn. Thus, in my analysis of the data, I looked for and saw opportunities for young children to learn through play. To counter this positionality and limitation a bit I engaged with a colleague in the field of education and international development, Ladislaus Semali, who was not involved in the project, but who had expertise on the issues I was researching. He conferred with me about the analysis and sense-making of my data, such as looking at my coding of the data and discussing the themes in order to provide a knowledgeable alternative perspective.

Summary

This chapter mapped the methods of this study, what I did, why I did it, and how I did it. As a focused ethnography, my study examined the observations, actions, and descriptions around young children's opportunities to learn in Ndogo. I sought to answer what young children have the opportunity to learn in the classrooms of the home and the community and the classroom of the school. I sought to find answers to these questions with awareness of my limitations and position to my research; I was an outsider with certain privileges. I pursued my research questions by learning from the Mwera people about their daily lives of fetching water, preparing meals, carrying little ones, walking together, and so on, in order to better understand their way of life and opportunities for young children to learn in informal and formal settings. I sought to learn about people by learning from them.

My approach to the data analysis is holistic, by looking at the context as a whole. Thus to establish credibility, I participated in whatever was happening, wherever I was, to encourage people to speak from their daily lives and I allowed the context to inform the interview questions. I also went with the flow of daily encounters and met with people wherever they were and in whatever they were doing. I interviewed some people multiple times or conducted only one interview with others, sensitive to their desire. I repeated what people told me to confirm what I heard to conduct member

checking, which Creswell and Miller (2000) defined as "taking data and interpretations back to the peoples in the study so that they can confirm the credibility of the information and narrative account" (p. 127). In some cases, I had the ability to visit them again the next day to confirm what I wrote up the previous night. In view of all of my limitations, I worked diligently to overcome what limitations I could with awareness of the elements I could not overcome. In the next chapter, I discuss what I learned seeking to understand what young children have opportunities to learn in the homes and the community.

CHAPTER 4

YOUNG CHILDREN'S INFORMAL OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN

Introduction

To think carefully about young children's opportunities to learn in Ndogo, I chose to examine what was occurring with young children both inside and outside of school. This chapter examines young children's opportunities to learn outside the school within the homes and the community of Ndogo and the surrounding Mwera villages. The descriptions and discussions are drawn from my time with the people there. In order to better understand the opportunities available for young children to learn in their everyday lives I conducted in-depth interviews and observations with mothers, fathers, young children, as well as elders in the community.

I address the following questions:

- What are the pedagogies and modes of young children's opportunities to learn?
- Who are the people involved in opportunities young children have to learn?
- Where are the places young children have opportunities to learn?
- What do young children have opportunities to learn?

This chapter begins with the variety of modes and pedagogies involved in young children's opportunities to learn in Ndogo. I then look at the variety of places these opportunities take place. Third, the people involved in the opportunities for young

children to learn are then examined. Lastly, the variety of knowledge and skills that these young children have to learn are described.

Young Children's Opportunities to Learn in the Homes and Community

While I was talking with Hawa, women from the community came by the house with their five-gallon buckets, young children trailing behind them with smaller buckets. Hawa said she would go with her neighbors, and invited me to fetch water with them. Retrieving two of her five gallon buckets, she handed me a smaller bucket the same size of the young children's. The other women rolled with laughter, and I hung my head and contended I was sure I could carry the five-gallon bucket, and they laughed harder. The different sizes of buckets for different people piqued my curiosity, so I asked how many sizes of buckets they had and how did they determine who would carry which size. Hawa said, "Old and young women and children carry buckets based on their age and ability." The sizes are small (approximately one gallon), medium (approximately three gallons), and large (five gallons). The mothers said they carry the large five gallon buckets. The older children use the three gallon buckets and the young children and old women use the one-gallon bucket.

Along the way to the water source and while we waited for the water, children rested and played together in the clearing. I noticed two young girls laughing and giggling with small buckets, which they tried to keep steady on their heads. I also saw

children observe older children and adults carrying and fetching water and then imitated them. Mothers said that they instruct the children how to balance the buckets on their heads and had them practice. These girls, however, were not only practicing but they were also playing with their work. This event illustrates a variety of the pedagogy in addition to illustrating where, with whom, and what young children have the opportunities to learn.

Each person goes to fetch water but the process contains variations. For instance, all children do not carry the same size bucket, but rather a size according to ability. The division built into the community life, illustrated in the various size buckets according to varying abilities, reflects a way that children moved from the margin of the community toward the center of participation. Young children participate in various ways in the daily work of fetching water and over time move toward full participation.

In order to give a nuanced description of the learning opportunities available to young children in informal settings, I include data from the interviews and observations in the homes and the community of Ndogo and the surrounding area. In my experience, the home and community are intertwined and inseparable, thus there is overlap in my examples.

Young Children's Opportunities to Learn through Mode and Pedagogies

In the opening story, young children participated, at their individual ability level, with the women fetching water. Young children were expected to be involved in the work, but the degree to which they participated was left to the discretion of the child. I watched as Rehema, a four-year-old girl, walked confidently between her house and the neighbor's house with a small jar on her head. She was working hard to stand straight and tall, balancing it just right, so it would not fall off her head. Rehema was practicing the skill to carry objects on her head as all the women in the community do in order to move from one place to another objects such as laundry, water, produce, and so on. To learn how to be full participating members of the society, children learn a number of things about the sociocultural practices of the community, such as fetching water. The modes and pedagogies in which the children have opportunity to learn these practices are discussed in this section.

Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger's concept of legitimate peripheral participation describes the most salient mode and pedagogy of the opportunities for young children to learn in Ndogo and the surrounding area. In their book, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, Lave and Wenger (1991) wrote that "Legitimate peripheral participation refers both to the development of knowledgeably skilled identities in practice and to the reproduction and transformation of communities of practice" (p. 55). Legitimate peripheral participation explains the way those in a learning process join a

community, starting first on the margin. As they learn, they move toward full participation in the community, demonstrated in the act of a novice, such as a young child, participating in an activity without being required to have full responsibility (Hay, 1996).

Peeling cassava is another example of how young children learn through participation. One hot afternoon, I observed mothers allowing young children to help prepare meals by peeling cassava root and shelling peas. The mama kept the older children on task and required them to work alongside her; however, the younger children were allowed to come and go from the task. This cultural practice demonstrates a kind of developmental awareness. We sat at the side of the house under the limited shade of the roof. Two women, both with nursing children wrapped in cloths around the mothers, were working. Next to them, a young girl of four wielded a large 10-12 inch knife, using it to work away at the skin of the cassava. Every once in a while she put the knife down and wandered off for a while to then return and try again. Her sister, approximately ten years old, sat the whole three hours we worked on the pile of cassava. She used a similar sized knife, peeling as quickly as the adult women. The children were involved in varying degrees of participation, a demonstration of the peripheral involvement in the community of work.

Lave and Wenger (1991) discuss learning as occurring through activities in lived experience: "Learning is a way of being in the social world, not a way of coming to

know about it…engaged both in the contexts of their learning and in the broader social world within these contexts" (p. 24). Young children in Ndogo and the surrounding community are allowed to come in and out of work activities to learn both the work activities as well as other knowledge, skills, and behaviors in the social context. Working alongside adults, the children carried buckets to the watering hole but not all of them stayed the whole time. Some brought buckets with water home and others were not able to, but all of them heard the stories from the mothers and listened as they were instructed about plants in the area. As we walked down the path, parents taught children about cultivating and how to use plants that grow in the area for medicinal and other purposes. Every moment had a purpose and a teaching opportunity. By coming along to fetch water, children had opportunity to learn about flora and fauna important for them to know for many reasons including cooking, cultivating, and taking care of wounds. Children listened and will imitate what they learn later on.

Children were allowed to be involved in work or other activities. Learning is situated in a way that allows children to progress toward more participation and responsibility in a social process (Wenger, 1998). Some learning occurs through contextualized daily life experiences. In informal environments, children learn in the midst of life and are not required to learn rote facts. Rather they learn in connection to real world situations. Children have opportunities to learn through social interactions and tasks associated with skills and behaviors that are valued in the community and

which they need to know to become full members of the community (Heeter, 2005). Children have opportunities to learn through engaging in activities. They learn skills and behaviors that lead to full participation in the community and to be able to cultivate land and grow food, feed themselves, take care of children, and so on. Like in the examples I offer, the most frequent opportunities for young children to learn are situated in experience.

Young children's opportunities to learn through observation and imitation

As the young girls played and practiced balancing buckets on their head in the opening vignette, they were imitating what they saw their mothers do countless times. Observation and imitation are common modes of learning in Ndogo. Lave & Wenger (1991) posited that observation and participation are "both absorbing and being absorbed in—the culture of practice" (p. 95). This is seen in many opportunities for young children to learn in Ndogo, such as when I assisted Zuri, a mom, to take leaves off of a plant called *mboga ya viazi*. As we talked, Zuri handed me a branch. I took a branch and imitated what she was doing; I did not ask if I could help, and she did not ask me to help. As I helped, two young girls, ages four and seven, sitting with us started helping, too. Zuri did not correct or instruct either the little girls or me. The younger girl worked at intervals and the older girl worked more continuously. Zuri told me she and the young girls plant the branches and water them, then later transfer the plants to the

fields. When harvested, the leaves are dried in the sun for thirty minutes and then they fry the leaves. I asked her how she learned how to do this process. She said, "I learned how to do this in my village, Chipwapwa, from watching the women, just like my daughters are doing now." This important knowledge is passed down from generation to generation and is shared within the community through legitimate peripheral participation by means of observation and imitation.

Another day, as I walked down the deserted road at high noon, a beautiful sound of melodic and moving music drifted down the hill. I started walking toward the music and found a boy of ten, Omar Bakari, playing on a marimba he had built with his friends when he was age seven. He said no adults helped them, but they used an old unusable marimba as a pattern. With a machete they cut wood from a tree and fashioned eight pieces. Each piece was made to the correct shape and size to produce different sounds. He created his own marimba by imitating something he saw and learned to play it without instruction from hearing it played. Omar told me, "I am invited to play my marimba at *ngoma* (a traditional ceremony) when there is a celebration." At age ten, Omar helps his parents in the field and is already building a house for himself next to his parents', but his favorite activity is to spend his free time playing music. The practice of imitating observable practices is integrated into everyday life on multiple levels.

In my interviews and observations, I visited families and spent time engaging with them in daily tasks together. I watched as Zahura, a seven-year-old girl took out cooking utensils from her house and began to prepare food. I was sitting on the ground with her mother and younger sister shelling peas they had grown. In this instance, the mother or sisters did not tell Zahura to help them or provide direct instruction about how to do it. I asked Zahura, "Oh it looks like you are going to cook. How did you know to start cooking?" Zahura replied, "I saw that it was getting close to the time we eat and I know my father will be returning from the field soon." I followed up, and inquired what Zahura was going to make and how she knew how to prepare the food. Zahura said, "Mama makes this all of the time and I have watched her and I want to try it." Zahura was imitating something she had seen before.

Villagers described that children would know how to do a task from observation and imitation from seeing the parents, other adults, or children perform the task. Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory provides a framework to think about how children learn through observation and imitation. Bandura (1977) posited that behaviors and skills could be learned through observation of others. Social learning theory helps to explain what learning occurs in social contexts; it occurs when a person observes another person's behavior and or the consequences of it. The process of social learning supports many types of learning through modeling either intentionally or unintentionally (Bandura, 1971). Social learning theory addresses how the context and

perceptions of people act together to influence learning and behavior. People learn from one another through observational learning, imitation, and modeling.

In Ndogo and the surrounding villages, young children have the opportunity to learn about most of the aspects of the community and life including social values, life skills, and desired behaviors and accomplishments for children and adults through observation rather than verbal instructions. Parents, adults, and children provide the critical stimulus of modeling skills, abilities, and behaviors that young children have the opportunity to observe and imitate (Artino, 2007). In my interviews, I asked parents how young children learn and what they believe is important for their children to learn. In my conversation with Khadija, a mother, I asked how she learned norms about when and what a child could do. She replied, "I learned from my mother to be a good mother. My mother taught me how to bring children up, by how she brought me up." I asked her if she could give me an example, and Khadija said, "When we get up in the morning, my mother showed me how I should wash the children first thing in the day." Parents teach children through example.

Observation and imitation extends to learning how to complete tasks in the fields while cultivating, learning how to hunt, how to relate to other people, and other important skills. Parents did not always provide verbal instructions on how to complete these tasks. There was a strong sentiment that young children ought to be observing and imitating as a valid tool for acquiring skills and behaviors. Hawa, a mother, said, "I

learned to cultivate from my parents. I was going to the farms with my parents starting when I was seven and eight years old." Parents teach their young children to cultivate by taking them with them to the field and observing and sometimes taking orders from their parents. Children have the opportunity to learn other crafts through imitation. Having learned through peripheral participation, Hamis, a teenager, is now an experienced member of the community. He told me, "Apart from farming I make local mattresses. I make them from banana leaves wool, *sufi*, and some other leaves. I did not go to school. I learned to make mattresses from my brother from Namichiga in Ruangwa District, by observing on what he was doing."

Other examples of young children in Ndogo and the surrounding Mwera villages learning through imitation include peers imitating one another and copying homemade toys. Girls imitate their mothers and neighbors peeling cassava or leaves to eat. Boys learn to trap and hunt small animals to eat by watching their brothers. During my time at Amina's house, I saw that each house had a fire inside and outside the house. This was a windy day; the fire was lit inside the house to protect it from the wind and to prevent sand getting in the food. I watched as Amina's son, Rashid, a five-year-old, started his own fire outside in the grounds around the house. Amina told her son, Rashid, to take care of the dish of food he was making and eating and to wipe his runny nose. I was surprised that he knew how to cook. I inquired from Amina, the mama, how Rashid knew how to cook his own food and start his own fire. Amina said

Rashid observed how to cook from his friends and family and was just replicating it. He watched his sister Awesa cooking and he copied her. Awesa is nine, she already learned last year how to cook *ugali*, a difficult dish to prepare. Her mother showed her how to cook by making it and having Awesa watch and eventually Awesa was able to imitate her mother. Amina said she demonstrates to both genders equally how to cook for themselves so they can eat if she is sick. Thus, young children become experienced members of the community by observing and imitating older children and adults.

Young children's opportunities to learn through play

In the vignette at the beginning of the chapter, the young girls played with their work. The mothers did not scold them for playing but rather encouraged them. Aysha said, "When my daughter plays with the container she practices how to carry it and will get better and better. That way she will be able to carry water soon." Mothers said that playing is a way that young children learn through experience practicing knowledge and skills. Play is an extension of the observation and imitation that young children participate in at the periphery of work and other skills.

Alison Gopnik (2009), a scholar at the forefront of research on play, argued that children also learn through exploring and playing such as in the case for young children in Ndogo. There is a plethora of literature supporting educational theories regarding how play is used in learning processes (Rieber, 1996). To understand this in the context

of Ndogo, this section addresses toys and games that young children make and use. There is much opportunity to learn through the creativity and ingenuity that children utilize in their free time. Playing is a daily part of a young child's life in Ndogo.

Free play has a lack of interference from adults in the children's play as well as free time and space in which children can choose what they want to pursue. In a recent study on the value of pretend play, Lillard et al. (2012), posited that pretend play is related to learning in early childhood, specifically social and linguistic competence. Pretend or imaginary play occurs in free play. There are no imposed rules and does not have an outcome such as in a game. Many children when left to free play engage in mimicry or pretend.

I observed that children in Ndogo have extensive pretend play activities using their imagination and performing pretend play, using things in nature such as creating tree houses. Children pushed branches with dried leaves on it on the sandy ground. The leaves rattled and they pushed it along the ground making noises, and they danced. Children often pretend wrestled each other, played in trees or with sticks, jumped, chewed on hard plastic pieces, and played with metal pieces or knives carving or moving around the sand. Children used sticks to build objects; the most elaborately built object that I saw was a tree house on the ground with leaves for the roof and blankets and plastic pieces inside to represent household items. *Mti nyumba* is the word for this tree house, and the children had a pretend place to cook outside the structure.

Igiza means to mimic and this is the word used for pretend play. The children told me they sleep or take naps inside and cook outside just like adults do in their real houses.

On rainy days, groups of children played in the rainwater. Two little boys took their shoes off, washing and sloshing in the puddles. A young girl stood under the edge of a thatched roof and as the water ran off the roof, she rubbed the water all over herself. Other little boys filled empty bottles with water to move the water to create new puddles. These examples and observations illustrate the way that play is an exploration of the natural world around the child (White & Stoecklin, 1998).

As mentioned earlier, children of the same gender tended to play together. I watched little girls about seven years of age teasing each other, tickling and pushing each other playfully. Children did not play in mixed-gender groups very often. One interaction between genders emphasized the lack of play that they conduct together. A four-year-old girl took an orange rind that had been peeled in a spiral and put it on a branch and then started to walk away. Two little boys snuck up behind her, attempting to snitch the orange peel away. The girl looked at them sternly and chased away the two young boys, who wanted to take it down, but she did not play with them; she just yelled at them to go away.

Another little girl hung a *khanga*, which is a traditional pattern on a cloth used for multiple purposes, over a bush and played underneath it with other girls. Girls wove coconut leaves to create pinwheels that they could blow. Children also like to play

by themselves. While I was sitting around talking and relaxing with villagers, a young girl of three busied herself drawing letters in the sand. This was entertaining to her but she was also practicing something she observed at the school and something she had seen her siblings complete in their homework.

Just as children counted together in a game to collect stones, children also worked on their own projects such as the dollhouse Dalia constructed. As I was walking home one night as the sun was setting I came upon Dalia, a six-year old girl, who sat in the sand along the path with many scraps of materials in front of her. I stopped and bent down to talk with her. I asked her what she was making, and she said, "This is my doll house." I saw she was making a dollhouse from recycled pieces of plastics and glass as well as shards of wood of different shapes. I asked Dalia if she could show me around her dollhouse. It was two-dimensional with extensive details including places to cook, neighbors, paths, food, furniture, etc. She pointed to the materials that represented a bed, sitting room, kitchen, and even a pathway to another house and the neighbor's house. I was fascinated by the details and creativity that this young girl used in her pretend play.

An example of the capacity to learn through play involved an unattended four-year-old boy who came and sat down on the ground near me while I sat in the shade and spoke with Amina, the Education Ward Officer. The boy rested against a pole and broke a thin stick into about fifteen pieces. He seemed to be making sure they were as

even as possible by trimming the ones that were longer than others in order to match each other. He laid them next to each other and measured their evenness. I drew a circle in the sand in front of him, and all on his own, without either of us speaking, he lined up the sticks inside the circle in a row. When he found that my circle did not fit all of his sticks, he tried to draw a larger circle around my circle in the sand. He went on to draw a design with a stick in the sand and then repeated it by drawing a design with his finger. This illustrates the freedom to roam and experiment. Children's curiosity drives their play and consumes their time. There were numerous examples of this during my time spent in the villages.

Other displays of creativity included toy cars and motorcycles that young boys created themselves out of local and recycled materials such as wood, bark, pieces of plastic, and metal. They did not have nails but used rubber strips and broken plastic pieces to secure the structures together. Other cars were made from broken plastic bottles, cardboard tea boxes, and sticks with wheels made of bottle caps. When I asked the boys how they made these cars, they said they did not have help from adults. They said they like to find a place on the ground where they can race them against each other.

Outside of the formal school, I observed children counting, creating shapes, using creativity, and constructing music, toys, and games from local and recycled materials. For example, there were multiple activities occurring simultaneously that

bridge math and language arts. Children created toys from trees and collected sand to make animal shapes. Children counted stones or compared sizes and shapes in play and can learn from these activities. While I was in the Ndogo or Mwenye area, I did not see any manufactured toys and of course, due to lack of electricity and money, there were no video games.

In my study, many adults articulated that play can be entertaining. Most parents thought that children should spend time playing but when I asked why, parents did not have an answer. I asked a follow up question inquiring if parents thought that young children were learning while they were playing and people responded that play is not a place where learning occurs. The chairperson of M'kalakacha, Hassan Ali, said, "Parents should let children from five to six play on their own and I believe parents should allow time for children to play." I noticed that some villagers expressed negative sentiments about children's play, so I wondered what people thought about adults playing with children. I asked what they would say if someone saw an adult playing with a child. Kurwa said, "They might ask them if they do not have anything to do because they think they are wasting their time. They might say, 'Do you not have something better to do?'" When I inquired what community members would think of a parent playing with or singing to a child, Hassan said, "Some would recognize it is good but most will say the parent is wasting their time. Juma said, "Parents do not interact or pay attention to children ages four years plus because they do not see the

value in that type of interaction." People expressed that there may not be value for the adult to become involved in children's play because parents have too many tasks to complete and do not have time to play.

This was not the reaction of all parents. In Ndogo, I observed mothers playing *mzobe*, which is jump rope, with their children. When I asked them about it, the mothers said, "We like to play with our children when all of our work is done or on holidays like *Sikukuu*." These are intertwining aspects of the boundaries for what is acceptable for play and what is not. Typically, women play with children more often than men and it is only acceptable for an adult to play with a child if their work if finished or it is a time for rest, such as on a holiday.

On some occasions, elders or older adults in the community facilitated games with children to teach them how to make the game pieces and to teach them the rules of the games. Whether or not adults thought that young children should play or spend their time in games, young children have a lot of discretionary time where they can choose to be with peers or create things with items they find in their natural environment. Play is allowed for young children and structure in some instances. However, there is an emphasis in Ndogo and the surrounding area for young children to learn respect and skills for future work such as cooking, water, washing, cultivating, and so on.

Another aspect of play is the use of games (Tizard & Hughes, 2008). Juma, a father in the village, said that "There are lots of different games the children play, but the children create them on their own; they are usually not taught to them." Boys have formal rules for racing their self-made cars from local materials, which I described earlier. Other games children play are handball, pool, and soccer. Since there are no commercial soccer balls in the area, children gather pieces of cloth and plastic bags and bind them together and put them into condoms to create a ball. They follow the rules they know about how to play soccer, setting up goals, and designating teams.

After an interview, one of the young boys who was at the house asked me to come to his house and see his pool table. When I arrived in the back of their house, a group of small boys had gathered around a miniature pool table. I saw a mortar used for grinding grain upside down. The boy had constructed a board on top of it, a piece of cloth nailed into the sides to hold the cloth down, and rubber strung around the sides to create walls for the pool table. He had whittled branches to use as pool sticks and marbles as pool balls. I asked if he had help from his father or other adults. He said, "No, only my father took me to town to buy the marbles." They spend time playing pool using the adult rules for the game. The creativity and ingenuity I saw was extraordinary, qualities that the young children will be required to demonstrate to survive and thrive in this environment as adults.

An elder in the community, Othman, took me to his house and played some traditional games so that I could see how they are done. Othman said, "We teach the children in the village our old, old games so they can have an activity but also so they know how we do things." One of the games called *ngongoja*, in Kimwera, was a game Othman taught the village children and me. In this game, people tie a rope between two trees and the children push each other on it like a *bembea* or swing. *Chingowe* was another game that Othman described to us. Children prepare a pit, then three strong children race each other to replace the sand back in the hole, and then three other children remove it again until a winner is declared when the first group replaces the sand. These games present opportunities for young children to learn skills such as counting and adding, cooperating with peers all through verbal instruction and observation.

In this section, I highlighted free play, games, and toys. As I mentioned, young children have more opportunities to experience free play. I observed that rule based games were homemade and adults were involved in young children's guided play however infrequently. Children in Ndogo and the surrounding communities have the opportunity to learn many things and different settings. There are many physical skills parents want the children to learn and in the next section I discuss the ways that young children are socialized into the learning process of work.

Young children's opportunities to learn through active instruction

When parents want to tell their children something, they make a fire in the evening and gather their children and talk to them. Parents said they wanted their children foremost to know about how to respect people. Active instruction can take the form of non-verbal communication either with direct or indirect modes. Active instruction included direct and concrete or abstract verbal instructions. It may also involve efforts to teach a lesson through telling stories (Bindarriy et al. 1991).

Children interact with parents to learn about behaviors and skills. In the interviews, parents and children both talked about sitting together as a family at home in the evenings to discuss issues. People tell stories to teach their children concepts. Kurwa said, "In the evening we [he and his wife] gather our children together by the fire. I tell them about what is good and bad. Parent must teach their children about good and bad." He gave me examples of what is good and bad and many of them included stories that he told his children to illustrate his point.

An example of the storytelling as instruction, Bakari shared with me was of a story he told his children the day before. Bakari told his children a story about the event of the mama who was killed in the area the past week. He wanted to teach his children that her death "was a result of marijuana and it is bad to get involved with drug use. The man who killed the woman became crazy because he used drugs and became mentally ill. In Mwenye there is a big problem with marijuana, which grows naturally

in the area. So I want to encourage my children not to use it." Opportunities to learn are constructed, in this case in the form of using stories to scare children into behaving in particular ways. Issa said, "The most effective way for children to learn how to be respectful is to tell them stories about scary things and explain to them about how best to avoid those scary things." The stories that were told to children encompassed many lessons but in particular focused on teaching good behavior and transferring values.

Parents said that they thought there are natural consequences for children if they do not listen to their parents. Abdulla said, "We expect children to listen, and if something happens they learn from it." A child is taught about what will happen, for example, if they climb high up into a tree, and that the risk is they can fall. If they fall, then they could die or break some bones. Another form of active instruction is verbal instruction. These verbal instructions can be abstract or concrete. This is a form of actively or directly teaching young children concepts (Good, 1983). I asked how parents train children of this age, and what are the ways they wanted their children to learn things that were important to them as parents. Mariam answered, "People here talk with children, for example when they are cooking, washing, and that is part of the learning. Another example is when Ayesha said, "I take my children with me to town to use the time walking to teach them by talking as we walk."

Parents verbally communicated to children the boundaries between what is believed to be good and bad. Examples of what is bad/wrong for the children to do

include sliding down from the hilltops in bushy areas because they can get hurt, setting fire randomly by cooking outside far from the house, etc. Examples of what is good is for the children are getting up in the morning and wash themselves, brushing their teeth, speaking respectfully to their elders, etc.

When children who are able to help in the fields accompany their parents in farming tasks, they take direct orders from their parents and practice a task to improve their skill. Cultivating is an important skill villagers teach both boys and girls. Parents take children to the field with them and show and tell them what to do. Muhammad described how and what you should teach children about farming. He said,

> A child around twelve years old can accompany you to the field so you can teach him what you do as a part of their education; this is what we are planting. While farming together, you can teach him how to do long season (such as mango or cashew trees) production rather than short season (like cereals or corn) crops. The advantage of long season products is that you hope to have a harvest every year and you can hire the harvesting done. You teach him to be the best farmer. I will also teach children to build a house so they are ready to make one when they get married. I teach my daughter how to cultivate until it is time for her to get married.

Durah said, "We teach children to listen. When we are in the field the most dangerous things do not happen much in the village. We teach the children that if they hear a noise of a motor they should stop crossing and keep off the road. When the children hear a bike or motor they run off the road. So, it does not happen often that someone is hit by a bike, car, or motorcycle." Remi put a piece of sharp plastic in her mouth while we were talking, and Durah said sharply, "Spit it out." She did not say, "do not do that" and did

not explain it to her. Durah did not skip a beat and continued talking. Hassan said, "You cannot force children to not do something. From birth through age four you cannot force a child. However above five years old you can force them; require them to do something." He continued explaining that a child knows what is right and wrong and parents begin to expect the young child to follow what they say after they reach an age that they understand the command and can respond. Parents articulated that they do not hold children responsible until they demonstrate awareness of what they have done wrong.

Young children's opportunities to learn through non-verbal instructions

Active instruction also includes non-verbal direct or indirect modes. Adults often use their eyes to communicate when a child is doing something wrong, before they verbally or physically get involved. I observed that parents gave orders but did not hover over children, making sure they did it correctly, but they did correct the child if the "mistake" was observable. Often it was done non-verbally. An example is when a five-year-old boy asked his mama, Asya, for something. She lifted her chin and pushed him with her hand in his stomach. He walked away silently. She did not use any verbal words but gave non-verbal cues. After some time, the young boy came back and stood in front of her still and quiet, not speaking a word, until she gave him her attention.

Finally, she looked at him, and signaled with her hand that he could speak, and he asked his mama the question. Asya's older son, around eight-years-old, asked her for the battery-operated radio. She looked at him and did not say anything for a moment. After pausing she asked, "Where are you taking it?" He said, "Over there," and pointed to a fallen tree in the yard. She said, "Ok," and he left with the radio. I noticed that older and younger children were given different reactions. The younger child received more non-verbal communication, and the older child received more direct communication, in response to their requests. This was a pattern that was repeated during informal interviews when I observed families as they went about their daily routines. Young children learn through both verbal and nonverbal communication. Opportunities to learn include young children learning to wait and not interrupt and thus delay what they want.

In Ndogo and the surrounding villages, as I demonstrate in chapter 5, active instruction is a method of instructing young children about religion and local practices. For instance, in the initiation rites for children in the Mwera people group, adult women sit with young girls and verbally instructed them about what changes they can expect in their body as they grow. Children also have opportunities to learn about how to work together, share things, and take care of people, things, their hygiene, and health issues. Overall, active instruction includes verbal, non-verbal, and telling stories to teach children concepts such as respect, which, as I have mentioned before, is very

important in the community. In addition to various modes and pedagogies of young children's opportunities to learn, there are also multiple people involved.

Young children's opportunities to learn through accountability and correction

Opportunities to learn are also present in the correction of young children. In Ndogo and the surrounding area, people communicate to young children what is acceptable and unacceptable through verbal rebuke, non-verbal signals such as eye contact, and physical consequence if considered necessary. Behaviors are taught through concepts of respect for and punishment of children. Behaviors that are valued in the community include social and personal goals such as being clean, staying healthy, getting along with others, participating in traditional and religious activities, and so much more. The following are examples of the types of accountability of young children's knowledge, skills, and behaviors.

Children try to cook or wash themselves, and if they do something wrong the parent corrects them. The reinforcement that the person modeling can provide the person imitating can be positive or negative, which guides the person imitating. I asked people how young children come to learn something like washing their own clothes. The mama, Durah, told her girls to start washing their clothes. Six-year-old Zuria got the buckets, water, and soap and brought them into the space at the edge of the grounds adjacent to their house. Four-year-old Rama retrieved her school uniform and started

washing her clothes. The Mama did not verbally correct Rama but noticed that Rama was not washing it correctly and took the sock from her hand without saying anything and demonstrated what to do, then handed the sock back to her. Rama repeated what Durah did. Conversely, Zuria was also washing clothes in a different bucket next to Rama yet the mother, Durah did not assist or correct seven-year-old Zuria throughout the washing. This was interpreted as Zuria not making any mistakes. This is one way that Durah provided her daughters with reinforcement – Rama, with negative or corrective reinforcement and Zuria, with positive reinforcement.

A father, Kurwa, reported that some children are stubborn and others are naturally respectful. He said, "Those children who are stubborn you have to work harder with. First you talk to them, and if they do not listen then you look in their eyes and have contact with them, so they know they have done something wrong and explain it to them. Then if that does not work you hit them so they will remember."

Another example of talking first and corporal punishment second is that of a mama frying cassava to sell. Her boy, about three years old, was crying very hard. I was standing next to their house waiting for a person to meet me for an interview. While I was standing there, I saw the boy try to hit his mama while he sobbed. She held his arm firmly and did not raise her voice or hit back and said to him, "You must stop." He continued crying. I saw her grab a coconut branch from the street, and she spanked him on his bottom. She dragged him by his arm into the house and shut him inside. You

could see it was dark inside the house and he wailed. Later, when I asked what he did, the mama replied that he was saying bad things to other people.

Multiple people articulated that parents discipline children with corporal punishment and that they also expect defiant behaviors from children. Miriam said, "When it happens that something is stolen, like money is taken without permission, a parent warns the child. They do not beat them but they can hit them." Notice that some things are deemed worse than other offenses and are punished differently. While I was sitting at the front of our guesthouse in Mwenye after dark, I heard screaming and people running down the street. Two figures in the dark stopped in the road ahead of us. One was a father running after his teenage son down the street, yelling. The father caught the son and held him down while he beat him with a thick plank. The son yelled, "You are hurting me." I was told the father had left his son to watch after their store. When the father returned there was some money missing and the father assumed the son had taken it. The son continued yelling as the father beat him, "You are killing me. I am not your son. If I was your son, you would not beat me this way." The father replied, "I think I am also not your father." Parents are the most significant people involved in children's opportunities to learn. Parents expect their children to learn what they teach them and as this example demonstrated, the older a child grows the more severe the punishment becomes.

At home, Abdullah said he uses words but when that fails he can slap the child or use a stick on him/her. Girls and boys, he said, are disciplined the same. Issa told me that from five years old a father uses a stick or slaps the child for disobeying. Where the stick is struck on the child's body depends on the willfulness of the child. He said, "If the child lay down and obeys then they receive one hit on the bottom. If older and not cooperating, then they can be hit anywhere on the body multiple times." Parents provide opportunities for young children to learn using direct and indirect methods and are largely responsible for punishing and correcting children with the goal that the children become competent adult members of the community.

Mila, a woman in the community, gave a young girl a look when she shoved another little girl who was provoking her. The young girl immediately stopped touching the other child. Mila was not the parent of the girl; she was a neighbor five houses away from her. A father in the community, Babu, told me that a "Child is considered property of the whole community." I asked what they consider the "community" and he replied, "The people who share the same locality. It is your neighbor, your people group, and your village. Adults have to correct a child even if he is not theirs." This mirrors Ocitti's (1973) finding that villagers have a vested interest in each child's upbringing.

Villagers correct a child who is doing something wrong whether they are their child or someone else's. For example, a young man, who was already a father, called me

mzungu (white foreigner) to my face. This is a sign of disrespect. The chairman of M'kalakacha, who was older and in a higher position than this young man, spoke harshly to the young man and said, "You are disrespectful and her name is Laura." There is an open policy for older people in the community to show younger people how to live appropriately. Respect is a central issue in the community, which is reinforced in every situation. Young children have opportunities to learn knowledge and skills with different people in various places through multiple modes and pedagogies. These opportunities to learn are reinforced through repetition and correction.

People Involved In The Opportunities For Young Children To Learn

One afternoon, I went to fetch water with the women in the community. Women and children walked up and down hills for an hour walk to the water source. While we walked, younger children stayed close to their mothers, and other children played with each other. A mother stopped us and showed the children the plant that will feel as though many needles were inserted in your hand if you touch it. She told her son, "Be careful Bakari, or it will happen again to you." Once we arrived at the water source, there were many more women and children from the community waiting there to collect water. All of the people's buckets were lined up based on whose turn it was to fill theirs. Once, when one of the mothers realigned the buckets as people filled their buckets and left, a young boy grabbed his bucket and tried to slip it in ahead of his turn.

Even though the woman was not the boy's mother, she gave him a stern look acknowledging that she had seen what he had done and it was wrong. The boy quickly removed his bucket and placed it back at his turn in the bucket line up. The boy hung his head and did not make eye contact with anyone for a bit, and no words were exchanged. Notice that the woman was not the boy's parent. Also interesting about this scenario is that these places and spaces are filled with people who facilitate opportunities for young children to learn.

Fathers teach their sons and mothers teach their daughters how to live and respect others. I observed that children learned from parents and peers but also with other adults in the community. There are fewer boundaries between age groups than are presented in models of early childhood education from the global north. Opportunities to learn are not allocated to certain ages. Just as in the Mwera villages, Ocitti (1973) observed in a different village, "Everyone was a teacher. Indeed experience was the most important teacher" (p. 103).

I briefly draw attention to the people who are involved in the opportunities for young children to learn in the context of my study. Children learn skills and behaviors and much more from their parents, peers, and other adults who help them survive and thrive in their environment. First, I highlight the role of the parents in children's opportunities to learn; second, I focus on other adults in the community; and finally, I

turn to peers and how same-sex, same-age, and older children all provide opportunities for young children to learn.

Parents

Just as the mother was instructing her son, Bakari, on our walk to fetch water about the painful plant, parents actively instruct their children in many ways in Ndogo. Mothers, fathers, and other family members such as grandparents are the first educators of children (Semali, 1999; Thaman, 2000). Women and men both told me that women are most responsible for taking care of children. Both mothers and fathers said in interviews with me that they help each other, though mothers are most likely to care for young children. I noticed children falling asleep on their father's lap, in particular boys. Fathers were also the ones that people pointed to as responsible for teaching boys about hunting. Both mothers and fathers taught boys and girls about cultivating. People in the village said that parents are responsible and are the primary teachers of their children to learn how to cultivate so they can have food and a livelihood when they grow up.

The way that parents provide opportunities for young children to learn was explained to me by a number of people as a way to give children occasions to learn from their experiences. For example, mothers show children how to wash themselves everyday and to wash their clothes every weekend. Another way parents teach their

children is through their attention or level of supervision of children's activities. Giving children room to make mistakes and learn from their environment is an important key that parents emphasized with their children.

Zuri, a woman in the community, said, "We supervise children, but it is a watchful eye from a distance." I went on to ask how much the parents supervise children and what type of autonomy they have. Mariam said, "If the mama hears something she can go and ask what is happening. Mamas have a watchful eye. They do not ignore the children – we have a way of watching them." Hassan said that children from birth to three "should be closely supervised because they can do something that might hurt themselves but once they can start taking care of themselves they do not need to be closely watched." The purpose of letting a child have a lot of room away from their parent is for them to learn on their own, which Hawa said is how a child can remember what they have learned for the future.

The parents of young children provide diverse opportunities for children to learn. Parents use indirect and direct ways of teaching children life skills and behaviors. Correction and punishment are integral parts of guiding children, such as the way that Chicu corrected her granddaughter who was using a large knife to peel an orange by herself. The mama gave a stern look to the young child and then leaned in to take the knife. The little girl gave it to her mama, but then she started crying in protest. Chicu completely ignored the child's behavior. I asked why she did not respond, and Chicu

said, “Because I already explained it to her.” (The pedagogies around this are discussed in a later section of this chapter, on modes of opportunities to learn).

Elders and other adults

On the walk to fetch water, parents were helping their own children. However, parents were not the only people involved in opportunities for young children to learn. On the walk, six women were going to fetch water and the children were learning not only from their own mothers, but other women as well. Also some children were there without their mothers. Ndogo and the surrounding villages are a collective society and children learn early on that life is shared.

Parents are not the only primary caregivers; in this community other family members such as a grandmother care for the child and teach them about life. Similar to other situations in the area, Hamida, an eight-year-old, said, “We do not stay together with my brother. I stay at my grandma’s and my brother stays at his own place. He has already married and his wife is now pregnant. My mother stays at Mandawa with my sister. There are six children in our family. My father stays with his second wife but my mother is his first wife.” Nuclear families include mothers and fathers as well as additional wives, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Another example is Hawa, who is a second wife who is raising two of the first wife’s six children.

Non-family adults in the community conduct the initiation for boys and girls rather than family members. Boys and girls in the Mwera community participate in traditional initiation rite and ceremonies, which include intensive teaching and a transition to adult responsibilities. Aysha said, "Our initiation is part of the natural flow of life, a natural extension of the life of our children and necessary for their growing up." This education is done once in their life, at approximately five to eight years old. For one month, separated by gender, the children are taken into the "bush" with their teachers. Girls participate in *unyago* and boys participate in *jando*. A *Mulongo,* which is Kimwera for trainer, stays with the children and teaches them. This adult is a respected member of the community and not a parent nor usually a direct relative of the child. Each parent interviewed in the village said this is a very important part of the child's growing up.

Peers

Adults play an important role but they are not the only people involved in young children's learning. As we walked to fetch water, young children, along with older siblings and friends, followed together after the adults. Peers, the same age or older, are often responsible as care-givers, and in some cases, intentional or unintentional instructors of young children in many things. Peers of the same age, older children, and same or different gendered peers all play a role in the learning process and

opportunities young children have to learn. Leaving children with other young children is part of the education of a child, parents said.

Same gender peers are the most frequent peers with whom young children spend time. Parents in my interviews stated that they expect strong peer relationships. There are many opportunities to learn as children spend time playing and working in groups. Unattended by an adult, children played, walked, and talked outside with peers. Most of the play I observed was conducted between children of the same gender, in close age proximity. Boys often pretend fight or wrestle in the dirt with each other but I never found mixed-gender play in this activity. Girls sat and giggled or played games together but I did not observe girls and boys playing one-on-one nor in small groups together.

In the village, adults do not closely supervise young children. If the mama is close to the house and she is cooking and taking care of children less than three years of age, the older children organize themselves to play with other children. They find food for themselves when they are hungry, they are responsible for washing themselves and their clothes, and they take care of other children. Children in Ndogo lack refrigerators or food pantries they can access; they have to go hunting and gathering for their own nourishment. Young children have adult and child caregivers supervising them; however, the degree to which young children are supervised varies. For example, most young children played unsupervised in a road. In Ndogo the necessity for both parents

to work and a philosophy that a child learns some things best by themselves or with peers dictates the normalcy of their methods.

Peers are vital to care for young children in the community because they allow parents to complete their work in the fields and keep young children safe (Damon, 1984). The necessity to leave children on their own is illustrated in Nia's response to my questions about her four-year-old daughter, Adia. I asked "Do you take her with you to fetch water or do you leave her at home to play with other children?" Nia answered,

> Adia stayed back at the house. It is safer to leave the child back playing with other children. If the child comes with you, the child can be bothered because they are alone and have nothing to do or play with. In the bush, it can be dangerous for the children because there are snakes and *siafu* [a bug like a tick that attaches to the skin, sucks blood and releases poison].

Peers have an important role in watching over each other. To keep the young child with a parent sometimes might be dangerous. A parent assesses the situation and decides what is best for the child. Left with peers, children are free to feed themselves when they are hungry and play with friends. The learning that occurs is how to discern what is safe or dangerous, how to take care of one's self, and how to take care of others. These opportunities to learn originate from the social relationships informed by the environment.

Older girls aged six and older take care of small children from birth to three years old. They put them on their back and take them with them to play in order to keep an eye on them. This connects to the way that children are learning to care for one

another as they play. Older children help the family take care of younger children mostly when the parents cultivate the land. Older children assist younger children to show them how to do things at home, like washing them, feeding them, sweeping the ground, and so on. Older children play with younger children. A five-year old brother of an eighteen-month-old little girl played on the ground with his sister. He was chasing her, making noises, and she was laughing and running from him, and then she hung on her older sister's skirt. The boy then cared for her by fetching a drink of water for his little sister. Sometimes, small children are with older people but play alone. A two-year-old little girl took metal and plastic parts out of a lid and put them back again. She was making sounds, and no one talked to or touched her. At a young age both boys and girls are responsible for those who are younger than them. Thus, boys and girls learn key skills, some gender specific, in caring for others and developed what appeared to be care and concern for others apart themselves.

The interviews I conducted demonstrated that the people caring for and teaching young children are, in most cases, united in opinion about what skills and knowledge young children should acquire. This allows children to learn in different ways from different people and respond to a variety of situations, which reinforce what they are learning.

To summarize, opportunities to learn occur with both adults and with peers. The adults are parents and other family members as well as elders and community

members. Notice that other adults in the community, whether they live in the same house as the child or not, are collectively responsible for the teaching, behavior and safety of the children in the community. They also pass along traditions from generation to generation such as games and understandings about life. Peers often spend time together in groups of same-sex and same-age but older children are frequently held responsible for younger children as well. There are many people involved on a daily basis that provide rich learning experiences for young children.

Places Young Children Have The Opportunities To Learn

Scholars such as Courtney Cazden (1983), Vera John (1972), and Dell Hymes (1980) have documented how teaching and learning varies in different places. Young children in Ndogo have the opportunity to learn in many places in the homes and community. Because place is embedded in the activities and skills and the people with whom children have the opportunity to learn, this section is an overview of the places where opportunities to learn occur; expanded examples will be seen throughout the other sections of this chapter.

The places I observed opportunities for young children to learn first and foremost include the homes. A father, Abdulla said that "Learning starts at home in such a way that children can be taught things at home before they go to school." He went on to say. "Home learning is the foundation for school." The home is the first

classroom for children. In Ndogo and the surrounding villages, homes are in houses made from sticks and tree branches tied together and mortared with mud. The roofs are thatched and the floor is the bare ground. The people who live together and call each other family live in these mud huts using the space outside the house for cooking. A toilet pit is behind the house, enclosed with coconut branches, and compost is kept in a specific place. The grounds surrounding the house are cleared of bushes and swept with a broom-like tool made from branches. Every household has a couple of chickens roaming freely. The opportunities children have to learn at home occur both inside and outside the house, and include abstract issues, life skills and play.

Musa, age six, was cooking a small bird on a stick over a fire outside his house that he shared with his parents and siblings. Around him, his two brothers and several neighbor boys, both younger and older, gathered. They told me about how they walked for many kilometers hunting small animals. Once found, they tracked, created and set traps, and then wait for the birds or small animals to arrive. Young children learn as they play in the bushes. They can wander from the houses into the undergrowth and play in the trees or brush.

Ndogo, located in a rural area of the Lindi region of Tanzania, to the Mwera people is seen as being far away from cities and defined by the agricultural work they do. The places that provide opportunities for young children to learn include these

spaces that are part of the community, including the land where young boys in the previous illustration had opportunities to learn life skills in the wilderness.

Rama worked alongside her mother, Durah, in their home, shucking their corn and took the corncobs to the mill to be ground. They regularly walk ten kilometers to the mill and while they walk the path, is an opportunity to learn through conversations. The integrated knowledge is a process of learning with opportunities to learn everywhere. I observed that, in Ndogo, learning often occurred in public places within the community. Young children experienced opportunities to learn indoors and outdoors, in the home, around the fire, in the communal spaces, on the road, and in the field.

Opportunities to learn occur in the community, which consists of the neighbors' houses, where people gather spontaneously and frequently to do tasks together or just talk and rest. The community is a social as well as a physical space. In the illustration with Musa, the young boys were learning many different things in various places. Children spend the majority of their time outdoors either in the yards that extend from their own home, neighbor's houses, or in the bushes, which are sometimes miles from their house. Children have opportunity to learn in play, often located outdoors in the dirt.

Public spaces are common areas with opportunities for young children to learn. Public spaces include the yard outside the house, the neighbors' yard, the road, the

bush, and so on. The fields, a place with extensive opportunities to learn, are situated away from the houses and the main road. As people walk to them, they explain their work. Initiation rites are also significant sites where children have opportunities to learn. During an initiation rite, young children leave their homes for a month and go with other children their age into the unoccupied spaces of the land away from other humans and live together with a teacher in a hut learning about life. This is another example of public space that has an opportunity for learning to take place.

Opportunities for young children to learn occur both indoors and outdoors across a number of villages with a diverse ecology. Opportunities occur as they walk along the hot, dusty dirt road and in the fields as they work together and children are taught issues about life and work. Notice that the spaces and place where the opportunities to learn occurred are at home, in the field, on the road, at the neighbors' homes, in initiation ceremonies. These opportunities are in private and public spaces. In sum, the community is a public space as well as a social network where young children have numerous opportunities to learn. Local knowledge and pedagogies, discussed later, are specific to a place.

Knowledge Young Children Have The Opportunity to Learn

Misra, age five, busied himself building a fire and cooking a snack in the area outside his house. He skillfully chose small dried pieces of wood and arranged them in

a three-dimensional triangle shape on a flat space on the ground and lit them on fire. He used a hulled-out half coconut shell that had dropped from the many coconut trees nearby as a cooking pot to hold his morsels of food over the fire. Misra used a stick to stir and a knife almost as long as his arm to cut food and wood. At the age of five, Misra had the opportunity to learn each skill and then be able to combine them to cook his own food to feed himself when he was hungry. These are personal skills that he used by himself because food and eating in Ndogo and the surrounding community is a social activity he share the results with his younger sister.

Misra's experience indicates the type of interconnected knowledge and skills that young children in this community have opportunity to learn. These skills and knowledge are not fragmented but rather compose complex multilayered tasks. Misra's activities also demonstrate the skills he has the opportunity to learn and practice are practical. In fact, there are a number of other examples throughout this section that remind us that this is not an anomaly occurring for Misra alone, each child in this community experience these opportunities.

Young children have opportunities to learn about many things in their homes and community. I focus specifically in this section on themes from my study about what young children have opportunities to learn. First, I address the local knowledge and life skills that children have opportunity to learn. I then discuss opportunities young

children have to learn the integration of knowledge and skills in the homes and Ndogo and surrounding communities.

Young children's opportunities to learn life skills and local knowledge

Adults in the Mwera community expressed a desire for the young children to master skills and knowledge from the Mwera tradition in Ndogo and the surrounding villages. Identifying something as local knowledge is based on the information originating from a particular place (Gladwin, 1989). Life skills and local knowledge are important aspects of what adults told me they wanted young children to learn. Not all life skills, such as learning to wash, are local knowledge. Also, all local knowledge does not involve life skills; for example the spiritual knowledge I discuss in chapter 5. However, in many cases the local knowledge and life skills are intertwined, for instance knowledge could be about local plants, foods, people, etc. and the life skill is what one does with that knowledge in order to use the knowledge.

What young children have opportunities to learn in this particular location of Ndogo and the surrounding communities include life skills and local knowledge in the broad categories of food, environment, social, and personal.

Food

Many of the skills and knowledge young children in Ndogo and the surrounding communities have opportunity to learn center around food. The knowledge and skills young children have the opportunity to learn about food includes safe foods, food prep, use of knives, building fire, cooking foods, farming (cultivate and harvest food), animals and fetching water. Children here learn skills and knowledge at a young age, such as in Misra's case.

Parents told me they teach their children to work hard to cultivate the land in order to have enough food. Kurwa, a father from the Ndogo village, was representative of many men and women I talked to when he said that they must teach their children how to farm to feed themselves and their family and because it is the primary source of income in the area. They describe the importance of teaching their children how to cultivate, including how to make decisions about what seeds to plant, how to prepare the ground for planting, and how to harvest.

As in the opening illustration about Misra, young children learn how to build and use fire to cook food at a young age. The local nature of the opportunities children have to learn include the foods that children eat and are taught how to cook. Food is made from plants and animals that are local to the area. A traditional food, *ugali*, is made from dried ground-up starchy vegetable, such as cassava, grown in people's fields, peeled, stored underground, and then reconstituted with boiling water. Children

are also taught how to cultivate cashew and mango trees because their produce can be sold for cash and they are the plants that grow in this climate and are local to the area.

Interesting to note in the category of food is gender-specific tasks. This includes daughters helping their mothers with the chores, fetching water with their mothers, and helping with the care of younger children. When mothers get sick, they rely on their daughters to know how to cook, fetch water, and collect firewood. Both girls and boys are taught how to cook at a young age; however, only the girls are responsible for cooking for the whole family. Haji cooked for his brothers when his mother was away cultivating, and Misra cooked for himself when he got hungry, but they both told me they were not expected nor required to cook for everyone as the girls are expected to do.

An example of this occurred when the Ndogo councilwoman, Somoye, took her family to the *ngoma*, a traditional celebration. Her four year old daughter, Awesa, left early from the celebration and returned home with her friend Zahura, which allowed her mother to stay longer at the celebration because the girls cooked a meal for the family to eat upon their arrival home from the *ngoma*. They made *dagaa*, which is a small fish in a curry sauce, and they prepared *ugali* and some vegetables for the family. Somoye showed me the leftovers from the night before and said they would eat it again that day with fresh *ugali* (*ugali* is made from cassava or rice).

Environment

In the community of Ndogo and the surrounding area, daily interactions exist with opportunities to learn topics such as learning about the land and what the land produces in synchronicity with the seasons and weather patterns. In the opportunities to learn to cook the children also have opportunity to learn the local knowledge about which plants are safe to eat and which ones are dangerous. The knowledge and skills young children have the opportunity to learn about the environment includes the materials and resources they use to play, cook, cultivate, and the caretaking of people, places, animals and plants,

Knowledge about the environment provides frequent opportunities to learn because aspects of the environment have a significant role in farming and cooking skills as well as games children play. The games that children play, and have opportunities to learn from, are passed down from generation to generation and are made from local materials found in the local environment and their daily lives.

Opportunities to learn for young children are found in the content and materials in the local place and environment (Warren, 1991). Villagers associated what it means to be local as affiliation with the Mwera people group. Esha said, "What we do and what we learn is from our people. We are Mwera." The importance of the local knowledge and materials is revealed in this association of being Mwera. Abdulla, a father, asserted, "We are a peaceful people. This is how we think of ourselves and what we teach our

children." The location is important because being from Ndogo means being Mwera, synonymous with being a peaceful people, cultivating, and knowing the land.

Parents said they teach their children additional life skills they personally possess, as well. For instance, occasionally a few people gain additional income from other sources such as Hamis, in the modes and pedagogy section, made mattresses from materials from trees or breaking stones to make gravel and sell to the state. Parents shared with me details about what their children need to know and about teaching their children how to perform these life skills, which may contribute as additional income someday.

Another example of the local knowledge that young children have the opportunity to learn about is the materials in the environment used in their play and games. The games children play are rooted in the local space and knowledge in their environment. One game, *njengo*, is played with dried corncobs from the fields that are snapped into equal portions three inches long and set up like bowling pins. A gourd or materials from the local *balboa* tree are carved into disk-like circles. Holes are made in the center and a small stick is inserted to make something like a top, which they spin to knock over the opponent's "pins." All their games are made from natural materials found in the local environment. The information about how to play the game is passed from generation to generation as older adults play the game with young children and demonstrates how to play. Children then imitate and recreate the game with each other

such as was discussed in the section of modes and pedagogies. There are many similar examples of the local materials that children use to play, but also use in daily life.

Social and Personal

Adults in Ndogo and the surrounding community articulated that they desire young children to know what is appropriate behavior and how to conduct themselves alone and with others. In the vignette about Misra, he seems to be learning skills by himself. However, this experience is really part of a broader process of Misra learning to care for others and learning how to be a part of a family and a community. Young children are expected to learn to be members of the Mwera community and to develop into individuals who participate in the collective society. Training a child to behave a certain way is an age-old commonality across societies; what differs is what parents and community members in various societies desire children to learn and how they achieve this. Life in Ndogo and the surrounding Mwera villages is a shared experience.

I observed in Ndogo, just as Ocitti (1973) noticed from his study in Uganda, "Children belonged to the community and every member has a stake in their upbringing" (Ocitti, 1973, p. 432). Children are considered the responsibility of the entire community and are raised under the care of both the family and the community. The collective aspect of the village extends from the instruction and care of children to the physical sharing of spaces and objects. There is a collective element of the

opportunities to learn for young children in Ndogo and the surrounding Mwera villages. The knowledge and skills young children have the opportunity to learn about include their social responsibility such as sharing items and physical spaces.

Items that the community uses together or in common include leisure and work items. The children told me the jump rope was stored at anyone's house, and if someone wanted to play with it they just had to go and get it. Neighbors share cultivating tools and will help each other in the field if needed. Young children have opportunities to learn to share physical items and spaces with others as a sign of respect in social relationships.

Mariam has three children of her own and two additional children that she raised. She grew up in the Mwenye area, moved to Lindi after she married, and now lives alone in Ndogo. Her husband still works for the district and comes to visit her. She articulated that one has to teach a child how to be a knowledgeable and experienced adult, which she said included learning how to "make plans for their life and fulfill them. A competent adult is one who gets advice from other people and takes it into consideration." This demonstrates an important community value, to listen to the advice of other people in making decisions. Getting along with other people was a personal and communal importance. Social opportunities to learn encompass personal characteristics in the interaction with others. Personal knowledge and skills young children have the opportunity to learn include respect and obedience, responsibility for

others, working together, sharing, and getting along, and self-care such as body care and washing, health, and illness.

People in the villages explained that young children are taught to respect and obey elders. Respect is the most important learning opportunity at home. The children I spoke with said their parents tell them to greet elders with *shikamoo*, which is a greeting that means hello intended to be used to address someone older than oneself. Young children are taught to say this greeting to their parents in the morning and evening. An example of modeling respect for children to learn, which I observed involved an old woman who came to the water source. The women already waiting to fill their buckets allowed the older woman to go ahead of them to fill up her bucket instead of making the older woman wait for the younger women to finish. A young mama of about seventeen helped the older woman fill her bucket and assisted her in placing the bucket on her head. Yet another example of this local norm of respect is when a family eats, children may not eat before their elders.

Parents said that they want their children to respect all genders, ages, and races, and not fight or insult other people. Mothers and fathers sit at home with their children in the evenings and teach them how to live with other people in community. Abdulla said that because they have these talks with their children, from four years old and onward, they could leave them without warning when they need to fetch water or go to the fields because the parents said their children know what is good and what is bad.

Once again, parents expressed that they instruct their young children based on the assumption of the child understanding what the parent wanted them to do.

In Ndogo and the surrounding communities, it is interesting to note the age young children are expected to learn body care skills. Typically, children of four and five are responsible for washing themselves and their clothes. Parents and young children described learning as very young children how to wash themselves, one's clothes, and utensils. Personal opportunities to learn also include knowledge about health issues such as, pregnancy, childbirth, injuries, and extended to knowledge about the local medicinal practices and how to treat ailments such as malaria.

Parents focus on skills and knowledge; however, parents also shared that when a young children demonstrates they can listen to directions and do things for themselves, are minimally supervised so that they can learn from their experiences, such as illustrated in Misra's account. This is also reflected in what I observed in the community. A father, Hassan, said, "Parents allow and watch to see how the child will be or will turn out. Within boundaries, children are allowed to be in their natural state. We want children to do work and respect others." He went on to explain that parents teach children skills and knowledge but the children are allowed freedom within the boundaries of respect and work and experience the consequences of their choices. Hassan's comment demonstrates a connection between social and personal

opportunities to learn. There is also an integrated aspect of the physical and life skills that children have opportunity to learn which I discuss next.

Initiation

Young children in the Mwera community participate in traditional initiation rites bringing together social, personal, and environment knowledge and skills with intensive instruction. This transfer of local knowledge and skills in the initiation rite occurs for one month in a person's life between the ages of six to ten. Separated by gender, girls participate in a *unyago* rite and boys participate in a *jando* rite.

There are female and male adults designated by the community who are responsible for training the young children in the initiation process. This takes place in the "bush," a place in nature that is a distance from all houses and from the regular activities of the community. The teachers are not relatives of the children.

During the month long initiation process, the boys are circumcised. A father in the community, Kurwa, reflected what I heard from many men when he said, "If a parent takes a child to the hospital for the circumcision, the parent is a coward. Being circumcised in the bush shows that the boy is a man."

The female trainer instructs the girls during the month. In the *unyago* rite, girls are taught about body cleanliness, cleaning and taking care of a house, what will happen when their body changes during puberty, how not to become pregnant, to obey

their husbands, to respect their parents, and how to please their sexual partner. Each parent interviewed in the village said it is a very important part of a child's growing into adulthood.

At the end of a young person's month long initiation rite, there is a big celebration called *kiangulo.* It is an *ngoma* ceremony with drums and dancing to celebrate both genders. The people I spoke to in the Ndogo community and the surrounding villages said that the initiation rite was considered a part of the natural flow of life. I had the great honor of being invited to and attending an *ngoma* ceremony for a young girl who had finished her initiation rite. An elder told me, "Today is a natural extension of the life of the young girl who we are celebrating." The celebration involves everyone in the community including those who have already been initiated and those who have yet to be. The *ngoma,* at the culmination of the initiation rite, is a formal celebration and community-building event. It is also a public acceptance of the young child as a full member of the community.

Local people groups across the country have held on to their language and traditions in the face of the threat of extinction. Families and communities come together to support young children in Ndogo to have the opportunity to learn about the Mwera way of life that is passed down through generations in part through the initiation rites. The community works together to maintain and preserve the cultural knowledge and skills. However, The government in Tanzania discourages traditional

initiation processes in the communities in part because it takes children away from days in the school classroom. The Ndogo schoolteacher said about the Mwera initiation rite that, "Initiation is not something that will help children. It only confuses them in a modern age when they should be in school." I pressed further to understand his thoughts about the content taught during initiation. The teacher said, "What children learn in initiation is useless. You do not see me including those things in the school." The view from the government and the teacher is that the knowledge taught to children in the initiation rites are outdated and do not contribute to a child's success in life.

The government is also opposed to initiation rites because it reinforces an ethnic rather than a national identity. At the national level, under the guise of promoting unity in the country, initiation processes are suppressed (Halley, 2012).

The knowledge and skills taught in the initiations across Tanzania has never been included in formal education. In Tanzania, school ignores and at times overtly rejects initiation rites. It presents an opportunity for young children to learn that the knowledge and skills from home and the community are not accepted in the school. Apart from an objection to the child missing school, the Ndogo school does not acknowledge that the children go through an initiation process.

The initiation rite provides opportunities for young children to learn knowledge about life such as sex education and the roles and responsibility of their gender. It also includes opportunities to learn skills from the community such as how to care for their

changing bodies. It is also an opportunity to learn how to become full members of the community. The rejection of the initiation in school is an opportunity for young children to learn that it is wrong to miss school in order to participate in valued community traditions such as initiation.

Spirituality

Aspects of spirituality are deeply woven in many layers into the Mwera community. To summarize, there are people who practice formal religions such as Islam or Christianity and there are people who simultaneously or separately practice local beliefs about gods and their interaction with the earth and land. The local beliefs also include the use of natural plants and other natural resources to cure medical issues. All of these subjects are opportunities for young children to learn aspects of spirituality.

Formal religion and local spiritually are reinforced in both the home and the community. An elder and a Muslim in the community, Bado, said "Mostly the Mwera people group is Muslim but some have converted to Christianity." Young children have the opportunity to learn that there is peace and acceptance between families of different religions in the area, whether Muslim or Christian.

The community identified largely as Muslim; however, traditional spiritualism is also a prominent belief system. Although the government does not discourage formal

religions, the government actively discourages local spiritually. During British colonial rule, a law termed the Tanganyika Ordinance of 1928 outlawed what the government called witchcraft or black magic, *uchawi* (Nordstrom & Martin, 1992). Local people in Ndogo use a different Kiswahili word, which translates into physicians or local doctors, *waganga*. The current government revised the law, most recently called The Witchcraft Act Of 2002 (Witchcraft Act, 2002) but it contains language from the original colonial documents outlawing traditional practices. Young children have the opportunity to learn about local spirituality and also that it is not accepted in the wider community outside of Ndogo.

Mesaki (2009) cited the government's motive for banning witchcraft as one intended to improve economic development. Though it is overtly rejected by the State, the banning of traditional healers or local doctors is not in decline. W*aganga*, which is plural for local doctors, still flourish all over Tanzania. *Muganga*, the singular of *waganga,* is a word that can be translated into English as "witch doctor" but the actual or direct translation is "local doctor". The function of this person's role is to provide remedies for illness and to provide spiritual guidance. The closest *waganga* to Ndogo were two women, one from Mandawa and another in Nyangao, which are also Mwera villages further west into the interior.

For most, the *muganga* is the first line of treatment. Women and children in the villages have necklaces with pouches filled with herbs around their neck to heal and

protect them from various sicknesses. Young children also have thick black strings tied around their wrists and waists to ward off demons. Women of childbearing age have bands tied around their chest over the top of their breasts for the purpose of protecting their milk supply. Aysa, a mother, said, "When a young child comes down with an illness, we have them rest and give them things we hope can help them feel better. A fever is the most dangerous." However, when young children become sick and if their situation starts to worsen, Aysa said,

> We go to the local doctor, *muganga*, to get herbal medicines and the *muganga* sings songs to put demons in the child's head. Then the *muganga* talks to the demon to find out what the problem is. The *muganga* then asks the demon, 'why did you come? What do you want? And what do you need?' Then the parent or child has to do whatever the demon requests. Once they have fulfilled that request the *muganga* takes the demon out of their head and gives them the herbal medicine to use.

When I talked to Kassim he told me, "I was bewitched when I was a young boy and my eye went bad. I went to the local doctor in Mandawa and she gave me some medicine that helped with the pain. It was herbal medicine that did not cost much."

Spirituality is a core component of being a member of the Mwera community. An example of this is how families' gather together four times a year to perform a ceremony asking supernatural beings to heal illnesses in the community and bring rain for the crops. Each member of the community, including young children, participate in the ritual. Young children learn that sicknesses can be helped with local herbs and that as a community they come together to stay well.

Medical care at clinics or hospitals is prohibitive to most people in Ndogo because of long distances and high costs. However Kurwa and others in the village remarked that, "When the sickness increases after we go to the medical clinic we then go to a *muganga* (the local doctor) to receive additional remedies." For many people, there is a mistrust of the government-run facilities; the feeling is that the treatment will fail and will not be able to help heal the illness or injury. Thus, young children have the opportunity to learn that find a solution to an ailment is preferred to going outside the community.

I present this information not to analyze the effectiveness of the local medicinal remedies, rather to point out that people in Ndogo have systems of belief and practice that are not validated for young children outside their community in the school or at the national level. Issues of spirituality are absent and/or actively rejected in their formal schooling experience yet families think them important to learn. Opportunities for young children to learn about spirituality are similar to other aspects, such as life skills. Just as a child learns how to cook through peripheral participation, young children learn about the spiritual beliefs and observances in the same way. Young children observe, imitate, try out the practices, and then through time become more proficient and participate more fully. Young children are not excluded from community spiritual activities. This demonstrates the routine but central aspect of including young children

in social practices and life skills to prepare them to become full members of the community.

Young children's opportunities to learn integration of knowledge and skills

Young children have the opportunity to learn about the world in which they live, play, and work. The illustration of Misra cooking shows he was learning integrated knowledge and skills about life. He was using multiple areas of content knowledge in layers that connected to various subjects, such as how to light a fire as well as care for others. This is representative of the notion that the opportunities children have to learn in Ndogo are interconnected in nature. Qualities of the skills and knowledge young children learn in the homes and the community is connected to integrated aspect of daily life. Semali (1999) said that there is a "dynamic way in which the residents of an area have come to understand themselves in relationship to their natural environment and how they organize that folk knowledge of flora and fauna, cultural beliefs, and history to enhance their lives" (p. 3). In Ndogo the opportunities to learn for young children makes connection between all areas of being.

Opportunities that young children have to learn are holistic and are also presented to them in integrated ways, as discussed earlier in the chapter. Aspects such as experiences and knowledge about life are connected not segmented (Semali, 1999). Informal education of young children presents opportunities to learn the skills and

abilities to build their house, protect themselves from wildlife, fetch water, grow food, cook, care for children, and much more. Subjects are not divided or fragmented into categories such as biology, geography, agriculture, and so on. Each aspect of life is taught in totality, without being broken into subject matter. The interaction with the content, such as how to build a fire, is back and forth. Young children try, experiment, and discover. Modes of young children's opportunities to learn were discussed in an earlier section.

An example of the interconnected nature of opportunities to learn is seen in how Omar and his brothers learned to build their own houses. Omar, who was older, was responsible for the project. Their father was teaching them and the process included subjects that are taught in formal schooling, such as geography, to understand how the land lays, geology about the type of rock and water that surrounded him, biology about the trees and vegetation he would have near his house or use for the building, etc. Local knowledge, from Ndogo, and in particular Misra's case, connects opportunities to learn with an approach to life as a whole (Warren, Slikkerveer, & Titilola, 1989). Opportunities for young children to learn are connected and in many instances present an integrated practice of acquiring knowledge. For instance, children eat from the nature that surrounds them when they are hungry. When peas are ready to harvest, children eat them off the plant; when corn, rice, or cassava are in season that is what is

eaten; when oranges are ripe, and a young child is hungry, she or he picks and eats them (or mangos or bananas, when they are ripe).

Whether making a go-cart or preparing a meal, young children in Ndogo have the opportunity to learn about being an individual as well as a group member, and to learn life skills and local knowledge in integrated ways. Skills are acquired in such a way that children can complete tasks that, in the context of many other societies such as the United States, skills that adults, and not children, conduct. For instance, Abdullah and many other people repeatedly told me that if a child can demonstrate a skill they are allowed to use it, such as handling a knife. I observed many young children, as young as two years old, using knives to peel fruit or dig in the dirt. The type of knowledge young children have the opportunity to learn is locally grounded and integrated, such as the act of fetching water as a way of learning about the environment as well as learning a skill. Notice that the organization of this knowledge and skills and how it is passed from one generation to the next generation is an important theme in the life of the Ndogo community.

To summarize, people in the community told me that the content of what young children learn is particularly important because it is the building block for becoming competent adults in this community. Relationships between people and with nature are central to the knowledge base that is produced and reproduced (Semali, 1999). Young children's role in learning these skills is the beginning of their journey into full

membership of the community. People emphasized to me it is essential young children begin learning these things at young ages. Another opportunity young children have to learn is language and numeracy discussed in chapter 4 and 5. Chapter 4 addresses Kiswahili language skills including reading, writing, speaking, and listening and chapter 5 examines Kimwera speaking and listening skills. There is significant overlap between where children have opportunities to learn and what they have opportunities to learn about.

Summary

Drawing on theories of learning, such as Bandura and Lave and Wagner, I note how young children have opportunities to learn at a very young age in multiple ways and settings. There is a wealth of learning opportunities in Ndogo and the surrounding villages. Young children in Ndogo and the surrounding villages have many opportunities to learn through legitimate peripheral participation including aspects such as observation and imitation, active instruction, and play and games. These opportunities to learn draw young children into greater participation in the community. Learning is contextually situated and there are varied locations and multiple people involved in young children's opportunities to learn.

What young children have the opportunity to learn about is complex and rich because it is passed down from generation to generation, contains much variation, and

is influenced by the passing of time and people. Opportunities to learn are local and connected to real-life experiences and situations. These include how to cultivate and harvest the land, prepare and cook plants and animals to eat, care of children, care for the house and grounds, hunt, fetch water, and acquiring knowledge about the environment such as fire, animals, and plants. Knowledge and skills are social as well as personal. Personal opportunities to learn included children spending time alone cooking, cleaning, constructing games or toys, and so on. Social opportunities included learning in groups or from groups about how to be a member of the community. Often, opportunities to learn are collective or group-oriented, such as when parents talk to all of their children together at night or when an elder rebukes a person for making a bad choice and uses this to teach all of the children a lesson.

Opportunities to learn are also integrated rather than taught in parts or separate subjects. Children have the opportunity to engage with activities starting with the whole structure instead of a series of sequenced steps. Learning opportunities are comprised of the many people and various places involved in the process. Notice how this creates rich opportunities to learn. Learning starts very young for children in this community and children are considered competent at many skills at very early ages.

In this chapter, I described what, in many ways, a person in this community would call ordinary life. The people in Ndogo validated the skills and knowledge that I examined and communicated that these skills and knowledge are needed for young

children to become competent adults. People here would not necessarily label these things as learning. From my interviews, people expressed learning as what occurs in what I describe in chapter four on formal schooling of young children such as reading or writing.

Opportunities young children have to learn in the homes and in the community are not the same opportunities to learn that exists in formal schooling. In chapter 4, I consider parallel questions to the ones I addressed in chapter 3 to examine opportunities for young children to learn in the Ndogo school. In chapter 5, in order avoid the creation of a false dichotomy, I turn the focus to examine the space between home and school which complicates and problematizes informal and formal learning and the opportunities young children have to learn in Ndogo and the surrounding community.

CHAPTER 5

YOUNG CHILDREN'S FORMAL OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN

Introduction

This chapter addresses the pedagogies, people, places, and knowledge that young children have the opportunities to learn in the Ndogo school. As I illustrated in chapter 1, while there is much literature about formal education in Tanzania, there is very little on rural pre-primary school, in particular, early childhood education. My study seeks to address this gap. My focus was to intensely examine one school to explore what learning opportunities are available in this setting and not to provide a generalization across Tanzania. Previous literature in Tanzania has not examined pre-primary school-based learning in this way.

This chapter is organized, as was chapter 4, around aspects of the learning process. This chapter on formal learning similarly examines the pedagogy in the learning, the places and the people involved in children's learning, and the content of the opportunities young children have to learn in the school for children in Ndogo and the surrounding area. Therefore, I asked the same questions about the formal schooling in Ndogo that I asked in chapter 4 in the context of the homes and community:

- What are the pedagogies and modes of young children's opportunities to learn?
- Who are the people involved in opportunities young children have to learn?
- Where are the places young children have opportunities to learn?

- What do young children have opportunities to learn?

To set the stage to understand the context of the Ndogo school, I begin this chapter with a discussion of the Tanzania school system. I transition to examine opportunities for young children to learn in the Ndogo school, first, through modes and pedagogies. Second, I address people young children have opportunities to learn with and third, the places where there are opportunities to learn. Finally, I explore what knowledge and skills young children have the opportunity to learn in this formal schooling.

The Tanzania education system

The Tanzanian education system is based on the British school system. Prior to entering primary school, young children can attend nursery school and pre-primary school. Nursery school is intended for young children, ages three to four and provided by private institutions, typically not by the government. Nursery schools can also act as daycare facilities for children younger than three. Pre-primary school is for children ages four to six and is either provided by a private or a government institution. Prior to 2005 when the government developed the two-year curriculum for pre-primary school, there was no national curriculum for pre-primary school. Neither nursery nor pre-primary school is currently mandatory. In February of 2015, the government signed a new education policy that universalizes pre-primary school for children ages 5-6 but it not yet implemented.

Primary school attendance is mandatory in Tanzania. In 2001, school fees for government primary school were eliminated. Parents or guardians are no longer required to pay pre-primary or primary school tuition; however, they still are responsible for providing the money to pay for uniforms, examination fees, and school supplies. Primary school contains levels Standard I through Standard VII. Typically, children in Standard I are seven years old, Standard II are eight years old, and so on; however in the context of Ndogo, and many rural schools, there are children of a wide age range in fewer levels. The government requires national standardized exams for students in the Standard IV and Standard VII. Kiswahili is the language of instruction for all pre-primary and primary schools in Tanzania.

Secondary school in Tanzania is voluntary and is fee-based. The ages of students in secondary school are typically ages fourteen to eighteen. English is the language of instruction for secondary school. Secondary school is divided into two parts, the O level (for ordinary) and the A level (for advanced). After passing the standard seven exams, students can enter O level, which is broken down into Form I through Form IV. At the end of Form II and Form IV, students are required to take another standardized exam, which must be passed before being allowed to proceed to the next levels. Following completion of the O level is the A level, which includes Form V and Form VI. Undergraduate studies at the university are an option only for students who pass the exam at the end of Form VI. Otherwise, there are diploma and certificate options for

students who pass the exams at the end of Form IV and Form VI but do not score high enough to go to the next level (A chart of the Tanzania education system is provided in Appendix C).

The Ndogo school

The Ndogo school opened in 2013 and currently contains only pre-primary and Standard I grades. There are no required examinations for those grades. There are also few resources in the school – no books or textbooks. Parents of the children who attend the school said that they could not afford additional school supplies. As I mentioned in chapter 1, the school building was built by the Ndogo people, themselves – their labor and time. The funds for construction materials and supplies inside the school building were provided by PFT grant funding for the project I was part of (backed by international donors, the TAG foundation). The salary of the schoolteacher is paid by the Tanzanian national government.

When the school opened in January 2013, government officials reported that up to 92 children from the village began attending the one-room cinder block schoolhouse, in Ndogo, with one teacher. The youngest child in the Ndogo school was four years old and the oldest was fifteen. Students were divided into two grades: pre-primary and Standard I. The teacher showed me his attendance log for the students in the school. The book stated the 92 children that the government had reported were enrolled in the

school. However, the teacher did not have the attendance log up to date and the attendance average I counted on a daily basis was consistently around sixty-five students. I asked the teacher about the reason for this discrepancy. The teacher said, "There may have been 92 students at the beginning so that is the number the government uses. But I am not sure how many children actually attend regularly." Even though the actual count of students who attending the school in Ndogo was lower than the government number, those students attended regularly.

The teacher's name is Hamis. As mentioned previously, community members and the children called each other by first names. However, given the social positioning of the teacher and the fact that he was an outsider to the community, he was called "Teacher." This is a common practice in schools across Tanzania to refer to the teacher not by their name but as "Teacher" or "the teacher." Thus, in this chapter, I will follow the conventions that reflect the interviews in the community and the term that was used in Swahili, *mwalimu*.

Essentially each class had one hour of instruction time each day. However, neither the students nor the teacher have watches. Therefore, the school day begins approximately at 9am when the teacher arrives, but not exactly at 9am because there is no clock. The teacher has a cell phone, but sometimes the battery runs down so there is no way for him to tell the exact time. Some people in Ndogo and the surrounding villages have cell phones, but not everyone and they regularly have difficulties trying to

charge them. No one I spoke to had a clock. Rather, people use the sun to guide their day, waking with the sunrise, and going to bed with the sunset.

The teacher in Ndogo speaks Kiswahili but not the local language, Kimwera. The majority of the students know both Kimwera and Kiswahili. Uniforms are required for the students in the Ndogo school because it is a government school. The Standard I male students wear navy blue pants and the female students wear navy blue skirts with white tops and black shoes. The pre-primary male and female students wear navy blue tops and bottoms with white collars and black shoes. The parents provide the uniforms but some of the students in the school did not wear uniforms because their families could not afford them.

Young Children's Opportunities to Learn through Formal School

I observed Juma, a six-year-old boy, almost daily, and we had two interviews together. One day like many other days, Juma said he woke up, as the raised sun was low in the sky. His mother had gone to fetch water and his father was already in the fields cultivating before the sun became too hot. Juma ate some leftovers from the night before with his older brother and younger sister. Juma and his brother said they went to school and left their sister with the neighbor. Their friends, Isa and Bakari, were already playing on the logs in the schoolyard. An older girl, Aysha told Juma to sweep the dirt before the teacher came. The brooms were made out of a collection of young branches

tied together with a piece of thin bark. The young children were sweeping and playing for what seemed like a long time before the teacher arrived. When the teacher arrived he went to the schoolhouse and unlocked the school building. Juma and his friends waited outside until the teacher came to the front of the schoolhouse and rang a bell. All the young children went running to the schoolhouse and sat where they liked.

Juma was in the pre-primary class and he chose a seat within arms reach from his brother who was sitting on a Standard I bench. The teacher stood at the front of the room and the students became very quiet. The teacher without introduction to the day, turned to the Standard I students and began their lesson on writing letters. Juma and the other pre-primary students sat at their tables and waited for the teacher. I observed Juma sitting quietly waiting for the teacher at his table. Juma said later that school seemed so much longer than playing outside while they waited for the teacher. Finally, the teacher turned his attention to the pre-primary students and instructed them on letter naming. Juma was excited and raised his hand to give the answers but the teacher did not call on him. After a short lesson, it was time to go outside. Juma stood up and waited his turn until the pre-primary students were allowed to go outside.

Outside Juma used a stick to dig in the dirt with his friends. The older girls sat and talked and the older boys kicked around some stones. The teacher stayed inside but came to the schoolhouse door once when a little girl was yelling because a little boy pushed her. The teacher asked what was going on and an older girl explained what

happened. The teacher told them that they should not touch each other and returned to the classroom. When the teacher called the Standard I students inside it was time for Juma and his pre-primary friends to walk home together. It was hot outside and they had to walk a long distance and Juma was very thirsty. His older brother stayed another hour at school and the teacher instructed the students in a math addition lesson. It was lunchtime and Juma was home alone with his younger sister until his older brother returned home and together they made some *ugali* and ate the fruit from the surrounding trees.

Young children, such as Juma, have the opportunity to learn a variety of knowledge and skills in the Ndogo school. Opportunities to learn are everywhere and I wanted to discover what was happening for young children in the school. In this chapter I examine how, with whom, where, and what these are for young children.

Parents and community members said they think it is helpful for the young children to attend the Ndogo school because they can learn things at school they cannot learn at home. Parents and the Ndogo teacher reported that the children attended regularly and were not pulled out of school for farming or other non-school activities such as is common at other schools around Tanzania (Eriksen, Brown, & Kelly, 2005; Burke & Beegle, 2004). This demonstrates support for children to attend school when parents expressed a commitment to make sure the young children attended the Ndogo

school. This demonstrates parents' value of the time young children spent in the school classroom.

First, I consider the pedagogy and structure of the opportunities to learn for young children. Second, I contextualize the people who are involved in opportunities for young children to learn and which young children have the opportunity to attend school in formal settings. Third, I consider what places exist in school where young children have the opportunity to learn. Finally, I examine what knowledge young children have the opportunity to learn in the classroom in one particular community.

Young Children's Opportunities to Learn through Mode and Pedagogies

In this section, I explore the modes and pedagogy regarding opportunities for young children to learn in the formal setting. The pedagogies used in formal education illuminates what school, in essence, is trying to accomplish. Legitimate peripheral participation provides a framework to make sense of the opportunities to learn in formal schooling. "It crucially involves participation as a way of learning—of both absorbing and being absorbed in—the 'culture of practice.' An extended period of legitimate peripherality provides learners with opportunities to make the culture of practice theirs" (Lave & Wenger, 1992, p. 95). In this case, the culture of practice is schooling. The expert of the community is the teacher who has a store of knowledge and skills that he works to convey to his students. The process of acquiring this includes

interaction with the teacher and student participation in activities that include young children memorizing and reciting specific texts from the teacher.

Young Children's opportunities to learn through teacher's instruction and interaction

There was approximately one hour of instruction a day for each grade level. There are even fewer hours of instruction when there are holidays or if the teacher is absent or sick. The teacher told me "If something happens to me like I am sick or I have to go and do something, the young children are not able to study. It is hard for me because I work far from home." Ada, a seven-year-old student told me "If we [the students] go to school and the teacher is not there, we just go back home." I asked how often that happens. Ada said it had happened three days this month. This is significant because students have very few hours of instruction time overall. Instruction centered on the same materials in each lesson. There are no books in the classroom. The teacher told me this is an obstacle in his teaching, the lack of conventional teaching and learning materials, especially books for him and the students. The classroom does not contain enough chalk for each of the pre-primary students to have a stick of chalk, nor are there enough notebooks or writing utensils for each of the primary students. There are no books even though there is a bookcase; it stands empty. The school has no outdoor activity or sports equipment and because there is no electricity, there is also no way to

see at night so people do not come to the school after dark to study, thus, school learning occurred during specific and limited hours in the day.

The type of instruction that occurs in Ndogo is similar to chalk and talk education around the world (Fuller & Snyder, 1991; Harter, Becker, & Watts, 1999). Another way to describe the type of instruction is active or direct instruction. The teacher gave students direct verbal instructions asking them questions or telling them to complete a task. As an example, the teacher in Ndogo told the Standard I students to copy the alphabet from the blackboard, and told the pre-primary students to write the first five letters of the alphabet.

In chalk and talk instruction, young children sit in desks and respectfully answer questions from a teacher who stands or sits at the front of the classroom. Fuller and Snyder (1991) explained that in Botswana, teacher instructional methods are top down and regulated by social distance because the teacher provides the instruction and the students receive and retain the information. I observed similar methods of instruction when the teacher in Ndogo presented material to the class, such as introducing the topic for the day to students. The teacher also would lecture about a topic such as how to recite words that rhyme. Students then recited materials and worked silently on the information the teacher gave them. Occasionally homework was assigned but as I have discussed earlier, this is problematic because of the lack of paper and pencils available for students to take home with them to do the homework. I did not observe any

formative or summative examination. The teacher used question and answers to engage the students in showing their assimilation of the information in the lesson. Formal exams are not part of the curriculum for the lower grades. Students spend a good deal of time waiting for the teacher to work with them. This demonstrates the authority of the teacher and how the teacher's instruction is the central element of formal schooling.

The teacher maintained an authoritative position during instruction in the Ndogo school classroom as opposed to collaborative or diminutive. The instruction time had a top-down structure delivered through a singular modality of instruction namely the teacher telling the students a concept and asking the students to recite or answer questions. For example, at the school in Ndogo, young children sat in their seats looking at a blackboard in the front of the classroom. The teacher was presenting a writing lesson on the shapes of the letters F, G, H, I, and J, in Kiswahili, which uses a Latin script. Esha, a six-year-old girl, worked quickly to copy the letters from the blackboard along with the other students. The point of the lesson was for students to copy the letters from the blackboard on their own small boards. Young children have opportunities to learn through copying and recitation.

Another example of this instruction and mode of learning was when the teacher gave the Standard I class a lesson on math. The object was to learn subtraction of numbers under ten. He asked the students, "How do you minus numbers under ten?" and "If there are ten things, for example when we minus three what will remain?" Then

he asked, “What is eight minus two?” The students all answered in unison, “six.” The teacher said to students, “concentrate on your abacuses.” He gave the Standard I students an exercise to complete. The teacher wrote problems on the chalkboard and instructed them to find the answer silently and write them on their paper. The Standard I students have small notebooks and a pencil they use to copy their work in from the blackboard. The younger pre-primary students copy their work with chalk onto small blackboards at their tables. Young children have the opportunity to learn through practicing the letters and numbers, reciting them in unison and thus through repetition remembering the information. The recitation mode of instruction the teacher used allowed the students to practice such concepts as letter recognition by copying and repeating the letter names.

The repetition of copying information from the blackboard is a standard pedagogy of learning in the classroom. While the Standard I students were working, the teacher did not speak or give attention to the pre-primary students who were sitting next to the Standard I students. Very quietly, the pre-primary young children talked to each other, laughed, or fidgeted. After approximately 30 minutes, the teacher began a lesson for the pre-primary students, while the Standard I students copied the problems off the board into their paper.

The teacher wrote the following on the board:

Figure 3: Drawing from the Ndogo school teacher's lesson

In this column the teacher drew pictures that resembled the shape of the numbers to the right	**6**
	7
	8
	9
	0

Source: Laura Edwards, 2014.

The teacher said a number out loud and then gave a student a stick to come up to the front and point at the correct number. The shapes that the teacher drew for the young children were not connected to any examples from their environment. The goal of the lesson was number identification. After he went through the numbers he had written, the lesson was over and young children were released to go outside. Young children had the opportunity to observe and imitate the work of the teacher to gain expertise in numeracy.

The teacher had only a syllabus, a small booklet, which set out objectives for each subject, published by the national government to guide him. No lesson plans are made available to teachers; the teachers create them. The national government dictates the subjects and objectives of the school curriculum (such as #4: "to assist the child in developing their cultural background"), however, teachers have the authority and freedom to create the curriculum and instructional methods. I asked the teacher to show

me one of his lessons. He brought me his lesson-planning book and left it with me. Inside the book were five lesson plans, drawn up the same day in August. At the time of my visit, it was already November and there were no additional lessons planned or prepared. The teacher does not write daily lesson plans or make goals for the classroom to complete. I asked him how he determined what to teach each school day. He replied, "I teach them (the Ndogo students) what I know about numbers and adding and subtracting and how to write numbers and letters." Young children have the opportunity to learn that going to school is to acquire arithmetic and reading and writing skills.

Young children also have the opportunity to learn skills through a teacher-centered pedagogy. Quite similar to the instructional model in Ndogo, Tobin (2005) described pre-primary school in France as "teacher-centered and academic. For young children four and older, play occurs only on the playground during recess. There is little or no interest in constructivism, child initiated activities, or the project approach. Moreover, there is no multicultural curriculum, no acknowledgment of cultural differences" (p. 424). The comments about best practices in France are not due to material constraints, while in Tanzania and Ndogo in particular, learning pedagogies are contingent on material constraints such as lack of funds to purchase textbooks. Pedagogies are also constructed based on the teacher's choices and the influence of their

teacher-training preparation. Additionally, formal schooling retains a legacy from British colonial rule, which I address in the next chapter.

Young children's opportunities to learn through accountability and correction

Young children have the opportunity to learn what is acceptable through correction from the teacher. When I explored the pedagogy of how learning occurred in the formal setting, the teacher's practices of accountability and motivation with students was noticeable. In general, punishment is an aspect of holding students responsible for their actions and their work in schools. Corporal punishment is a common practice in schools across Tanzania and in other places around the world (Makame, Ani, and Grantham-McGregor, 2002; Bartman, 2002). Feinstein and Mwahombela, (2010) found that in Tanzania, corporal punishment was used in secondary schools for both small and big incidences, such as tardiness or misbehaving. However, in Ndogo parents said that the teacher did not use corporal punishment and I did not see him use any physical force or raise his voice to the students when I was present. There were no instances reported of discipline or punishment from the teacher to students. The teacher told me he did not believe in corporal punishment but that he had to use it in Mwenye sometimes. He told me he had never felt it necessary since he came to Ndogo because the young children were very respectful.

Young children had the opportunity to learn what knowledge and skills were valuable as the teacher guided the process of instruction with accountability. The teacher did not walk around the room to check on students. He waited at the front of the classroom for the students to complete tasks. The teacher either sat at his desk or stood with his hands behind his back surveying the room to confirm that students were focusing and completing their work. The teacher was able to see each student from where he stood at the front of the classroom and he was aware of what they were doing. He reinforced his authority at the front of the classroom, interacting minimally with students and watching the students as they worked.

Through classroom management and the authoritative nature of the teacher's instruction, young children had the opportunity to learn what knowledge and skills are important to acquire in the school. The valuable knowledge or skills were rewarded with silence from the teacher. However, when a student misbehaved or gave the wrong answer, the teacher verbally or non-verbally corrected them. If a student got the answer wrong, the teacher made the student re-do the problem. If a student did not do their work, which rarely occurred, the teacher told the student that they could not go outside until they finish. The teacher also sent non-verbal messages to influence the student's behavior either to quiet down or to refocus on their schoolwork. Nonverbal motions such as looking up and staring at a student who was not focusing on their schoolwork functioned to maintain classroom order. Literature suggests that when a teacher

selectively asserts power or authority, as the teacher in Ndogo established with his students, it impacts the learning process because students are motivated to focus and complete their schoolwork (Plax, Kearne, McCroskey, & Richmond, 1986). The teacher also managed the classroom by using non-verbal cues to redirect students.

Another measure the teacher in Ndogo used to control student behaviors in the classroom was through such instances as students waiting for instruction. The teacher expected students not to do anything and to be quiet while they waited. A scholar in student motivation, Jere Brophy, addressed the ways that wait-time and the teacher's selection of which students could answer questions impacted classroom management. Brophy and Good (1984) said that "'Pacing' usually refers to the solicitation aspects of lessons, but it can also refer to the rate of presentation of information during initial structuring" (p. 124). The teacher in Ndogo asked a question and they responded in unison. The wait-time between answer and response was very quick. The teacher kept the pace of the lesson moving quickly through the instruction section and then left students to complete the problems or work he put on the blackboard. Young children had the opportunity to learn that the teacher kept a tight reign on the instruction time by moving it along quickly, and did not allow for student input or questions.

The teacher's assessment of students was not formalized. The teacher said he performed assessments on Standard I students' work but not on the pre-primary students. This is a type of formative assessment when the teacher observes what the

students are doing and evaluates their progress (Boston, 2002). The assessment was not systematic; the teacher did not have a schedule for evaluating students but occasionally he said he looked at their work to see if they were advancing. The teacher assessed their progress by looking at the material they were writing, such as numbers and letters, from the beginning of the year and then compared that to what they were able to do now. The concept of formative assessment asserts that the observations a teacher makes based on their observations of students alter the teaching and learning process (Boston, 2002). I observed that the teacher in Ndogo who identified that a student was doing well, he did not do anything, either notice or give praise. If he saw that a student was not making progress in their work, he required them to do extra work such as copy the letters or complete additional math problems. The teacher said that this was the first time Muhammad Bakari, Aysha, and most of the students in the Ndogo village, had attended school. He said he thought they had made significant progress in their math and writing subjects for not having been previously exposed to print materials and formal schooling.

Muhammad Bakari, a seven-year-old boy and Aysha, an eight-year-old girl said that they wanted to go to school so they could learn how to read and write. Every school day they get themselves ready and come to school and on the weekends they wash their own uniforms. Aysha said, "I do everything the teacher asks so I can learn as fast as I can." Most students seemed to have a high inner motivation and student

attendance was not an issue in this community, and I did not notice student resistance to schoolwork during instruction time. Regardless of their ability, students attempted to complete the tasks from the teacher. This type of motivation, parents reported, was due to the encouragement and excitement in the community about the new school and their desire to have their children to learn how to read and write. Overall, I heard and observed that the newness and people's positive anticipation about children learning to read and write provided sufficient motivation for students to do their work and not require the teacher to enact strict accountability.

People Involved In The Opportunities For Young Children To Learn

I sat quietly in the back of the classroom as students were doing their schoolwork. I noticed Rama, a six year old, two rows in front of me at the Ndogo school, who seemed to struggle with a math problem. She was concentrating on the board keeping her gaze constant but every time she started to write something down she stopped herself. Another girl, Zuri also six years old, in the next seat to Rama asked her a question about the math problem but Rama did not return her gaze. The teacher noticed the little girl's chatter and sternly told the whole class to be quiet. The teacher instructed students that they work alone on a project and need to be quiet. The teacher told students not to talk to each other and not to help each other with schoolwork inside the classroom. In this classroom, the main person that creates opportunities for young

children to learn in school is the teacher. There are peers present and sometimes parents who come by the school but their contribution is not visibly recognized.

Adults

The main person involved in opportunity for young children to learn in the school is the teacher, an adult. The Ndogo teacher is originally from Mtwara. He came to Mwenye in 1991 from a teaching post in Mandawa, which is also in the Lindi district. He taught in Mwenye for 20 years as a primary teacher and during that time he married a woman from the Mwenye area. The teacher began his post at the Ndogo school in January 2013. The Lindi District Education Office (DEO) chose him for the teaching post at Ndogo because he had completed a workshop on early childhood education. It was held in the regional capitol, Lindi town, and organized by the DEO.

He became a teacher after he finished Standard VII. He did not pass the standardized exam to go on to O levels, so his formal schooling ended there. At that time this route into teaching was common. Today, if someone wants to be a teacher, they have to pass the Standard VII exam. Many teachers in Tanzania are teaching without conventional teacher education or training in working with young children.

The teacher at the Ndogo school had 20 years of on the job training because no formal training was available then as it is now. The teacher said to me that he could not meet the needs of both younger and older students. He said this frustrated him. The

teacher is aware he does not have the training to work with young children. He said he would like to go back to school to earn a formal teaching certificate. He said, "I sometimes do not feel like I know what I am doing. I would like to have another teacher so I can be the headmaster of the school." This statement reflects the teacher's desire for administration rather than working with young children.

The teacher lives in Mwenye and walks approximately 7 mi each school day to the school in Ndogo and is considered an outsider by the villagers in Ndogo, but he is much respected. The teacher, as well as the parents, told me that it is very difficult for a teacher to stay so far from the school and travel on foot every day. The walk takes more than one and a half hours each way; he cannot afford another mode of transportation. I asked him why he goes every day to the Ndogo school, since it takes so much time to go there. He said, "It is because of my commitment to the country and my desire to see Tanzania grow." In Mwenye, teachers have complained because the government does not answer their requests for such things as textbooks, so they have refrained from teaching in protest. This, however, is not the case with the Ndogo teacher. He continues teaching without textbooks and other promised resources from the government.

When the day begins at school, the classroom is bursting with energy but quickly quiets down as soon as the teacher stands in the front of the room. The students respond to the teacher's authority as he stands at the front of the classroom. He does not say anything but stands, unmoving, until the students respond to his silence and stance.

Notice that the act of standing in the front of the classroom asserts authority and reinforces the social distance between the teacher and the students.

Additional adults involved in young children's opportunities to learn through formal school are parents. While there is only one teacher, parents present opportunities for young children to learn in the school through their involvement with the school and in their support of learning at home. However, many of the parents do not know how to read or write in Kiswahili. A parent committee from Mwenye, the closest *Ujamaa* village, joined together with the parent committee from Ndogo to discuss students' progress in school. Additionally, the Ndogo teacher called for a meeting with parents monthly, and the parents responded positively. I asked how the teacher communicated with the parents. He said he tells the students to come to the school with their parents at the end of the month. When he wants to meet with the people in the community who do not have young children in school, he walks up and down the road, telling people about the meeting who gather along the road and in the front of houses.

As discussed later, reading and writing are at the core of the school curricula. The teacher has expert knowledge about how to read and write Kiswahili with proficiency that the parents in the Ndogo community self reported they do not possess. Occasionally the teacher gives assignments to take home, but they are not always completed when the student returns to school. The teacher told me the reason for this is usually due to the fact that only a few parents are academically able to help their young

children do their schoolwork at home. Kiswahili knowledge and numeracy knowledge is low in this community, and between heavy workloads and not understanding the schoolwork, most parents said they are not able to, even though they desired to help their children with homework. Parents said they reinforced learning from school even if they cannot help their students complete the work. Young children have opportunities to learn what parent's want them to learn knowledge and skills in formal schooling.

Young children

Opportunities for young children to learn in formal school are available to those who are healthy and are not needed at home. In my study, I focus on young children under the age of eight. Commonly, in Tanzania, young children of this age do not regularly attend school because they typically do not enroll in primary school until age eight or later, even though the mandatory age for school enrollment is seven. It is significant to note that young children in developing countries are most often enrolled in school at an older age, one to four years older, than the Tanzanian legal school entry age. This is documented in Tanzania by Bommier and Lambert (2000), in Ghana by Glewwe and Jacoby (1993 & 1995), and in Cote d'lvoire by De Vreyer, Lambert, and Magnac (1998). These studies also confirmed that girls enter school earlier than boys but fewer girls enroll overall and boys stay in school longer than girls. Jacoby (1994) stated that young children who have to contribute to the family income or well-being are

delayed or prevented from enrolling in school. Another reason Bommier and Lambert (2000) noted is that the distance to walk to school influences the age of school enrollment. Glewwe and Jacoby (1995) argued that issues arising from malnutrition also influence school enrollment age. Similar to these studies, in the Ndogo school, there were more boys than girls at the older ages and there were Standard I students that were up to fifteen years of age. However, contrary to the literature, on a regular basis there were thirty young children enrolled from ages four to eight years old.

In Ndogo and the surrounding area, parents and students expressed an excitement about the new school and commitment to regularly attending because it was close to home and because parents said the school had a good teacher. Bommier and Lambert (2000) found that quality of schooling in Tanzania is tied to the age of student enrollment in formal schooling, "young children starting school earlier and staying longer if school quality increases" (p. 200). Parents told me they wanted their young children to go to school, and that they would not pull young students out of school to work in the fields. Similar to the studies mentioned, distance was a factor in young children's enrollment. Bommier and Lambert (2000) stated that "The further away the school is, the more parents will wait before enrolling their young children and the lower the number of completed years of schooling will be" (p.200). The Ndogo school experience was the first time sixty-three of the sixty-five young children attending the school had ever set foot in a formal school. The teacher and parents said these children

had not attended school prior to when the Ndogo school was built because the Mwenye school was too far away for the children to travel.

In many formal education settings, peers can be sources of opportunities to learn (Blumenfeld, Marx, Soloway, & Krajcik, 1996). However, in the environment of the Ndogo classroom, young children are not encouraged or allowed to speak to each other or to help each other with their schoolwork. In this classroom, the teacher said he considered a child was cheating if the child engaged with other students about the work they are doing. However, when students are not engaged in recitation or doing schoolwork, the teacher said he instructed students in skills pertaining to how young children to relate to one another. The teacher told me that when young children attend pre-primary school, they "are able to develop peer relationships, which is important for advancing in school." While these statements may seem contradictory, the teacher delineated that peer interactions were not acceptable during classroom instruction but were encouraged before and after class time. He went on to say that students had to learn how to get along in school so they would not fight in class and share things during recess.

In thinking about the people involved in the opportunities to learn, the school is organized to reflect that the person that holds valuable knowledge in school is the teacher. Peers (like Rama, from the opening illustration) and parents do not offer skills or knowledge that are accepted or acknowledged in the formal school setting. There is a

distinct type of child that attends school, one who is healthy, seen as able-bodied, and not needed by the family during school hours. There is also a distinct person who provides instruction, the teacher. The parent's stated role was to encourage students in their schoolwork when they were at home.

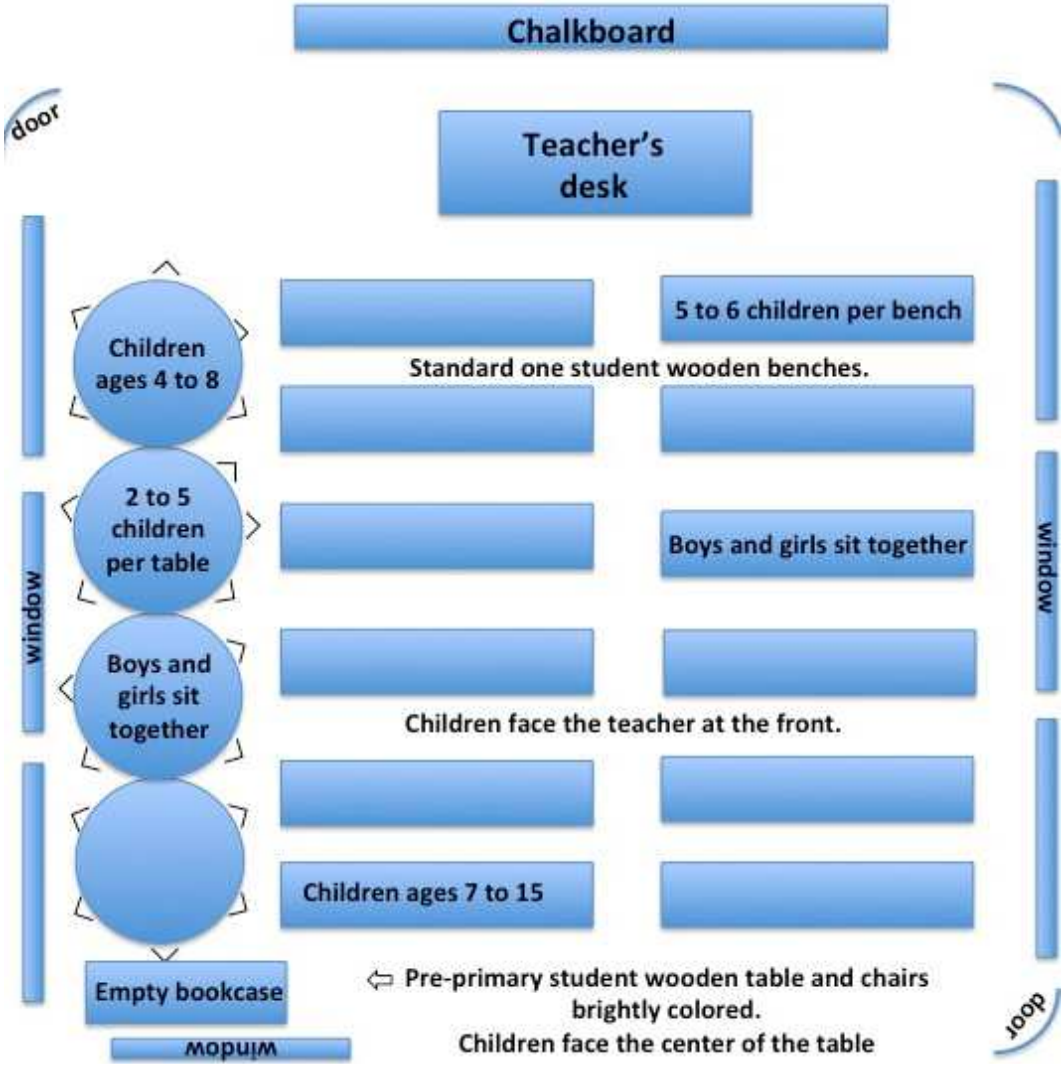
Places Young Children Have The Opportunities To Learn

Issa, a seven-year-old boy, sat quietly in his seat at the desk he shared with four other students waiting for the teacher. Issa and the other students remained quiet until it was their turn to receive the teacher's attention. The teacher then turned his instruction to the pre-primary students and had the students recite the letters they knew. Issa and his classmates have the opportunity to learn many things while they are in school and these opportunities occurred inside the school building and while students sat at their desks. The classroom instruction is set up around desks for the primary students and table and chairs for the pre-primary students and they do not sit on the floor, or work in groups, or use other spaces for instruction. Examining the places where young children have opportunities to learn in the Ndogo school aids in better understanding the formal opportunities young children have to learn.

Ten kilometers down a dirt road west and south from Mwenye is a smaller dirt pathway that branches off from the road leading to the school. The Ndogo school sits atop a small hill overlooking a valley of thick vegetation. The school building is a one-

room schoolhouse with concrete floors and walls, a wooden door, and a tin roof. Inside are wooden desks for the older young children in Standard I facing the front of the classroom. Small tables and chairs occupy the space next to the desks for younger children in pre-primary. A desk for the teacher sits at the front of the classroom facing the students. A large blackboard is on the front wall, set too high for the pre-primary aged children to reach the bottom of it. Below is a diagram of the one room schoolhouse I constructed to illustrate the physical place of the classroom.

Figure 4: Diagram inside the Ndogo school



Source: Laura Edwards, 2014.

This diagram of the classroom is helpful to visualize the tight space and the physical location of the young children and the teacher. This organization remained constant with an ebb and flow of the relatively consistent number of students that arrived for the school day. The room is split between the pre-primary class and Standard I class. There were roughly 15 to 20 pre-primary students in attendance during the time I was in

Ndogo, ranging from ages four to seven or eight. The Standard I class had approximately 45 to 50 students in attendance, from ages seven to fifteen.

The teacher said he did not have a systematic way of dividing up the class into pre-primary and Standard I grades. He determined pre-primary verse primary student placement based on when the young children began to attend school. If they were making progress they could move to the Standard I and if they were younger and or not making progress they started or stayed in pre-primary. There were some seven year olds in pre-primary and some other seven year olds in the Standard I. Students were not exclusively grouped on age such as in the USA. Opportunities to learn in the Ndogo school are afforded based on young children's ability.

The physical surroundings of the school and environment present opportunities to learn habits of learning and engaging with materials. As I noted in the diagram above, the pre-primary students sat around four tables large enough that their arms could not reach to touch the center. At any time, there were enough chairs to seat up to five young children per table. Only one or two pre-primary students sat with their back to the teacher and had to crane their necks around to give him their attention. The other pre-primary students sat at an angle facing the table but also had to twist their body to face the teacher when he spoke. The pre-primary tables and chairs were colorfully painted and low to the ground. The brightly colored tables and chairs were a result of MSU's involvement in this project. It was implemented in the context, not requested.

These types of round table with chairs are not in the pre-primary school in Mwenye, which demonstrates that these accommodations are not a common practice in the area. The Standard I students sat on benches. Here, there were two different notions, side-by-side, about what learning is. The only thing that distinguishes the two seating arrangements is the age of the student. Learning occurs at round tables with the students set up to face each other and also at benches where students sit in rows facing only the teacher. The set up of the schoolroom demonstrates two different models of instruction and assumptions about where and how learning occurs. However, even though there was a unique seating arrangement for the young children, the instructional methods of the teacher did not change from one group to another.

Young children have the opportunity to learn what it means to be in school. The Standard I students all faced the front of the classroom with five to six students on each bench with little room between them. The Standard I benches were connected to a ledge, which was a narrow piece of wood that functioned as a place to put their papers on and write. All of the desks, tables, and other carpentry in the schoolhouse were made locally. Boys and girls in both grades could sit together but usually boys sat with boys and girls with girls. The students sat where they chose; there was no assigned seating. When the teacher called the students inside, they would run to their seats, the younger ones giggling and talking. The teacher would then stand at the front of the classroom and students would immediately fall silent.

Young children have the opportunity to learn that the location and position of the teacher reinforces his authority; he chose to stay in the front of the classroom but kept a watchful eye on the students in all parts of the room. Students from different sections can be sitting an arm's reach away from each other but have to wait their turn for instruction time. I want to point out that young children, such as four- and five-year-olds, sit quietly in chairs with no task to complete while they wait. This also demonstrates the significance of the teacher's authority in the classroom.

The first time I walked into the Ndogo school, I saw many typical features of schools I had been in many places. I have been in numerous schools in the US, Mexico, and Europe. In my past experiences, desks or tables were organized in a uniform fashion and students generally faced a certain direction. The teacher was the focal point of instruction periods whether s/he is sitting at her/his desk or standing at a black or white board. The physical position of the teacher indicated the importance of their role in the instruction and learning processes. These are similarities I observed between the way school was organized in rural Tanzania, in a wealthy school in Bloomfield, Michigan, and in a poor school in inner city Phoenix. The desks may be new or old but the eyes of the students are intended to face the teacher. However, I have not seen such a hybrid model of the school layout such as in the Ndogo school with round tables to one side and rows of benches on the other side. The arrangement of the desks creates opportunities to learn behaviors of being in school such as attention to the teacher as the

center of the instruction and focus on individual work behaviors. Notice that while collaboration is not encouraged, there are collective opportunities to learn due to the set up of the classroom and the teacher instructing the whole class (pre-primary and primary respectively) and not differentiating his instruction

In addition to the classroom, the other place where there are opportunities to learn are in the grounds outside and around the schoolhouse. The Ndogo schoolroom was a stark contrast to the places outside of school where young children have opportunities to learn different knowledge and skills. Instruction occurs in the classroom. Free time took place midway through the school day. The young children leave their desks and tables and go outside the schoolhouse to sit or stand around in the schoolyard. They talk and discuss things about school and life.

Attending school also requires responsibilities such as cleaning and gardening. The teacher also told students to sweep the grounds in the front of the schoolhouse (which they did). Students were also responsible for cultivating the school garden. I observed this before and during school hours. There is also a rudimentary kitchen, consisting of a two-sided lean-to and three stones to cook a pot on, and a small school garden that the young children are required to work in. These activities in these places are considered work by the parents and teacher, not a site for instruction or an opportunity for students to learn. The school curriculum does not state that learning does or does not occur outside the classroom but there is an omission of the outdoors or

the physical environment of the area in the students learning process or teacher's instruction.

The grounds at the schoolhouse in Ndogo provide young children with the formal opportunity to learn that valuable knowledge is found while sitting, receiving instruction from the teacher. The teacher said that, "School occurs inside the classroom. What the children do outside the classroom in the grounds is their choice." Students are not encouraged to play or organize games. If they do so it was on their own volition. I observed that young children did not create toys or games during free time but rather talked and waited for the instruction to resume.

One exception is the case before the free time officially began when the teacher organized a short lesson on the subject of sports and personality. He organized a game for the older boys, but this left out the girls and young children. The teacher told the older boys to divide themselves into two teams to play an organized sport. The girls, however, were not included in the sport and were left to play by themselves. Most of the girls arranged themselves on fallen tree logs around the perimeter of the schoolyard to talk and watch the boys. It brings up the question why do older boys need to know the skills or knowledge demonstrated in the activity and not the other students?

In sum, the organization of the classroom reinforces the importance of the individual and the authority of the teacher with lessons occurring in seats, whether tables or benches, set in rows, facing the teacher at the front of the classroom, listening

quietly, and repeating or copying exercises the teacher writes on the blackboard. Obedience is stressed when young children are not allowed to stand up unless they need to use the toilet or unless it is time to leave the classroom. They do not work in groups or create things from scratch. Lessons are not organized in multiple settings. The school grounds outside the classroom are used mainly for the older boys to play organized sports. Otherwise, the school grounds or any other outdoor spaces are not included in the academic curriculum. In all, opportunities to learn occur in very few places.

Knowledge Young Children Have The Opportunity to Learn

Tanzania had a national curriculum since the beginning of government schools in 1967, when Tanzania became independent from Britain and Julius Nyerere took over the leadership of the country. Nyerere provided a vision for education, which became a landmark direction in future government education plans. He published these ideas in a paper called "Education for Self Reliance" in 1967. The premise of this work is that "Education, whether it be formal or informal, has a purpose" (Nyerere, 1967, p. 382). Nyerere set out to provide a framework for thinking about post-colonial formal education, because he argued that colonial education under Britain and Germany was "motivated by a desire to inculcate the values of the colonial society and to train individuals for the service of the colonial state" (p. 384). He wrote that this type of

education perpetuated the colonial state, where the government prepared bureaucrats and religious officials propagated their religion. However, over 45 years later, many scholars today argue that the education system in Tanzania is still closely tied to the colonial system and it is set up to fail many of the students it is meant to serve (Towse, Kent, Osaki, & Kirua, 2002; Tedre, Bangu, & Nyagava, 2009).

Young children in Tanzania may have the opportunity to attend formal pre-primary or primary school attend government-run schools or in some few cases, private schools. Most private pre-primary schools are located in dense urban areas. In Mwenye and the surrounding areas there are no private schools that teach the same content as the government-run schools. The Madrasa schools focus on the recitation of the Qur'an and the principles and tenets of Islam (Anderson, 2002); however, these schools do not resemble the government schools, which place reading, writing, and arithmetic at the center of their curriculum.

The 2005 Tanzania national pre-primary curriculum is called a syllabus. There is a syllabus for each grade that includes the subjects and objectives to be covered in that grade. According to the pre-primary syllabus, there are six learning activities or school subjects. The Tanzania National Curriculum for pre-primary school states the following six objectives for this grade:

1. To encourage and promote the overall personality development of the child, that is his or her physical, mental, moral and social characteristics.

2. To identify children with abnormal patterns of development or education potentials and device special programmes for them.
3. To mould the character of the child and enable him/her to acquire acceptable norms of social conduct and behaviour.
4. To help the child acquire, appreciate, respect and develop pride for the family, his/her cultural background, moral values, customs and traditions, as well as national ethic and identity.
5. To provide the child with opportunities to acquire and develop communication, numerical and manipulative skills.
6. To prepare the child for primary school education

Source: Tanzania Ministry of Education and Vocational training (MoEVT, 2005. p. iv).

Curriculum can be implemented in multiple ways. Officially, all six of the national curriculum objectives and subjects are intended to be incorporated into the Ndogo classroom instruction time but in praxis certain ones took priority and others omitted; the teacher was only able to address some of the subjects. School in Ndogo is about opportunities to learn knowledge and skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and it is also includes opportunities to learn how to be in school and to develop social skills. In this section, I employ the framework of the six subjects in the Tanzania national government pre-primary school syllabus to better understand the

opportunities that young children have to learn knowledge and skills within the Ndogo school.

Opportunities to learn personality development

The first pre-primary objective in the national curriculum is, "To encourage and promote the overall personality development of the child, that is his or her physical, mental, moral and social characteristics" (MoEVT, 2005, p. iv). This includes opportunity for young children to learn social and interpersonal knowledge and skills.

In the opening example to this chapter, the Ndogo teacher provides male students the opportunity to learn or observe social skills through teaching sports. The teacher illustrated the Tanzanian national curriculum's subject of personality and sports with the example of teaching cooperation through organized sport, as well as teaching self-confidence. He told me, "It helps them [students] develop a healthy body. Another skill is self-regulation and emotional control that can be learned through a soccer game, jumping, or running." These skills are a part of school values and aid students in knowing how to relate to other people in the school setting. However, the teacher only targeted certain students, such as older boys, to work on these subjects, girls and younger students observed but were omitted from direct learning of this activity/ objective.

The teacher said that he taught students how to stand in rows, how to raise their hand, and how to wait their turn. The teacher told me he felt that young children do not learn these things at home, such as how to take turns, wait for an answer, or share objects, thus it is very important that he teach these skills at school. However, when I asked parents what they teach their children, parents said it was important for them at home to instruct young children in skills such as sharing and taking turns. The teacher viewed there is a deficit at home. He said to me, "Parents do not take time at home to teach young children how to relate to other young children." Thus, one of the functions of school, the teacher said, "was to fill a gap for young children that parents cannot or will not."

Opportunities for all children to learn in school

The second pre-primary objective in the national curriculum is, "To identify children with abnormal patterns of development or education potentials and device special programmes for them" (MoEVT, 2005, p. iv). This language denotes an inclusion of all children in the pre-primary classroom. In Ndogo and the surrounding community, people articulated that not everyone could be a student. For instance, if a child is needed in the field, s/he does not go to school. In the case that a child has a disability, either physical or mental, s/he is not sent to school. Bakari, a father, told me that "Some parents take their disabled child to school, but the majority hide them at

home so that they cannot be seen, because it is a shame to the family." People in the village said that young children with disabilities are considered not to need knowledge and skills acquired in school. Parents said that students who lack ability to memorize and recite are considered disabled and are often excluded from the educational system. Although this is an educational objective, accommodations for disabilities and different learning styles are not prevalent in Tanzania (Aldersey, 2012). Schools such as Ndogo are not equipped to assist young children with disabilities and therefore these young children do not have access to formal education. Thus, formal opportunities to learn in school are available to children who are allowed to attend and who can perform the tasks the schoolteacher required of them.

Opportunities to learn character and acceptable social norms

The third pre-primary objective in the national curriculum is, "To mould the character of the child and enable him/her to acquire acceptable norms of social conduct and behaviour" (MoEVT, 2005, p. iv). A central opportunity for young children to learn in school is the social and interpersonal aspect of the school curriculum in character development. A father of two young children at the Ndogo school, Hassan, echoed this when he said, "At school young children must learn to study, to read, and respect their teacher and other people." Young children have the opportunity to learn acceptable social norms.

The teacher shifted the topic away from letter recognition and provided a five-minute talk on what he called "character development." He talked about the importance of students staying in the their seats and sitting quiet and still. The teacher said when it was time to go outside, students should show restraint and not run for the outdoors but instead walk in a single-file-line to go outside. The students sat very still and then the teacher said they could be excused to go outside. The young children left the classroom in lines, heeding the teacher's instructions.

In the Ndogo school, the teacher focuses instruction on appropriate behaviors centered mainly instructing students to respect the teacher. Listening, repeating, and complying are key concepts reinforced in the classroom community. The teacher gave an example when he said, "When you tell a child that they need to do as they are told in order to learn in school, you are teaching them to have good character." The social distance between the teacher and student solidifies the teacher's authority and commanded compliance from students. The social and interpersonal experiences the teacher described in school places respect as the most valuable behavior in school. This did not allow for student input or co-construction of knowledge in the curriculum or instruction.

Opportunities to learn about oneself

The fourth pre-primary objective in the national curriculum is, "To help the child acquire, appreciate, respect and develop pride for the family, his/her cultural background, moral values, customs and traditions, as well as national ethnic and identity" (MoEVT, 2005, p. iv). In some societies, the formal education of young children is considered an extension of the home, while in others, formal education is considered a separate universe from home life (Peak, 1991). In Ndogo and the surrounding villages, people articulated that school is a different world away from the home and the community. Abdullah said, "Parents are the foundation for young children because they spend a lot of time with the child in comparison with the teachers. The parent teaches things that the child does not get in school." Another parent, Mariam said, "Children think if they go to school they can get a job but that never happens. They learn different things at home and at school."

Young children have the opportunity to learn that schooling in Ndogo was perceived as *separate* from the learning at home rather than as a continuation of the learning process young children were involved in at home. The opportunities to learn in school and at home have very different purposes. Both seek to socialize young children but emphasize different aspects. There is a lot of literature in the global south that says that schooling is preparing students to leave their villages. Mussa went on to tell me that people who go to school are the ones that hope they can leave the village.

However, Mussa said, "School does not help you really leave. It is something that does not happen."

Parents in Ndogo, such as Mussa, expressed that "School is necessary so that our young children can gain the skills and knowledge to sell their crops in the villages outside of Ndogo." In order to stay in the community and do well in farming, children need to know how to read, write, subtract, and add. Parents articulated they could not provide their young children with the same set of skills and knowledge that school does. For example, parents articulated that their young children learn Kiswahili and are more advanced in math than they can complete. Somoye said "Young children learn how to be in school. If a child goes to school then they might be able to have a better life." I asked Somoye what would be better about their life and she said, "They will be able to be successful in their cultivation."

As the previous chapter demonstrated, parents articulated that what young children should learn at home was how to function within the local community in Ndogo and how to behave with other people. This concept was reiterated in Tobin's (2005) work in inner city Phoenix. Tobin wrote that immigrant parents of young children in preschool believed that the role of the school was *enseñar*, which means in Spanish "to point out or show" and the responsibility of the family was *educar*, which is "to raise or bring up" (p. 432). As I stated previously, in Ndogo, the family was viewed as the first teacher of a young child. There was no indication that young children have

the opportunity to learn about or support their ethnic or family background in the formal school; rather, this was the role that the family took.

Opportunities to learn the 3R's

The fifth pre-primary objective in the national curriculum is, "To provide the child with opportunities to acquire and develop communication, numerical and manipulative skills" (MoEVT, 2005, p. iv). Formal schooling in Tanzania provides students with instruction about knowledge and skills such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. I observed the teacher instructing students' lessons on reading, writing, and math. The scope of academic knowledge reflected in the primary school curriculum includes literacy, numeracy, and life skills. Esha (from the opening scenario) and the other students in Ndogo have the opportunity to learn how to read and write Kiswahili and how to perform math problems such as addition and subtraction. The teacher also mentioned teaching science but it was mainly in reference to learning shapes and colors.

Officially, the national curriculum lists six objectives and six formal subjects to be covered in pre-primary school. These are reflected in published preschool objectives and curriculum, particularly influenced by the US. I examined published preschool curriculum and interviewed preschool providers in the US. I asked a handful of preschool teachers to examine Tanzania's national curriculum and each person in the US said that the curriculum was comparable to the objectives and themes they covered

in their classrooms. It is important to notice that the focus of pre-primary school is similar to the preschool focus of curriculum from the US. However, it was clear from my observations and from what the teacher told me that only certain subjects and objectives are given priority in the Ndogo school. The teacher placed emphasis on writing numbers, letters, and shapes, and identifying letter names in the pre-primary subjects. He admitted that he was only able to cover three of the subjects with students. The teacher attributed this to the number of students and lack of time and resources available to him.

The teacher defined his priorities in pre-primary school instruction as "the 3Rs" [3] (reading, writing, and arithmetic). The teacher said his goal for the pre-primary and Standard I students was to first teach the letter names of the alphabet—A, B, Cs—including the vowels in Swahili which uses the same Latin letter system as English, to use materials to teach shapes, and to teach how to write the numbers one through ten. When asked what he thought was the most important thing to teach young children in formal education in the pre-primary school, he replied, "vowels." He told me he focuses on the names of the letters rather than the sounds. (The national curriculum in Tanzania does provide instruction in phonics.) The second most important thing the teacher listed was writing each letter in the alphabet. The teacher's third priority was math, including how to count and write from 1 to 10 in the Arabic numeral system. The fourth

[3] "The 3R's" was the only phrase that people used in Ndogo that came from English. An elder in the community said that it came from the time of the British.

most important, the teacher said, was science, which involved content he defined as recognizing shapes from pictures and creating shapes through working with puzzles.

Parents and community members in Ndogo supported the knowledge and skills content of school. Kurwa, one of the fathers who, at that time, had one son in the Ndogo school, and a daughter who would go to the Ndogo school in another year, said his priorities for his young children in pre-primary school were to learn how to:

1. "Read and write Kiswahili;
2. Do arithmetic, including counting and simple calculations;
3. Work in school (understand how to operate in the system);
4. Respect teachers, elders, and old people, at school and at home."

People in Ndogo and the surrounding villages said that they wanted school to teach their young children the "3R's" – reading and writing Kiswahili and arithmetic. These were mentioned in each interview as important content for the early years. In the interviews with parents, the teacher, and community members, people used the phrase "the 3R's" to describe what young children should learn in school. This was a familiar phrase for me and was used in a literal translation by the people in this community placing reading, writing, and arithmetic in the same context.

Opportunities to learn about schooling

The sixth pre-primary objective in the national curriculum is, "To prepare the child for primary school education" (MoEVT, 2005, p. iv). The premise of pre-primary school in Ndogo is learning skills and knowledge to be in *school*, not necessarily learning what young children need to know for *life*. Young children have the opportunity to learn about the rules and function of school. The teacher stated that young children have the opportunity to learn in school how to not fight, to take turns, and to share. The Ndogo teacher said, "The primary students who attended pre-primary school are better able to obey teacher's directions and function in the school setting."

In formal schooling, there is a strong emphasis on norms for how to act in school. In an earlier example, the teacher expressed that sitting still and leaving the classroom in a single-file line are acceptable behaviors in formal schooling. The teacher worked diligently to reinforce skills about how to work in school and how to operate in the classroom. The teacher's instructed young children how to go to school. The teachers said, "Students need to be able to do things such as sit still, raise hands before speaking, and be quiet." In order to stay in school, children need to learn to learn how to be students.

Specifically, pre-primary school stated intent is to prepare young children to attend primary school. An example is the way young children learned how to raise their

hand and wait to be recognized by the teacher before they ask a question. The pre-primary and primary students are in the same room right next to each other, and pre-primary students have to wait quietly while they watch the Standard I students receive instruction. There are many opportunities for the young children to learn through observing the primary students' instruction. The students were very quiet when the teacher was in the room, and even when he left the room. They were expected to be doing the work that he gave them to do earlier during his instruction. Only once there was a rustle among the students, and the teacher said, "Why are you making noise? What is the matter?" No one answered, but they became quiet again. Notice here how the content students are exposed to includes unwritten rules about how to behave or operate in formal schooling. Part of this is overly stated in the curriculum objectives and instruction time in the classroom. Other aspects are not as obvious and are part of the unwritten curriculum in school and are discussed further in the next chapter.

Bakri, a father, said, "Those parents that take nursery school seriously are those that were sent to school themselves. If I send him [Bakri's son] to pre-primary school, it will prepare him well to perform better at the primary school level." Another father, Abdullah, who sends his young children to the Ndogo school, said, "The difference between young children that are sent to pre-primary school and others who go straight to Standard I is that the pre-primary students have an advantage because they understand earlier how to behave in school and it is also much easier for them to read."

Abdullah talked about how students needed to learn how to be in school. He went on to say, "The reason to send young children to pre-primary school is so they learn how to study." Parents were worried that young children would not learn how to be in school if they stayed home all of the time.

The teacher articulated to me that, "The purpose of pre-primary education is to learn how to read, and to learn social, emotional, and physical skills that will prepare the students for primary school." I asked one of the younger boys, five-year-old Sefu who was left behind from joining the sports lesson, what he enjoyed or disliked about school. Sefu said, "At school, I like to write and I sweep the ground with other students at school. I do not dislike anything at school." Whenever I saw him, he had a lot of energy for the work he was doing in school. In addition to Sefu learning how to read and write Kiswahili, he, with the other classmates, also studied numbers and addition and subtraction problems as a part of the national curriculum. Letter identification, how to write letters, and how to write numbers were the main topics of the lessons I observed.

The type of capital that young children gain from this government school is different from what a student might take away, for instance, from a Montessori school. It is a particular type of education that instructs young children how to read and write and how to sit still and raise their hand. Notice that the academic subjects included in the Ndogo school are the basic building blocks of how to read, write, and do math

problems. However the teacher also included material on how students should behave in the formal school setting, such as rules for behaving in the classroom and rules on setting-appropriate interpersonal and social skills. These themes correspond to the national government's pre-primary school objectives.

Opportunities to learn: the hidden and null curriculums

In this chapter I described what young children have the opportunity to learn from the national curriculum and what is presented in the Ndogo classroom. As I mentioned previously, the premise of pre-primary school in Ndogo is learning skills and knowledge to prepare young children to attend primary school, such as the way young children learned how to raise their hand and wait to be recognized by the teacher before they ask a question. Other opportunities to learn in school are not as obvious and include the unwritten or hidden curriculum and the null curriculum, which is what is omitted or rejected from the school curriculum.

Phillip Jackson's (1968) concept about hidden curriculum refers to what young children have the opportunity to learn that is not overtly stated, but rather are subtle and sometimes invisible aspects and expectations in the learning process and environment (Kentli, 2009). For instance, in the Ndogo school, parents and the teacher said that young children have the opportunity to learn that valuable knowledge, such as math and reading, can be found while sitting, receiving instruction from the teacher.

Another scholar, Robert Dreeben (1967), referred to hidden curriculum as the socialization that takes place in the classroom. The hidden curriculum is how students learn to adapt their behavior. An example from the Ndogo school, this takes place when the teacher reprimands or praises young children they have the opportunity to learn for instance that the teacher does not reprimand them when they are quiet. Another example of the hidden curriculum, in the Ndogo school, is the structure and practices of the classroom, such as students waiting their turn for the teacher's instruction, which reinforces the teacher's authority.

Another facet of the hidden curriculum in the Ndogo school is the organization of the physical space of the classroom. The location of the teacher, maintaining his position at the front of the classroom at all times, sends a message of his authority but it is not overtly stated. Opportunities to learn in the Ndogo formal schooling occurred at desks with instruction from the teacher to the students. Interactions between the teacher and students were defined by social distance and sent a message that the teacher holds the key to knowledge, and that the young children must learn from him.

Another aspect of young children's opportunities to learn in school is a null curriculum. This is what is excluded or outright rejected from school time or instruction. Elliot Eisner (1985, 1994) originally wrote about null curriculum, and stated that it is what schools "neglect to teach" (p. 103). The Ndogo school neglected and ignored that young children are becoming members of a collective society. The family

and the community wanted and expected to prepare young children for a communal life. At home and in the community there were shared goals and work that young children learned, such as fetching water, caring for themselves and younger children, and spirituality. However, formal schooling reinforced an individualistic learning process. Young children were not encouraged to work together. In the Ndogo school, children are held to a standard of individual learning and punished for collaborating. Working together was seen as cheating.

The null curriculum also includes what is intentionally or unintentionally excluded from the curriculum, such as the local language Kimwera or sex education, which is central to the young children's initiation rite into Mwera community. Additionally, the teacher discourages young children from participating in the initiation rite. What is omitted from school is the lack of acknowledgment of the Mwera language and their cultural practices. Interestingly, a government official stated to me that the people of Ndogo only spoke Kiswahili. This is not what I found. The Mwera people in Ndogo spoke only the Mwera language Kimwera with one another.

Knowledge and skills young children in Ndogo and the surrounding villages have the opportunity to learn in school, is connected with very little of the local knowledge, the holistic and spiritual aspects and ways of learning and of learning life. In this way, the local knowledge is omitted. An example of this, students in Ndogo were working on number identification on the chalkboard in the front of the room. The

teacher told the Standard I students to find the missing numbers with an abacus (one shared between four to five children) and he told the pre-primary students to use a chalkboard to practice writing numbers one through ten. This illustrates the way that young children are taken out of their "real" world, or their experiences, to learn things they would also learn by counting stones while they played a game. Such as they do outside of school. The hidden and null curriculum provides opportunities for young children to learn what is considered valuable knowledge within the school.

Summary

In this chapter, I focused on formal opportunities for young children to learn. I examined the pedagogies, with whom, where, and what young children have opportunities to learn knowledge and skills in the Ndogo school. I described the formal pre-primary educational context of young children in Ndogo from interviews with students, parents, community members, and the teacher in Ndogo. I posed parallel questions as the ones I asked from the previous chapter on informal education to understand better across sites what is happening in and out of school.

I explored opportunities to learn about pedagogy, people, places, and knowledge and skills in the school classroom. Examining across sections, young children have opportunities to learn how to read, write, add, and subtract as well as other aspects of the national curriculum in the school classroom. This raises questions about what

young children have the opportunity to learn in and out of school. A pattern I observed about learning in school is that it is in a singular modality: one legitimate teacher, one location to learn, and a narrow formal curriculum.

The Ndogo school is required to use the national curriculum. However, it is not specifically influenced by the national curriculum as evidenced by the schoolteacher's admission that he does not have a copy of the curriculum, he does not write lesson plan, and he was not formally trained as a teacher. When I explored how opportunities to learn are presented in the Ndogo school, I discovered lessons in the school did not use textbooks or other types of books, and other types of instructional materials were scarce at the Ndogo school. Time in the classroom is limited to a few hours in a single day and sometimes the teacher does not show up to school. There is free time to play outside before and after the first lesson. The students in pre-primary spent approximately one hour in school. For roughly the whole hour of unbroken instruction time, young children sit quietly at their tables doing some work and other times waiting for the teacher. After the first period of the day the pre-primary students go home and the Standard I students sit for another hour-long lesson.

Opportunities to learn in formal schooling occurred at desks with instruction from the teacher to the students. The organization of the physical space of the classroom, the location of the teacher maintained his position during instruction at the front of the classroom and when he paced the room while students copied the material

from the board, sends a message of his authority not overtly stated. Interactions between the teacher and students provide opportunities for the young children to learn social distance and the message that the teacher holds the key to knowledge, and that the young children learn from him. Young children also have the opportunity to learn that school occurs in a singular modality. In the next chapter, I examine opportunities for young children to learn between the home and the school.

CHAPTER 6

BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL: OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN LANGUAGE

Introduction

The two preceding chapters demonstrated the diverse knowledge and skills young children have the opportunity to learn in the home and community and in the Ndogo school classroom. The relationship between informal and formal learning is both important and multifaceted. This chapter addresses language learning as an example of the intertwining of the young children's formal and informal opportunities to learn in the home, the community, and in the school. I examine young children's opportunities to learn language in order to understand how the role of languages is approached across settings.

I chose language as the focus of this chapter to examine together formal and informal opportunities to learn because Tanzania has a complex multilingual history. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1994) advocated that "The choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to peoples' definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe" (p. 4). Language learning is not isolated and it is influenced by many factors over time. It is significant which languages are used in Ndogo. There are significant formal and informal opportunities to learn languages in both the home and the school.

In this chapter, the connection between home and community and school draws on chapters 4 and 5. On the surface, it seems that parents and the teacher are the main participants in young children's opportunities to learn. However, as the complexities of these opportunities to learn converge, it becomes evident that parents and the teacher are not the only people influencing young children's opportunities to learn. As discussed in chapter 1, the national government and global donors (International NGOs) may not always be physically in Ndogo but their influence on opportunities for young children to learn is present.

I also chose to discuss language because it emerged as a strong theme among all of my interviews, either as the topic of conversation or because of the choice of language used during interviews. As I looked across the data, the use of Kiswahili language was an issue that both the school and the home supported. However, although English is one of the official languages of Tanzania, it is not available to learn but is nonetheless used by government officials and international NGOs in Ndogo. Kimwera, the local language, is passed down from generation to generation and is taught in and used in the home and the community but is omitted in the school curriculum and in my time in the school, it was not spoken in the school, even casually.

First, I examine a brief history of Tanzania's official languages. Then I address what are the languages in Ndogo in both the school and the home and describe the opportunities for young children to learn languages. In Ndogo and surrounding

villages, I sought to understand who speaks which language, and when and where. I wanted to uncover how people approach language learning and how that pertains to young children. I describe how, over time, parents made changes about their language use and opportunities for young children's language learning use because of the changing nature of the national government. I discuss how parents postpone teaching the local language, Kimwera, and teach Kiswahili first.

Brief overview of Tanzania's official languages

I open with the history of languages in Tanzania and begin this with a discussion of the official national languages in Tanzania: Kiswahili and English. Tanzania has a complex and multilingual history. Kiswahili is widely spoken across Tanzania. It is the language of instruction in primary school and it is used for business. English is used as the language of instruction in secondary schools as well as in the government. Historically, various national and colonial leaders have enforced language acquisition, such as Kiswahili and/or English, with overlapping purposes such as to create national unity and/or domination.

Kiswahili

Kiswahili has long been the language of trade and communication along the coast of eastern Africa. The word *swahili* has evolved and was used by Arabic speakers

to mean coastal people. In Swahili, "ki" is placed before the name of each people group's language such as Kiswahili or Kimwera. "Wa" is placed before the name of each people group. The Waswahili people groups lived along the coast and Arabs traveled in and out of the coastal areas of Tanganyika (what Tanzania was called before it joined with Zanzibar in 1964) and the surrounding areas beginning in the 700's (AD). Kiswahili contains many Arabic words because the people interacted and traded with the Arabs, many of who were from the area of Oman. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive in the area, at the end of the fifteenth century, but they did not move inland from the coast. Kiswahili has adapted some words from Portuguese such as *meza,* which means table.

Kiswahili was the language of governance across Tanganyika during the German occupation of the country from 1886 to 1921. As one result of Germany's defeat in World War I, the British acquired Tanganyika as a territory in 1921. The Kiswahili language also integrated words from German and English and Hindi, because of the large numbers of people the British transported from India to Tanzania to work as bureaucrats. The British continued to use Kiswahili but also instituted English as the language of higher education, secondary school, and the government. By 1961, Tanganyika became independent from Britain and both English and Kiswahili became official national languages at that time.

Then Tanganyika joined with Zanzibar to make Tanzania under Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania. The government's social policies enacted by Nyerere were called *Ujamaa* (see above in Chapter 2). This is a Kiswahili word meaning "unify." It was instituted in 1964 and was a program that invested in the social services of education, medical clinics, and access to water in designated villages, referred to as *Ujamaa* villages. "Operation *Vijiji*," as part of the *Ujamaa* policy, forced farmers to move from their homes to the designated *Ujamaa* villages. One result of the forced migration was the increased fluency in Kiswahili for those affected people. Previous to Operation *Vijiji*, people who were not involved in government did not know or only knew a little Kiswahili and commonly only spoke the language in their local community, such as Kimwera in Ndogo. Because education was a concentrated focus of Nyerere's Operation *Vijiji* and the language of instruction was Kiswahili, young children at that time were forced to become rapidly fluent in Kiswahili by immersion.

English

Historically, English was the language of the colonizers of Tanzania. Today it is remains an official language of Tanzania alongside Kiswahili, and is used in some government and education sectors. English is the language of secondary school instruction and textbooks. In order to progress through each secondary grade a student must have adequate English language skills. While teachers are required to teach

secondary school in English, this is not always accomplished. Brigit Brock-Utne (2007), a language scholar, conducted studies in Tanzania to examine the use of English and Kiswahili in the classroom. She concluded that using English, a foreign language for most people in Tanzania, as the language of instruction in the secondary classrooms is unproductive because the students and teachers did not obtain enough proficiency. In an earlier study, Brock-Utne (2002) said, "Levels of English were too low in most schools for effective learning to take place" (p. 4). Still, the ability to advance in the Tanzanian educational system is dependent on English. Not only do students need to understand English, they need to comprehend written texts and work at an academic level in English (Rose, 2004). The use of English in secondary schools presents an opportunity for some children to learn and advance, but not for others if they do not learn English. As national languages, English and Kiswahili are the language of instruction in Tanzania formal schooling.

Language in Ndogo

English

English is the main language used in higher education, the Tanzanian government, and NGOs; however English does not have the same significance in Ndogo because people in this area do not speak it and have not advanced to secondary levels of school education. English language skills are not available for the students in

the Ndogo school to learn. In my multiple times in the Ndogo area, I did not meet or hear of anyone from the area who had passed the Standard VII exam. One teacher from Mwenye primary school told me, through my interpreter, that people did not progress to secondary school because they lacked the required English language skills. The teachers themselves are not proficient in speaking or comprehending conversational English, including the schoolteacher in Ndogo. Not having the English language skills themselves makes it difficult for teachers to teach their students well. The national school curriculum is written in English, even for pre- and primary school, though it is not the language of instruction for younger children. This was a challenge for teachers at all school levels.

In 2011, The *African Press* argued that "the current [education] system [in Tanzania] precludes many students from becoming fluent in English and so allows elitism to continue" (p. 2). The article went on to describe that this system was left over from the colonial era. Brock-Utne (2002) strongly concluded from her work in Tanzania that "The strengthening of the ex-colonial languages is of no help to the masses of Africans but functions as a means of separating the African elites from the masses of Africans" (p. 5). This is clearly the case in Ndogo. English is not available to learn in the Ndogo area due to the low levels of education in the community. However, without English skills or opportunities to learn English the people in the community could not progress in school and so can only gain a limited formal education.

The use of English by national government officials and international NGOs creates a communication barrier with the local people. The global donor organizations provided funding for the school building and the furnishing of the school classroom. They also provided training opportunities for the teacher and remain in continuous supervision of the schooling project. In Ndogo, the international donors cannot match the school's and family's influence on young children. However, their presence cannot be ignored. The global influences in a place like Ndogo echoes issues associated with the colonialism of the past, in particular, non-contextualized solutions applied to local situations. An example is the creation of the pre-primary school instead of the primary school as requested by parents and the community.

Upon further examination, the stance of the government and the NGOs generally align because they both support formal education for young children in the Kiswahili language. The government-stated goal of education is articulated, at least to the public, as national unity. The national government stresses the use of Kiswahili for national unity and the language of instruction in the school is therefore Kiswahili. The other 128 languages spoken in Tanzania do not have a place outside local communities (Lewis, 2009).

Kiswahili

Young children have the opportunity to learn that Kiswahili is the language of opportunity. Kiswahili is spoken in official capacities, such as in the government, business, and schools. People from the Ndogo community reported that today Kiswahili is largely spoken as the language for buying and selling goods in towns, such as in Mwenye, the ward capital for the Ndogo community and in Lindi Town, the regional capital of the area. Kurwa, a father said, "The hope of the parents here is that our children will learn Kiswahili and have advantages and opportunities in life." Parents felt if their children did not learn to speak Kiswahili they would not be able to operate in the wider Tanzanian society. For instance, if they had a surplus of crops to sell, they would have to take it to Mwenye and find someone to buy it, and that would require Kiswahili language skills. Many of the parents in this village are the first or second generation to speak Kiswahili fluently. Progressively, over the past three generations, the people in Ndogo have become more proficient bilingually. Today's grandparents were the first generation of people who had broader access to formal education and were required by the government to learn Kiswahili. During their life, Kiswahili was the language of school and became the language of commerce outside their tight-knit local community.

Kiswahili is the language of the Ndogo school and has been of primary school nationally since the time of Nyerere. I interviewed families who were forced to move to

the *Ujamaa* villages, in particular to Mwenye. Sikudhani, a mother of older children, told me, "In Nachingwea [a nearby town], some children can speak both Kimwera and Kiswahili, but these are the ones that went to school. Children who speak only Kimwera did not go to school." Her parents, who had been moved to an *Ujamaa* village, were able to study through Standard IV and were able to speak both languages; however, her grandparents did not go to school and spoke only Kimwera. Haji, a father of young children, was also affected by the *Ujamaa* policies. He said, "My parents were fully bilingual and went to school up through Standard IV." At the time of Haji and Sikudhani's parents, school in the villages was only offered through Standard IV level.

Language serves a purpose beyond being merely a subject in the Ndogo school. Kiswahili is the only language of instruction in Tanzanian primary school. Kiswahili listening and oral competence is only a portion of what a child learns in school about language. The language used in school is not only about instruction; it also reflects a political decision to create a Tanzanian identity. The way that Kiswahili became the dominant language in Tanzania and the omission of local languages which are spoken in the home and the community, such as Kimwera spoken in the Mwera people group, reflects that the government places a higher value on Kiswahili as a unifying factor than it places on home languages.

Kimwera

Most communities and villages in Tanzania belong to people groups each with their own language. There are 126 unique languages currently spoken in Tanzania (PEDP, 2012). Local languages are often a child's first language in many parts of Tanzania. Kimwera, the language of the Mwera people group, is one of the local languages spoken in Mwenye and it is the primary language spoken in Ndogo and for miles around the surrounding Mwera villages. After I became aware of how prevalent was the use of Kimwera, I began to ask each person I spoke with which language they used and when. I discovered that all of the people I spoke to who were teenagers or older, spoke Kimwera with some proficiency. Kimwera is an oral language, which according to the people I interviewed, has not been written, hence there are no texts in the Kimwera language. The Mwera language, Kimwera, and Mwera traditions are not documented and are generationally transmitted from one person to the next.

The use of the Kimwera language is a central element of being Mwera. Kimwera, the Mwera language, is considered an important component to pass on to the next generation. There is now concern among the people in Ndogo that young children will become less and less proficient in Kimwera because of the need for them to know and use Kiswahili. An elder, Hamis, said that President Nyerere's effort to unify the country led to devaluing local traditions, in particular local languages. Hamis said, "So many people [in Tanzania] are not proud to say that 'I am from a people group' because there

are more than one hundred and twenty people groups in Tanzania. The legacy from the government is that people just say I am Tanzania. There is a struggle to identify as Mwera in a 'Kiswahili world.'" The "Kiswahili world" was a common phrase people used in our interviews to refer to the world outside the Mwera people group.

People in the villages told me that it was only a couple of generations ago that Kiswahili was introduced as a common or required language by the government to the Mwera people. Older generations were immersed in Kimwera as their first language and rarely heard Kiswahili until they started interacting with wider circles outside their community. The eldest man in the village, Lumbwi, told me, "My first language is Kimwera. I learned it from my mama and baba [father]. I was twelve or thirteen before I began speaking in Kiswahili. I learned it from the wider community. I know Kimwera better than Kiswahili because it was my first language." But he noted that is not the case today. Parents now teach their children Kimwera as the second language and Kiswahili as the first language. Many children can speak both languages but instructing children in Kiswahili takes precedence over learning Kimwera. Until a child is between the ages of ten and thirteen, they are only spoken to in Kiswahili, even though everyone in the home and community uses Kimwera. It is significant to note that the Tanzanian government actively devalues the use of languages such as Kimwera in favor of Kiswahili to promote national cohesion. This is communicated by excluding local languages from government and schools.

Young children's opportunities to learn language

Language learning is an important concept to examine because it is a key element in children's everyday lives and their later opportunities to learn. Young children in Ndogo have the opportunity to learn that Kimwera is the language of the community. In part, they learn this through experience. For example, Abdullah, a middle-aged man married to Sikudhani, speaks Kimwera well. It was the first language he learned at home and in the community. He learned Kiswahili only in school. He is also from a generation affected by *Ujamaa* policies. He started school when he was ten years old and his family was forced from the countryside into Mwenye. He finished Standard VII with Kiswahili as the language of instruction. Abdullah's wife, Sikudshani, whom I quoted earlier, is from nearby Nachingwea, and started school when she was eight years old. She only went through Standard IV. Her mother needed her help at home, so even though the school was available, she was not chosen by her family to attend. Thus, Kimwera is her primary language. Young children learn Kimwera from listening to their parents speak to each other and later from instruction at home. Kiswahili is learned at home and school.

Many people said they learned Kimwera from their grandparents or parents, who were not able to speak Kiswahili or had limited proficiency in Kiswahili. Another consideration in language fluency was the geographic location of the family home. The

people I interviewed mentioned this as a factor in how predominant Kimwera was in the home. For people who lived outside the *Ujamaa* villages, the local language use was strongest and the use of Kiswahili was minimal. Ndogo is relatively close (approximately 10+ kilometers) to Mwenye, an *Ujamaa* village, so Kiswahili is used regularly for buying and selling in Mwenye. These language-use patterns present opportunities for young children to learn two languages. There are also opportunities to learn messages about when and where the languages are used and thus, the validity of the languages in certain places such as in Dar es Salaam, in Ndogo, and in surrounding villages.

Young children's opportunities to learn language occur in and out of school and are not static. An example is Fatima, a married, childless aunt, who said her father went to school but that she did not have a chance to attend. She is more proficient in Kimwera than Kiswahili; still, I asked her how she learned Kiswahili since she did not go to school. Fatima told me, "I learned from my peers who went to school. I did not go to school; my parents did not want me to go because the school was too far away." This is significant because the generation of children that were school-aged during the time of *Ujamaa* (from 1964 to 1985), such as Fatima's father, had the opportunity to attend government schools if their parents could pay the fee, because distance was not a limiting factor. However, when families started to return to their land in the mid 1980's, a gap developed in school opportunities, especially for women such as Fatima, because

of the long distances back to the towns that had schools. The government did not establish schools, medical clinics, or even water pipelines to villages outside of the *Ujamaa* villages, such as Ndogo. People in Ndogo and the surrounding area said this greatly influenced the return to or strengthening of the Mwera community because people had to work together to survive. It also influenced a resurgence of the use of Kimwera, particularly with young people.

Young children also have the opportunity to learn that their home and community identity is secondary to their national identity. The use of languages provides an example of the complex relationship between the government and the people in Ndogo. Parents do not resist the government enforcement of Kiswahili and they have not had the opportunity to learn English. However, parents also work to maintain their local language. Families make choices about how and when to teach their children which language. The languages parents used at home and taught their young children have changed over time, based on the policies of the government. In present day, the power of the government has influenced parents' behavior to move away from speaking only Kimwera at home. Now families choose to teach Kiswahili to their young children before teaching their own local language. Kimwera is used between adults and older children but not younger children. Kiswahili is the language used to speak to young children. It is important to note that young children constantly observe and hear

Kimwera all around them, being spoken by adults and older children to each other. They learn words and phrases.

Parents reported the reason to teach Kiswahili as the first language to young children was, as I mentioned, to help them in their pursuit of subsistence, to go to school, or buy and sell crops. Thus, the language that young children speak to one another is typically in Kiswahili, since that is the language in which they are addressed. Older siblings typically follow the parents' pattern of speaking Kiswahili to their younger siblings and Kimwera to each other. The parents' intention for their children's language acquisition is clear. The home and the community support young children in their learning Kiswahili first and then actively instructing children in Kimwera later, after approximately age eight and up. However, the process of language learning can become mixed because young children hear Kimwera in the home and in the community. Parents told me that little children often use some Kimwera words they picked up. The older siblings made a transition to speaking Kimwera with their parents at home and that would trickle down to the younger children.

Parents clearly wanted their children to retain their local language and said that they teach their children the Kimwera language and their Mwera heritage at home. Tobin (2005) described a sentiment held by Mexican immigrant families in inner city Phoenix, which was reflected in the statements I heard from the families in Ndogo. Tobin reported that "Most parents made the point that given the shortness of the school

day (2.5 hours in either a morning or afternoon session) they wanted the school to emphasize academic and social readiness and the learning of English, saying teaching Spanish and Mexican culture is parents' responsibility" (p. 432). Notice that there is a distinct difference between the perceived role of the home and school. Similarly in Ndogo, parents and community members articulated that young children should learn Kiswahili in school. Bakari, a father, said, "If children today do not know Kiswahili well, they cannot operate in society." I asked what he meant by children operating in society. Bakari said, "Without Kiswahili, children cannot go to school or buy oil."

The people in Ndogo and the surrounding areas I spoke with, including children, understood Kimwera to some degree, but people said they had different proficiencies in Kimwera and Kiswahili. Hassan, a father of young children, said, "It was so difficult to go to school and have to work in a language I did not understand." Parents such as Issa, a father of young children, lamented the difficulty of his immersion in a language he did not understand and being expected to perform academically in it. Issa and many other parents did not want their children to go through the same difficult experience. Older people, adults, and especially parents attributed their own varying degrees of Kimwera and Kiswahili language skills to their experience with a rough transition to school because of the abrupt language change from using Kimwera in the home to using only Kiswahili in school. Instead of teaching

their children Kimwera first, they taught them Kiswahili as the child's first language so the child would be ready for school.

By age eight, children are given direct instructions in Kimwera. Before age eight they overhear parents and older siblings and community members addressing each other in Kimwera. In local communities such as the Mwera villages, Semali (1999) confirmed that people "educate through examples that children imitate and through oral tradition based on their mythology that is very complex and rich" (p. 66). This is the case in language instruction in Ndogo. Children listen to stories from older children or adults and recite rhymes in Kimwera.

One example of how parents teach children Kimwera is through a jump rope game that children play. The jump rope was made from reeds woven together, and it is shared property in the village. One afternoon, while two mothers each held an end of the rope, the children and mothers sang a little melody in Kimwera as other children jumped through the rope. They used oral tradition, passed from generation to generation, to reinforce language learning through rhymes. The rhyme translated, "I am small so I need someone of my size to play with me." Everyone was laughing and smiling. The young children imitated speaking the rhyme with their mothers and as they maintained their steps to the beat of the rotating rope, the children then began to count in the rhythm of the song and the movement. This game developed and reinforced language development through a fun and active manner to retain

information. The youngest children heard this and also attempted to imitate it but they were not the focus audience. The older children were the focus.

Today, adults are expected to be able to operate in both Kiswahili and Kimwera languages. Many young people who currently speak Kimwera said they were instructed in it between the approximate ages of eight to fourteen. Amina, a mother, said she started teaching her daughter Kimwera at age ten by giving her commands in Kimwera to familiarize her with the vocabulary. Parents speak Kimwera to other adults, their friends and neighbors. As stated earlier, young children are not directly spoken to in Kimwera but they are continuously exposed to it because they hear it around them. The parents I spoke with said that they intentionally spoke to young children, ages four to six years old, in Kiswahili. Parents, such as Ali, a father of young children, expressed a concern that "If my child was instructed in two languages at once there would be confusion and maybe my child would not be able to speak either language well." It is significant to note that this is a commonly held belief in this community. The idea that learning two languages at once would confuse a child prevented parents from prioritizing Kimwera instruction earlier in children's lives and prompted their focus on teaching young children Kiswahili first.

When a child is at an age when the parent considers they can handle both languages, they start to instruct them in Kimwera. Hashima, a mother of young children, explained the process when she said,

> My parents would give me orders in Kimwera instead of Kiswahili, like, "Go get me a cassava." I do not really remember when, at which age, but I think I was eight years old. I did not learn to write Kimwera or Kiswahili but I learned Kiswahili the way I learned Kimwera, through my parents giving commands but when I was much younger. I teach my oldest child [she has three children] Kimwera starting at eight-years-old by asking her for things like "bring me the water bucket." When you do it from that age they can understand it better. If she does not understand me, then I can ask my daughter in Kiswahili. The next time I ask for it in Kimwera so she can hear it over and over again.

Othman, an older man with grandchildren, confirmed this when he said, "Children after a certain age learn Kimwera from hearing parents speak and when parents start to give them commands in Kimwera." Many others confirmed this method of language instruction. It was a process of imitation and repetition: parents gave commands in progressively more complex language. This eventually enabled the child to transition into conversation using Kimwera.

Due to the limitations I had with the language, my translator served a key role in telling me when the conversations transitioned from Kiswahili and Kimwera. The translator did not speak Kimwera but the people were eager to teach us both as much Kimwera as we could learn. Before I came to Ndogo I did not know that the local language was so prevalent. I had asked a government official if the local languages were still spoken in the villages surrounding Mwenye. The government official said that they were not. I find it interesting that the local language is the primary language spoken between adults and yet the government does not, knowingly or unknowingly, recognize this.

Brock-Utne (2002) documented that "For many Tanzanians, Kiswahili is the second language, but the number that has it as the first language is rapidly growing" (p. 1). Likewise, Lumbwi, the highest-ranking elder and oldest man in the community, noted that the generations are less knowledgeable about their language and heritage. He said,

> My daughter learned Kimwera from us, her parents, through commands like "get this" and "bring that." It was her first language. However, my granddaughter is more likely to speak Kiswahili. The children today would not understand if I told them something in Kimwera. I believe the Kimwera language will die in the future because I can speak Kimwera and the boys today can only speak Kiswahili. If I speak Kimwera to the children they will not ask what I said, they will just say "I do not understand." We (parents) have abandoned our culture by abandoning our language. It will be up to (the choice of) the children to abandon the culture. It is a disadvantage for them to not speak the language.

Lumbwi went on to tell me that "children do not have the motivation to learn the language, and it will be trouble for them because they will have no people group. Being recognized as Mwera is something to be proud of. Even you are proud of your language [he said to me]. To be recognized as a Mwera is a proud thing for our people group." Lumbwi expressed his fear about the next generations losing Kimwera. Not all parents agreed that children did not have the motivation, however everyone concurred that being Mwera is associated with speaking Kimwera. There is a widely felt sentiment in the Ndogo community that the language is essential in passing along the heritage of the community to the next generation. Of all the parents I spoke with, they each talked about how important it was for them to teach their children Kimwera.

Older generations lamented that young children are not embedded enough in the Mwera ways of life and language because of the encroachment of Kiswahili as a language but also the encroachment of the "Kiswahili world." The parents of young children held a similar sentiment but were fearful that if their children are not fluent first in Kiswahili they will not be successful in school and will have difficulty later on in life. It is complicated because as Issa and Adia, parents with young children, told me, "People today think that Kiswahili is more critical than Kimwera for their children to speak." Parents of young children communicated a commitment to making sure their children learned Kimwera and participated in the Mwera way of life.

A father of young children, Tembo, argued that, "It is important to teach children Kimwera because every human being has an origin. If you teach a child Kimwera they will identify as Mwera. The importance of identifying as Mwera is that every people group has pride to be recognized. Kiswahili is a language for communication and business. Kimwera is a language of heritage." I asked him which language he spoke at home, and he said he speaks Kimwera with his wife, but his daughters have not picked up much Kimwera and mostly speak Kiswahili. But they are still young, and Tembo told me he is hopeful they will still learn Kimwera better.

A key element in every society is language. Language is necessary to be able to communicate. Language through verbal instructions or storytelling is used to pass concepts of heritage from generation to the next generation. Semali (1999) recounted his

experience, in Tanzania, speaking his community's local language and his transition to speak the dominant language, Kiswahili: "The language of my education was no longer the language of my culture…My struggle began at a very early age constantly trying to find parallels in my culture with what was being taught in the classroom" (p. 9). The language of instruction is an important issue with young children. What is taught in the school and in the home derived from different paradigms. The home and the community environment provide opportunities for young children to learn the language of the government to succeed in life and the language of the Mwera people group to participate in the community. The government (through school) ignores the existence of any other language but Kiswahili, as seen in the example of the government official who does not acknowledge Kimwera (or perhaps is unknowledgeable about it). Notice that language represents significantly varied opportunities for young children to learn in different places with various people. This includes the opportunity to learn that the home and community offer differing opportunities from the school.

In sum, I found that Kimwera, in most cases, is taught to children as their second language after a certain age, while the national language, Kiswahili, is spoken first. Parents wanted their children to learn this because they felt it was important for primary school and for business skills later on in life. Thus, parents did not teach Kimwera to their children until the child was older and the parent perceived the child could handle using two languages. When I asked parents how they knew when a child

was ready to learn Kimwera, the answer I received was consistently that it was when a child started to take on more responsibility on their own accord.

In Tanzania, like many other places in the world, language has a past embedded with messages about what counts as valuable knowledge. The majority of Mwera people in Ndogo exclusively spoke Kimwera until independence in 1961. During the colonial area, Germany and Britain had great influence and technically governed the area but local people reported that this reach was restricted. People in Ndogo reported that although the colonial rulers greatly impacted their lives, it was constrained because it did not break apart the people group nor effectively influence customs and practices overall. Kiswahili was used to communicate with the Tanzanian representatives of the colonial government but the people in general did not speak Kiswahili. People spoke Kimwera at home and in the community. However, the languages of instruction in schools that did exist were either the missionary's language or Kiswahili and school was not widely accessible. Joe Tobin (2005) argued

> Education has long been an important tool of colonialism. The introduction of a system of education by a colonizing power to a colonized people is an act of magnanimity from the perspective of the colonizer and of disempowerment from the perspective of the colonized. Education is a strategy employed by colonizers to inculcate their values. (p. 428)

Over time, the official and accepted languages for school, business, and government were consistently the languages of those who ruled over the people in Tanzania. Since independence, President Nyerere instituted social policies that

fractured traditional and local practices in the name of creating national unity. Education became more readily available to people in *Ujamaa* villages, but it reinforced national norms while ignoring or rejecting local practices. People in Ndogo were forced to move to Mwenye, which was an *Ujamaa* village. At that time Kimwera was the language of the home. Now that people have left Mwenye and returned to their land, since the late 1980s, Kimwera is still important but Kiswahili became more predominant in the Ndogo community.

As mentioned previously, according to the people I spoke with, the majority of the people in Ndogo and the surrounding areas started more generally speaking Kiswahili approximately three generations ago. English still is not spoken. The government ignores the local language and, so by omission, does not validate it in the classroom. The current generation of parents has changed the language taught to their children in the home and community. Thus, patterns of language acquisition have drastically changed in the last fifty years. Parents' conversations with me about teaching their children Kiswahili first were centered on social mobility. Language is one element that demonstrates an issue that the parents, the community, the teacher, the Tanzanian government, and the international donors reinforce. They agree that for a young child to be successful in the Tanzanian society they have to master Kiswahili and be exposed to English. In this way, all these groups are in agreement. However, this is a very complex issue. Parents have adapted and now teach Kiswahili first, but they have

in no way abandoned their commitment to teaching their children their local language, Kimwera.

Summary

In this chapter, I briefly examined the history of language movement and development in Tanzania connecting it to the present use of Tanzanian national languages: Kiswahili and English. I discussed Kimwera, the local language, used in the home and the community and then discussed how language intersects with opportunities for young children to learn.

Language is an issue between the school and the home that is complex. People adapted by teaching Kiswahili first and then Kimwera second. It illustrates the many actors and influences in the education of young children in Ndogo. Parents and elders stated in conversations with me that because the language of school and business was in Kiswahili, children must learn this language well. Kimwera was important inside the community and as an issue of identity. Thus, older children were taught Kimwera but the use of Kimwera was deteriorating with young people because of the predominance of Kiswahili. However, young children did not have the opportunity to use Kiswahili in abstract and complex ways, particularly in the academic context of school as an instrument for learning. For example, students did not write essays or read texts in Kiswahili. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the study of Kiswahili in school is

confined to learning the letter names and, with time, the children hoped to learn how to read.

The English language is a different matter than Kiswahili and Kimwera in Ndogo because children are not exposed in any form to English. Children do not acquire English even at a rudimentary level at home, in the community, or in the school. Not having an opportunity to acquire any level of English places a barrier for the children in the Ndogo area to continue schooling into secondary school.

Parents and community members support young children's learning about Mwera heritage and language, Kimwera. My interviews with people in Ndogo about teaching Kimwera to the next generation revealed an intense desire for children to learn Kimwera in order to become full members of the community.

They also work to prepare young children for their future in the community and operating in neighboring areas by ensuring children are fluent in Kiswahili. People lamented that the shift to teaching young children Kiswahili first has left children at a conversational level in Kimwera and not able to fully function in the language. Children are under pressure to use different languages in different places. There is a great deal of switching between the use of the languages of Kimwera and Kiswahili. Children, as they come to learn both languages, have to manage code switching to navigate when and where, and what language to use. This is complicated. A deeper understanding and use of the Kimwera language is diminishing and parents, community members, and

elders in Ndogo are unhappy about this but they also do not know how to fix the problem.

Language is intertwined in the distinction between what it means to be Tanzanian and Mwera, to belong to the nation and to the local people group such as Mwera. These are not polarized or singular identities. No culture is isolated and with time influences are intertwined. The home, the community, and the school are not the only factors influencing young children's opportunities to learn. There are parents, community members, the government, the schoolteacher, and international donors involved that present different opportunities and types of learning for young children learn.

Global influences are present in Ndogo but, as discussed in a previous section, the national government has greater influence. In the past, the Ujamaa policies dictated daily life but now the influence of the government is significantly more indirect. One example of the indirect impact of the government in Ndogo is how Kiswahili has taken prominence over the instruction of Kimwera for young children.

Traditions and heritage are transmitted in part through language. In Ndogo, Kiswahili was given precedence over Kimwera but Kiswahili did not become more valuable. Various opportunities for young children's socialization through language are critical components in the child's social learning process. Children make meaning from when, where, and how language is used with whom. For children in this community,

the meaning of when and where language is used reinforces that Kiswahili is the language of the dominant culture. Language is an instrument of socialization and as seen in Ndogo, the government (through the school) provides different opportunities for young children than the home and the community does. In Ndogo, Kimwera has gone from the dominant language of the community to an important sub-culture in the national context. Everyday life of young children is tied closely what it means to be a member of the Mwera community this includes speaking and learning Kimwera.

The national government overlooks and at times attempts to regulate diverse ethnic groups and traditions in Tanzania through the mandated use of certain languages at various levels of formal education. However the social dynamics and family relationships remain powerful influences in young children's lives. I discovered that young children are placed in a position of navigating different worlds between the home and the school with diverse opportunities to learn. The home and the school are not always in tension but in many ways they are also not congruent. In the next chapter, I conclude with what can be drawn from this study by examining themes across the data I collected.

CHAPTER 7

INSIGHTS FROM YOUNG CHILDREN'S OPPORUNITIES TO LEARN

Introduction

In this concluding chapter, I review and discuss the diverse opportunities for young children to learn in the home, the community, and the school in Ndogo and the surrounding communities. As I draw on the conceptual sociocultural context framework for this study, presented in Chapter Two, I address the variety of the funds of knowledge present in this context and explore how opportunities to learn intersect both developmentally appropriate/inappropriate practices (DIP/DAP) and cultural appropriate/inappropriate practices. Opportunities to learn often overlap and diverge between the home, community and school and shed light on instances when these are incompatible. In summary I highlight the questions that arise from this study and analysis and address future research inquiries.

Young Children's Opportunities to Learn: A Review

Parents, community members (including peers), and teachers involved in young children's lives each influence and shape the opportunities young children have to learn. Examining both the formal and informal settings provides a more holistic view of young children's opportunities to learn. The skills, knowledge, and dispositions that young children encounter matter in their learning process. In this section, I highlight the

range of formal and informal opportunities for young children to learn that I observed in Ndogo and the surrounding communities.

Young children in Ndogo spend more time outside of school than in the formal school in its instructional time. In the field, I discovered the school was only in session two to three hours per day; therefore, I observed greater numbers of and more varied opportunities and methods for young children to learn outside of school than inside the formal school context.

Table 6 below, while not exhaustive, provides a summative framework organized around observations and interviews, examined in chapters 4, 5, and 6, about what young children have opportunities to learn in Ndogo and the surrounding villages. The table provides a way of thinking across these chapters. The top row summarizes content areas to which young children are exposed. The column on the left contains descriptors of elements involved in which young children have the opportunities to learn the content.

The table demonstrations the intertwining and overlapping aspects of the opportunities to learn such as formal and informal, people and places, laid out in a visual organization. The first row contains the opportunities for the children to learn. Because social interactions are also key in the learning process, I addressed the people who are directly involved in the learning process in row two. An assumption from row three is based on contextual learning theory, which includes places and spaces where

learning occurs. In row four I examined the mode of learning, which includes the process and activities in which children engage. In rows five and six, I distinguish obstacles or threats to the opportunities to learn in each column and I also identify ways the opportunities are corrected or reinforced.

Table 6: Summary of findings on young children's formal and informal opportunities to learn

	Social learning	Personal learning	Language and numeracy	Life skills/local knowledge	Gender/sexuality
What young children have the opportunities to learn (implicit and explicit)	• Respect • Obedience • Religion (Islam or Christianity) • Local spiritual practices • Work together • Own things together • Responsible together for child • Ask for advice and follow it • Peaceful people group - get along • Celebrations and customs	• Hygiene – washing self, clothes, utensils • Local doctor and healthcare (flies, malaria, pregnancy/birth, etc.) • Be a good citizen	• Assume children develop to a certain extent on their own. • Numeracy and Kiswahili language skills including reading, writing, speaking, and listening. • Kimwera speaking and listening	• Cultivate/harvest • Cooking and preparing plants/animals to eat • Care for children • Care for house/ grounds • Hunting • Fetch water • Knowledge about environment (fire, animals, plants, etc.) • Other trades	Women: • Cultivate • Make food and cook for family • Care for young children • Pregnant and breastfeed • Monogamous Men: • Cultivate • Make money • Polygamous
People involved in young children's opportunities to learn	Parents, adults in the community, the school teacher	Parents, siblings, and the school teacher as a representative of the government	The school teacher, parents, and international organizations	Parents, other adults, peers and siblings	Initiation instructor, the family and community

Table 6 (cont'd)

	Social learning	Personal learning	Language and numeracy	Life skills/local knowledge	Gender/sexuality
Where young children have the opportunities to learn	In all places: Home, fields, school, road, neighbor, public spaces, etc.	In the home and in initiation rites. The teacher at school	Kiswahili reading, writing, speaking, listening and arithmetic at school. Kimwera and Kiswahili listening and speaking at home and in community	In home and space right outside the door and in fields	Initiation rites, at home, and in the community
Mode of learning/ pedagogy children have the opportunities to learn	Direct instruction at school. Active instruction, observation and imitation at home	Direct instruction at school. Active instruction, observation and imitation, Legitimate peripheral participation at home	Direct instruction at school. Observation and imitation, Legitimate peripheral participation at home	Play, observation and imitation, Legitimate peripheral participation	Active instruction, observation and imitation
Obstacles or threats	Child rebellion	Insufficient water supply, lack of medical access	Child disinterest to learn	Wild animals, bad weather, lack of resources	Influences from school and from outside the village
Accountability and correction of the young child	Verbal rebuke, non verbal eye signals, physical consequence if considered necessary	Daily verbal or non-verbal reinforcement	Repetition until correct	Daily verbal or non-verbal reinforcement	Opportunities: stated or inferred

Source: Laura Edwards' interviews from Ndogo and the surrounding villages, 2013-14.

Table 6 examines observable practices and my interviews in the Ndogo school and community. The table demonstrates the knowledge, skills, and dispositions young children in Ndogo have the opportunities to learn. Young children have the opportunity to learn respect and obedience, about religion and local spiritual practices, how to work together and on their own, how to be responsible and ask for advice and take care of their self and their things.

The table delineates opportunities for young children to learn in the pre-primary school. These are standard features that, according to the literature, are found in most pre-primary and primary government schools in Tanzania. The table also shows the Ndogo formal school does not necessarily reflect the cultural practices of the community. Parents declared they want their children to learn all of the items listed in Table 6. Some divergent opportunities to learn require thinking about these opportunities to discern their importance and complexity. It also presents challenges. These differing opportunities to learn lead to various notions by about when, how and what young children learn.

The national government, in its primary influencing role as gatekeeper, allowed the pre-primary program to be implemented in Ndogo. Parents said they wanted their children to learn to read and write but that they did not request a pre-primary school, they only asked for a primary school. Parents said that the idea of institutionalized pre-primary school and sending four and five year old children to school was new to them.

In an environment such as Tanzania, where poverty, sanitation, and water access feature as primary concerns for the majority of the nation, basic survival is a dominant focus for many people. This is exacerbated in the rural village of Ndogo, because its inhabitants are very poor, experience high mortality rates, and do not readily have access to water, sanitation, or government healthcare. Medical care is limited due to distance, poverty, and staffing. With a 2:100,000 doctor patient ratio this rural area relies on local shamans (doctors) and herbal/tribal medicines for health care. Children learn ways of dealing with these challenges at a young age, which can be viewed as opportunities to learn.

The social context in Ndogo impacts children's opportunities to learn both in formal and informal setting in the following ways. Poverty impacts access to food, clothing, and shelter, which are necessary for young children to stave off illness and death. There is a high mortality rate for young children in poverty. This is the case in rural Lindi where Ndogo is located. Poor health impacts opportunities to learn as it corresponds with low birth weight, learning disabilities, and or developmental delays.

Illnesses and disabilities in young children impact access to formal education. People in Ndogo said that children who have physical problems such as malformation or sickness stay at home instead of being sent to school. Thus, access or lack thereof to formal schooling, which is an opportunity for young children to learn, is influenced by many of the statistics listed above.

Due to the less than $2 per day most people in Tanzania live on, people in Ndogo engage in subsistence farming. This opens up opportunities for young children to learn how to cultivate the land. Parents said that they did not think that their children would have the opportunity to continue their formal education past two years, which is what is currently offered to them in the school supported by the Project For Tanzania (PFT). Thus, learning how to farm was very important for their future and their existence. This was also shaped by the economic limitations in the geographic area.

The lack of access to water and healthcare limits young children's opportunities to learn because water and health are basic to survival, families and children in Ndogo are forced to focus on these needs and use their time learning how to meet these needs well. At a young age, children learn how to carry water and use water, as well as learn about plants and herbal medicines. These opportunities to learn are shaped by the social context and take priority.

Most families said that they did not have expendable income, thus money for toys or games or learning supplies were nonexistent. Young people learned how to reuse and recycle materials to complete tasks and in their play. They learned to reuse various containers for cooking or fetching water as well as create entertainment (such as the miniature pool table and the soccer ball). Natural, as opposed to manufactured, materials are used for building houses. Children learn how to build these structures at young ages. Housing was constructed from a combination of branches, bark in strips to

connect branches, and mud to fill in gaps between branches. Roofs were thatched with grasses bound together. This life skill was taught to children, again as a matter of survival. This opportunity to learn what is required in their social context again supersedes and limits or types of learning perceived to be nonessential.

The lack of access to improved sanitation leads to childhood illnesses such as diarrhea, malnutrition, dehydration and even death. In Ndogo, each house has an enclosed area with coconut branches and a pit dug approximately six feet deep for people to defecate. In more developed areas of Lindi town or Dar es Salaam, toilets are porcelain holes in the ground that lead to pits or into a sewer system. Lack of sanitation can cause illness and thus impact lower rates of formal school attendance and completion. Body care and sanitation practices are all taught in the home, again as a matter of survival. The formal schooling does not engage with this learning and expand the children's understanding on or why these practices are important to follow.

The table facilitates a concentrated view of the opportunities for young children to across each of the sociocultural aspects to learn. In the next section, I discuss the young children's funds of knowledge, the knowledge, skills, and dispositions young children have the opportunity to learn, by describing what is distinct in young children's opportunities to learn in the home and the community, this is detailed in chapter 4 and 6,. Following this, I examine what is distinctive about opportunities to learn in school, which was discussed in chapter 5. Finally, I discuss the crossover

between home and school learning opportunities that Table 6 illustrates.

Young children's opportunities to learn in the home and the community

The aim of this section is to describe young children's funds of knowledge in the context of Ndogo. Funds of knowledge assume that students have valuable skills and experiences that they can bring to the school classroom. This concept posits that "People are competent, they have knowledge, and their life experiences have given them that knowledge," and they take it with them to school (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2013, x). Table 6 delineates a spectrum of the funds of knowledge young children are developing in Ndogo and the surrounding area.

Young children's opportunities to learn with parents' and community members' are focused on preparing them for life. People stated they wanted their children to stay close to home when they reach adulthood and be prepared to cultivate the land for food. They also articulated that they wanted their children to be equipped to go to market with their excess produce and possess the skills necessary to be able to do business in neighboring areas. In the Mwera tradition, parents give each of their children land, regardless of gender, when they turn eighteen. From the time the child is quite young, the parents begin to prepare the child to cultivate their own land, raise a family, and participate as members in the community.

A symbiotic nature exists in the relationship between people and place in Ndogo. Villagers rely on natural resources for food, cooking, and fuel, as well as for entertainment, such as toys, games, and musical instruments. According to interviews and observations, the community exists in rhythm with the land and with each other. The most salient social objective is creating appropriate and successful relationships with others in the community, and this is taught and reinforced through a Mwera initiation rite. Villagers stated that relationships with one another and the earth are very important to their lives.

Young children's opportunities to learn reading, writing, adding, and subtracting skills occurred at the Ndogo school. Parents said they hoped these skills would eventually help their young children function better in the community outside Ndogo such as when they needed to use Kiswahili in Mwenye or Lindi town and buy and sell crops and goods. Parents also talked about an elusive desire for their children to finish their schooling (such as university) to become doctors and return to Ndogo to provide services in the community. However, this was acknowledged as something that is not a likely possibility in reality. Bado told me that children that finish Standard VII and move to places like Dar es Salaam rarely are successful. He said, "I want my children to finish school but you never see it happen." If the government does not expand the Ndogo school to include more grade levels, the children's education will end in Standard I. Parents stated they would not send their young children to the Mwenye

school because it is too far and the seasonal rains make the path impassable part of the year. Conversely, parents acknowledged that if the children have more schooling, they think the children might leave the community for economic gain elsewhere and they worried the children would not return to the villages.

Chapter 4 noted a multitude of examples of young children's opportunities to learn in the home and the community. The chart above illustrates opportunities to learn in a variety of content and methods for young children in Ndogo and the surrounding area. The content (table 5, row 1) ranges from social to language to life skills. Parents instructed young children about the knowledge and skills they might need in their future. This included knowledge about the language they would need for formal schooling (Kiswahili), the local language (Kimwera), spirituality, plant uses for medicinal purposes, how to cook and care for children, and eventually, their tribal language.

The settings where young children experience opportunities to learn (table, row 2) demonstrated how these opportunities are both organized and spontaneous in various non-institutional settings such as the home or community. For example, young children have opportunities to learn in and around their homes, in the bush or fields, and through initiation rites.

There are numerous people involved in young children's learning processes. This includes peers of the same age or children older than the young child and adults

related or unrelated to the young children. Notice that the community members unrelated to the children took responsibility for the children in the community. Opportunities to learn through different modes include observation, imitation, peripheral participation, and active instruction (Table 6, row 5). Play, along with games and toys, provides opportunities for young children to learn. Children of all ages are expected to participate in some type of play. Children use *bao* (*mankala*) a game played locally made of wood and learn about patterns and groupings. Additional types of play include dancing and playing with adults during celebrations and festivals. My interviews and observations demonstrate the rich and complex learning that occurs outside of school.

The concept of funds of knowledge is based on the idea that when students come to school they are not empty vessels. Cummins (1996) observed that "Our prior experience provides the foundation for interpreting new information. No learner is a blank slate" (p. 75). The school does not, in the way curriculum is set up or instruction organized, recognize what students bring to school. From the perspective of funds of knowledge one could argue that the opportunities to learn in the home and the community are contextually situated whereas the school classroom is isolated from the social relationships and setting in which children spend most of their time.

Children in the school already know a great deal about many things such as counting and social interactions. Learning occurred through many pathways and in

multiple areas, such as emotional and social experiences and with numerous people. I also noticed that opportunities to learn intertwined and overlapped. These experiences and the skills young children develop are funds of knowledge that they acquired and accumulated. For instance, the skill of learning through observation and modeling is practiced in many circumstances in the home and the community.

Recall the example from chapter 4 of the young boy who created his own miniature pool table. In the Ndogo community, the young boy was exposed to various opportunities to learn such as how to recycle materials, make a plan, execute the plan, improvise materials, and produce the correct size materials for his pool table replica. The knowledge, skills, and dispositions that this young boy and other young children in Ndogo and the surrounding area develop are complex and related to real world experiences.

Young children's opportunities to learn in the school

Young children in Ndogo and the surrounding communities had the opportunity to learn explicit, hidden and null curriculums in school. Examined in chapter 5, hidden curriculum of school demonstrates the unarticulated curriculum to which students are exposed. For instance, young children had the opportunity to learn from the way that their desks were set up and that their attention was directed only to the teacher. Additionally, messages were sent to the young children by what was included and

excluded (null) from the school curriculum; one message being that Kimwera language is not valued nor are the spiritual or traditional aspects of the Mwera society.

As demonstrated in chapter 5, using interviews with parents, children, and the teacher, opportunities for young children to learn in the formal school included how to be in school and to learn the 3R's. Parents articulated school was the place where children learn to study, to read, and respect their teacher and other people. Important skills and behaviors are taught at home, but the parents said they do not think they could teach skills such as reading and writing to their children. Formal schooling was the only venue villagers said they had for their children to learn the knowledge and skills to read and write.

Parents articulated home and school are both important. They stated schooling was to provide elements of skills and knowledge for young children to eventually be able to excel in the dominant society of Tanzania. In the Ndogo school, children have opportunities to learn how to read and write Kiswahili and conduct addition and subtraction math concepts that parents said might assist them to obtain jobs in construction or in a market if they choose not to cultivate the land or to seek employment to supplement their farming.

Parents expressed the idea that school is a necessary component of social mobility and required to obtain higher paying jobs. However, parents said that this would require a higher level of schooling than the people in the Ndogo area achieved.

The highest level of schooling completed was Standard 7 but no one including the schoolteacher in the area passed the exam after Standard 7. However, pre-primary and Standard I schooling available to the young children in Ndogo does not necessarily connect students with the wider world outside the classroom or provide opportunity for social mobility.

There are many other constraints to the mode of learning and setting in the Ndogo school. A consistent observation in this study was that the school delivered de-contextualized content void of the young children's everyday lives. There are post-colonial powers at play in the school structure, in the choice of language of instruction, and in the omission of local knowledge and skills in formal schooling. Konai Thaman (2000) reflected that in much of the majority world, "Formal education continues to be Euro-centric in outlook and academic in orientation, reflecting Western industrial and scientific cultures, rather than the cultures of learners and as well as teachers" (p. 51). This outlook is strongly reflected in the Ndogo classroom.

There is a significant difference between the school and the home and community in the child's environment and opportunities to learn. Observations and interviews reveal that the formal schooling practices in some ways disconnect children from their everyday life.

The national curriculum and the curriculum used in the school classroom articulate directly and indirectly by inclusion and by omission of content what

knowledge is valuable. According to Vavrus, (2003) "Schooling occurs within a specific social and political-economic context that may mitigate, or even reverse, its empowering effects" (p. 5). An impact of this was the community elders lamented children in future generations will identify less and less with being Mwera.

Both overt and subtle opportunities were found for young children to learn. Several opportunities traversed both domains of home and community and the formal schooling.

Young children's opportunities to learn that traverse both domains

The knowledge and values that transverse between the domains of the home and school are social values of respect and obedience, personal values for cleanliness, and Kiswahili language and numeracy skills. One of these aspects that the home and school mutually reinforced was Kiswahili. Kiswahili, as the language of school instruction, was the only language option for young children to learn in school. However, the home and community facilitated opportunities for young children to learn Kiswahili early in life in order to operate in school and the wider community. The home and the community instructed young children in Kimwera as a passage into full membership of the Mwera society. Parents were working to bridge the connection between home and school learning by emphasizing Kiswahili as the first language for young children to prepare

them to better engage with the outside world than they might if they only knew Kimwera.

In Ndogo, children who are able to attend school may have to quit before they complete a level of schooling that would impact their future economic opportunities. Some children developed the ability to switch systems between home and school. These children attempt to maintain the values of the community while trying to work within and acquire the skills of formal schooling. However, the child eventually has to choose which world to live in. For instance, school becomes a way to learn how to read and write and do addition and subtraction and then one must leave school to learn how to cultivate and feed oneself. Parents said school is a necessity but they see themselves as the child's first teacher and they have the responsibility to prepare their children for life. Parents articulated their responsibility to teach children domestic chores while they saw the school teaching different things, but both home and school should teach respect (Table 6, column 1).

Social values such as respect are reflected in the learning in the home, the community, and the school. Some of the social values, such as collective responsibility for one another in the community, were not reinforced in the school. However, as I mentioned, obedience and respect were key issues for young children to learn both in and out of school, according to the people in Ndogo. In the home, respect was reinforced as a daily concept. For example, parents said they taught their children to

greet them in the morning with *shikamoo*, a Kiswahili greeting for elders. The social and interpersonal aspect of the school curriculum centered on children showing respect to the teachers.

The teacher expected parents to support young children in attending pre-primary school, completing their homework, and learning Kiswahili. However, the teacher did not include nor incorporate parents' contribution to young children's learning. The teacher at the Ndogo school said, "The home and the school should contribute to a child's development. The parents should offer services that help the children learn, such as buying shoes and school uniforms, providing adequate nutrition, teaching cleanliness, and providing writing materials such as books and pens." The teacher stated parents are outside the realm of formal schooling and do not offer anything but material support for young children's learning. Parents supported the school by ensuring student attendance and completion of homework and also viewed and treated the teacher with great respect. Parents and the teacher supported pre-primary school; but a disharmony exists for the young students in the Ndogo school. Young children's world out of school is omitted, rejected, or discouraged in various examples. There was a dichotomy between the world of learning at home and learning at school.

An example is seen in how the school creates individual learning experiences whereas the community supports collective opportunities to learn. These simple

concepts are subtle and not addressed. People remained silent on this issue, perhaps because formal schooling serves an important and limited role for young children to learn Kiswahili reading and writing, and numeracy that will later allow them to sell crops, etc.

In the home, young children have the opportunity to actively participate in the learning process there. In the school classroom, children were passive receivers of information and did not have the chance to work with the knowledge and skills they are exposed to in the hands-on, experiential learning method they use at home or in the community. Young children's interests drove the pursuit of learning the skills and knowledge that they had the opportunity to learn at home or the community. In contrast, young children lacked choices in the subjects, direction, or method of instruction in the school classroom. An example is the skill of learning through observation practiced in many circumstances in the home and the community but it is minimally utilized in the school classroom.

Upon further examination and additional in-depth interviews, it became apparent that the parents and community supported the school up to the point where it discouraged the community's divergent opportunities to learn. An example of this interference with the community's goal for learning is the initiation rites that young children experience. Even though the school discourages this practice, parents fully support it and continue to practice it. Another issue of omission was the use of

language, previously discussed.

The school did not acknowledge the young children' funds of knowledge, the complex knowledge, skills, and dispositions that young children developed outside the school classroom. The school experience was regulated and limited to the 3R's. As mentioned in the previous section and in chapter 5, the null curriculum of school is a concept that demonstrates what is omitted from the classroom (Eisner, 1985). For example, the knowledge young children in Ndogo and the surrounding villages have the opportunity to learn in school, is not connected with local knowledge such as the holistic and spiritual aspects and ways of learning of life and learning. In this way the local knowledge is omitted.

Another illustration of this disconnect is that the school neglected and ignored the fact that young children are becoming full members of a collective society. The family and the community wanted and expected to prepare young children for a communal life. At home and in the community there were shared goals and work that young children learned, such as fetching water, caring for themselves and younger children, and spirituality. However, formal schooling reinforced an individualistic learning process, young children were not encouraged or allowed to work collaborative rather held to a standard of individual learning and punished for collaborating. Working together was seen as cheating. There was a one-dimensional authoritative nature of young children's relationship with the teacher. This reflects the government

relationship with the people in Ndogo. Gruenewald (2003) articulated an assumption about schooling that it "mainly supports individualistic and nationalistic competition in the global economy and that an educational competition of winners and losers is in the best interest of public life in a diverse society" (p. 4). While Grunewald's sentiment is not reflected in the opportunities for young children to learn in the home and the community, parents admitted they are subject to the current times and are resigned that young children must participate in individualistic and nationalistic schooling process to participate in the wider society. Parents said that they knew their desire for their children's learning may not be realized.

The dichotomy of the strain of being collective members of the community and yet individual learners in school was very real. An additional omission in school was the lack of acknowledgment of the Mwera language. Interestingly, a government official stated to me that the people of Ndogo only spoke Kiswahili. However, the first time I traveled to Ndogo I noticed that the people there used another language other than Kiswahili. When I inquired, people said that they were speaking Kimwera to each other, which is the language of their ethnic group. Each of these omissions left young children, mostly on their own, to navigate, these divergent messages about what and how they learn.

Parents worked for their children in the area of language to bridge the dichotomy between learning Kimwera at home and needing Kiswahili at school and for

business outside of Ndogo. Teaching young children Kiswahili, the parents hoped to give them an opportunity to be successful adults in a "Kiswahili world," as the young father, Issa, said. The school does not extend a bridge to connect the worlds of learning, the one young children are developing in school and the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they bring to school. It is important to note that school does not currently acknowledge or build upon what young children already know and have experienced.

In the context of Ndogo, the home and the community was a classroom and the school was largely a separate and disconnected classroom. The government and school, international donors, and parents and the community impact these opportunities to learn. Due to the divergent opportunities presented by each of the agents in young children's education, this raises question about young children making their own connections between their worlds at home and at school. Table 6 shows young children's funds of knowledge, skills and dispositions are reinforced in some contexts and ignored in others.

This leads one to wonder, are opportunities to learn compromised and potentially less effective than they could be with integration? Can identifying funds of knowledge be critical in understanding better young children's opportunities to learn because according to Rios-Aguilar, et al (2011) "When funds of knowledge are incorporated into curriculum and instruction, it facilitates teachers' recognition and use of family and community resources for pedagogical purposes" (p. 164)? Could

understanding better what children bring with them to the classroom provide enriched learning experiences because Gonzalez, et al (2013), assert the "educational process can be greatly enhanced when teachers learn about their students everyday lives" (p. 6)?

Opportunities for young children to learn: Broadening conceptualizations

As stated in chapter 2, the significance of better understanding opportunities and for young children's learning in a particular context is that it can provide pertinent information to the government and to international donors. Additionally, the groundwork may serve to interrupt early childhood mainstream conversations that perpetuate a narrow conceptualization about early childhood education and development. Sally Lubeck (1998) argued against a singular view of young children from the minority world extending to other regions of the world. She said "We do not have boxes big enough to contain such crashing complexities, no simple answers, no tried and true schemes. We must learn to question our own thinking - and to listen well" (p. 7). One way of listening well is to carefully observe and provide nuanced descriptions of young children in their context, this study was designed and conducted to do this.

Kessler and Swadener (1992), scholars in early childhood education, call attention to the need for re-conceptualizing the way educators in the mainstream minority world conceptualize early childhood education and care. As I mentioned

previously they said, "If knowledge is power...the nature of knowledge, as well as the practices that are valued or privileged in the early childhood curriculum, must be examined within a number of larger contexts as well as from multiple perspectives" (p. 293). Differing and marginalized contextual frameworks can be introduced into the dominant mainstream early childhood conversation about what is valuable knowledge or practices for young children, particularly helpful due to the influence of international donors from the minority world in Tanzanian education. A dominant narrative is developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) were first published in the US in 1986. This framework has been used to develop standards used in various contexts globally to create specifications and accountability for pre-primary teachers and programs (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

Early childhood scholar, Tobin (2005) corroborates contextualizing early childhood education. Tobin said, "A cost of de-contextualized quality standards in early childhood education will be that local approaches that are well adapted to their local context will be driven into extinction by ideas and programs that are less context-dependent" (p. 427). Thus, a decontextualized approach to early childhood education, such as the one held by the government or international donors, may exclude local ways of learning for young children. Examining opportunities for young children to learn moves the discussion toward incorporating the contextual lived-world as an access point for learning. It is important to acknowledge and explore contextual

framework of approaches to young children's learning because they affect the opportunities young children have to learn.

To my observations of the opportunities to learn for young children in Ndogo and the surrounding villages, I provide in this section a look at the framework of the context-dependent approach alongside the framework of the dominant and standardized approaches. To look through each framework demonstrates how they influence the opportunities young children have to learn. The context-dependent approaches were gleaned from observations and interviews in Ndogo regarding the Ndogo culturally appropriate and inappropriate practices for young children. The approaches of the dominant and standardized appropriate and inappropriate practices for young children are found in early childhood education literature over the past thirty years.

Table 6 presented the young children's opportunities to learn. Table 7 below teases out examples of young children's opportunities to learn both in and out of the formal classroom to demonstrate the overlapping and divergent practices in the DAP/DIP, the mainstream child development framework, and the (in) appropriate framework of the Ndogo culture. Table 8 delineates how practices align and or diverge. As the observer, I recorded what I observed and what village people communicated to me. Ndogo culturally appropriate and inappropriate concepts were derived from

numerous interviews with people in this village regarding what was approved or disapproved of in the community.

Table 7: Analysis of findings with different lenses to examine young children's formal and informal opportunities to learn

	Observable practices	Developmentally appropriate features (DAP)	Developmentally inappropriate features (DIP)	Ndogo culturally appropriate features	Ndogo culturally inappropriate features
Formal Opportunities to Learn in Ndogo	Small child-size tables and chairs in the pre-primary classroom for young children	X			X (children do not have tools or other items that fit their size)
	The teacher provided differentiated instruction for each class of pre-primary and primary students	X		X (developmental differentiated but not age differentiated)	
	Students listened to and repeated the teacher's sounds to learn the names of the letters in the Kiswahili alphabet	X			X (whole language method used in Kimwera instruction)
	Only Large group work/ no small group or individualized work in the classroom		X		X (children work and play in large and small groups)

Table 7 (cont'd)

	Observable practices	Developmentally appropriate features (DAP)	Developmentally inappropriate features (DIP)	Ndogo culturally appropriate features	Ndogo culturally inappropriate features
	Absence of classifying or sorting items to distinguish similar or different objects		X		X (young children sort and classify items regularly in the informal environment)
	No play equipment or toys at the schoolhouse		X	X (the Ndogo school has space designated for play)	
	Children demonstrated respect to people who were older than them.	N/A	N/A	X	
	Parents articulated that they ensured their children completed their homework	X (community relations)		X (respect for authority)	
	Teacher prohibited engagement between students during school hours		X		X (in Ndogo, collaborative learning was observed consistently)

Table 7 (cont'd)

	Observable practices	Developmentally appropriate features (DAP)	Developmentally inappropriate features (DIP)	Ndogo culturally appropriate features	Ndogo culturally inappropriate features
	One room school house: students were age 4 to age 15 divided into two classes		X	X	
	Teacher delivered lesson information in the form of lecture and recitation; children received and recited but did not interact with the information.		X		X (imitation was a common method of instruction)
	Learning was expected to be a rote activity; experiential learning was very limited		X		X (parents did not object to rote learning in formal school, however, rote learning was not observed in any other part of the Ndogo culture)
	Tribal initiation rites are discouraged / considered a waste of time taking children out of school	N/A	N/A		X

Table 7 (cont'd)

	Observable practices	Developmentally appropriate features (DAP)	Developmentally inappropriate features (DIP)	Ndogo culturally appropriate features	Ndogo culturally inappropriate features
Informal Opportunities to Learn in Ndogo	Young children observed and imitated things in their natural environment	X		X	
	Classified and sorted items distinguishing similar or different objects	X		X	
	Incorporates both Kiswahili and Kimwera languages	N/A	N/A	X	
	Observation, experimentation, repetition and memory were actively engaged in learning opportunities	X		X	
	Children created and engaged in play with toys which the children created	X		X	
	Children engaged in "pretend play"	X		X	

Table 7 (cont'd)

	Observable practices	Developmentally appropriate features (DAP)	Developmentally inappropriate features (DIP)	Ndogo culturally appropriate features	Ndogo culturally inappropriate features
	Children created and engaged in games	X		X	
	Children cooperated and worked with others	X		X	
	Limited direct supervision of children. Parents allow young children to play and experiment with work without direct adult guidance; for instance a five year old child cares for a one year old child		X	X	
	Children demonstrated respect to people who are older than them. Ex: young children are taught to greet their parents and elders with "shikamoo"	N/A	N/A	X	
	Older children helped younger children learn a skill		X	X	

Table 7 (cont'd)

	Observable practices	Developmentally appropriate features (DAP)	Developmentally inappropriate features (DIP)	Ndogo culturally appropriate features	Ndogo culturally inappropriate features
	Children progressed continuously through development (rather than a child's age determine expectations for a certain stage of development) this culture watches for "signs of readiness" to introduce learning		X	X	
	Use of corporal punishment in disciplining children		X	X	
	Tribal initiation rites are used for sex education		X	X	
	Young children used adult sized knives at will and without adult supervision.		X	X	

Source: Laura Edwards' interviews from Ndogo and the surrounding villages, 2013.

In Table 7, I categorized interview and observation data using four categories in two settings to give clarity to my findings. The two settings are formal schooling (aka "in school") and informal opportunities to learn (aka "outside the formal school setting"). The four categories of frameworks are "developmentally appropriate/inappropriate," and "Ndogo culturally appropriate/inappropriate features," represented in each of these two settings. These categories represent different frameworks.

The table demonstrates how young children's opportunities to learn are within the two frameworks are diverse, including the complexities, intersections and differences. Most of the examples from the data can be categorized with more than one label. Many of the observable practices are both DAP and Ndogo culturally appropriate. While many of the practices are similar, there are significant differences.

Some practices are both DAP and Ndogo culturally inappropriate. An example of this is the child-sized equipment that is DAP but in Ndogo, people do not have child-sized equipment. I labeled this as culturally inappropriate because it was not practiced in the community.

A few practices are both DIP and Ndogo culturally inappropriate. An example of this is the teacher-prohibited engagement between students during school hours. The DAP framework and the Ndogo cultural practices both accept interaction among children as valuable for learning.

This table shows some of the developmentally appropriate practices of DAP clash with some the Ndogo cultural practices, these appear in both the DIP category and the Ndogo culturally appropriate category. For example, a Ndogo culturally appropriate practice assumes a five-year-old child can supervise a one-year-old child. The DAP framework contends young children need close supervision by an adult and which indicates that a young child's supervision of a younger child inappropriate (DIP).

There are a few examples where a practice is Ndogo culturally appropriate but the DIP/DAP standards are silent, such as the Ndogo initiation ritual. In the setting of informal learning opportunities (non-school time), there were no culturally inappropriate practices observed since the subjects of the study shaped the culturally appropriate definition.

Following are examples from each framework and I describe why I chose to align the observation with it. From the formal schooling category, in the example, "Small child-size tables and chairs in the pre-primary classroom for young children," I assigned the label "Developmentally appropriate feature" (DAP) because according to NAEYC's DAP guidelines, young children should have child size equipment to interact. The principle from DAP states, "1. Consider what is age appropriate—that is, based on what we know about the development and learning of children within a given age

range" (Copple & Bredekamp, 2006, p. 11). This includes table, chairs, crayons, toys, etc. that are size appropriate for the age of the child.

An example of the developmentally inappropriate feature (DIP) from the table: "Only large group and no small group or individualized work in the classroom." In the Ndogo school, the teacher worked consistently with the group as a whole and taught from the front of the classroom. He did not work with students in groups other than dividing students into the Standard I large group and the Pre-primary large group. The teacher did not use small groups and did meet or work individually with students. I assigned this practice the label "Developmentally inappropriate feature (DIP)" because according to NAEYC's DAP guidelines, a teacher should make an effort to know and work with students individually. The principle from DAP states, "2. Consider what is individually appropriate—that is, attuned to each child in all of his or her individuality" (Copple & Bredekamp, 2006, p. 12). The teacher did not differentiate instruction based on individual needs.

A Ndogo culturally appropriate feature "Children demonstrated respect to people who were older than them," I assigned the label "Ndogo culturally appropriate feature" because young children sat quietly and without moving around during a school lesson. An excerpt from my dissertation state, "He (the teacher) talked about the importance of students staying in the their seats and sitting quiet and still. The teacher

said when it was time to go outside, students should show restraint and not run for the outdoors but instead walk in a single-file-line to go outside" (found also in chapter 4).

A Ndogo culturally inappropriate feature from the table is when the “Teacher prohibits engagement between students during school hours.” I assigned the label “Ndogo culturally inappropriate feature” because in Ndogo, collaborative learning was observed consistently and there were many opportunities to learn as children spend time playing and working in groups and peers engage with one another outside the school setting.

In the informal opportunities to learn in the home and community of Ndogo and surrounding villages, an example of a developmentally appropriate feature (DAP) is that “Children engaged in ‘pretend play.’" I assigned the label “Developmentally appropriate feature” (DAP) because the NAEYC states, “Children acquire knowledge about the physical and social worlds in which they live through playful interactions with objects and people” (NAEYC, 1986, p. 21).

A developmentally inappropriate feature (DIP) in the community is the “Limited direct supervision of children” and “Young children used adult sized knives at will and without supervision.” I assigned the label “Developmentally inappropriate feature” because parents allow young children to play and experiment with play and work without direct adult guidance; for instance the use of knives and a five-year-old child supervises a one-year-old child.

I assigned the label "Ndogo culturally appropriate feature" to the "Use of corporal punishment in disciplining children" because of the interviews with people in Ndogo as illustrated in my dissertation, "Multiple people articulated that parents discipline children with corporal punishment and that they also expect defiant behaviors from children" (found also in chapter 4).

Parents and community members in Ndogo did not articulate or demonstrate activities or information that was inconsistent with their values. Therefore, there are no examples of Ndogo culturally inappropriate feature in the table.

In opposition to the concepts perpetuated in the dominate early childhood discourse such as developmentally inappropriate practice (DIP) and developmentally appropriate practice (DAP), I argue that there are not clear cut binary "appropriate" and "inappropriate" cultural practices, which patterns from table 7 suggest of opportunities for young children to learn. In my study, I presented ways of conceptualizing what young children have the opportunity to learn about in a particular context. Sally Lubeck (1998) observed that "we do not currently have many ways to think about such things, to observe alternative ways, or engage in unfamiliar activities that might challenge our views of what children - and teachers - can do" (p. 5).

This study was designed to provide a nuance and complex description of young children's opportunities to learn in a particular location. There is a call in Tanzania for NGO's and government initiatives for young children to be informed by the

examination of young children in complex and nuanced ways. In rural southern Tanzania more attention could be given to the diversity of early childhood education practices within the sociocultural context. Educating young children is contextualized; it is not universal.

In agreement with Lubeck's (1998) argument that there is not a correct way of educating or raising young children, I identified two framework approaches regarding opportunities for young children to learn in Ndogo. Table 7 shows the framework from the mainstream early childhood education filters of DIP/DAP do not completely align with the Ndogo area's cultural practices. This raises questions. I observed a significant divide between opportunities for young children's to learn in the home, including the parents and community, and the school, including the national government, the individual teacher, the NGO's that influence and fund the school, and global ideologies such as DAP. The parents and teacher interviewed suggested elements of this dichotomy affected the young children's lack of success in progressing through school. This raises questions about how and why the dichotomy was formed and is maintained. Could the contextualization of the practices of educating young children improve formal learning opportunities? Might the differences between what young children have the opportunity to learn in the home and school serve to assist the local community to reproduce its social norms and practices? Does the divide serve the government by maintaining its political party's rule over a people who have

insurmountable obstacles to further schooling? Would the children have the opportunity to learn more in the limited amount of time they have in formal schooling if the cultural capital of the student was acknowledged and built upon? And then, if the children had more formal schooling, what affect would this have on their lives? Table 7 does not discuss these questions, but valid questions arise from the data and the table. In the next section, additional future research questions are discussed.

Summary and Future Research

In this study, I examined opportunities for young children to learn in rural southern Tanzania. I conducted observations and interviews that shed light on the range of learning that exists in the home and the community of Ndogo and surrounding villages, as well as in the Ndogo school. When Dr. Phinny and I interviewed NGO leaders, scholars, and government officials involved in interventions with young children in Tanzania we heard a call for research to understand what is already happening for young children in particular contexts. There has been limited systematic effort to understand what opportunities exist and what they afford. This study adds to the literature that addresses the nuances, ambiguities, and complexities of the opportunities for young children to learn in and out of formal school in a specific context. These complex descriptions, gained through observations and interviews, of young children's opportunities to learn could provide additional information to

contribute to and inform decision-making by NGO and government initiatives in Tanzania concentrated on early childhood.

In the rural southern area of Tanzania where I focused my study, I described a variety of opportunities for young children to learn. The previous chapters demonstrated that the opportunities for young children to learn are rich and are multiple. Thinking about young children's opportunities to learn, my study recognized there is already a lot going on and that opportunities to learn are happening everywhere in many different places with lots of people. Sometimes the opportunities to learn seemed to collide and other times they were merely found in separate places.

Observations and interviews suggest a rich and complex nature of the opportunities for young children to learn with diverse pedagogies, people, and settings available. Exploring where, how, with whom and what are the opportunities to learn illustrates the opportunities appear to be significantly divided between formal and informal contexts. In the home and community, young children are exposed to extensive learning content with a variety of pedagogies and people, adults as well as peers, and these opportunities to learn exist in numerous places and environments. The opportunities to learn in the Ndogo school, for a variety of financial and time constraints, was narrowly focused to a single place, a single person, and with limited pedagogy and content.

As established throughout the observations and interviews of my study, the

world of learning opportunities for young children in the home and the community are largely disconnected from the opportunities for young children's learning in the school classroom. Is this disconnect a result of the devaluation of the variety of opportunities to learn and/or a result of the underfunding of education and/or is it a byproduct of the colonial legacy? What are the long-term implications and end results of schooling that does not acknowledge the funds of knowledge, which is the knowledge, skills, and dispositions young children bring with them to the classroom?

Information discovered in my study can useful in future research. As discussed in chapter 2 the influences of the Tanzanian government and international NGO's are salient. The national government creates initiatives to increase pre-primary school enrollment to meet UN development goals and obtain donor funding. Numerous NGOs articulate the desire to assist families and communities to help young children meet development needs and to build strong community based organizations that deliver quality early childhood services including education. Further studies utilizing sociocultural contextual frameworks could benefit goals.

Future research could include a comparative study involving several other communities in rural Tanzania to examine the opportunities young children have to learn in and out of school. Similarities and differences across multiple sites can better inform scholars and NGO's who have appealed for more detailed information about

learning opportunities for young children as they design interventions informed by local contexts.

Additionally previous chapters demonstrate the way that knowledge, skills, and dispositions that young children bring to school may not have been valued or were ignored. Further research could be conducted with NGOs, government officials, and primary care givers of young children in underserviced rural areas to examine what issues and perceptions exist about young children in their learning. The intersection between care of and school for young children could also be examined. Further examination of the local context in different regions of Tanzania could provide information pertinent to exploring relevant services for families and communities. Research could be conducted on the contextualization of the local practices in formal education of young children.

My study could inform research regarding opportunities for cooperation between parents, teachers, NGOs, and policy makers to explore and validate children's experiences and learning. Additionally identification of local concerns and desires for early childhood care and education could shape initiatives and inform research and policy (Carasco, Clair, & Kanyike, 2001). Scholars in early childhood education, Dimitriadis and McCarthy (2001), argued that "A strategy of alliance might allow us to produce new anti-discriminatory pedagogies that will respond to this fraught and exceedingly fragile moment of globalized, postcolonial life" (p. 119).

While few academic articles have focused on alternative models of early childhood education, some research (Garcia, Pence, & Evans, 2008; Cheney, 2007; Carasco, Clair, & Kanyike, 2001) has addressed different educational contexts for young children. These models provide cases in which other modes of early education provisions for Tanzania can be examined. The parents and community members in Ndogo and the surrounding villages desire both the formal and the informal opportunities to learn for young children. More information needs to be collected to understand how local educational concepts may or may not inform initiatives focused on young children.

Influences on opportunities for young children to learn came from the government, the school, and international donors, which in this case, support the school infrastructure, and parents and community members. The opportunities to learn afforded by these participants both differ and intersect. The government functions through the school to develop national unity and the international donors, often with good intentions, but with ideologies that may diverge with parents' work to prepare young children to stay in the villages with them when the children reach adulthood. International donors influence on young children's opportunities to learn stems from the donor's influence with the government through conditions for funding and expert consultants. International donors place conditions on their funding to put pressure on the government to enact certain policies. The government then influences the

curriculum, policies, and accountability of teachers and schools to incorporate what they consider to be best practices. Overall, young children experience these diverse opportunities to learn on a regular basis both directly and indirectly.

From the data presented in previous chapters, the most significant influence on young children's opportunities to learn was the home and the community. Children spend the greatest amount of time in this setting and interact with the most people here. Parents in this under-resourced area want their young children to attend school in order to learn skills that will allow them to stay in the community, to have a family, and to cultivate the land to allow them to have sustenance. The role of the school is important according to parents because it gives young children the opportunity to learn to read, write, add, and subtract, but the school is also confined to that function. The teacher spent few hours in the day with young children and the school is one of the main outside influences on local communities. School reinforces, through formal schooling, individual social mobility; an example is the way that the schoolteacher emphasized individual work and prohibited collaboration or group work.

In this study, I sought to understand one context better in order to add to the literature of global conversations about young children's opportunities to learn. I do not advocate for one approach to education of young children as more productive than another way, but I do advocate for considering the sociocultural context of opportunities for young children to learn. Table 7 suggests that at present there are

occasional conflicts and gaps in the frameworks. The DAP/DIP framework align in some categories and not in others with the context of Ndogo and what is considered culturally appropriate. This is important to be aware of for NGOs and government officials in the design of early childhood initiatives.

Soto and Swadener (2005), scholars dedicated to creating a stutter in conversations about early childhood education, articulated that "It is clear that it will be crucial for the field to continue to critically analyze how privilege and power have influenced the direction of the field toward the scientifically driven epistemologies and valorized the rationalistic Western lens. Who stands to benefit from the overreliance on Western ways of seeing the world?" (p. 55-56). Soto and Swadener along with other early childhood scholars advocated for studies to examine the context of young children's opportunities to learn.

My study contributes to this call as I examined the opportunities for young children to learn in the home and the community and the Ndogo school that were similar and different and converged. This study adds to the literature that addresses the nuances, ambiguities, and complexities of the opportunities for young children to learn in and out of formal school in a specific context. A way forward in the global dialogue about educating young children is to encourage scholars, NGOs, and policymakers to understand and consider opportunities for young children to learn.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Glossary

KISWAHILI AND KIMWERA WORDS:

Balboa: tree
Bembea: swing
Chingowe: game
Dagaa: a small fish
Igiza: to mimic
Jando: boy initiation
jembe: hoe
khanga: traditional pattern on a cloth
kiangulo: celebration ceremony at the end of initiation rite
mboga ya viazi: plant
Mganga: local doctor
Mti nyumba: tree house
Mulongo: initiation teacher
mundu: sickle
munyakiti: Village executive officer
Mwalimu: Schoolteacher
mzungu: white foreigner
Njengo: game that children play with corncobs and gourd tops
Ngongoja: game
Ngoma: drums and a celebration
Shikamoo: respectful hello to an elder
Siafu: a bug like a tick
Sikukuu: holiday
Sufi: wool
Ugali: corn meal cooked in boiling water
Unyago: Girl's initiation
Waganga: plural for local doctor
Vigelegele: noise make with tongue

VILLAGES:
M'kalakacha
Chipwapwa
Nahoro
Wimbwi
Ndogo
Namichiga in Ruangwa District

ETHNIC GROUP:
Mwera (Wamwera is plural)
Kimwera (Mwera language)

APPENDIX B
Interview Questions

Parents (with and without children in school):

- How long have you been in the village?
- What would you want me to know about your village?
    - …about the new school?

Tell me about your child…

What do they like?
What do they need to learn?
What are they good at?

Informal education:

- Do parents interact with young children prior to primary education?
    - Who interacts with young children?
    - Who cares for the needs of young children?
    - Why or why not—what influences this?
- "A lot of kids who are 4 and 5 like to play "pretend" – that is, they take a stick and a bowl and pretend they are cooking, or use a stick and pretend it's an axe". What kinds of toys and games do your kids like to do at home? What materials do they use? Who teaches them how to do this?
- We found that in Zanzibar, parents had fears that… is that the case here? Tell me about it…"
- What are your everyday activities and chores? What ages are "appropriate" for certain types of activities? What things are girls allowed/asked to do and not to do? When do fears begin about sexual assault or sexual activity during household labor (collecting firewood, etc.)?
- Is this type of activity good for children? Why? What do they learn from it? Is play a good thing? How much? When is it not a good thing?
- How are young children important to rural livelihood? Why?
- Can you tell me a story or metaphor regarding something about educating young children?
- What are the stories that capture what parent's need to know in your village and your future—can you share those stories with me?
- Can you tell me about a time when….
- What are some proverbs/maxims (Swahili or local ones) about children, about elders? "Children are wealth" and "education is wealth"

Formal education:

- What do young children need to learn
- How do young children learn
- Where do young children learn
- What are hardships or obstacles to young children's learning
- What are perceptions about the new pre-primary school and the pre-primary education that has just begun
- What are perceptions about what is pre-primary education
- What do young children in the village need
- What does a child need to go to school and why?
- If I could be helpful while I am here, what does the school need and why?
- Do you feel education in schools is important? Why or why not?
- Why are primary and secondary (respectively) important?
- What are the benefits of early childhood education? What are the weaknesses?
- What is gained and lost in sending children to pre-school?

Village members/leaders:

- How long have you been in the village?
- What would you want me to know about your village?
    - …about the new school?

Formal education:

- What does a child need to go to school and why?
- If I could be helpful while I am here, what does the school need and why?
- Do you feel education in schools is important? Why or why not?
- Why are primary and secondary (respectively) important?
- What are the benefits of early childhood education? What are the weaknesses?
- What is gained and lost in sending children to pre-school?

Informal education:

- Can you share stories with me about what a parent needs to now before they are a parent and when their children are young?
- Can you tell me about a time when…. (you were deciding when and where to send your child(ren) to school)?
- What are some proverbs/maxims (Swahili or local ones) about children, about elders? "Children are wealth" and "education is wealth"
- What do young children need to learn?
- How do young children learn?
- Where do young children learn?
- What are hardships or obstacles to young children's learning?

- What are perceptions about the new pre-primary school and the pre-primary? education that has just begun?
- What are perceptions about what is pre-primary education?
- What do young children in the village need?

The teacher:

- How long ago did you first come to the village?
- What would you want me to know about the village?
    - …about the new school?
    - How is it for you to commute from Mwenye?
    - What did you do previous to this teaching post?

Formal education:

- Tell me about your daily routines at the school
    - What do you notice about the students you are teaching- are they progressing as you hoped?
        - What would you like to do differently?
- How much do the parents influence the development of your students verses their time in your classroom?
- What is happening outside the classroom like in the home or community to educate young children?

Informal education:

- What do young children need to learn?
- How do young children learn?
- Where do young children learn?
- What are hardships or obstacles to young children's learning?
- What does a child need to go to school and why?
- If I could be helpful while I am here, what does the school need and why?
- Do you feel education in schools is important? Why or why not?
- Why are primary and secondary (respectively) important?
- What are the benefits of early childhood education? What are the weaknesses?
- What is gained and lost in sending children to pre-school?

APPENDIX C
Tanzania school calendar and school system

1) Tanzania school calendar

- January 1st New Year
- January- school year begins
- January 12th Mapinduzi Zanzibar
  April 15th Maulidi
- April 18th Good Friday
- April 21st Easter Monday
- April 26th Muungano
- May 1st Labour Day
- June- end of school term
- 4 week break: June 6- July 5
- July 7th Saba Saba
- July- second term begins
- August 8th Nane Nane
- October 7th Eid el Haji
- October 14th Nyerere Day
- October- secondary examinations occur this month and primary schools are closed for 3 weeks
- December 9th Independence Day
- December- end of 2nd term
- 4 week break - Dec 6 - Jan 13

2) Chart of Tanzania's school system

Table 8: Tanzania school system

Title	Level	Age	Government
Preschool	Nursery school	3-4	Ministry of Social Welfare

Table 8: (cont'd)

Title	Level	Age	Government
	Pre-primary	5-6	Ministry of Community development, gender, and children
Primary/elementary	Standard I	7	Ministry of Education and vocational training
	Standard II	8	
	Standard III	9	
	Standard IV	10	
	Standard V	11	
	Standard VI	12	
	Standard VII	**13**	
"O" (ordinary) level Lower secondary	Form I	14	
	Form II	15	
	Form III	16	
	Form IV	**17** If pass exam: Diploma	
"A" (advanced) level **Upper secondary**	Form V	18	
	Form VI	**19** If pass exam: Certification	
University	Undergraduate	20-23	
University	Master's		
University	PhD		

- After standard 7 there is an exam- if one passes the exam they can continue on to form 1.

- After Form 4 there is another exam - if one passes the exam they can continue on to form 5.
- If one does not pass the Form 4 exam they are eligible to go to a college and pursue a two year certificate and then they can go on for a two year diploma.
- If one passes Form 5 and 6 – they can either go to a college for a 2 year diploma or on to university for a 3-5 year degree.
- On the secondary Form 4 exam (which is in English) - if a student scores class/division 1-3 then they can go to Form 5. If they score class/division 3-4 then they can get a TTCS certification. If they score in class/division 6- 28 points then they can go to PPs teaching. Below that score a student fails the exam and cannot continue with their education.

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