The school situation for street children in Nairobi–
A study about different terms and possibilities

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SUMMARY

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This report is written for the purpose to find out about the school system in Kenya and what has influent today’s system. I will also write about the difference between public and private school and equality. I will base this research upon the Bronfenbrenner theory to see how street children can adjust in school and institutions; I will also write what institutions do for these children.

The conclusion of this report is when Kenya implemented the 8-4-4 system from U.S they thought it would increase dropouts but instead it had gotten a lot if critics. Children who live on the street have gotten an attitude so when they are put in a school, they have difficulty to adjust and instead they might drop out. The schools are starting to be equal, but girls still drops out because they are needed at home. The difference between private and public schools is big, the classes are much smaller and books are not always enough for each pupil in public schools. Teachers in public schools have 70-80 pupils in one class.

Key words: Bronfenbrenner, western world, street children, vulnerable, 8-4-4 system, equality.
Acknowledgements

First and foremost, my gratitude and appreciation go out to my host family who gave me all the tips and information about Kenya culture. It is always hard to come to a new country that has other rules and lifestyle.

I would like to indebted Edwin for taking me to all the different schools to explain to them the purpose of this report, and also for having patience with me when I asked all my questions.

Also thank to all the participants and to Watato wema who has opened my eyes for vulnerable children. After two months in this center I can gladly say that I am a sponsor of a girl call Lucy, 10 years old. I have now seen how important sponsorship is for this centers and how the children long for education.

I hope this report will inspire others to offer more service to vulnerable children and orphans in different institutions.
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1 Disposition

This report starts with a background on why I chose the topics for my research. After the background comes the purpose of this research and my problem formulations. In this chapter I have written about my approach, and challenges and solutions. Following this chapter comes a presentation of the former research that has been done which I found has been relevant for my own research such as street children, Bronfenbrenners theory and influents on today’s education in Kenya. After this chapter I have written about the methods I have used, this includes interviews, literature, observation, participation ant ethic. After this chapter I present my results, following this is analyzes of each problem formulation. Last in this report is a discussion where I have written the consequences my conclusions will lead to. In this chapter I have also written what I think have been the most interesting discoveries. There is also a discussion of the methods I have used for this research, this part is about if I could have chosen another method to find my results. After the report is my reference list and appendixes.
2 Background

Study after study has taught us that there is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls. No other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity, lower infant and maternal mortality, improve nutrition and promote health, including the prevention of HIV/AIDS [...] Getting children into school is a vital first step. But to receive the full benefits of education, they must continue to attend classes.¹

This quote is from the Millennium education goals where the UN has determined that is every child’s right to go to school. One of MDG (millennium development goals) goal is to promote gender equality and empower women. I believe it is a worldwide issue that more and more children in developing country such as Kenya drop out of school because of poverty or those girls are needed at home. My motive for this research is that we in the western world take education as compulsory; if we don’t go to school we can’t get a job. Meantime, people in Kenya are struggling with poverty and some don’t see education as a priority. In the slums of Nairobi, there are vulnerable, orphans and street children. Historically, western world has had big influent on Kenya’s education system e.g. 8-4-4 system which is taken from U.S and was implemented to decrease number of drop outs. What interested me is why the government doesn’t do anything about the amount of pupils in classrooms, and parents rather put their children in private school. Shouldn’t all children have the same terms depending if you go to a public school or a private. Since the Millennium goals have been set to 2015 I am interested if the goal of taking girls to school has improved and what have been done to put street children into school. To understand why children drop out I found it crucial to do research about today’s school system.

There are institutions that help these children with education. However, putting a child with no experience of being in a school will cause problems. I became interested in Bronfenbrenners theory which shows a child’s environment affect its part in society and its role in the classroom. This interest is from previous practices when children with rough background have problem to adjust in the classroom and even have difficulty to socialize with classmates. I found it difficult to handle these children, but it must be harder for teachers who have 70-80 pupils in one class to handle it, especially if the children never have been in school before.

I chose to do this study since I will be a teacher in primary school, in the Swedish curriculum it is written that schools mission is to give the pupils an international perspective to be able to see the own reality in a global context and to create international solidarity². Therefore, writing about the education in Kenya and street children will give me a bigger understanding of global education context; it will even give me the advantage to teach my future pupils. I believe my research is very important and relevant for my future occupation. I believe pupils will listen to a teacher who has something to say from own experience.

¹ Fleshman, Michael. (2005)
² Skolverket. (2011)
3 Purpose and problem formulation

My purpose of this research is to see what has influent education in today’s Kenya. How is the equality issue, does girls go to school? When a child comes from the street and receive the opportunity to go to school, a place where the environment is totally different, what positive and negative effects will affect the child? And how do teachers and institutions handle this dilemma, what is their role in these children lives? What are the difference between public and private schools, can everyone depending on what school they go in, proceed to secondary school?

My question formulation is:

- What has influent the school system of today’s Kenya?
- How is the gender and equality situation in the schools?
- How do institutions work and can street children behave in one?
- What are the difference between public and private schools?

3.1 Approach

I have gone as a volunteer worker from the organization Peace Work who cooperates with ICYE in Kenya. I helped them on their project which was being in a school call Watato wema, in the slums of Nairobi. I have gone to a public school close by called Kayole 1 primary school, a private school called Primrose Junior School and a self-sponsored school called Carmel Centre School to receive more information. Since I will be a primary teacher, I will only focus on primary schools. I will therefore not write anything about higher education such as secondary schools and university.

I have only been in schools in Nairobi; therefore this research is only about some schools in the same area in Nairobi where I did my volunteering. I am aware that in villages and by the coast it is different, I am especially thinking of equality in school.

Many children who go to Watato wema could have been street children, and the children in Carmel Centre School are children who got picked up from the street. That’s why my research focuses on street children in Nairobi from without the Bronfenbrenner theory.

I will do interviews with children, teachers and workers in Kenya Red Cross. I will also follow the daily work with the social worker at Watato Wema, which contains house visits. These visits are to parents who want their child to come to the center; they can’t afford taking their child to school or give them food. I have been the teacher in the beginners’ class in Watato Wema, the same children whom I did house visits.

3.2 Challenges and solutions

Coming to a new country means culture chock, it is impossible to avoid. I have written what I felt was difficult the first period in Kenya, and how I succeed to find a solution.
3.2.1 Practical

As I have gone to Kenya alone and as a volunteer, it has been my own responsibility to go to different schools to receive the information I needed. Many headmasters and directors were very suspicious when I came to their school asking for an interview; they thought I might write something bad about their school. Then I brought a Kenyan friend who could explain to them what I wanted, after that they let me in to their schools.

In Kenya, they always give something as a “thank you” for participated\(^3\). At the beginning this was a bit difficult because I didn’t know what they expected me to give them, and if I should buy to the whole class. I bought cookies sometimes to the whole class and sometimes to just the headmaster, if it was him I was interviewing that day.

When I was going to buy books, especially about the school history of Kenya, the workers couldn’t understand what I was looking for since the supplies of books are very low. The books I could find were the same in every bookshop.

3.2.2 Communication

Some of the children I wanted to talk to were too small, they didn’t speak any English. This was the biggest issue I had during my volunteering in Watato wema, I was put at beginners class (2-3 years old) and was going to teach them numbers and letters. After one month, we understood each other and even if we didn’t speak the same language, they still called me teacher and did what I told them. And if I needed help with translating, I asked the bigger kids and them gladly helped which also gave them self-confidence.

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\(^3\) Lindberg, Claes. (2011)
4 Former researches

This chapter will be about what former research has been done that I think has been relevant for my research. It will be about street children’s capacity of adjusting to school environment, institutions, influents on today’s education and also equality in Kenya.

4.1 Street children

In Nairobi there are, according to COCESCI, 300,000 children who are registered in different institutions. But it is still difficult to establish the number of street children there is in Kenya and in Nairobi, since different people has different understanding of what a street child is. In Kenya, a child is defined as a person below the age of 18 years. But street children are forced to become adults prematurely. In an early age they are given negative understanding that they are a threat to society. There are a different between children of the street and children on the street. Of the street children have a home and a family to go home to at night. On street children lives and work on the street full time. Some of the problems and challenges a street child will have when he/she comes to an institution is child abuse, HIV/AIDS pandemic, poverty, lack of essential resources and facilities e.g. classes, personnel and medical care.4

The oldest institution in Kenya is East Leigh community Centre which started in 1959. The growth of institutions was slow up to 1980 but as the poverty grew, so did the interventions. Most institutions shared their long and short term plan, short and long term plans depends on the different institutions resources. Some of these plans are: increase/decrease the number of children to be reached, working with the youth and young adults, train local people to take over the project and extend geographical outreach5.

4.2 Bronfenbrenners theory

Former research of how children’s environment affects their behavior has done by a Russian-American psychologist call Bronfenbrenner. This theory dwells on human development and follows the growth of children in to the society. Bronfenbrenner developed a model that shows the systems which surrounds the individual person. The different systems are:

- Micro system - the system where the individual person cooperate with those who are closest; parent’s siblings and classmates. For the child to feel good, it is important that this system works and is in balance. When the child grows older, other micro system become important, such as new friends in the neighborhood.

- Mesosystem – the system that describes the cooperation between the different parts in microsystem e.g. between family and school. How a pupil function in school is determined not only by influences in school but also how the family interact with the school.

- Exosystem – this system includes people and institutions which stand longer from the individual bur still affects. This can be parent’s workplace, media, relatives and neighbors. The child does not participate in this system but it still affects the child, such as the school’s

4 A project of Koinonia Community. (2006)
5 A project of Koinonia Community. (2006)
personnel situation. Even the county’s childcare and the access to public means of communication.

- Macro system – that system which is longest apart from the individual such as laws, religion, culture and economy, different happenings in the society that still can affect the child.\(^6\)

Bronfenbrenner means that in the classroom there are two factors which determine children’s behavior; teacher and the children. The teacher must have authority, self-confidence. For the teacher to reach the children it is best if she/he has the same cultural background. If pupils work in groups, they learn from each other and it creates learning situations. Family is a big part in children’s learning, a child needs someone more than the teacher to show its new proficiency\(^7\). Bronfenbrenner means that the only setting that serves as a comprehensive context for human development is the children’s institution. This is because it provides the opportunity to investigate the impact of a contrasting primary setting. To summarize Bronfenbrenner’s theory; a child’s development depends on its interaction with the different systems.\(^8\)

### 4.3 Equality

The African culture is built so that the man will be higher than the woman\(^9\). Since Kenya became independent 1963, the enrolment of girls in primary schools has increased, even in a faster race then boys (See appendix 3). A research has been done in Kenya about what attribute women and men have in the document *Teaching and Learning in the Primary Classroom*. It is written in Kenya, and according to this document the woman as a shy, quiet housekeeper meanwhile the man should be strong, powerful, and dominant and the one who makes all the decisions. Years ago, parents have generally favored education of their sons; it will be their responsibility to take care of the parents when they grow older. Girls on the other hand, are incorporated into the husband family. The girls were also the ones who would look after the younger children and do the cooking in the house, which means they have to be taken from school. Boys were also seen as the biggest provider, they have a bigger prospect for wage job in the Kenyan economic system\(^10\).

### 4.4 Influents on today’s education

Bogonko (1992) means that western education had some effects on Africans, the boys who attended mission schools went back home with new ideas and principles of European culture. The traditional society began falling apart after this because Africans received exotic, irrelevant and theoretical education. The pupils also depended on the teacher as the only source of knowledge. After a while, western education alienated African youth from the indigenous education so instead of being prepared for the organic unity, the pupils were introduced to philosophy of individualism\(^11\).

In 1950 there were two structure of education: Africans and European/Asian. The difference between these two was that primary school in Africa lasted four years while the European/Asian seven years. In Africa, after the pupils had finish primary school they were expected to read the Bible and to write

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\(^6\) Philips, Tove. (2011)

\(^7\) Bronfenbrenner, Urie. (1974)

\(^8\) Bronfenbrenner, Urie. (1979)

\(^9\) Bogonko Nyachieo, Sorobea. (1992)

\(^10\) Eshiwani S, George. (1993)

\(^11\) Bogonko Nyachieo, Sorobea. (1992)
letters to friends and relatives. The final year in European/Asian primary school was a preparation for secondary school. African primary and secondary school were total twelve years while European/Asian was thirteen years. The African structure of education changed after their independence\textsuperscript{12}.

Today, Kenya has the 8-4-4 system which overall structure was similar to U.S. The 8-4-4 system is the brainchild of the Presidential Working Party on the Second University; it is designed to provide life-long education. The main purpose of this change was to improve the quality of education at all levels. The 8-4-4 system means that children are going eight years in primary school, from ages six-fourteen, then four years in secondary school, and four years in University.\textsuperscript{13} Why they chose this system of education came from the Mackay Report from 1981 and was assumed to enable school dropouts. According to Bogonkos research, the government accepted the report but the public didn’t really accept the changes from a six year to a four year secondary education\textsuperscript{14}. However, this new system is thought to have several advantages. One advantage is that the curriculum content has more practical and technical education, it will concentrate on implicating experience of the learner in the classroom instead of only lay emphasis on the exploitation of local resources and facilities. Another advantage is the system will move from an examination-centered education to a more pragmatic, child-centered approach.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{12} Eshiwani S, George. (1993).
\textsuperscript{13} Närman, Anders (1995)
\textsuperscript{14} Bogonko Nyachieo, Sorobea. (1992)
\textsuperscript{15} Eshiwani S, George. (1993)
5 Methods

In this chapter I will present this research’s implementation. I have written about the methods and why I have chosen these methods.

5.1 Interviews

The purpose of using interviews as a research method is to receive more information and understanding from the participant’s point of view. Kvale & Brinkmann writes about possible aspects the interviewer can use. One on them is focus, this means that the interviewer design questions from without pre-determined themes, at the same time the interview is not strict structured. The questions should be open and the interviewer should not have the right to give his/hers own opinion about the subject.

5.1.1 Participants

I chose the participants after my observations in Watato wema, so they are not random selected. I did so because I felt they could contribute with information to this research. Teachers and principal have I not selected however, because I didn’t have enough time to observe them long enough to be able to choose. I have chosen both boys and girls but unconscious I have focused on girls since this research is about equality (See Appendix 3). Larsson means that me as an interviewer should be aware of the answers I want from the participant. In this way I can easily distinguish what patterns are appropriate. The questions should also be specific and the interviewer should always listen to the participants. I decided what questions I was going to ask in advance, but during the interviews I changed or added some questions depending on the situation, such as attendant questions (See questionnaire in Appendix 1 & 2).

5.1.2 Processing

I used my I-phone as a recorder during the interviews to make sure I got all the information, and each participant said yes to this. I listened to the interviews duplicate times. Then I wrote out fair the results I had gotten from the interviews. Some interviews were very long, therefore I categorized my material. According to Kvale & Brinkmann categorizing gives better structure and the interviewer can easily compare the different parts of the material. The interviewer can decide beforehand or when processing what categories he/she should have. I decided my categories during the processing. I divided teachers-pupils and boys-girls, and in what purpose, such as gender- street children.

16 Lantz, Annika. (2011)
17 Kvale & Brinkmann.(2009)
18 Larsson, Sam (2005)
19 Kvale & Brinkmann.(2009)
5.3 Observations/Attendance

Another method I have used is participated observations both in Watato wema, public, private and self-sponsored school. According to Stukat observation is a good method to see how teachers and pupils behave in reality. \(^{20}\) I have followed the social worker as an observer to do house visits at parents’ houses who wants their child to come to Watato Wema. The social worker looks at the house setting and the lifestyles that the families live in, the general environment to assess if the child is classified as being vulnerable or not, if it is very dirty and unsuitable for a child to be in, then she takes them to the center. \(^{21}\)

I have taught in a class, been talking to pupils during break time and lunch, and attending classes’ means that the researcher participates more active in the process than its custom\(^{22}\). I came very close to the pupils when I did so and they felt relaxed with me.

5.4 Literature

I have mixed both Swedish and Kenyan literature in this report. The most important literature is “A history of modern education in Kenya ” of Bogonko Nyachieo, Soroea because it gave me the basic tools I needed to proceed with my research. He has written about the history of Kenya and why the country implemented the 8–4–4 system. He has also written about equality. However, book supply in Kenya so I was very lucky to find this book. But other methods like interviews and observations have been crucial for this research.

5.5 Ethic

The interviews are with both children and teachers; therefore it is important to use the four demands which are information demands, approval demand, confidentiality demand and to make use of demand.\(^{23}\)

Information demand means that the person who is getting interviewed has the right to get informed on the project purpose. Approval demand means the participant has the right to decide over his/hers participation. This means that the participant has the right to decide where, how long and how the interview should take place. Confidentiality demand means that no personal information is going to be given to unauthorized people. To make use of means that information about private persons should be used only for research purpose.\(^{24}\)

Knowing about these demands I will only use the participant’s first names in this report, I have neither forced anyone to give me an interview and no personal data will either be given in this report.

\(^{20}\) Stukát, Staffan. (2005)
\(^{21}\) Elisabeth. (2011)
\(^{23}\) Fischier-Persson, Ulrika. (2011)
\(^{24}\) Fischier-Persson, Ulrika. (2011)
6 Result and analyze

Here I present the result I have received from this study. In the end of each result there will also be analyze.

6.1 What has influent the school system of today’s Kenya?

Today, Kenya is one of the countries in Africa that wants their citizen to have education. Although, there are still some problems the country stands before; such as children are needed at home to do the daily tasks. The parents also can’t afford for their child’s education, there are school fees in public schools, and it costs for taking the bus and school uniforms. According to Jiver, after Kenya’s independence 1963, they wanted a better education system so they came up with a development plan. It is written in this plan that Kenya wants social justice, individual freedom and financial independency. From the development plan the eight national goals for education have occurred.

The eight national goals:

1. Nationalism, patriotism and promote national unity
   In Kenya, there are different ethnic groups, races and religions and they all need to live and interact with Kenyans. By removing conflicts and promoting positive attitudes, they will live in harmony.

2. Promote the social economic, technological and industrial needs for national development.
   Children in Kenya must be prepared for the changes in attitudes and relationships. It is necessary for the smooth process of a developing modern economy. Education should produce citizens with skills to support a growing economy. Education should also provide learners with skills for Industrial development.

3. Promote individual development and self-fulfillment
   Children should get the opportunity to develop their potential, interests and abilities, building a character.

4. Promote sound moral and religious values
   Education should provide and help children to grow up into self-disciplined, self-reliant and integrated citizens.

5. Promote social equality and responsibility
   All children should be given varied and challenging opportunities for collective activities and corporate social service, irrespective of gender, ability or geographical environment.

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26 Jivén, Lars M (1982)
6. **Promote respect for and development of Kenya’s rich and varied cultures.**

In order to build a stable and modern society, education should give the children in Kenya an understanding of past and present cultures and their valid place in contemporary society.

7. **Promote international consciousness and foster positive attitudes towards other nations.**

Education should lead the youth to accept membership in this international community with all obligations and responsibilities and rights. Kenya is a part of the international community.

8. **Promote positive attitudes towards good health and environmental protection.**

To avoid indulging that will lead to physical or mental ill health; education should give the youth the value for good health and foster positive attitudes towards environmental development.²⁷

After Kenya implemented the 8-4-4 system as a purpose to increase numbers of drop outs and to have a better education system has not given the best result. Eshiwani writes that there were a lot of critics of this system; it required many books and facilities. All pupils were also doing the same subjects, including girls doing science subjects.²⁸ My research shows that this system can see as a result of the school strike which was the first week when I came to Kenya. According to head teacher Hellen the strike was necessary, because the government has promised for years that schools were going to get more teachers. The strike shows that the teachers are unmotivated to continue, the government needed to feel a bit of pressure. Children don’t have books to study for tests and they how can’t keep up in school leave school.²⁹

According to fourteen year old pupil Lydia, what needs to be improved in school is that there have to be more teachers because they are 72 pupils in one class with only two teachers, one for Swahili and the other have the rest of the four subjects. She also thinks there have to be more textbooks because there are not given to all children. She also thinks school is that you have to go there; there are important things to learn. She wants to have a bright future, money you can lose but education will stay forever. She wants to be independent and education helps you to be that. Her favorite subject is social studies where they learn about Kenya and other countries in Africa. She thinks the education is good in Kenya because people from other countries like Somalia and Saud Arabia come to Kenya for education.³⁰

According to head teacher Kuria in Kayole 1 Primary School, the quality of education hasn’t changed during the years. The standard is not better after taken so many kids in each class. Since Kenya is a developing country, it is not possible to provide with e.g. computers. He means that the feedback between teachers and government is not there. He also means that society is changing, the pupils 10 years ago are not the same as the ones they have today.³¹ But teacher Hellen thinks that the Kenya education is good, nothing to complain about, that are those who has worse education.³² According to Esther, a twelve year old pupil, going in private school says that the teachers are very nice and her favorite subject is social studies. She thinks that the Kenyan education is very good and she wants to be a nurse when she grows up. She mentions that:

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²⁸ Eshiwani S, George. (1993)
²⁹ Hellen. (2011)
³⁰ Lydia. (2011)
³¹ Kuria. (2011)
³² Hellen. (2011)
“without education you don’t have a future, knowing to read is very important.”

6.2.1 Analyze

What influenced today’s education in Kenya is their independence where they came up with the development for a better education. Both Bogonko and results from my interviews the implement of 8-4-4 has gotten critics, both from pupils and teachers. It has not gotten that affect that the government thought, that there will be less drop outs. As I see it, both from interviews and observations, pupils don’t get enough attention so therefore the weakest leave school. The strike is a result from the problems Kenya’s education have. The government promises more teachers in the classroom, perhaps that is what is needed for them to reach their eight national goals. Eshiwani writes that the government has experimented with a number of education structures and systems and that is why 8-4-4 was introduced. What influenced Kenya in this new system was U.S where the system is from. As I see it, Kenya will experiment with new systems, and perhaps there will be other influents in some year. Pupils believe that their education is good, but the teachers believe there can be improvements.

6.3 How is the gender and equality situation in the schools?

The Kenyan culture is built so that girls ought to be at home and boys are the ones going to school because they have a bigger chance of getting a job to support the family. Both pupils and teachers are aware about this equality issue; they say that both girls and boys should have the same opportunity. But it is boys who is becoming prefix (teachers right hand) and monitors (prefix right hand) because girls are weaker. However, the percent of girls attending to primary school has risen and pupils debate about the equality issue in school, this shows that the practices and the mindset that this generation has is different from the ancestors.

Lucy who is 10 years old, lives and goes to school in Watato wema and wants to be a police woman when she grows up because they are doing a good job. She is also playing with all of the boys. Even Angelica who is ten years old also wants to be a policewoman which she admits in Kenya considers as a man job. Even five year old Eugene wants to be a police but he doesn’t really know why. Under observations Lucy plays with the boys and do not want to play “girl games”. Even Lydia takes a big part in the classroom; the boys are listening to her. Boys and girls are all the same and should be treated in the same way, according to head teacher Hellen. In her classroom, all the boys are sitting in front in groups, and the girls are sitting in the back. Boys are more active and needs bigger supervision than the girls who are sitting quietly in the back and do their work. But boys don’t go to secondary, because they don’t need to, they find a job after primary.

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33 Esther. (2011)
34 Eshiwani S, George. (1993)
35 Lucy. (2011)
36 Angelica. (2011)
37 Eugene. (2011)
38 Observation
39 Hellen. (2011)
40 Stephen. (2011)
Female principal Mathemge says that boys and girls can do just the same work. If they have a break and boys are playing a game, the teachers interrupt and say that they have to play together with the girls. According to the male director Mwang girls are more demanding than boys, and they are cheated easily and drop out, it can be that they get pregnant or are needed at home. If girls are having any problems they talk to the woman principal. However, he says boys and girls are equal, a child is a child and each one is important. They are given equal opportunities; girls are competing with boys and boys with girls. Twelve year old Esther thinks that the pupils in her class are being treated the same, but girls sometimes have to answer the teacher more because the boys don’t do that. These stereotypes can be reflected in school under observations. According to pupil Lydia, it is not any different between girls and boys in the classroom.

My research shows that girls drop out of school because they are needed at home, pregnancies, early marriages or parents who feel that it is a waste of money. When boys drop of school it is more common that they do so of own will and their desire to make money. However, it depends if you are in a village or in the city. In the city, girls have more freedom to go to school then in villages. According to Hellen a little bit of the old African norms seem to still be in today’s schools. According to Edwin the different terms of boys and girls is equal in schools, but years ago this was a problem because girls are more needed at home but the people of Kenya is starting to realize that education depending on what gender you have is very important.

6.3.1 Analyze

As a conclusion to this problem formulation, there are still some traces from the old African culture, girls drop out because they are needed at home but both pupils and teachers are getting aware of the equality issue. It is not 100% equal in school; teachers and pupils say that it is which shows that Kenya is making progress. But if boys drop out because they want to make money and girls don’t have a choice; the man is still higher than the woman. The opportunity to drop out of school is not there for a girl in the same way. Girls drop out because of pregnancy and boys drop out because they find a job. Kenyans mindset of equality has changed but there are still some things left from their old culture, this research has showed. The consequences of this are that if the Millennium goal should be accomplished till 2015, the mindset has to be changed, both from teachers, pupils and government.

6.4 How do institutions work and can street children behave in one?

Hjörne & Säljö means that being a pupil means that you are expected to act in a certain way, they have to respect and understand to be a part in the institution, being a pupil is something different from being a child.

My research has shown that school today is not the highest priority for everyone in Kenya, especially not the street children, orphans and vulnerable children. They lean on sponsorship from the western world; if they can’t afford the school fees then they can’t go to school. And a lot of pupils who goes

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41 Agnes. (2011)  
42 Stephen. (2011)  
43 Esther. (2011)  
44 Lydia. (2011)  
46 Hellen. (2011)  
47 Edwin. (2011)  
48 Hjörne & Säljö. (2008)
in public schools don’t continue with secondary school. As a result from my interviews and observations the children has a big faith in going to higher education, many children, depending on what background have a dream of going to university abroad.

An institution like Watato Wema receives a lot of help from The Kenyan Red Cross and from sponsorship. The Kenya Red Cross’s vision is to prevent and alleviate human suffering to the vulnerable in the community. Their mission is to build capacity and respond with compassion to those affected by disaster and at risks.

The pupils I have meet live in the center and goes to public schools, they have to have a sponsor to pay for fees. Finding a sponsor is all about the relationship, it doesn’t matter how high the grades are. However, in Watato wema they have a lot of tests to see the process of the child, to motivate them extra hard. German government has written a contract with the Kenyan government, so they can take a lot of volunteers, they have a special bond. Lydia has a sponsor in Germany so she will be able to go to secondary school next year, but there are many girls and boys in her age who don’t have that and they are very uncertain if they are going to afford going to secondary school.

The sponsors often come as a volunteer and they then decide to be a sponsor, it also happens that the volunteer returns home and tell their friends about Watato wema. Lusweti says that:

It is hard to find a sponsor; half of the children in the center have a sponsor, the sponsor take care of the child from primary to secondary level. And when they turn 18, they are an adult so then it is up for the sponsor to continue sponsor the child for higher education, but it is rare that the child goes up to university.

In a self-sponsored school which opened six years ago when the director saw children on the street looking in dumpsters for food and they had no education whatsoever, it is 40 pupils in the class. The director of this school was brought up in the slum so he has a lot of compation with the youngsters. It is a vision and a passion from God, he says. He started to be friends with the children he saw on the street, so he had to make a step, and in one month time, they could call him teacher. Then he talked to the owner of the building witch was going to be the school, and he could use the school without paying anything.

The school helps them to give them education, and it is not a school ruled by the government. The pupils who go here all come from the slums and have low, economic backgrounds. Many older pupils are living in different centers, like Watato wema. But like Watato wema, there is no organization that helps them, such as The Red Cross. Instead they have a school fee. This means that the school wants their pupils to pay a little to make the school go round, to example teachers’ salaries. The school gives them or the parents the chance to pay daily, weekly or monthly. Most of them pay five dollars per months but if the child who lives in centers has sponsors, the sponsor can contribute with some money. The sponsorship is therefore very important, however not everyone has a sponsor. The children can’t go to school without having paid anything.

Those who complete secondary school, they have secured chances in university. Even though this school only has been in process for 6 years, they have seen that it is common that the pupils go to higher education such as university after secondary school. But not many children join secondary school from primary. In this school the pupils are considered as people who has been given a chance,

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49 Edwin.(2011)
50 www.kenyaredcross.org
51 Lydia. (2011)
52 Lusweti. (2011)
53 Stephen. (2011)
54 Stephen. (2011)
they are not considered to be children from the slum. Interaction between pupils and teachers is very important in this school. According to the director, in public schools there is a big gap between pupils and teachers. Here they have a friendly environment, not only in lessons, they are with them around the clock, they share everything, engage everything what happens in the country. Apart from the normal lessons they are always with the students, to show that the world and God support them.

My research shows that it can be difficult taking care about young adults when they come to institutions because at the time of growth, children have gotten habits like rudeness, slowness to response order, no one in their microsystem has told them that they have to go to school. If this happens, the institutions unfortunately dismiss them from the institution. They can also show positive sides of being in school, they get the opportunity to be in a group and try their best to handle the school environment. The educators who work in the institutions might be unable to understand the children’s behavior so physical punishment might occur. Even girls who are being pregnant get dismissed.

In Watato wema the pupils are fewer, the teacher has the similar background, but it has taken a year for these children to adjust to the new environment. In the beginning the children were very messy and didn’t want to sit down. Now, the children had gotten a routine; they behave like children should do in a school. From my observation these children has huge respect for each other, the older take care of the younger, and they have become a family. Eugene, five years old, says that the director is his father and his mother is dead (she is exactly alive). The director is now in Eugene’s micro system like Bronfenbrenner mentioned, he is the closest person in Eugene’s life and keep telling him that education is important and teach him to behave in school. His mother doesn’t want to see him, she is not dead but she might be in Eugene’s macro system.

6.4.1 Analyze

How a street child can behave in school or in an institution depends on the teacher and on the child’s background. If someone in the child’s microsystem or the other systems has told school is important, then the attitude might be different from someone who has seen school as something unnecessary. Institutions are very important so these children can receive education and feel they are a part of society. Institutions can’t give up on the child if the child is rude or have gotten an attitude. The children in Watato wema were very rude a year ago but today they have a good behavior and act like school children. Bronfenbrenner writes that it is the teacher and the classmates that is the biggest factors in a child’s school environment. Teachers in institutions or school might not have the capacity to understand the child. In Watato wema, the teacher has the same cultural background as the children; he also has authority which has given result in the children. One of the nation goals Kenya has set up is that “children should get the opportunity to develop their potential, interests and abilities, building a character”, and this is what institutions such as Watato wema are trying to do.

55 Stephen. (2011)
57 Observation
58 A project of Koinonia Community. (2006)
59 Observation
6.5 What are the difference between public and private schools?

In Kenya, public school is free however there is a still cost for school shoes, school uniforms and since the government don’t give enough money for school books, the pupils will have to buy their own books.  

Kayole 1 Primary School is a school in the slum of Nairobi. They have 2500 pupils in 32 classes, so there are almost 80 pupils in each class. The children are much disciplined and listen to the teacher. Many come from difficult home setting, and they need a lot of gaudiness from the teachers. Some parents are not conserved about the children, however 90% of the children the area go to school, even the ones that have been living on the street, but poverty makes some them drop of. Those children can’t follow the school rules; they don’t have any behavior, so they go back to the street.

Class teacher Hellen has 75 pupils in her class, 43 girls and 32 boys from age 13 to 16. She teaches math, English, social studies and Christianity. Because she is the class teacher she has the major subjects. There is another teacher for social studies and one for Kiswahili. There is also a lot of Muslims in the school, the school doesn’t mind any religion but they only teach Christianity. Maybe one day, policies will be changed but today the Muslims have to sit in the Christianity lessons which parents sometimes get angry about. However, they are allowed to practice their religion in the school, if they need to go and pray they are allowed to do so.

Since there are so many in one class and only one teacher there are those pupils who needs more time with the teacher, therefore the teacher agrees with the parents to coach the child for some money after school time. On Saturday they can come to school, to finish what is written in the syllabus. In Hellens classroom, interaction between the children is very important. Hellen also take the pupils for a field walk, to learn about flowers. But it is not just the flowers they will look at, it is also nature, science and it open doors for group discussions. It is important for the stronger pupil to teach the weakest because they might fear the teacher and prefer to learn from someone equal. Group discussions are so good to have because then even the weakest ones participate. She also says that 95% of the pupils go to secondary schools, not depending on what gender they have.

Ten minutes’ walk from Kayole primary school is an area with 15 private schools; one is called Primrose Junior School and they have classes from baby class, nursery, pre-unit, and from first grade up to eight. The uniforms are red because the other private schools don’t have that color. The children who started baby class at year 2004 are now in seventh grade.

The teachers in private schools have the same knowledge as the ones in public schools, but the director have to follow the teacher strictly. They make sure the teacher is in the classroom, and that they do their work. Private schools are doing well just because if a pupil fail the exam then they have to explain why, it is that strict. Almost everyone in this school goes to secondary school, and it is common they even go to university. They don’t have head boy and head girl because the parents don’t like it. The reason is because they think their children don’t concentrate of their school work and the mind is concentrating on the tasks which come being a head boy/girl. However, they have prefix who is both a girl and a boy. They pick different ones every month so the parents can’t complain about the issue that their child is not doing their homework.

60 Kuria. (2011)
61 Hellen. (2011)
62 Kuria. (2011)
63 Hellen. (2011)
64 Agnes. (2011).
65 Duncan. (2011)
In this school the parents pay monthly instead of per semester because it makes it easier for the parents. The prices are 500 Ksh up to pre-unit, class 1-2 costs 600 Ksh, class 5-6 costs 800 Ksh and class 7-8 1,000 Ksh per month. This fee covers the costs for teacher and development. The parents have to pay extra for textbooks and uniforms. What happens if the parents can’t afford paying and the child might be gone for a month, they organize with the parents so the child goes longer after school, the parents pay for that extra time, it is then compulsory to catch up with the others, but it is really rare. If they can’t pay then they come with the child to the office and work something out. Perhaps they can pay the next month.66

Tests are not the same in private schools as in public schools. In private schools tests are set by the director, and the teacher is not aware so they can’t ask any questions. According to Agnes67 the Kenyan education needs to be approved in both public and private schools so the pupils can perform well. So many pupils go to private schools because the parents see the work they do in private schools. The classes are too big in public school, so they feel like if they want their child to get a good education, they have to take them to private schools. For example; in pre unit there is 41 pupils with two teachers at the same time, this is because the class is too big.68

The teachers are better paid in private schools than in public schools. In public schools they don’t add more time; however they pay for extra time in the evening. Parents also prefer to take their children to private schools because they use English all the time. It is important to interact with the parents, so they understand what is going on in the classroom. That is not possible in public schools because of their amount of pupils, according to Agnes.69

6.5.1 Analyze

My research shows that there is a big different between private and public schools, the major different is the amount of pupils in the class. It is very common for pupils to go to private schools; they are competing with each other in the same area. Compared to public schools, if one pupil shows poor performance, the director goes to the bottom with it to find out why, from my observations it shows they don’t do that in public schools. If they don’t pass a test, it is not the teacher’s fault, the pupil just failed. Agnes mentioned that parents prefer taking their child to private schools, because they use English in every subject. However, Hellen said that 95% in public schools continue with secondary school.

66 Duncan. (2011)
67 Agnes. (2011)
68 Agnes. (2011)
69 Agnes. (2011)
7 Discussion

In this chapter I have written about what the consequences are from my conclusions. I have also written about my choice of methods.

7.1 Result

I thought it would be a hard task finding any private school, but the opposite; there are fifteen private schools in the same area and they are all competing with each other. The children have to have uniforms and they can afford schoolbooks, classes are not that big, the total opposite of public school. Just ten minutes away from the private school I visited is Kayole public school where there its 70-80 pupils in one classroom with one teacher.

Why I have gotten the results I have is because I have been using the Bronfenbrenner theory which has been a good tool to understand how children’s environments reflect their behavior in school. And this theory is worldwide; therefore I have been looking at the wide perspective. Using another theory might have given me different results, street children in Kenya live with different terms, not like in western world. My own experience from Swedish schools has been shown that pupils who I know have problem at home have difficulty to behave in school. As a teacher I believe it is crucial for teachers to understand the pupil’s background and to understand that it is so much in a child’s live that determine its place in school. The consequences from my results show that teachers who have big classes leave the weakest ones behind, because there is no interaction.

I believe the strike was necessary, not only because teachers want higher salaries but also because street children is a big concern in Nairobi. Decreasing classes and put more teachers in the classes, will make these children feel they are seen and work harder for higher education instead of dropping out.

What I think is my biggest discoveries are the difference about private and public schools. A teacher in public school earn about $130/month which is not much in Kenya. To get a good education should be free, but instead parents have to struggle with money to put their child in a private school. Another big discovery is how important the micro system is for a child’s development, in public schools where there is impossible to interaction, children drop out or don’t continue with higher education. But in the self-sponsored school where interaction is very important, many pupils continue with higher education. This gives me an understanding of how important it is for me to interact with my future pupils. Bronfenbrenner has also put teacher in the microsystem.

7.2 Method

I don’t think I could have gotten a better picture of my research if I had used different methods; however I feel I could have done my interviews better. This is because I did my interviews in school, a place where for them is safe but I could feel they were gotten stressed, especially the teachers because pupils came in the room to ask questions. I did one interview with Edwin outside school and immediately the atmosphere became better.

Since I was a teacher in Watato wema I participated a lot in this research, I became very close to the children and they trusted me after a while. What I felt I did wrong was when I walked around with a paper and a pen to ask the pupils questions. They immediately became defensive and shy. That was
when I understood that that technique was not going to work; therefore the teacher told the participants the purpose of my research and then we could sit in private.
8 References

8.1 Literature


### 8.2 Internet


### 8.3 Interviews

Angelica. (2011). Face to face interview at Watato Wema 2011-11-02, 15.30 to 15.45

Agnes. (2011). Face to face interview at Primrose Junior school 2011-10-05, 10.00 to 10.28.

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Kuria. (2011). Face to face interview at Kayole primary school 2011-09-29, TIME

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Lucy. (2011) Face to face interview at Watato Wema 2011-11-01, 09.34 to 09.50

Lydia. (2011) Face to face interview at Watato wema 2011-09-17, 14.25 to 14.35.

Stephen. (2011). Face to face interview at Carmel Centre School. 2011-10-12, 10.31
8.4 Lectures


9 Appendix 1: Questions (Teachers)

1. How many pupils do you have in your class?

2. What are your subjects?

3. What do you think about the Kenyan education overall?

4. What do you think about the strike? How did it affect the schools and has there been any improvement?

5. Is the school fees expensive? Can many pupils afford going to school? (Public school)

6. How important is the curriculum for your teaching?

7. How many pupils continuing to secondary school?

9. Is there any different between boys and girls, the way they are treated? Who is prefix and monitors in your class, girls or boys and why?

10. Is it hard to be a teacher in Kenya? What is the biggest challenge as a teacher?

12. Is it important with individualization, to see each and every pupils need?

Questionnaire (Pupils)

1. What is your favorite subject?

2. Why is it important to go to school?

3. What do you want to be when you grow up, and why?

4. Do you feel that boys and girls are treated equally?

5. Do you want to go to higher education such as secondary and university when you get older?
10 Appendix 2: Participants

- Edwin, a teacher in class one from Watato Wema. I choose him because he came as a volunteer from The Kenyan Red Cross one year ago. He has had the class from the beginning, so he knows if the pupils have done improvements or not.
- Elisabeth, social worker at Watato Wema. She knows everything about the children’s background; she helped me with the selection of children to interview.
- Lusweti, director of Watato Wema
- Lydia, fourteen years old, live in Watato wema. Came to the center when she was nine.
- Esther, twelve years old, going to private school Primrose Junior School.
- Eugene, five years old. Orphan who lives in Watato Wema. His mother left him in the center and don’t want anything to do with him.
- Angelica, nine years old. Vulnerable child at Watato Wema with a mother who can’t afford school for her.
- Lucy, ten years old. Vulnerable child at Watato Wema with unemployed parents.
- Hellen, teacher in the public school Kayole 1.
- Kuria, principal at Kayole 1
- Stephen, director at the self- sponsored school Carmel Centre School
- Agnes, principal at the private school Primrose Junior School
- Duncan, director at the private school Primrose Junior School
Figure 4.9: Percentage Enrolment of Boys and Girls in the Primary School, 1963–1979

Table 4.12: Gross Enrolment Ratios for Primary Education by Sex, 1970–1982

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Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Reference