

EMPOWERMENT PROCESSES IN THE LIVES OF TANZANIAN WOMEN:
INTERSECTION OF FAMILY, EDUCATION, AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

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By

Kara L. Kirby

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A dissertation written by

Kara L. Kirby

B.A., Antioch College, 1994

MAED, Vermont College, 2005

Ph.D., Kent State University, 2016

Approved by

_____, Chair, Doctoral Dissertation Committee
Vilma Seeberg

_____, Member, Doctoral Dissertation Committee
Natasha Levinson

_____, Member, Doctoral Dissertation Committee
Suzanne Holt

Accepted by

_____, Director, School of Foundations,
Kimberly S. Schimmel Leadership, and Administration

_____, Interim Dean, College of Education, Health
Mark A. Kretoivics and Human Services

KIRBY, KARA L., Ph.D., December 2016

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This study explores the experiences and feelings of seven Tanzanian women towards education, social relationships, and digital technology within the broader discourse on well-being, aspirations, and empowerment. Using a narrative inquiry method this study examines how the intersection of education, social relationships, and digital technology contribute to an enhanced quality of life for Tanzanian women. A capabilities approach in tandem with a feminist perspective were employed allowing for a deep and thick description of well-being and empowerment as expressed through the participants' narratives and reflections on their lives, and what they aspire to be and do. With the guiding question: *Whether, to what extent, and how do urban Tanzanian women use ICTs for empowerment?* I implemented Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three dimensions of space, *backward/forwards*, *inward/outward*, and *situated in place* to examine the participants' lived experiences. These three dimensions provided insight into how ICTs create spaces for women's voices to be heard, aspirations to be awakened, and where ideas can be shared, and solutions to pressing issues can be addressed.

The findings from this research study suggest that with a secondary level education or higher in combination with access to digital technology, supported by strong family relationships, women have the means to engage in opportunities that are

personally, professionally, and economically uplifting. They also develop a sense of agency and contribute to social change through connections with others, aspiring to alternative ways of being and doing, and constructing a collective voice to express the way forward.

Keywords (Education, digital technology, ICTs, African women, aspirations, empowerment, capabilities, well-being, Tanzania)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Sitting in my classroom one day I overheard one Tanzanian woman sharing her grief with another, because her husband of 12 years decided to marry a younger woman. It's as if a light goes on, and I begin to understand my position as privileged, not just because I am White and American, but because I am educated and know how to utilize the law. I am shocked and confused by these women not knowing their rights, or where to find assistance. It is in this moment that I am drawn to the idea of helping women to better understand their rights. While contemplating the complexity of socio-cultural norms and women's rights, I take note of a rapid and dynamic digital technology *revolution* happening all around me. I am mesmerized at how quickly small sized mobile phones are making their way to Tanzanian streets. On a recent trip home to the U.S. I saw my friends and family with clunky cell phones that had limited access to texting through their carrier contracts. At the same time in Tanzania texting was cheaper than calling, and there were no carrier contracts. You simply buy a phone and a sim card, and when you have the money a scratch card to enter the amount of money you want added to your phone's account. It seemed like such a simple system set up for ease of making businesses run smoothly, and staying in touch with friends and relatives much more realistic than the previous system of calling from a post office in one town to another post office in another town. However, on closer inspection I came to realize the *owners* of the mobile phones appeared to be mostly men, and I began to wonder how and why women

did not seem to have the same level of access to this new and important wave of technology seeping into the country.

From the inception of this study's idea, my mindset towards women, technology, and education has shifted. As I began to dig into the research questions with the participants, I slowly realized that what I expected as an outcome was very different from how the participants viewed their lives and the role of education and technology as instrumental in their empowerment processes. This study is a reflection of my desire to be part of a larger, global feminist movement, where women not only have access to knowledge, but also understand how to exercise their rights and take part in the education of other women.

Problem Statement

Women in urban Tanzania in the second decade of the 21st century are often well-educated, but because of social norms regarding gender they tend to work in jobs that do not give way to opportunities for professional growth. They often work for low wages and lack prestige. Women in Tanzania provide the bulk of support for their families and carrying the majority of family responsibilities (Bakesha, Nakafeero, & Okello, 2009), such as carrying the burden of raising the children, maintaining the home, and securing the resources for school fees, clothing and extra food. In addition, women may well be subject to male domestic abuse, extramarital affairs, and restriction of social and physical freedoms. These burdens contribute to the mismatch between women's levels of education and their position in society as well as their personal empowerment (Kirby, 2013; Stambach, 2000; Vavrus, 2003).

Women, especially those living in remote areas, lack a window from which they can view a world different from their own. Many African women have limited access to move beyond the borders of their communities due to socio-cultural constraints (Asiedu, 2012; Ojokoh, 2009; Robins, 2002; Stambach, 2000) and therefore lack experiences that can help create new ways of seeing themselves and their place within their communities and daily lives.

Information communication technologies (ICTs) have been shown to provide such a window (Asiedu, 2012; Kleine, 2013); however, many African women have limited access to ICTs and certainly lack experience in participating in the modern context related to ICT use, the knowledge society.

Many African women's limited access and ability to control the kind of information they might receive, obtain, collect (Ojokoh, 2009)—if they could choose to engage with ICTs—restricts them also from making contributions to society and in particular the *knowledge society*. Thus they miss out on some opportunities to convert information into localized knowledge for sharing with others within their communities and beyond its borders. Among the missed ICT related opportunities are those that would offer ways to develop “their self-empowerment, self-determination, and well-being” (Ojokoh, 2009, p. 65). In other words, Tanzanian women's lack of access and use of technology limits their engagement in the wider information and knowledge society, thus, reducing their contributions to and voice on empowerment, both individually and collectively.

Purpose

The purpose of this research study is to understand urban Tanzanian women's experience with ICTs and education, and their views on its contribution to empowerment, individual and collective.

Studying the role of ICTs and education in individual and collective empowerment as perceived by urban Tanzanian women may provide us insight on how to address the problems of lack of access, capabilities to use them for the enhancement of their empowerment and well-being. Ample literature reviewed in Chapter 2 makes the case that using ICTs may have a strong positive impact on women's views on their own lives, the community in which they live, and the wider world (Buskens & Webb, 2009; Molony, 2009; Ojokoh, 2009). Having access to ICTs may open a new window on the world, allowing women to connect with other people, giving them the opportunity to access ideas and knowledge, and to see themselves on a different life trajectory, or, in other words, providing both real and imagined spaces for them to pursue a life they have reason to value (Sen, 1999). As Ojokoh (2009) found, it is when aspirations are linked to the harder skills (basic literacy, language acquisition, and an understanding of how ICTs work) that women can become empowered to live a life they value. Confirmatory findings might imply or show how such processes could begin to make changes in the social fabric of the communities in which they live. Positive findings might imply or show how ICTs and education may disentangle women in some way from deep-rooted, long-standing socio-cultural traditions that hinder their personal and professional self-development and self-empowerment.

Empowerment is often described to require the exercise of agency, and it, in turn, cannot be actualized without an aspiration to be or do something more in one's life (Appadurai, 2004). In this study I endeavor to draw together the context in which girls are becoming women in Africa, the state of their current educational experiences, and how digital technology can contribute to awakening their imaginations. This research explores how looking out and experiencing the world, bringing their knowledge and information back to the context of their own lives (Kleine, 2013; Ojokoh, 2009; Somolu, 2007) can move women from being consumers of information and knowledge to becoming producers, and having a voice in the global discourse on women and development.

Need for the Study

The literature on African women and information communication technology (ICTs) is still relatively new and growing rapidly. However, there are many different and compelling perceptions about the significance and use of technology in Africa by women (see Buskens & Webb, 2009; Comfort & Dada, 2009; Foda & Webb, 2014; Hafkin & Huyer, 2006; Isaacs, 2006; Kiss, 2009; Tafnout & Timjerdine, 2009). This study contributes to the literature and adds a key component of the connection between education, empowerment and ICT access and use.

There are multiple and competing perspectives and discourse surrounding the question of whether, to what extent and how African women are empowered through the access and use of ICTs (see Abagi, Sifuna, & Omamo, 2009; Bakesha et al., 2009; Hafkin & Huyer, 2006; Isaacs, 2006; Kiss, 2009; Kyomuhendo, 2009; Meena & Rusimbi, 2009;

Omamo, 2009; Sane & Traore, 2009; Tafnout & Timjerdine, 2009; Wanjira Munyua, 2009; Yitamben & Tchinda, 2009). Until recently, research around women in Africa have more often centered on their socio-economic empowerment, health, and education. There has been some discussion that before women can benefit from using ICTs they must already have achieved basic functionings and not be suffering from severe capability deprivations (Nussbaum, 2011).

Some researchers suggest women ought to have their basic needs met before they are exposed to technology (Griffins, 2003) and learn new skills, whereas others believe engaging in information communication technology not only helps build language and business skills (Norton, Jones, & Ahimbisibwe, 2011), but is also empowering and necessary for the advancement of women.

Design and Lenses for Understanding the Study

For this researcher, three theoretical and methodological approaches to understanding the experience of Tanzanian women regarding their education and ICTs made invisible connections visible.

Using narrative inquiry allowed the participants to tell their stories as a whole. It is used as a methodology to interview participants and to understand their lives holistically. Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three dimensions of space provided the framework for the research and interview questions; however, in itself it did not shine a light on empowerment.

The feminist perspective not only centers the research on the female participant, but also allows the researcher to investigate the processes of social change that will

benefit females, that is, social justice for women. I used the feminist perspective as a lens while designing the research questions, and during the collection and analysis of the data. In order to gain perspective on the participants and how they viewed ICTs, education, and empowerment in their lives, I used my position as a woman to emphasize connections between myself and the women in the study. However, it is important to note that I do not lump my experiences as an American woman categorically with those of these Tanzanian women in the study, nor do I view the participants as a powerless homogenous group (Mohanty, 1988). Utilizing a feminist perspective allows space for me, the researcher to put gender at the center of the study. The participants experienced their lives uniquely within their social, cultural, and economic environment as women, thus making gender the most important piece to their experiences in education, with technology, and how they viewed empowerment. Feminist approaches to research involve a deep reflection into power relationships between the researcher and researched (Sprague, 2005), because the researcher has more control over the research process, how the findings are interpreted and presented, and researchers often have more social capital and power than the researched.

In this research study I used the capabilities approach as another lens while designing the research questions and during the data collection and analysis. In developing the questions, I was looking specifically at how the participants' aspirations were guided by their perspectives on well-being and empowerment. While collecting the data I routinely checked in with the participants as they narrated their stories on how they described their *beings* and *doings* and how these related to their perceptions of achieved

freedoms within their lives. In the analysis stage of the research process I used the capabilities approach within a capabilities empowerment framework (Seeberg, 2014) to understand how the participants' functionings (doings and beings) connected to their capabilities (ability to achieve functionings) and thus which dimensions of freedom (desired outcomes of a life worth living) were attained. The capability approach, pioneered by Amartya Sen, helps to show how people's lived experiences contribute to their own and collective development, framing it as a pursuit of freedom, both individual and collective. It shows how agency, empowerment, and achievement are connected to the wider context of personal and community development. Having this understanding allows me to perceive these invisible connections that are evident in the narratives of people's lives. Agency, aspirations, empowerment, well-being, and achievements are not mere themes. They are what make people's lives; they are not outcomes—they constitute people's lives and their search for freedom (Sen, 1999).

Research Methodology, Narrative Inquiry, and Questions

I used a narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) to study how urban Tanzanian women use their education, linked with ICTs for individual and collective empowerment. I have chosen a narrative inquiry approach because it gives space for the women in this study to tell their stories as embedded experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) in the larger social fabric of their socio-cultural-historical landscapes. Narrative studies “are flourishing as a means of understanding the personal identity, lifestyle, culture, and historical world of the narrator” (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998, p. 3). Narratives are used to represent the character or lifestyle of specific sub-groups in

society, defined by their gender, race, and religion in order to express unheard voices (Lieblich et al., 1998). Stories provide coherence and continuity to one's experience and have a central role in our communication with others (Lieblich et al., 1998). By studying the narratives of the study participants, I can access the individual identity of the participants and their systems of meaning, as well as the narrator's culture and social world. Narrative inquiry is both a phenomenon and method. The story itself is ongoing and the analysis is more of a "searching again . . . a continual reformulation of an inquiry" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 124).

Working with narrative material requires dialogical listening to three voices: the voice of the narrator, the theoretical framework, which provides the concepts and tools for interpretation; and a reflexive monitoring of the act of reading and interpretation (self-awareness of the decision-making process of drawing conclusions from the material; Lieblich, et al., 1998). In my study of how Tanzanian women use ICTs for empowerment, I used a narrative inquiry method in combination with a feminist perspective as viewed through the capability approach lens, with an emphasis on empowerment as elaborated by Seeberg (2014).

In designing my research questions I modeled my approach after Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. The authors find using John Dewey's theory of experience, which includes interaction (personal and social), continuity (past, present and future) and situation (place), a means to understanding the experiences of individuals situated within a larger context or phenomenon. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggested that interaction between personal and social strike a

balance appropriate to the inquiry occurring in specific places or sequences of places. They focused on four directions in an inquiry: inward and outward, backward and forward. Inward suggests the internal conditions of the participant, such as feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, and moral reactions. Outward reflects the existential conditions, the environment, and backward and forward, refers to temporality: past, present, and future (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). “To experience an experience . . . is to experience it simultaneously in these four ways and to ask questions pointing each way” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50). Below I frame my research questions to fit within each of the four ways using a table inspired by Jamie Huff Sisson’s (2011) dissertation. (See Table 1.)

Research Questions

The main research question guiding my study will be: “Whether, to what extent, and how do urban Tanzanian women use ICTs for empowerment?” To further develop my main research question I have crafted five subsidiary questions reflecting Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. In looking backward and forward I want to understand how the participants view their empowerment and ICT journeys through the trajectories of their lives, in the past, present, and visions for the future. In looking inward and outward I hope to understand the internalizations of the participants as they reflect on gender and its relationship to using ICT as a woman in Tanzania. In situating this study in a place I am interested in understanding how this particular context affects the participants’ opportunities and decisions regarding their use

of ICTs. The questions are outlined in Table 1, each connected to a dimension of space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Table 1

Dimensions of Space: Supporting Research Questions

Dimension of Space	Supporting Research Questions
Backward	How do the participants view their biographical contexts (particularly the educational journey) as contributing to their sense of empowerment?
Forward	How do the participants view the role of ICTs in the future well-being in their professional and personal lives?
Inward	In what ways do the participants reflect on their gender as a contributing factor to their access and use of ICTs and perceived empowerment?
Outward	How do the participants perceive that socio-cultural factors influence their access and use of ICTs, and how do these factors guide their aspirations?
Situated in Place	What challenges and supports do the participants perceive contribute to their exercising agency, both generally and in regard to access and use ICTs more specifically?

Setting the Stage: Exploratory Study 2013–14

It was after analyzing the interviews of seven Tanzanian women, in an exploratory study, who had similar perspectives on the empowering aspects of ICTs that I began to wonder, how do ICTs contribute to the empowerment of Tanzania women? The more I thought about the participants and all they had discussed with me in their individual interviews, the more I wanted to better understand how their personal histories and life journeys led to their ending up as empowered professionals in a socio-cultural

context that does not overtly encourage women to be independently successful. Thus, this study was born.

Contribution to the Research

This study contributes to the field of Cultural Foundations of Education and Comparative International Education by opening a wider discourse on how ICTs can impact the lives of women in developing nations. Through my study I examine how ICTs create spaces for women's voices to be heard, aspirations to be awakened, and where ideas can be shared, and solutions to pressing issues can be addressed. This research study opens dialogue on moving women in the developing world from information consumers to creators of ideas, information, and knowledge. Currently the literature in the field of education stresses the growing digital divide between the rich and poor, with women being disproportionately affected. I open a new avenue of thinking around the subject of digital divide and posit my research so that others can begin to explore the notion of access and use by women as the means to making social change through connecting with others, aspiring to alternative ways of being and doing, and constructing a collective voice to express the way forward.

Significance

This narrative research study on how Tanzanian women use their education and ICTs for individual and collective empowerment is significant for two important reasons. First, the study of ICTs for empowerment, particularly in an African context is relatively new, and inquiries into women's perceptions on well-being are limited, if growing.

However, select literature suggests that ICTs can be empowering for women who have not reached all their basic functionings and can serve as tools for building capabilities.

Second, this research study provides a space for women's voices to be heard. The nature of a narrative approach allows room for deep reflection and thick description (Geertz, 1973) to emerge. The stories of the participants' lives capture their experiences and are woven within the socio-cultural context of their place of work, home, community, and that of the nation. Their voices will illuminate the milieu that Tanzanian women negotiate on a regular basis and uncover the capabilities within their reach. The narratives of the participants open up dialogues about empowerment, education, and ICTs within the feeling of well-being.

Organization of the Dissertation

In Chapter 2, *Understanding the Literature*, I explore the context of women and girls' education in Africa, ICTs in Africa, ICTs as a means for women's empowerment, and the link between ICTs and capabilities. I end with a discussion of the body of literature that has assisted me in understanding the capabilities approach.

In Chapter 3, *Methodology*, I describe further the use of the narrative approach and how I incorporate the capability approach lens as viewed through a feminist perspective for this study. I carefully outline the main and subsidiary research questions, expanding on them further. I then explain the methods used for participant selection, data collection, analysis, and ethics. I end with a discussion on how I establish the trustworthiness of this research while identifying any limitations to this study.

In Chapter 4, *Introducing the Participants*, I describe each of the participants' lives as told to me during the narrative interviews. I tell the stories of their childhoods through to their current lives. Important life events and historical events are highlighted and juxtaposed in context with the participants' journeys of empowerment. I frame these narrative life stories around their family relationships, educational and ICT experiences.

Chapter 5, *The Constitutive Nature of Relationships*, is the first of three findings chapters. This chapter discusses the largest emerging theme from the narrative interviews. The chapter begins with highlighting the importance of the relationships between the participants and their mothers. Next, the chapter investigates how the participants' relationships with their fathers encouraged and enhanced their empowerment processes. Finally, I look at the participants' relationships with their husbands and the effect on empowerment.

Chapter 6, *The Instrumental Functionings*, is the second of three findings chapters. This chapter looks in depth at how education and technology function within the participants' empowerment processes. The chapter begins by looking at the participants' educational journeys. Next it highlights the participants' experiences with technology.

Chapter 7, *Empowerment: Individual and Collective*, is the final findings chapter. This chapter starts with the participants' explanation of empowerment. Next, the chapter highlights the participants' description of well-being and how they see it in their own lives. Finally, the chapter highlights the participants' aspirations for the future.

In Chapter 8, *Discussion and Conclusion*, the research questions and purpose of the study are revisited through the narrative inquiry framework. Next the theoretical perspectives are reexamined and expanded. The feminist perspective reviews literature on *intersectionality* and the perception of the *African (or Tanzanian) woman*. In this review the researcher explains that because the study was not originally organized around the concept of *intersectionality* there can only be a brief and loose connection to current research on this topic. The capabilities approach is built on further using evidence from the research findings. Finally, the chapter discusses the implications for the future and offers concluding thoughts.

Definition of Terms

Capability framework and evaluation: The capability approach “is a broad normative framework for the evaluation and assessment of individual well-being and social arrangements” (Robeyns, 2005, p. 94). It is an emerging theory that seeks to understand “societal arrangements . . . [and] their contribution to enhancing and guaranteeing, the substantive freedoms of individuals, seen as active agents of change” (Sen, 1999, pp. xii-xiii). It asks ‘what can a person do and be?’ (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1999), and asserts that “what persons . . . value and act on, [and] what they find feasible to achieve” (Seeberg, 2014, p. 679) guides what kind of life they have reason to value and choose to lead (Sen, 1999). The capabilities of concern in this study are conceptually developed by Seeberg and Luo (2012) as empowerment capabilities.

Development: Although there is no consensus on the term, development does encompass economic growth, with a balance of social and ecological concerns (Kleine,

2013). This study adopts Sen's (1999) concept: "a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy" (p. 3). The freedom "of people to live the lives that they have reason to value and to enhance the real choices that they have" (p. 293).

Empowerment: see heading *From Empowerment to Agency* in the literature review.

Information Communication Technology (ICTs): "Any technology serving the purpose of gathering, processing, and disseminating information, or supporting the process of communication" (Kleine, 2013, p. 5).

Knowledge Society: *Knowledge society* is information women might receive, obtain, collect (Ojokoh, 2009), and then convert information into localized knowledge for sharing with others within their communities and beyond its borders. It is also a community of knowledgeable people around the world who connect with each other through the Internet.

Urban (in Tanzania): The OECD maintains that there is a cut-off point of 150 people/km² for all OECD countries, where all settlements with population density above the threshold are considered urban. For the purposes of this research study, and in order to simplify the area of study I draw on the urban hierarchy in Tanzania, which consists of four urban strata: cities, municipalities, towns and townships (or district headquarters) (Muzzini & Lindeboom, 2008).

CHAPTER II

UNDERSTANDING THE LITERATURE

In this chapter I draw together the context of which girls are growing into women in Africa, and in particular, Tanzania, the state of their current educational setting, and how digital technology can contribute to empowerment. I review the literature that relates to my research questions, putting education, women's empowerment processes and ICTs into the Tanzanian context, as seen through a feminist lens, supported by the capabilities approach. Specifically, I look at literature that helps to situate what it is urban women in Tanzania value in determining what they want to do and be.

I begin with situating girls' education in a broad overview of an African context, emphasizing the inequalities and barriers girls face in the classroom, and how that interferes with gaining a high-quality education. In this section I also discuss the literature on international development education, and technology in Africa. Subsequently I review feminist approaches to development, particularly feminist theories and studies on education and girls and women's empowerment. I then move on to a review of the capability approach, its major concepts, uses in this study, reviewing the literature that connects the concepts of education in the context of development in Africa. This is followed by a review of literature on technology (ICTs) in the African developmental context. Finally, I draw on the literature using the capabilities approach that ties women's empowerment to access and use of ICTs.

Contextual Setting of the Study

In order to gain perspective on the salience of this research study I contextualize it within the existing body of literature as described above. Narrative studies elicit vast amounts of data that are dynamic as they move within space and time, thus creating the importance of understanding historical contexts of the place, in this case Africa, in particular East Africa, and how the participants' identities shift over and within time and space. These shifting identities are grounded in phenomena, and therefore are rooted within the literature discussed below.

The State of Girls' Education in Africa

“Although the typical African family has not intentionally neglected the health and nutrition of a daughter to any large degree, it has neglected her education” (Kevane, 2014). Boys are more likely to attend school than girls, especially in secondary school (UNESCO, 2012a). Household poverty is the single most important factor in keeping children out of school. Children and adolescents from the poorest households are at least three times as likely to be out of school as their richest counterparts (Millennium Development Goals Report, 2013). Two out of three of the 110 million children in the world who do not attend primary school are girls (Huyer, 2006a). Girls generally do not attend school for as many years as boys and living in rural areas tends to widen the gap. Factors related to girls' education affecting lower enrollment rates include, but are not limited to, parent's choice to invest in boys' education over girls; preconceptions that girls do not need education as much as boys because they are often not expected to move into paid employment outside the home; and early marriage (Huyer, 2006b). Abagi et al.

(2009) found that in Kenya there are gaps at every level of education, with boys enrolled at higher rates (e.g., 118 boys to every 100 girls in secondary schools). These imbalances in access to education are attributed to cultural factors and socialization patterns. For instance, men are still seen as owners and controllers of resources (Abagi et al., 2009; Bakesha et al., 2009; Tafnout & Timjerdine, 2009; Wanjira Munyua, 2009) and *breadwinners* while women are the homemakers and dependent upon men. Also, education of girls is not seen as important as boys, and cultural perceptions of girls and boys are factors in socialization in school and at home, where girls are rewarded for passivity, dependence, and compliance; whereas boys are rewarded for aggression, competitiveness, and independence (Abagi et al., 2009). Recognizing gender as an organizing principle is fundamental to understanding the ways girls and boys are socialized and educated, interact with each other, and generally in which public and private lives are shaped and organized (Abagi et al., 2009).

Factors beyond the home include: lack of acceptable or appropriate sanitation facilities at schools, such as latrines (Huyer, 2006a) and rubbish containers for menstrual trash; situations of armed conflict in which situations girls are more vulnerable to rape, sexual violence, and exploitation than boys; and sexual harassment in schools (Huyer, 2006a; Vavrus, 2003). Literacy levels of females are lower than males in almost every region in the world, with a notable exception of the Caribbean. Women make up two-thirds of the world's 771 million illiterate adults (UNESCO, 2003).

The gender gap in school attendance widens in lower secondary education, even for girls living in households not stricken by poverty (UN Millennium Development

Goals report, 2013). In light of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the global push for universal primary education more and more girls are attending school; however, social exclusion based on gender, ethnicity, language, location, and wealth is a major barrier to universal access and completion (Lockheed & Lewis, 2006). In Sub-Saharan Africa gender parity at the primary level of education is apparent in only a handful of countries, namely Ghana, Tunisia, Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zambia, Botswana, Namibia, Malawi, Madagascar and Mauritius (UNESCO, 2012a). The low rates of literacy and poor schooling quality are worrisome even in the absence of gender parity (Kevane, 2014), but add gender inequity and the worry deepens. By the time a girl reaches puberty she is at risk of dropping out of school to be married or to assist in the running of the domestic affairs of the home, such as caring for younger siblings, helping to cook, clean, carry water, and firewood. Other issues include the hidden curriculum, which comprise, teacher practices, attitudes, and expectations, textbook messages, peer interactions, and classroom dynamics. Girls' dropout rate is connected to the education of male siblings, a fear of disappointing families, such as not living up to mother/parent's expectations, as well as low expectations for self (Wanjira Munyua, 2009).

Even in the countries that have reached gender parity for primary school enrollment they still cite gender inequality as a barrier to the attainment of secondary schooling for girls. In Ghana for instance, 83% of parents listed the possibility of girls falling pregnant as a disadvantage of schooling them (Plan, 2012). This issue is posited in two separate trajectories, the first being, if a girl becomes pregnant she most likely will

not have the opportunity to complete her education because now she will be burdened by caring for an infant; and in most African cultures (Plan, 2012) an unwed mother lacks social acceptance and is often forced to either move in with the father of the child or fend for herself outside of her childhood home. Another related issue to becoming pregnant while in school is the lack of childcare facilities to assist young women and girls in returning to their coursework while raising a family. The second trajectory pregnancy and schooling follows is the unfortunate reality that many adolescent girls feel they must exchange sexual favors for academic advancement. This is true for both advances made by teachers on students and older men with extra income living in the community (Stambach, 2000). Although, the law does not support expelling girls from school who become pregnant, many school administrators are fearful of the community's perspective on a school that allows pregnant girls to continue attending school (Vavrus, 2003).

Facing Inequities

In Guinea Bissau, Plan's (2012) study found that girls work an average of eight hours a day on household chores, compared to three hours a day worked by boys. Tiredness and lack of time for completing schoolwork are consequences of these burdensome domestic responsibilities. Other conflicting studies have found that the difference between men and women in the amount of time spent working each day was less than an hour (Kevane, 2014). These studies suggest that rather than focusing on counting the hours, research should try to understand the determinants of time allocation, and especially the constraints people face in their choices of how to spend their time (Kevane, 2014). "Freedom to choose what kind of work to do, and for whom, is a basic

human right, and should be considered one of the goals of development” (Kevane, 2014, p. 116). Therefore, women and girls should have the choice of how much they work and what type of work in which they engage, especially when committed to completing their education. However, choice and voice in decision-making processes is still an imagined concept in many women’s and girl’s lives within much of the African continent.

Another hindrance for girls in completing their education is the attitudes held by men (and women) within their communities. In a study by Bowman and Brundige (2013), secondary school girls in Zambia reported that male teachers viewed girls as less intelligent and incapable of reaching the same academic level as boys. In another study by Thomas and Rugambwa (2011) male teachers believed they viewed girls and boys equally in a secondary school in Tanzania; however, the authors noted that they were often unaware of the power relations between the sexes and that the teachers themselves carried gendered perspectives. The male teachers repeatedly indicated that “thinking like a boy” was the normative stance and standard by which girls would be judged. Plan’s *Because I am a Girl* Report (2012) noted that both female and male teachers accepted and reinforced gender stereotypes. Teachers consciously or subconsciously transmitted stereotypes to their students, which most likely will have an adverse affect on girls’ learning outcomes. Research in Botswana and Ghana found that boys dominated both the physical classroom space and the verbal space (Plan, 2012). They tended to blurt out answers, which teachers responded to, instead of calling on hands raised, which were more likely to be those of girls. The boys also tended to jeer and shout “shhh” to girls when they attempted to participate actively (Plan, 2012). This is consistent with

Tanzanian cultural norms where I have witnessed girls huddling together in class appearing shy and lacking the confidence to speak out when teachers ask general questions to the class. This is also true of participation in workshops that I have both attended and facilitated where men often took the center stage and women's voices were silenced, because they did not come across as assertive and demanding.

International Development and Girls' and Women's Education

In order to understand the salience of utilizing a capabilities approach in this research study, it is important to understand briefly the history of international development thinking as it evolved from a functionalist perspective into what currently the capabilities approach deems a humanist perspective.

The most enduring beliefs about women's schooling and national development in the third world are derived from functionalist theories of modernization. Functionalism serves as the foundation of modernization theories as it "reconfigures urbanization, industrialization, secularization, democratization, education and media participation" (Vavrus, 2003, p. 26). Human capital is stressed in functionalism as a way for societies to move from "the traditional" to "the modern" through prerequisite skills and knowledge in a linear form of stages of development (see Rostow, 1960). "Therefore, national economic growth depends largely on the education and health of the labor force and not simply on a nation's physical capital, such as its roads and factories" (Vavrus, 2003, p. 27).

Through functionalist theories grew the Women in Development (WID) movement. It was in 1970s and 1980s that WID advocated argued for more training for employment so that women could join the workforce to engage in the modern economy.

The WID view did not challenge the basic tenets of modernization theory, such as its embrace of capitalism, its evolutionary view of social change, and its economic rationale for women's schooling; instead, WID advocacy drew attention to gender stereotypes and prejudices in development policy and practices that prevented women from reaping the fruits of development that modernization is thought to produce. (Vavrus, 2003, p. 27)

Within the neo-Marxist perspective the Women in Development (WID) concept emerged as a reaction to the structures of capitalism and patriarchy which work to "doubly disadvantage women in the third world" (Vavrus, 2003, p. 28). Prior to the 1970s assistance to women in developing countries came in the form of welfare (Huyer, 2006b). Women were seen as passive beneficiaries of aid that put their domestic responsibilities and reproductive health at the center of development. The United Nations Decade for Women launched in 1975 in Mexico brought attention to the absence of women's economic and productive contributions. This was the launching of Women in Development (WID), which emphasized small-scale, income-generating projects for women that were often separate from larger scale development initiatives (Huyer, 2006). This neo-Marxist perspective highlights the inequalities of production between periphery countries that export raw materials, and the core countries that process and consume most of these goods (see Frank, 1966). These inequalities identified at an international level

between nations can be extrapolated to the inequalities operating at the household level. Women continue to work for and under men, but they have their own projects designed specifically for empowerment (usually economic empowerment). They work together in groups and produce consumable goods, or develop farming and animal husbandry skills to enhance their economic independence. In the WID context women are better situated to make some household decisions about how money is spent than they were in previous decades.

Through the postmodern perspective the Gender and Development (GAD) movement is born as “skepticism toward metanarratives, or grand theories, used to explain the operations of social and political-economic forces [and] orients research toward an examination of the discursive relations that shape people’s taken-for-granted assumptions about the world” (Vavrus, 2003, p. 29). GAD creates a framework for feminist analysis of schooling and development considering how gender relations are constituted in different contexts. The GAD movement defines gender as the “differences between women and men in the same household, and within and between cultures that are socially and culturally constructed and change over time” (Huyer, 2006b, p. 16). These differences are reflected in the roles, responsibilities, accesses to resources, constraints, opportunities, needs, perceptions (Huyer, 2006b), values, and other enduring concepts. Within the GAD movement women are situated to be part of the process of making decisions that not only directly affect them, but those that affect the world in which they live and work. Through these development theories we can now embark on a

more critical understanding of how GAD sets the stage for discourse on women's schooling and development.

Vavrus (2003) raised concerns about neoliberalism and its effects on development policies in the third world. In her definition, neoliberalism is "the articulation of a set of political policies, neoclassical economic principles, and human capital theory" (p. 32). Because of these policies, people of third world nations have had to cost share for schooling (and other previously free services, such as health care) to keep government expenditure down and reduce inflation. This has caused families to make choices about whom they send to school, with girls losing. Vavrus (2003) discussed the birth of education-as-panacea as basic education became connected to words such as "*women, empowerment, the environment and population*" (Vavrus, 2003, p. 34, emphasis by the author) beginning at the 1999 World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand. Vavrus (2003) contended, despite closing the gender gap in education for all in "most regions in the world the 'crisis' in international education has been defined primarily in terms of women's lack of access to schooling" (p. 34). She further asserted that gender-based discrimination is a serious problem that keeps girls out of school in many places, but economic and political crises triggered by certain neoliberal policies have not received the attention they deserve. Vavrus (2003) implicated the "culture-as-cure" philosophy that societies adhere to value consensus and the institutions within support the ongoing stability of the beliefs. She used the example of young women, community leaders, and elderly men as having consensus on how reproductive health should be taught in schools, yet not one young woman was asked how she would

like to learn about such a sensitive and pertinent topic to her well-being and development. When women begin to have a voice within the development of their lives and communities there may be contention, but the tensions can set the motion toward social change. Next, I discuss how feminist approaches redefine conceptualizations of power.

Technology and Africa

Many scholars, for example Otiso and Moseley (2009) see the utilization of ICT as a prominent part of the socio-economic and technological shift in the global transition from industrial to service and information-based economic activities. African nation states realize the potential uses of ICTs to rapidly further socioeconomic development (Otiso & Moseley, 2009). In the latest version of Tanzania's policy on science and technology (1996) the link between technology and socioeconomic advancement is made clear, particularly in creating international competitiveness and positioning the country within the world economy. Otiso and Moseley (2009) contended that the ICT-led socioeconomic development in the developing world calls for an assessment of the technologies and applications that are most beneficial to the nations, as well as "the potential contributions of these technologies to development" (p. 100). The *Measuring the Information Society Report* (ITU, 2014) found that Internet usage in developing countries has grown by 8.7% in 2014 alone. In two UN "World Summits on the Information Society" (WSIS) references to Rostow's (1960) stage theory are clear in the language that some countries can be expected to "leap frog" stages of economic development by focusing on new technologies like the Internet (Kleine, 2013).

The technological revolution came late to Africa, but quickly permeated throughout the continent, particularly in cities, boosting the economic development of many countries. Although mainly used by urban dwellers, the section below discusses the rapid spread of ICTs throughout Africa. There are, however, many obstacles in the path of Africa's technological advancement. The continent is faced with formidable socioeconomic and infrastructural obstacles to widespread ICT use, including poor access to computers, low computer literacy, uneven distribution of available computers and internet hosts, low overall literacy levels, low per capita incomes that make ICTs unaffordable to most people, inadequate power supplies, poor ICT policy environment, reliance on foreign language to access information gathered digitally, and gross social and gender inequities in access to ICTs (Otiso & Moseley, 2009). Combine these with a lack of infrastructure and political instability and it appears that Africa may never fully develop at the same rate or to the same degree as the rest of the world in regards to digital technology.

Yet, technology is undoubtedly impacting Africa's development (Otiso & Moseley, 2009) and there is a larger more subversive technological movement taking place. Mobile technology is making its way across the continent. Mobile telephony is growing even in remote rural areas and its use for accessing market information and banking services is growing (World Bank, 2011) as is text messaging services to aid health care workers to make diagnoses, sending images to larger hospitals, or for sending reminders to patients to take medications, and to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS (Etzo & Collender, 2010). By the end of 2013, mobile-cellular penetration had reached 66% in

Africa and growth continues to be stronger than in other regions in the world (ITU, 2014).

Mobile phones are being used across the continent from shantytowns to remote villages (Etzo & Collender, 2010). They are accessible regardless of the remoteness of most locations because they are wireless and require minimal infrastructural installations for operation (Kiss, 2009). They are being used to transfer money, monitor elections, and deliver public health messages (Etzo & Collender, 2010). Mobile phones are less costly than computers to obtain (Otiso & Moseley, 2009) making them more accessible to people with limited incomes. A large informal economy has emerged due to their popularity and in support of the mobile sector with people selling air time, charging and fixing phones as well as renting them out (Etzo & Collender, 2010). A study of Ugandan women entrepreneurs claimed success in providing mobile payphone services (Kyomuhendo, 2009). Many of the women in this study also expressed a feeling of empowerment associated with their new economic success. In the formal sector, jobs have been created in large telecommunications companies generating sizeable amounts of tax revenues for the countries in which they operate (Etzo & Collender, 2010). However, with all these advances and possibilities for socioeconomic development there are still tremendous hurdles faced by many of Africa's marginalized people.

Can mobile technology be widening the gap between the poor and the poorest, women and men? Etzo and Collender (2010) suggested that the divide may be growing; however there are gaps in the literature addressing the complexities of this concern, particularly in regards to usage. Current research investigates access, generating data on

the number of subscribers and owners rather than on the specific patterns of use and users (Etzo & Collender, 2010). Sane and Traore (2009) found much of the population in Senegal lacks the means to access and use mobile technology. Widespread illiteracy, low levels of schooling in “major languages,” and lack of financial knowledge and management contribute to limitations faced by many women and men when trying to access or use ICTs. Another issue faced by women entrepreneurs that varied from men’s experiences included discrimination, difficulty in accessing funding, and disadvantages in securing credit in a woman-unfavorable environment. Cost is a restriction both in owning and using mobile phones. People are often restricted to “beeping,” a widespread phenomenon which entails calling a number and hanging up before the call is answered (Etzo & Collender, 2010). It is meant as a message to the mobile phone owner to call back or as a prearranged meaning like “pick me up now,” or it can be relational meant to tell the owner “I am thinking of you right now” (Etzo & Collender, 2010). This type of communicating suggests mobile technology is weaving its way into the mainstream, making its way into the hands of people with limited resources, finding ways to access and utilize a growing market. However, does this mean that over time the several gaps will become smaller? In the following section, ICTs are discussed for their ability to enhance the well-being of, and create empowerment in the lives of women in Africa.

ICTs in development. In the 1990s the Internet caught the attention of donors and posited it as a means to solving a variety of development problems (Kleine, 2013). In these early stages the Internet was seen as a possibility for countries to leap ahead and end economic crises by moving directly into a knowledge-based society. This approach

was shortsighted because it overestimated the influence of technology in changing uneven economic relationships, and it narrowed the Internet's potential to just economic development goals, when technology is much more far-reaching, "touching people's lives as well as potentially expanding their freedom of choice in the personal, social, political, cultural, and economic spheres" (Kleine, 2013, p. 6). ICTs, particularly the Internet and mobile phones now are integrated within many sectors in development work, with electronic and mobile learning (e-learning and m-learning), e-health and m-health, e-government, e-business, political participation, disaster management (Kleine, 2013) among others being used to assist development workers and being distributed to beneficiaries in order to develop their own capabilities. The Internet and mobile phones can easily be adapted to the purpose and usage choices of individuals. These technologies have inspired new areas of development (Kleine, 2013) empowering people with knowledge, information and sources of connection.

Originally concerns were raised by critics about using technology within already thinly financed development projects such as within food security, clean water and sanitation, and reliable energy sources that seemed more pressing than providing Internet access to local people. In the beginning there were many ICT projects that failed; however, with lessons learned, and the mainstreaming of ICTs into sectoral programs; where development is addressed through specific areas, such as health, education, anti-corruption and the like, these programs run more efficiently and are able to quickly divert funds from inappropriate priorities (Kleine, 2013). Mainstreaming ICTs in development does not effectively encompass the full transformative nature and "highly personalized

effect that access to the Internet or even mobile phones [*sic*] can have on people's lives" (Kleine, 2013, p. 7). As noted in the literature above, access to technology can increase individual and collective opportunities, increasing the choices people have available to them in their lives, expanding their capabilities, resulting in empowerment.

Women and technology in Africa. As women in Africa "struggle to enlarge their spheres of influence in political, economic and social arenas, the question is whether the Internet and other digital technologies will become agents of transformation or reproduce the inequalities of the status quo" (Robins, 2002, p. 235). In a candid discourse on the position of women, ICT and development Robins attempted to peel back layers of the complexities and ambiguities of globalization, and the intersection of gender and technology in Africa. She noted that an emergence of an international information society is seen as an opportunity for African women to rise out of systemic, traditional, and cultural disadvantages. Many of the world's leading agencies have been paying increasing attention to women in regards to ICT and its place in enhancing women's lives due to their crucial role in agriculture, the informal economy, and family life (Robins, 2002). Only middle-income and professional women have access to ICTs either through work or have the means to go to Internet caf  s and use the Internet and send emails (Robins, 2002) or log on to social media sites and find time to research questions and interests on search engines. For rural, poor, and undereducated women, the barriers are greater in gaining access to technology, and are well documented.

However, the barriers are also the envisioned successes (Kole, 2001) as well. Empowerment of African women through access and use of technology has developed a

discursive platform for development agencies, educational institutions and governments to connect the two. With this great interest in the development of women across the continent there have been numerous initiatives in bringing technology and the education to use it to Africa's women. Health organizations use text messaging to inform and monitor women's reproductive health (Robins, 2002), banking and agricultural planning (Asiedu, 2012) are now accessed through mobile technology, connecting and taking up causes such as #bringbackourgirls for the return of the captured school girls in Nigeria by the extremist group, Boko Haram are all forms of providing women with the means to having access to information quickly and efficiently.

Access has opened the doors for many women across the continent. Before receiving the text messages from HealthNET (Robins, 2002), M-Pesa (a mobile banking system started in Kenya and now providing services in Tanzania), or having the opportunity to research and read about anything of interest, women had to gather their information through word of mouth. They listened to the radio, doctors and nurses, politicians at rallies, and if literate, read newspapers or if in environments that supported it, watched television. In all these circumstances they are consumers of information and rarely, if ever, producers. Asiedu (2012) suggested that through the blending of radio and mobile technologies (in this case using text messaging) women in Africa can evolve from consumers to producers as they interact with radio show hosts through discussions accessible by free text messaging service to the show's phones, as well as taking part in developing the content of the shows to be aired (Asiedu, 2012). Women's voices can be heard in difficult and sensitive topics such as war and be aired to the global community

through digital means, transcending local boundaries (Asiedu, 2012). In another study by Macueve, Mandlate, Ginger, Gaster, and Macombe (2009), community radio was used by 95% of the participants. The radio news programs enabled women to acquire information that reduced their isolation within the community, national, and internationally.

Programs offered information on HIV/AIDS, children's health and behavior, oftentimes created and presented by indigenous women embodying the local to global phenomena within their own community. Because radio is the most familiar type of technology used by women, confidence in accuracy and dependency of the information broadcasted was noted.

Women's voices are so often left unheard or silenced in the political and economic development forums as discussions center around empowering women for economic gains. However it is the experiences of women that will guide the best path to take in serving their needs while advancing developing nations economies. Giving "voice to the voiceless fosters and facilitates community decision-making and action and empowers people to take control of local development processes" (Asiedu, 2012, p. 254) and will contribute to reducing the digital divide. Asiedu admitted that studies on localizing technology as well as its blending are very few and therefore theorizing about the level of empowerment transcending marginalized populations such as rural women are relatively underdeveloped. In answering whether, how, and to what extent women in Africa use ICTs for empowerment, it is important to note that the answer is not simple, but rather multifaceted with empowerment intertwined within the socio-cultural-economic barriers.

Barriers within ICTs and women in Africa. Barriers in accessing technology include geographic isolation (rural living), poor networking quality, the language of the ‘net’, cost, and time constraints due to other responsibilities as well as the lack of training and limited education. Women in Africa face dual barriers in accessing technology, because of the social and cultural constraints (Asiedu, 2012; Ojokoh, 2009) discussed in the section on education above including issues of poverty, location, and women’s expected roles within the family and the wider society.

A study by Kiss (2009) on Zambian women’s groups found that Economics matter. Only women who can afford to run the phones can become “privileged” members of the network. Over time low-income women lose their “voice” and become silent listeners, as they are simply recipients of texts because they cannot afford to send messages back. A virtual class system seemed to be emerging whereby women of lower-economic status use beeping (paging: calling and hanging up before the person answers, therefore not incurring any cost) or sending very short text messages as ways to communicate without spending money or utilizing precious air time, unlike the women of a higher socioeconomic status who can afford to make phone calls or send text messages and thus make deeper and lasting connections with other women. In this respect adequate income becomes a means to creating capabilities. Users with call units (airtime) on and contacts within the mobile phone becomes a portal through which to access social amenities such as information, emotional well-being, and resource. Underprivileged user potential is diminished because of their inability to afford communicating. This diminished potential is an indication of poverty, and poverty can be identified as a

capability deprivation (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1999) where the poor may face social exclusion and therefore cannot take part in the life of the community, in this case the virtual community, and their freedom to connect is restricted. Gender issues were also noted. Gender based conflict over the use of mobile phones also restrict freedoms. In Zambia married couples are considered one being, therefore contradicting the ownership model of mobile phones, and making calls or texting by women is not culturally appropriate without their husband knowing who and what they are communicating with and about.

In a study by Wanjira Munyua (2009) challenges to utilizing mobile phones by Kenyan women entrepreneurs were found to be: high running cost, and male partners wanting to find out content of some conversations conducted on the phone, which was felt as an intrusion into the women's privacy, blurring the boundaries of what is public and what should be private contributing to conflict between spouses in the house. Husbands and partners were seen as wanting to control how the women used their mobile phones and even whether they were allowed to continue using them. This is found in other studies on African women's use of mobile phones (Bakesha et al., 2009; Hafkin, 2006). These findings beg the question of whether the mobile phones lead to empowerment or gender role entrenchment? Current concepts of empowerment assume that increase in women's access to resources like education, finances, and ICTs transforms them and society as well. These concepts ignore that "women's access is often mediated by poverty, classism, traditional divisions of labour, social traditions and expectations, racism and xenophobia" (Wanjira Munyua, 2009, p. 126) making access

empowering to only a few. It also ignores the choices women make, because these are often mitigated by social norms of what is expected of women, “therefore many choices do not necessarily serve a woman’s own interests and their wishes for their lives” (Wanjira Munyua, 2009, p. 126). Nussbaum’s (2000) adaptive preferences are illuminated here, because rather than having the capability to do the things that these women have reason to value, they made choices within the cultural milieu of what is right to do, so as to keep the household equilibrium inside the accepted male dominated Kenyan cultural expectations. “Rather than simply evaluating the equality of and access to resources such as income and wealth, the analysis should ideally focus on people’s capability to take action” (Sen, 1999, p. 127).

In a study of grassroots women entrepreneurs in Uganda, Bakesha et al. (2009) found socio-cultural constraints affecting women’s ability to create and expand on businesses. In Uganda women are still regarded as property of their husbands, thus “allowing men to control women’s lives, including their time, access to information and participation in politics, social groupings and training” (p. 143). The women in the study could not make profits, because they spent a significant amount of profits on family needs such as food, school fees, and medical bills meaning they had little or nothing to reinvest into their businesses to make them grow. The participants in the study were concerned that their husbands abandoned family obligations once realizing the success of their wives’ businesses. The participants did not take offense at this sudden abdication of family responsibilities, which is again in line with Nussbaum’s (2000) adaptive preferences, with some women feeling their new earnings improved their relationship

even though their husband withdrew from family responsibilities. Interestingly in this study, widowed women seemed to have more freedom in making choices about the direction they wish to take in their lives.

In the groundbreaking book by Nancy Hafkin and Sophia Huyer, *Cinderella or Cyberella?*, Huyer (2006a) discussed the myth of gender-neutral technologies and how women continue to benefit less than men in the knowledge society, most severely in developing countries where women lag behind men in their use of technology and does not correlate to the level of Internet penetration within a given country. “It is the same age-old rationale: women’s inferior status in society gives them unequal access to all resources, including ICTs” (Mitter, 2005, as cited in Huyer, 2006b, p. 25).

Some constraints to women’s participation in the knowledge society include:

- Low levels of education (in particular text literacy)
- Low level of computer and technology literacy: girls less likely than boys to enroll in S&T courses
- Prevalence of non-local languages
- High cost of equipment and access
- Lack of time due to the burden of domestic and productive (agricultural) activities
- Socioreligious attitudes restricting public participation and travel
- Predominance of women in rural areas where ICTs are less available

- Lack of information and knowledge that is relevant to local interests and concerns, particularly those of women. (Huyer, 2006b, p. 26)

Considering the myriad of barriers to women's access and use of ICTs in Africa can these technologies contribute to women's empowerment? "For ICTs to promote the empowerment of women, they need to provide opportunity to gain options, choice, control, and power, or the ability to make decisions based on useful information and affect outcomes in one's life" (Huyer, 2006b, p. 27). This involves increased confidence or status on a personal level, leading to actions by women to influence larger political and legal systems. Critical components to moving through the barriers towards empowerment include: information literacy (being able to find and use information), technology literacy in terms of comfort with and ability to use and operate computers, videos, cell phones, and other forms of ICTs (Huyer, 2006b), and most importantly, for women to be active agents in their empowerment within the knowledge society women must become creators and developers of technology. This is what Hafkin and Huyer (2006) called the Cyberella approach. Cyberella is fluent in the use of technology. "She can imagine innovative uses for technology across a range of problems and subjects and finds information and knowledge to improve her life and expand her choices" (Hafkin & Huyer, 2006, p. 1). ICTs have the potential to contribute to the empowerment of women; however, in order for this to happen several interrelated conditions must be present. Social, economic, political, and legal approaches to empowerment are "necessary for ICTs to serve as effective tools for empowering women and building gender equity" (Huyer, 2006b, p. 32). For women to benefit from the "possibilities of the knowledge

society” (Hafkin & Huyer, 2006, p. 1) they must participate in it actively, independently, using their voice, choice, agency and capabilities.

The intersection of education and technology. Education is a critical component to lifting many of the barriers facing girls and women in their access and effective use of ICTs. High illiteracy rates of women and girls and their lack of ICT training are two of the most serious barriers that prevent them from entering the knowledge society (United Nations, 2005). Gender gaps in education come in the form of burden of domestic responsibilities, lack of mobility and socio-cultural practices that downplay the importance of girls’ education (United Nations, 2005), and the lack of awareness among government policy makers and other officials about the potential of ICTs in learning environments (UNESCO, 2012b). Females have less access than males to education in general and to science and technology education specifically. They also have less access to skills training and development that will assist them in gaining employment in the ICT industry (Huyer, 2006a). ICTs for education should not be reserved just for formal classroom settings. In non-formal education ICTs can supply tools and skills to women (and men) to use technologies and to improve well-being (Huyer, 2006a).

Computers and mobile learning tools have been introduced in many educational settings in Africa; however, classrooms are not free from gender bias. Therefore, gender-sensitive planning of ICT interventions is a precondition to ensuring equal access by female students in the classroom (United Nations, 2005). Creating gender-sensitive interventions requires a careful critique of the many institutional barriers. For example, a

lack of female teachers and role models within the ICT industry, lack of flexibility in admissions selections and entry requirements that do not take into account women's life responsibilities, and heavy attendance requirements for practical skills and laboratory work that do not take into consideration female family responsibilities (Huyer, 2006a), in order to make space for women and girls to become part of the knowledge society.

In the literature cited below, ICTs and education have massive potential for opening the doors of the knowledge society to girls and women; however, working through the barriers requires a process of social transformation. "Gender, like race, class, HIV status, educational levels, and the digital divide-is a systemic issue. Gender inequality is interwoven into a larger fabric of generalizable social inequality, especially in Africa" (Isaacs, 2006, pp. 129-130). Gender equality is not about treating girls and boys the same, but rather about "recognizing that boys, girls, women and men may face different constraints in accessing educational opportunities and achieving their educational potential" (Isaacs, 2006, p. 121). There is a large disparity of research-based knowledge on digital divide issues in education in general, and more specifically on gender issues and ICTs in Africa (Isaacs, 2006).

Not only do parity and equality need to be reached within education, but also it must be equitable so that women and girls can enter the knowledge society and take part in the information economy. Women and girls' voices must be heard to be valued, and to speak they must feel valued. Education paired with appropriate access to use of ICTs can provide the means to being heard.

In a study by Rubagiza, Were, and Sutherland (2011) on introducing information communication technology (ICT) into Rwandan schools, girls cited a lack of space to access the computers in the lab. They stated they don't like going into the lab because they have to fight for a place at one of the few computers, and the boys were more inclined to assert themselves in this situation, whereas the girls often hang back and watch. The authors found that girls tended to have less exposure to ICTs outside of school compared to boys, citing the gender divide as privileging males over females allowing more free time for boys to access technology at Internet cafés and through sharing mobile phones with friends increasing skills that may provide them with an added advantage at school. Another study (Huyer, 2006a) in Uganda illuminated findings that having the computer lab in another location (outside of the classroom) hindered girls' access. Running by girls is seen as inappropriate in this culture and the boys got to the lab first, leaving no room for the girls to sit at a computer to practice skills (Huyer, 2006a). This was also due to a low computer/student ratio.

Girls often stay home to take care of household chores while boys have the freedom to spend time outside the home (Huyer, 2006a; Rubagiza et al., 2011), have earlier curfews than boys at boarding schools, and a lack of confidence in using computers (Huyer, 2006a). Boys in urban areas were also more likely to gain access, where available, to home computers than girls. This may be linked to Rwandan society's patrilineal nature "that accords boys and men many privileges that help them develop networks since they are seen as future heads of households" (Rubagiza et al., 2011, p. 41). However, when girls used computers they used them more for academic research

and communication with friends and family, increasing their reasoning and communication skills. They also used the computers to find out information about reproductive and sexual health that was not available from their families and communities, thus improving their self-confidence. Boys tended to use the computers for sports, and music, with less academic benefit (Huyer, 2006a).

A research study of School NetAfrica (SNA), an African and female led NGO set up to promote learning and teaching schools through ICTs across Africa found that access to technologies by girls and women was a central to the issue of girls and women entering the knowledge society (Isaacs, 2006). Wider equity issues also “challenge [the] ability of girls to use and benefit from the use of computers” (Isaacs, 2006, p. 124), such as confidence levels when working with new technologies, the role and gender of the teacher and his or her attempts to support girls in their learning process and to become more actively involved in using technologies, the number of women and girls involved as technicians, technical coordinators, and help with technical support functions, and gender bias in education content and curriculum.

In a study about the ways in which young women in rural Uganda accessed information about HIV/AIDS through digital technology, Norton et al. (2011) found that previously unimagined spaces, the Internet café in this case, came to life as the participants began to see themselves as part of a larger global community. The purpose of the study was to investigate whether digital access to HIV/AIDS information for English language learners in a rural village in Uganda might be a powerful way for increasing knowledge about HIV/AIDS and to better understand the language learner

identity in relation to digital resources. The findings suggest that access to digital resources is salient in opening the world to the participants regarding possible future employment, reducing the workload by saving time in accessing information, accessing and understanding current events as well as gaining deeper knowledge on historical events. More interestingly the participants viewed themselves as joining a community of knowledgeable people around the world, the knowledge society. They did not see themselves as only consumers of information, but also as producers through expressing their desire to blog, commenting on articles read, and even conducting research and publishing it on the web. They appeared to be deepening their understanding of themselves as young women in a larger global context (Norton et al., 2011). They were also interested in bridging the gap between the virtual and the real world through linking their identities (students, community members, and research participants) with the wider world available on the Internet. They could look up information on their own community, the people they are working with in the research project, the school they attend, and so forth. This helped create a larger image of themselves set within a global context. This is of particular interest to me as I embark on my research with Tanzanian women and their experience with ICTs and education in their lives. I wonder if their identities have evolved due to their connection to the global world through accessing the Internet? Buskens (2009) suggested that in order to understand women's dreams and desires beyond their subscribed female-accepted roles, "it is often necessary to create a mental space for them where they can experience that part of themselves and give it a

voice” (p. 13). Entering the digital world of the Internet can be one vehicle for creating the mental space for women and girls in Africa.

Empowerment through digital technology. Having a global voice (Asiedu, 2012; Norton et al., 2011) is important for women whether they are poor, wealthy, rural, or urban. And, although access to digital technology in Africa is generally limited to women with means living in urban areas, there are more and more studies being published that have opened the discourse on the access and use of ICTs by women living in rural areas and those affected by poverty. Women’s organizations in Africa working to ameliorate conditions of gender inequality within their communities use ICTs to gain new skills, supply grassroots movements in less connected areas with information necessary to support their ‘life-improving’ initiatives, and to establish electronic coalitions to compel the implementation of international gender policies. They also link local communities in Africa to international processes towards gender and development (Kole, 2001). The powerful transformation of knowledge from women with the means to those without is critical in the advancement of achieving gender equality in Africa.

A study by Meena and Rusimbi (2009) of educated professional Tanzanian women explored the impact of mobile phones and the Internet on different aspects of the participants’ life paths. The participants conceptualized the “power” from empowerment as a force within that pushes individuals to do something, self-love (caring for oneself first), taking control and following a step-by-step process moving one down the path of life, an energy within that gives courage. “Power is perceived as an inner strength, an inner push, something which is not tangible but which is then facilitated by the external

environment” (Meena & Rusimbi, 2009, p. 203). Two main findings in this study were that a woman’s personal background contributes to the choices made later in life (i.e., growing up in a village encouraged a sense of wanting to help others and understanding the difference between material poverty and the wealth found in the hearts and minds of people living in poverty), and that “ICTs have the capacity to facilitate economic well-being, provided they are harnessed by women who are grounded in their ‘power within’” (Meena & Rusimbi, 2009, p. 205). Sometimes the “power within” (Meena & Rusimbi, 2009) expresses itself in a more subtle light. In a study by Foda and Webb (2014) on body image and young Egyptian women’s use of ICTs, the participants tended to be silent during meetings at school and work; however, after the meetings they turned to the Internet to connect outside their communities through ‘chatting’ to get their voices back. Connecting with others who shared similar issues related to how they felt about themselves and their place in society created a sense empowerment through mobilizing their voices.

Economics matter. The milieus in which women interact with ICTs are grounded in gender inequality, cultural context, political-economic situations, yet their “journeys cannot be seen and understood in isolation from the power of the global market economy and the pervasive gender images, and without recognizing the immense inner strength they are drawing on” (Buskens & Webb, 2009, p. 208). Macueve et al. (2009) found that ICTs are critical for rural women in Mozambique as tools in increasing their economic self-sufficiency, for themselves and their households. In this rural area of Mozambique, radio was the most familiar type of technology used by women. However, mobile phones

were accessible and usually shared with family members and friends. The women in the study found ways to overcome difficulties of literacy, language, and costs through their processes of sharing. Kiss' (2009) study on Zambian women's groups found that having an adequate income is a means to capabilities. With enough financial resources the women in the study benefited greatly by using mobile phones. The women with less financial means struggled to be able to use the group to their benefit, because they could not afford to run their phones to participate in the text message conversations or to respond to other women when they needed assistance. Instead these poorer women tended to use their phones only when they required assistance.

A study by Sane and Traore (2009) of Senegalese women fishmongers found that ICTs are considered tools for economic development. The women fishmongers, working in, until recently, a male dominated profession used mobile phones for economic advantage. The mobile phones allowed the women entrepreneurs to save time and increase business volume. With the mobile phones, there was no need to travel to make arrangements with clients, resulting in a great reduction in travel, more time to sell and locate new clients, and an increase in client loyalty.

Poverty is more than a low income; it is the deprivation of basic capabilities (Sen, 1999). Coupling ICTs and increased personal empowerment (through education, voice, and choice) can lead to increased personal and household security and income. The young Ugandan women in Norton et al. (2011) expressed a deep desire to be part of the global voice of women after participating in a short course on English language learning and HIV/AIDS awareness. Women's empowerment is widely accepted as the key to

development. Empowerment is linked to education and information. With at least a primary education and preferably a secondary level, women can have more control over their lives as they can read local newspapers, pamphlets at health clinics, and billboards and posters advertising important events and key information. With an education, women can improve their skills in mathematics and business leading to autonomy and contribute to the local economy. Women with an education and access to digital technology can expand their market, reaching customers further from their local community, and information necessary to improve their business.

Making connections. But, economics is not the only driving force motivating women to join the digital community. Connecting with other women within their local communities and across the globe is a powerful impetus in the empowerment and development of women. Communicating with one another about their views and opinions about their progress and empowerment (Ojokoh, 2009) inspires new ways of thinking and seeing themselves in their own context. Networking with other women and creating and organizing groups are places to share experiences (Bakesha et al., 2009). Underlying the modernization paradigm is the assumption that once access is achieved there will be empowerment (Asiedu, 2012). However, access is merely the initial step in each individual journey to empowerment. ICTs are not empowering in themselves, it is the use of them that has potential for empowerment (or not; Buskens, 2009).

In a postcolonial approach to research and development, technology can be utilized to emphasize the voice of marginalized people in creating indigenous knowledge (Asiedu, 2012). Women can use digital technology to “adapt and innovate collected

information into new localized knowledge for further sharing with others in the community, thus contributing to their self-empowerment, self-determination, and well-being” (Ojokoh, 2009, p. 65). The Internet and mobile phones can be used as tools for self-empowerment through connecting to others to discuss their daily worries and concerns (Macueve et al., 2009). When women have the opportunity to genuinely work together they can build the confidence and strength to address existing gender inequities that perpetuate discrimination and subordination (Ojokoh, 2009) and empower themselves into living lives they deem worth living. ICTs are creating a sense of global interconnectedness, bridging gaps and bringing people together who would otherwise be separated by distance, geography, and economic and socio-cultural constraints. It is critical that ICTs do not “create new spaces for exclusion” (Buskens, 2009, p. 209) and instead work towards a more inclusive global society. Thus, it is imperative that women take part in the knowledge construction processes that define Africa and are not pushed towards consumption only.

Women’s empowerment features prominently in the discourse on access to ICTs as means to gender equity and development, and access to technology gives women alternate forms of information outside of the conventional or government-controlled media sources (Asiedu, 2012), which in turn can lead to empowerment. Having access to ICTs can lead to women’s participation in the development process and empowers them economically (Asiedu, 2012; Molony, 2009; Robins, 2002). Empowerment also lies in the ability to tell the narratives of their lives. Communicating about their lives narrows distances between women (Meena & Rusimbi, 2009) and reduces stress (Macueve et al.,

2009; Sane & Traore, 2009). In a research study on African women who blog, Somolu (2007) found that more than half of the women blogged to “shed light” on how African women live and to connect with other women. Having space to have their voices heard, support each other, and develop strategies for improving the quality of their lives is essential in reducing the digital gap for African women.

Alternative spaces. In many gendered societies, women cannot move in the same physical spaces as men. Virtual spaces can replace physical places of connection, knowledge acquisition, construction and sharing. In a study by Hassanin (2009) of Egyptian women utilizing ICTs to learn income-generating skills, get advice and help, and become exposed to the wider world led to awareness that helped in reshaping their lives. In Egypt “gendered spaces separate women from knowledge used by men to produce and reproduce power and privilege” (Hassanin, 2009, p. 77). With access to ICTs in female friendly learning environment the participants moved beyond consumers of knowledge to constructing not only knowledge, but also their own realities through reaching socio-economic, educational and skill development goals.

Comfort and Dada’s (2009) study of rural Nigerian women’s use of mobile phones found that using cell phones allowed women the opportunity to find out information that they had previously only heard in fleeting moments from their husbands or other sources. The mobile phones gave the participants opportunities to connect to other women and gather information, which was significant in developing their sense of empowerment. Religious requirements of purdah places constraints on acceptable spaces for these Muslim women to conduct business with third parties, and the mobile phones

created a space for women to manage their businesses without having to involve a third party.

A study of Moroccan women victims of domestic violence (Tafnout & Timjerdine, 2009) found that women in Morocco are not free to move independently within their society. Although Internet cafés are acceptable places for women, women and men occupy different Internet spaces. Men are not watched at the cafés (and they often view pornography), while women are, and critiqued on what they view on the Internet, making the cafés spaces of oppression rather than freedom. By having access to mobile phones and the Internet outside the public sphere the victims of violence created connections with other women, exposed violence (in past women victims told their families—now they can report it to authorities/legal aid clinics themselves); and gained knowledge. Some of the women used the Internet as a space for creativity, dissemination of information, and in establishing connections with women across the globe through shared experiences, making this virtual space a place of empowerment.

Widening the gap. However, not all studies point to access to digital technology as leading to empowerment. The general conditions in which people are living will not suddenly or drastically change due to the introduction of digital technology (Alzouma, 2005). Digital technology is not the panacea for development and lifting people out poverty or closing the gender divide. Many scholars see it as widening the gap (Robins, 2002). Technology is still mostly used in a vertical diffusion model (Asiedu, 2012) with the majority of the population receiving information generated at the top rather than being part of the production, for example in such spaces as Wikipedia and online blogs.

This formation of information flow exacerbates the existing gaps between the haves and have-nots in society (Alzouma, 2005; Asiedu, 2012; Robins, 2002).

In order for empowerment to transpire through the windows of ICTs they must first be accessible. Studies have found that in rural areas low connectivity and expense of running makes using mobile phones a challenge (see Comfort & Dada, 2009; Kiss, 2009; Macueve et al., 2009; Wanjira Munyua, 2009). Low levels of literacy also limit the extent of which women (and men) can utilize ICTs (Abagi et al., 2009; Hafkin & Huyer, 2006; Huyer, 2006a, 2006b), particularly mobile phones and the Internet. A more distinct intrinsic barrier to empowerment is the embedded value systems where women exist within cultural frameworks (Kyomuhendo, 2009) and “the remote control is controlled by the husband or the father or the older brother” (Tafnout & Timjerdine, 2009, p. 96). Also, a lack of time due to the unequal burden of domestic responsibilities inhibits women in Africa from using ICTs to their fullest potential. Even when women have access to ICTs, for example at work, they often face enduring burdens of domestic tasks their male colleagues do not (Macueve et al., 2009). In understanding the complex web of access and use of ICTs as tools for empowerment it is important to recognize the connections between wider global issues of gender inequity, local socio-cultural values, access to economic freedom, and individual perseverance and power. There is a need to carefully examine national policies and socio-cultural structures that advocate for or against women’s rights in regards to how these can be used to women to transcend forms of oppression and how ICTs can become tools for empowerment.

Missing in the studies that posit technology as widening the gender divide is the component of aspiration; the desire to live a worthwhile and valuable life as individually and collectively perceived by marginalized people and groups. It is a very rare place in the world where there is no access to digital technology. Technology may only be found at a tiny village shop or brought in by a relative from town during the holidays, but people can gain a very small window into the world (Asiedu, 2012) through watching one YouTube video or a photograph uploaded to an online news website. Each time a person has the opportunity to view something new, the window opens wider. It is in this way the imagination grows and aspirations flourish.

Feminist Approaches and Uses in This Study: The First Lens

Feminism at its core connects women to men and their relationship to power, and it serves to seek social justice for women (Stromquist, 2000). “Gender is seen by most postmodernists as a system of relations and differentiation, and much less as a system of oppression” (Stromquist, 2000, p. 421). Gender differences may vary according to locality; however, in all cultures across the globe women have clearly defined and socially acceptable gendered roles and responsibilities. Although in some areas of the world these roles and responsibilities are being challenged, much of the world still divides labor by gender.

Gender roles are not fixed and change according to social, environmental, economic and technological trends (Huyer, 2006b). There are many entangled social and cultural factors that weave together the notion of gender within communities across the world.

Fong, Wakeman, and Bhushan (1996, p. 2 as cited in Huyer, 2006b) provide a useful outline of social factors influencing gender roles and gender-differentiated interests including,

- Institutional arrangement that create and reinforce gender-based constraints or, conversely, foster an environment on which gender disparities can be reduced.
- Sociocultural attitudes and ethnic and class/caste-based obligations that determine men's and women's roles, responsibilities, and decision-making functions.
- Religious beliefs and practices that limit women's mobility, social contact, access to resources, and the types of activities they can pursue
- The formal legal system that reinforces customs and practices giving women inferior legal status in many countries. (p. 17)

Recognizing that women and men's roles vary from region to region, there are some general statements that can be made about women's roles and responsibilities in their homes and communities. Women in developing regions often have a "triple role," encompassing reproductive activities such as childbearing and care, health care for family members, and subsistence agriculture; productive or income-generating activities outside of the home; and community management or community volunteer work (Huyer, 2006b). In most countries, women bear responsibility for childcare and house work. It is unpaid and uncouned in the economically invisible non-formal sector. At the same time women are major contributors to food production, and the provision of energy, water, healthcare and family income (Huyer, 2006b).

Gender relations are conditioned by ethnicity, socioeconomic and educational level, and age. Educated women who live in urban areas with access to some level of unrestricted income are in much better position to take advantage of, for example, ICT opportunities than women (or men) at lower socioeconomic levels and who live in rural areas. Gender and development lends itself to the discourses on the transformative properties of education and women's development for it is impossible to separate gender dynamics within communities from the development of said communities. Education is so powerful that it has the capability to transform women's lives and empower them to take charge of decision-making processes in directing their lives. However, women cannot become empowered simply because they have had access to education. Entering the classroom helps initiate the movement towards empowerment, but in order for women to become empowered they must be involved with their education from the beginning. They must have the opportunity to solve problems, make decisions, and assert themselves in and outside the classroom so that the road to empowerment is truly owned. This psychological element is important but it needs to be strengthened with economic resources (Stromquist, 1995). As noted by Carolyn Medel-Arionuevo and Bettina Bochynek (1995) the actual working and living conditions of women prevent many of them from meaningful engagement in educational programs or projects, because of the necessity to maintain the household and to work outside the home in income generating projects to support their families. With the development of nations' economies so closely linked to education programs for women an impetus for increasing their level of education is growing stronger each year. The question moves from how to educate

women to what type of education will women most benefit from? It is clear that in order for women to become part of the development of their nations they must secure a well-rounded and holistic education (see Medel-Arionuevo & Bochynek, 1995).

As noted above, placing women at the center of a study allows for emerging data to be implicitly and explicitly woven through a gender lens. “A research investigation is considered ‘feminist’ when it is grounded in the set of theoretical traditions that privilege women’s issues, voices, and lived experiences” (Hesse-Biber, 2014, p. 3). Feminist research positions gender centrally in the inquiry and research process (Hesse-Biber, 2014). In my study, understanding the participants’ lived experiences through their life narratives opens spaces for critical dialogue about gender and access to ICTs in an African context. This allowed for conversation to emerge about the social inequalities women in Tanzania face in their lives, in particular how their ability to access and use ICTs affects their personal and professional advancement. Deliberately placing these women’s narratives into contextual and historical understandings made it possible to assess power structures that connect institutions and individuals to larger social formations (Bloom & Sawin, 2009) and inequities. Placing the women in the study at the center of the research and including the thick description (Geertz, 1973) of their narratives also emphasizes the power relationship between myself and the participants. Chapter 3 goes into more detail on balancing this relationship and ethical considerations.

In the following section I connect education, agency, and capabilities as components of empowerment by reviewing relevant scholarship.

The Capability Approach and its Uses in This Study: The Second Lens

In order to understand why people live the way they do it is necessary in a research study to employ a theoretical approach that encompasses the *beings* and *doings* of people. The capability approach, an emerging theory that seeks to understand “societal arrangements . . . [and] their contribution to enhancing and guaranteeing, the substantive freedoms of individuals, seen as active agents of change” (Sen, 1999, pp. xii-xiii). It asks “what can a person do and be?” (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1999), and asserts that “what persons . . . value and act on, [and] what they find feasible to achieve” (Seeberg, 2014, p. 679) guides what kind of life they have reason to value and choose to lead (Sen, 1999). It is the social environment, the community that frames individual choice. This collective influences individual choice in several ways:

First, formal laws or norms are created and altered in collective processes that reflect the decisions by powerful individuals or groups of individuals. Individual choice can be limited by these laws and norms, and in turn also shape them, depending on the nature of the collective decision-making process. (Kleine, 2013, p. 29)

The capability approach “is a broad normative framework for the evaluation and assessment of individual well-being and social arrangements” (Robeyns, 2005, p. 94). It is used in a wide variety of fields, the most prominent being development studies; however, it lends itself well to the study of education as a means and the end of inequalities. The capability approach is not a theory that is designed to explain poverty, inequality or well-being (Nussbaum, 2000, 2011; Robeyns, 2005; Sen, 1999) instead it

provides a “tool and a framework within to *conceptualize* and *evaluate* these phenomena (Robeyns, 2005, p. 94, emphasis by the author).

Some roots of the capability approach can be traced back to Aristotle, Adam Smith, Karl Marx, and John Rawlings. However, dominant strains of developmental literature through the years have grown to center on economics as means for measuring a society’s development. Rostow (1960) proposed a model of how societies move through “stages of development,” starting with “the traditional society” moving through “the age of mass-consumption,” with an increased importance shifting to consumer goods and services (Kleine, 2013). The key indicator of international development theorist’s measurement of success has been GDP per capita. Because the functionalist social scientific theories assumed that wealth would trickle down to the poorest members of a society over time, less attention was paid to looking at the complexities of income inequality (Kleine, 2013). It is within the framework of inequality that the human development and capability approach emerges, pioneered by the economist, Amartya Sen and also associated with philosopher Martha Nussbaum, and continues to be expanded upon through literature in development studies, education, philosophy and other fields interested in the advancement of humans and society. It focuses on what a person is able to do and be (a person’s capability) rather than on people’s happiness, income or expenditure (Robeyns, 2005; Sen, 1999), which until recently have been (and continue to be) the normative ways of measuring human development. Opportunity is the ability to achieve valuable functionings, which are the various things a person may value doing or being, such as being adequately nourished, having good health, and taking part in the

community life in which one lives (Kleine, 2013). Functionings are actions or states of being, while capabilities, combining both functionings and opportunities, are dimensions of freedoms (Sen, 1999, 2005). The purpose of development is to expand the portfolio of capabilities that shape an individual's freedom of choice (Kleine, 2013) and,

Seeing opportunity in terms of capability allows us to distinguish appropriately between (i) whether a person is actually able to do things she would value doing, and (ii) whether she possesses the means or instruments or permissions to pursue what she would like to do (her actual ability to do that pursuing may depend on many contingent circumstances). By shifting attention, in particular, towards the former, the capability-based approach resists an overconcentration on means (such as incomes and primary goods) that can be found in some theories of justice. (Sen, 2005, pp. 153-154).

Sen's approach is the "most influential heterodox perspective on development, yet remains a minority position in international development institutions" (Kleine, 2013, p. 4). Sen along with the celebrated post-colonial development economist Mahbub ul Haq (1995) authored the Human Development Index (HDI), "a composite index first introduced in 1990 the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report as an alternative to the gross domestic product (GDP) measure for growth" (Kleine, 2013, pp. 4-5). Sen focused his approach around the unfortunate reality that many people around the world face varying degrees of unfreedoms, such as living in abject poverty, lacking access to enough to eat and clean drinking water, or functional education systems. There are also people who live in oppressive environments where

they are restricted politically, or because of their gender or ethnicity and have a limited voice in determining their own destiny. In order for all people to thrive and enjoy freedoms of being human they must be given the opportunity to access functioning at the highest level they consider appropriate. “It is the interaction of functionings with opportunities that constitute capabilities” (Seeberg, 2014, p. 682). In the capability approach, functioning is “an active realization of one or more capability” (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 25) and capabilities are “the freedoms or opportunities created by a combination of personal abilities and the political, social, and economic environment” (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 20). Freedom, therefore choice, becomes the means and principle end of development, creating empowerment in people through choice to live the life they have reason to value (Kleine, 2013). Sen (1999) explained the importance of freedoms as linked to capabilities in his book *Development as Freedom*:

What people can positively achieve is influenced by economic opportunities, political liberties, social powers, and the enabling conditions of good health, basic education, and the encouragement and cultivation of initiative. The institutional arrangements for these opportunities are also influenced by the exercise of people’s freedoms, through the liberty to participate in social choice and in the making of public decisions that impel the progress of these opportunities. (p. 5)

The capabilities approach is “*concerned with entrenched social injustice and inequality*, especially capability failures that are the result of discrimination or marginalization” (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 19. emphasis by the author) such as the discrimination and marginalization faced by the women in this study. The participants

within this study expressed how they build upon their substantial freedoms (Sen, 1999), “a set of (usually interrelated) opportunities to choose from” (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 20) in aspiring to move their lives in the direction they feel is worthy. Capability is a kind of freedom, not just an ability “residing inside a person but also the freedoms or opportunities created by a combination of personal abilities and the political, social, and economic environment” (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 20). As this study articulates, the examination of the political, social, and economic environment in relation to the participant’s life trajectories is central to their personal empowerment and the access to capabilities in imagining a life beyond their past and current realities.

Putting People at the Center

Unlike a functionalist theory of development, which views development as the contribution to society through an integrated and bound social system (Meyer & Ramirez, 2003), the capabilities approach centers on individuals and their definitions and desires for living a meaningful life. Functionalism serves as the foundation for modernization theories that explain how a society moves from “traditional” to “modern” through stages of development (Vavrus, 2003; also see Rostow, 2000). Therefore, in the case of education it serves to reproduce the demands and needs of the social elite and not as a function of the common good (Meyer & Ramirez, 2003). Functionalism bolsters human capital theory, which is still the most widespread development theory used today, particularly in relationship to education (Vavrus, 2003). Human capital theory suggests that education promotes economic and social development (Oschenfeld, 2014; Vavrus, 2003) and women are thus beneficiaries resulting in improvements in maternal health,

childcare, domestic sanitation (Vavrus, 2003). Although the benefits for women are positive in human capital theory, it is purely an economic model and misses the importance of interpreting development through the experiences and desires of individuals. The capabilities approach puts people at the center and the individual experience is considered most valuable in determining well-being, which is the antecedent for development.

In order to understand whether and how Tanzanian women view ICT and its impetus for empowerment, I draw on the concepts of the capability approach. Because my research focuses on women's views, the capabilities approach with its person-centric seems to be the best fit rather than focusing on the economic outcomes or institutional arrangements as do the human capital theory and functionalism respectively. The capability approach originally developed by Amartya Sen (1999), an economist searching for a deeper description of evaluating the development of people across the world, but particularly those in Third World countries who have long had their lives assessed as valuable mainly through quantitative means. This approach to development asks, "What can people do and be?" (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1999). It allows room for cultural interpretation and individual choice of what is deemed valuable within each particular locality and home. It is an approach that conceptualizes well-being above and beyond measuring individuals' development based on their level of income (Tao, 2013) or the nation's gross national product, or industrialization, technological advances or social modernization (Sen, 1999). The capabilities approach asks what opportunities are available to ensure each individual is living the best life they wish to live while

respecting people's powers of self-definition and desired outcomes, where well-being is defined as, individuals having the freedom to make choices that are relevant and meaningful to the development of their lives. Kabeer (1999) emphasized that although important to maintain databases such as the Human Development Index and its Gender Empowerment Index, it is crucial to move beyond measuring basic well-being as a marker of achievement in gender discrimination to more complex realms such as political representation, or as this study asserts, access and use of digital technology for empowerment. In place of "focusing on the means that might facilitate a good life, we should instead focus on the actual living that people manage to achieve; and more importantly, the freedom that people have to achieve the types of lives they want to lead" (Sen, 1999, p. 73). Seeberg's (2011) *capabilities empowerment framework* is useful in situating Tanzanian women's empowerment through access and use of ICTs. Using the capabilities approach in conjunction with a feminist perspective I focus on the actual living the women in this study manage to achieve through their access and use of ICT as a tool for empowerment.

Next, I discuss several aspects of the capability approach, which constitute empowerment (Seeberg, 2014).

From Empowerment to Agency

Empowerment is a widely acknowledged concept in development literature. In the context of this research study I explore how it is a means to an end and an end in itself. For women to become empowered it is generally accepted that they need some form of basic education, financial autonomy and a voice within decision-making

processes that affect them. In order for women to take advantage of the opportunities available within their homes, communities and societies at large they first must have the personal perseverance, resilience and confidence to take action: create agency.

Empowerment is a deeply personal transformation of the state of mind. In women, empowerment must include “cognitive, psychological, political, and economic components” (Stromquist, 1995, p. 14). These components of empowerment involve understanding the self and the necessity to go beyond a comfortable tolerance of cultural and societal expectations. It includes gaining new knowledge to create a new understanding of gender relations as well as ridding oneself of old beliefs and values that organize dominant gender ideologies (Stromquist, 1995).

Women can attain “empowerment through different points of departure: emancipatory knowledge, economic leverage, political mobilization” (Stromquist, 1995, p. 16). When women achieve basic literacy and have the opportunity to connect with other women to share their personal experiences, they confirm it and conceptualize a new reality (Stromquist, 1995). These shared experiences enable women to see the connections between their micro realities and macrosocial contexts (Stromquist, 1995). This then becomes the catalyst for agency to take hold, creating a space to voice the seriousness of the need for women to be part of the development process.

In many developing countries across the world, women’s NGOs are discovering the challenges in linking women’s’ demands not only in the family and the community but to national policies: and how to move beyond the situation of poor and marginalized women to infuse these demands on civil society (Stromquist, 2000). Women’s demands

for equity socially and politically have been on the table for years in discussions across varying sectors of development such as in education, health, employment and political mobility. The policies and legislation are written and in place in most countries (Nussbaum, 2011); however, the practice has yet to catch up. Therefore, by encouraging women to create the capabilities to enhance their status within their communities there will be a transformative change in the practices of gender equity and women's rights. For women to create or realize their capabilities it is necessary they are engaged in empowerment processes moving them from a position of being acted upon or for, to that of creating action independently or collectively (Nussbaum, 2011).

Empowerment definitions hold several similar concepts: options, choice, control, and power (Huyer, 2006b). "Women's sense of empowerment is determined or shaped by a multiplicity of factors, including their individual circumstances and realities, needs, aspirations and the social context in which they operate" (Kyomuhendo, 2009, p. 164). Empowerment is linked to self-esteem and self-confidence (Garrido & Roman, 2006) and is reflected in individual agency and the existing opportunity structures (Kleine, 2013).

Empowerment is a bottom-up approach where women are significant actors in the process of change from inequality to equality (Huyer, 2006b; Kabeer, 1999).

Empowerment processes require women to be active agents in pursuing goals that are important to them (Seeberg, 2014) within their development processes. Agency is "the ability of women to define self-interest and choice, and, importantly, to consider themselves able and entitled to make choices" (Huyer, 2006b, p. 19). An agent "makes a choice to take an action that indirectly changes relationships with and in her or his

environment” (Seeberg, 2014, p. 692). Connecting with others who share similar issues relate to feelings about oneself and one’s place in society creates a sense of empowerment through the mobilization of voice (Foda & Webb, 2014).

Knowing the self gives a clearer sense of “your own capacity to direct your own life and your future . . . With increased space or openings for individual reflection, one can contemplate one’s own dreams and even how to progress towards them—what Appadurai (2004) identifies as the capacity to aspire, and which entails a growth in a sense of agency, to lead the life one has reason to value (Sen, 1999). (in Foda & Webb, 2014, p. 130)

Taking agency and thus taking control of ones’ life leads to the desired outcome, empowerment.

How can we know if empowerment has been achieved? Huyer’s (2006b) inclusive list below gives insight into what empowerment looks like for women, particularly in the developing world.

Socioeconomic:

- Economic empowerment: participation and opportunity, including control over income and family resources; increased income and access to employment; and participation in the formal economy and work force at higher levels with higher pay.
- Sociocultural empowerment: freedom of movement, lack of discrimination, visibility in public places, and positive media images.

- Familial/personal empowerment with respect to status and autonomy in the household and family: right to make choices in one's personal life and in one's family; access to reproductive health and family planning resources; access to sufficient nutrition and health care; safety, security and integrity.
- Psychological: including self-esteem, self-efficacy, potential for mobilization, sense of inclusion and entitlement by self and others.
- Education: including access to literacy and education at all levels.

Political Empowerment:

- Legal empowerment: knowledge of and ability to exercise one's legal rights, community mobilization and enforcement, the existence of laws and legislation supporting women's rights and offering channels to redress violations.
- Political empowerment: knowledge of the political system and participation in it; the right to vote; representation in regional and national governments; representation of interests in lobbies and interest groups. The goal is equitable representation in decision-making structures, both formal and informal, with women's voices present in the formulation of policies affecting their societies, and, in the longer run, learning, using, and changing the rules of decision making to reflect all groups. (p. 21)

Empowerment entails a process of change (Huyer, 2006b; Kabeer, 1999; Stromquist, 1995). It requires having the opportunity to make choices that are meaningful to individuals. Poverty and disempowerment are logically connected, because "an insufficiency of the demands for meeting one's basic needs often rules out

the ability to exercise meaningful choice” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 437). However, when survival imperatives are no longer dominant there is also the issue that now all choices are equal in their significance in terms of their consequences for people’s lives (Kabeer, 1999). Kabeer framed decision making into two tiers: first and second-order choices, the former being impactful life choices like who to marry, whether or not to have children, and the latter tend to be less consequential choices, although they may be important for determining the quality of one’s life they have less defining parameters. Kabeer suggested that the ability to exercise choice can be thought of in three dimensions: resources, agency, and achievement. Resources include not only material resources, but also those that can be found in terms of human and social resources. These include the relationships and various institutional domains that make up a society (family, market, and community are examples). Agency, “the ability to define one’s goals and act upon them” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438) encompasses the meaning, motivation, and purpose which individuals bring to their activity. This can be understood as their “sense of agency” or the power within (Kabeer, 1999). Agency is a fluid notion that embraces a far larger meaning than its operationalized meaning of “decision making.” As Kabeer explained: “It can take the form of bargaining and negotiation, deception and manipulation, subversion and resistance, as well as more intangible, cognitive processes of reflection and analysis. It can be exercised by individuals as well as by collectives” (p. 438).

Agency must be discussed together with notions of power. Agency can be exercised in a positive light through people’s capacity to define their own life-choices and pursue their own goals. It can also be exercised in a more negative sense whereby a

person uses power over another to take control as in the use of violence, coercion, and threat (Kabeer, 1999). With this understanding, positive agency must be posited, as taking the opportunity to make choices about how one desires to live. Agency cannot occur in situations where oppressive families, laws, religious rules and other social and political constraints do not allow individuals to make meaningful “first-order” choices about their lives. In many instances women across the globe face such oppressive inequalities, this is particularly true of African women.

Agency and Resources

For women to take agency they must have the resources that will allow them to make meaningful decisions. Resources, agency and action together constitute capabilities (Kabeer, 1999; Sen, 1999). However, in order for women to develop their capabilities (the potential that people have for living the lives they value), they must have basic and equal functionings (all the possible ways of “being and doing” which are valued by people in a given context) as men in their communities. Inequities in basic functionings tend to occur in situations of extreme scarcity (Kabeer, 1999); however this does not mean that women’s disempowerment is largely a matter of poverty. Although poverty is a contributing factor, it misses other forms of gender disadvantage, such as social restrictions on women’s ability to make choices. Some of these social restrictions transpire in the form of distribution of labor, eligibility to own land, decisions of who can attend school and to what level, as well as who can work outside the home doing what.

Education and Empowerment

A primary resource for creating agency in women is education. In the paragraphs above I have discussed the importance of education (and its place in empowerment processes) in developing societies, with education and economic advancement at the nexus of development. With women being at least 50% of the population, an increase in national economic advancement is more than likely when more girls and women have the opportunity to an education. In Plan's (2012) *Because I am Girl* the empirical evidence for educating girls beyond primary school is abound. Not only will the economy improve, but also the health of the family, and personal and social well-being will rise causing an overall more productive community. CARE (2012) has developed a girls' leadership initiative that aims to educate, empower and hone leadership skills in girls so that they can be the future leaders of their communities, making decisions that support and free women and girls from long held traditions of social oppression. This model uses the agency and resources theory towards achievement. Agency arises from the support of structures (policies, laws, rules) and the cohesion of relationships, creating space for women's empowerment and development.

Women's education is both crucial and contested. A key to the amelioration of many distinct problems in women's lives, it is spreading, but it is also under threat, both from custom and traditional hierarchies of power and from the sheer inability of states and nations to take effective action. (Nussbaum, 2004b, p. 327)

Education is key for women to make progress in addressing many of the concerns they view in their lives. It offers much potential for gender transformation (Stromquist,

2013) both within the family and wider community. However, education for women is at the nexus of policy and action, with governments agreeing on its significance and to implement some of the major treaties and declarations, but lacking in the capacity to enact them. Rhetoric has not yet seen action in its fullest form. Many of the policy makers and others in positions of authority still carry with them values, attitudes, and beliefs they have learned in their homes and community (Stromquist, 2013) into their places of work and within each and every interaction and engagement. Inequalities in education for women are complex and lie within intersectionalities of culture and economic and social exclusions (Kabeer, 2014) that continue to exist in societies across the world. Without continued critical inquiry and analysis of women and development we run the risk of limiting the opportunities for dialogue about what development means to those whose lives are most affected by it (Vavrus & Richie, 2003).

Schooling can provide “an increased awareness of marginalizing and patriarchal sociocultural practices, increased confidence and strength, and feelings of some control over decisions” (Ross, Shah, & Wang, 2011, p. 36) in women’s lives. However, there still remain major sociocultural practice hurdles delineating empowerment within limitations. Women that have been offered an education that “balances the promotion of empowerment with ensuring that [they] still function appropriately in their current sociocultural milieu” (Ross et al., 2011, p. 38) still have a long journey in reaching equity. If girls and women cannot realize their full potential to exercise their capabilities once they have been exposed to empowering ways of thinking and behaving through education, will they be able to make strides in creating change within their societies? The

discourse on instrumental versus intrinsic empowerment structure allows a depth of dialogue of how to approach creating capabilities. Instrumental empowerment meets the practical interests and needs of girls and women, such as educational access and attainment and literacy (Ross et al., 2011). Intrinsic empowerment encompasses both individual and collective processes: increased self-confidence and efficacy, critical awareness of cultural norms, psychological resiliency, and capabilities to work with others for change. Instrumental empowerment is highly visible in the literature on capabilities, education, development and women's studies. However intrinsic empowerment is much more difficult to document and receives scant attention in the literature (Ross et al., 2011). Seeberg (2014) found evidence of intrinsic empowerment in studies on rural Chinese girls that included "aspiration, [which] were associated with advancing levels of schooling, and habitus and individual variation in learning ability" (p. 691). These findings closely resonate with many of those on how women across the continent of Africa use ICTs for empowerment, discussed at length below. In this study intrinsic empowerment is the focus allowing for more voices to enter the discourse and develop further the scholarly literature in this area of women and development.

Culture's Role in Actualizing Agency

The environment in which the poor, in particular, poor women live inhibits their ability to aspire to the future development of their lives (Kabeer, 1999). Culture plays a definitive role in the actualization of agency for poor women in Africa, as discussed in varying contexts below connecting these commonalities across nations and ethnic groups. Power and dominance can operate through "consent and complicity as well as through

coercion and conflict” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 441). Within Africa (among other places around the world) there are aspects of tradition and culture that are so embedded or taken-for-granted that they have become accepted and adopted as commonplace. It is these aspects that are nearly impossible to peel away from what is viewed as normative within a given society and notice the transformative processes women embrace as they make progress, no matter the size, towards ordaining their own agency. Without examples of transformation or empowerment people cannot visualize or aspire to create the change themselves. Women need access to a world outside of the one they currently reside so that they can begin to build a database of alternative ways of seeing, doing and being.

In order to be empowered one must have the option to exercise choice, and choice implies the possibility of alternatives (Kabeer, 1999). Kabeer suggested three interrelated dimensions that allow for the ability to exercise choice to be realized as resources, agency, and achievements. Resources are wider than in the conventional material sense and encompass social relationships that are developed and conducted in myriad institutions (the family, market, and community at large). Agency is defined as “the ability to define one’s goals and act upon them [is broader than discernible actions, and embodies the] meaning, motivation and purpose which individuals bring to their activity” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438). Agency, resources, and achievement collectively make capabilities (Sen, 1999). Achievement is possibly more complex under Kabeer’s (1999) definition. It cannot be measured alone and instead must be disentangled from variances in functioning achievements, which are people’s different ways of realizing being and

doing (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1999) and are the actual living they can manage to achieve within their social environment (Seeberg, 2014; Sen, 1999). Common in development literature is the idea that inequalities in basic functionings generally occur in situations of extreme scarcity implying that women's inequality is largely a matter of poverty. Kabeer (1999) asked us to think about forms of gender inequality that stretches to the better-off sections of society. She examples life expectancy and children's nutrition, two widely used indicators of gender discrimination in basic well-being, which are not as widespread in Sub-Saharan Africa as they are in South Asia. However, both men and women in Sub-Saharan Africa recognize women's far heavier workloads (Kevane, 2014) as well as male domination in public and private decision-making. In my research study I looked more carefully at this concept of disentangling achievement and functionings. The women in the study are all what development and education literature would consider as highly educated and "capable." They can care for their families and appear to balance work and life responsibilities. However, they are silently adhering to socio-cultural expectations of women, by leaving professions that have higher earning power to be available to raise their children and tend to their husband's or parent's needs. They "choose" to take on traditional female roles yet struggle with their decisions and attempt to create different paths for their daughters. Discourse on adaptive preferences (Nussbaum, 2000) suggest that rather than having the capability to do the things that people have reason to value, women make choices that are "acceptable" within their social and cultural contexts. In a study by Wanjira Munyua (2009) women stuck to working in and running their own businesses that reinforce gender roles, earn less, and

close down more often than men (for reasons of: caring for children, caring for sick family members, and other domestic responsibilities).

Kabeer (1999) reminded us that untangling these adaptive preferences of when women appear to choose their secondary status and accommodate forms of gender discrimination from what they would have reason to value if negative socio-cultural expectations were removed is all too common within patriarchal dominant societies. Examples include, women's willingness to bear more children than physically healthy to satisfy their own and or the husband's preference for sons, being overly cruel to daughters in-law, the continuation of bearing a heavier workload or appearing to support men's dominance in decision-making. Kabeer (1999) was suggesting that in these cases presented above that there is a distinct lack of alternatives in choice on these matters, because they reflect and stem from women's subordinate status. Making these choices is reflective of the inability to even imagine the possibility of having a different choice. For example, Macueve et al. (2009) found that women are obliged to think about their family's day-to-day survival and lack the mental space to think about anything beyond their family's well-being.

Without the ability to make relevant and meaningful choices, women will not be capable of "moving from a position of unquestioning acceptance of the social order to a critical perspective on it" (Kabeer, 1999, p. 441). It is only with this critical perspective, moving from the instrumental form of empowerment to the intrinsic, that transformative agency can take place. Buskens and Webb (2009) asserted that women are best able to "be the agents of their own development" (p. 207). When women have the opportunity to

dialogue with other women living in different circumstances they can gain a critical perspective on their own lives. Gaining access to the lives of others women in the developing world can begin the localization of information, knowledge, and ideas gained through the wider discourse on women and development. In order for women to gain the freedom to reach their fullest potential it is necessary to “transform [all] people’s minds and knowledge about the world” (Buskens & Webb, 2009, p. 208).

The Capacity to Aspire

Aspirations grow from exposure, and exposure can be found through education. In the following section I introduce the concept of aspirations so that in the later sections it is clear how aspirations are formulated and expressed. Appadurai (2004) formulated the term *capacity to aspire* explaining it as relative to the environment in which the person lives. He projected that the *capacity to aspire* precedes and constitutes individual and communal agency as the means for the development (and possible transformation) of a society. With this proposal, Appadurai made clear the dynamic nature of the concept of capabilities as dimensions of freedoms (Seeberg & Luo, 2012). Both Appadurai and Sen connect beliefs, values, and culture as central aspects of human development. Sen (2004) expressed the importance of culture and its role in influencing development through the beliefs, values, behaviors, and habits of a given society, whereas Appadurai (2004) focused on an orientation to the future. Both authors saw culture as a means to transforming a society if given the proper channels for expression, including voice, choice, community dialogue, and decision-making. Culture is not something that should be worked against, but rather foundational to societal transition.

Appadurai (2004) expressed his concern that many of the world's treaties on development view culture as a "worry or a drag on the forward momentum of planned economic change" (p. 60). Culture is too often described as something from the past, a habit, custom, heritage, and tradition, whereas development is seen in terms of the future: plans, hopes, goals, and targets. It is through this lens that he unpacked what it means to aspire and how it can be done. In the developing world the capacity to aspire is hindered by a severe lack of basic human needs such as shelter, clothing, enough food, access to clean water, and health care. He took the example of the slum dwellers in Mumbai who have no hygienic way of disposing of waste, human (bodily) or other. This alone diminishes the people living in these communities. It is excruciatingly difficult for them to think beyond their very basic needs and therefore their aspirations are built on the want for better housing, more food, a more hygienic place to live, and so forth. Their aspirations are limited to basic human necessities. For Appadurai (2004) the mal-distribution of the capacity to aspire in any society is central as the mal-distribution of capabilities is central for Sen. "It is a sort of metacapacity, and the relatively rich and powerful invariably have a more fully developed capacity to aspire" (p. 68). He did not mean that the poor and deprived cannot wish, want, need, plan, or aspire. What he suggested is that the environment in which they live inhibits their ability to aspire to the future development of their lives. They are merely trying to survive one more day. "The capacity to aspire, like any complex cultural capacity, thrives and survives on practice, repetition, exploration, conjecture, and refutation" (Appadurai, 2004, p. 69). Without the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue about their individual and collective development the capacity to

aspire is diminished. This is where the importance of collective decision-making (democracy) guides the discourse as for Sen (2004): all members of a given society must be able to engage in discourses about beliefs, values, and desires in order to create communities and democratic development.

Enhancing Voice, Aspirations, and Empowerment Creating Freedoms

In my research into voice, aspirations, and empowerment, I found Asiedu (2012) who showed that women in developing countries can cultivate the capacity to aspire far outside the boundaries of their lived experiences—if they have the opportunity to access to ICTs. They can open that “window into the world” as they view videos, listen to music, read news, read opinion columns, and read personal and political blogs. The more they view, the more they can virtually experience, and the more they have the opportunity to share their experiences online, the more developed their aspirations will become. The wider their aspirations the larger the shared dreams will become and the possibility of creating shifts in the social fabric of their communities will be more likely. They can become part of a collective global voice (Norton et al., 2011) contributing to the creation of discourse rather than passively receiving information and knowledge generated by others who are not connected to the context in which these women exist.

“In one form or another, culture engulfs our lives, our desires, our frustrations, our ambitions, and the freedoms that we seek” (Sen, 2004, p. 39). Culture matters in everything we do. It is not, however, responsible for all that is good or all that is undesirable. It is an essential element, but so are class, race, gender, profession, and politics influentially powerful. Culture influences and it evolves. Globalization is a

reality and need not be a threat to culture, rather it should be embraced, because it is inevitable that cultures will shift and evolve as they interact with other cultures. Talking and listening are at the core of consensual cultural identity building, for every individual is needed to participate in the evolution of a culture (Sen, 2004). There may be resistance, and this is an essential part of the evolution, but if the resistance is met with open dialogue then consensus building can happen. Women's voices are essential to the process of development, change, constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing the social milieu. To build consensus all voices must be at the table.

In order to aspire to freedoms, particularly of voice, one must have some sort of foundation of security, including good health, a basic education, peace of mind and body and participation in decision-making within the home, community and nation (Sen, 2004). These foundational human rights are rooted in democracy. Democratic living is the most inclusive and beneficial way to live. Without democracy there is the distinct "possibility of being alienated from one's own independent agency" (Sen, 2004, p. 56). Not all women (or men) have the benefit of living within a democratic nation, creating a tension between their right to live free from oppression and their ability to access the knowledge of the basic human freedoms that should be granted to all people. This is a dilemma larger than the scope of this project, but necessary to address in order to understand the great need for women living in politically claimed democratic nations (such as Tanzania) to have a larger voice in their own societies. Their voices can be broadcast across the globe through ICTs and caught by women in more restrictive environments opening a small window onto the world (Asiedu, 2012). Education plus

access to technology can not only open windows for women, but with knowledge and skills they can become the creators of the windows. Democratically educating girls and women provides benefits both to the family, the wider society and perhaps the entire world.

Aspirations, Digital Technology and Emancipation Linked

In this next section I address the effect access to ICTs has on women's mental images of themselves. Through the literature it becomes evident that having access to and the ability to use ICTs creates a mental migration in women's lives from the "here and now" to "what can be" perspective.

When women have access to a world beyond the geographical confines of their community they can dare to dream, to imagine themselves living a life quite different from the one they are currently living. They can find sources of inspiration (Yitamben & Tchinda, 2009) and be creators of ideas and products. This sort of aspiring to be and do something more than what they can see immediately in front of them is very powerful. In order for women to take advantage of the opportunities available within their homes, communities, and societies at large they first must have the personal perseverance, resilience, and confidence to take action: create agency. These capabilities must be present for empowerment to be transformational. It is a deeply personal metamorphosis of the state of mind. And yet it is intertwined within women's "individual circumstances and realities, needs, aspirations and the social context in which they operate" (Kyomuhendo, 2009, p. 164). One major way women can create agency is by knowledge

acquisition and sharing through the use of information communication technology (Ojokoh, 2009).

Access to a wider view on the world can create deeper aspirations for knowledge and skills that may be obtainable within the context of people's lives (see: Hassanin, 2009; Kyomuhendo, 2009; Omamo, 2009; Wanjira Munyua, 2009). In Africa, arguments against using ICTs to empower women center on how low levels of literacy impede their empowering use. These arguments fail to take into consideration projects like that of Norton et al. (2011) in Uganda supporting language training using computers and the Internet while learning about HIV/AIDS prevention, or Professor Mitra (TED Talks, 2013) who conducted the 'Hole-in-the-Wall' experiments placing computers on the streets of a large metropolitan center as well as in the center of a tiny, remote village in India for children to use freely. He monitored the technical and language skill development of the children over time and found they taught themselves English in order to use the Internet and became quite savvy in navigating the system and operations of the machine through trial and error. In these two small examples there is evidence that people, even those without much formal education, can overcome technological and language barriers and become part of the global voice in creating knowledge. Given the resources, the participants in both of these studies used the opportunity to develop their understanding and knowledge base and expressed a sense of transformation as they felt connected to something bigger than themselves.

In the study by Foda and Webb (2014) of body-image and young Egyptian women, the participants were able to move beyond their social context that maintains

talking about feelings or expressing extreme emotions brings disrespect. However, by *chatting* through the Internet and making connections with other women outside of Egypt, the participants were able to express themselves freely without the constraint of societal norms of behavior and conversation. And as in Foda and Webb's (2014) study, the women participants were able to recognize their own worth and see themselves as worthy of visualizing and aspiring to reach their dreams; "Aspiring to attain a particular vision or goal means that we see ourselves as capable and deserving of not only shaping our own life and future, but also contributing to and shaping the future of our family, [and] community" (p. 122).

Appadurai (2004) stated that "one of the gravest lacks is the lack of resources with which to give 'voice', that is to express their views and get results skewed to their own welfare" (p. 63).

Knowing the self gives a clearer sense of "your own capacity to direct your own life and your future . . . [and] with increased space or openings for individual reflection, one can contemplate one's own dreams and even how to progress towards them" (Foda & Webb, 2014, p. 130). This reminds us of how Appadurai (2004) identified the capacity to aspire, which involves an evolution of a sense of agency, to lead the life one has reason to value (Sen, 1999).

Development, Capabilities, and ICTs

People all across the world are using the Internet and mobile phones to improve their lives (Kleine, 2013). Their lives are intentionally and unintentionally developing through different points of access and use of ICTs. In the field of informational

technology for development (ICTD), development is the end and ICTs are the means. Therefore the use of specific technology may be a capability in itself, but is much more often a tool used to achieve or expand other capabilities (Kleine, 2013).

As touched on above, there is no consensus for creating a definition of development. Definitions of development include economic growth, rights-based approaches, and sustainable development (usually concerning issues of the environment; Kleine, 2013). In the capabilities approach development is “a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy [freedom of people to] lead the lives they have reason to value” (Sen, 1999, p. 3). It is understood as a process, not an outcome; it is ongoing and dynamic (Kleine, 2013). Sen’s (1999) approach focuses on freedom of choice in the personal, social, economic, and political sphere making it an extremely holistic approach to human development (Kleine, 2013). People are at the center of development, and people themselves define what lives they value, resulting in a plurality of views, which makes the processes of development come alive in their dynamism. Women may find that communicating with family and friends, gathering and accessing information, or exploring their personal, social, and cultural interests online may be some of the most salient ways these technologies assist them in aspiring to and achieving the lives they value (Kleine, 2013).

Summary

In the above segments, I reviewed the literature pertaining to education, women’s empowerment processes, and ICTs within the African context as it relates to my research question. I began by situating girls’ education in an African context, emphasizing the

inequalities and barriers girls face in the classroom, and how that interferes with gaining a high-quality education. This section discussed international development, education and feminist approaches and uses connecting larger concepts of development and feminist theories and practices with education and girls and women's empowerment. Through the capability approach and its uses in this study section, I threaded together the concepts of education in the context of development in Africa, with agency and capabilities, and how they constitute empowerment for women. Finally, I joined the literature on the capabilities approach and women's empowerment through access and use of ICTs. In the literature review above elements of the capabilities approach and feminist perspectives are inseparable from the discussions on girls' education, women and development and ICTs within the African context and as tools for empowerment, and therefore, are found seamlessly weaving together the elements of the research question and purpose.

Using technology in new and innovative ways, evaluating the empowerment, and changed state of well-being in women is a major area in need of addressing as researchers and development practitioners move forward in assessing the intersection of ICT and education as a forum for enhancing aspirations and empowering women to address oppressive and submissive lives. The literature above lays out the need for further research on how ICTs can contribute to women and girls' development. In this research study I ask, *how do urban Tanzanian women's experience with ICTs and education, contribute to their views on individual and collective empowerment? Whether, to what extent, and how do urban Tanzanian women use ICTs for empowerment?*

Through my research project I document how technology and education can provided an opportunity for Tanzanian women to see how others live, and engage in discussions of the information society.

The literature has raised the question in scholarly circles as to whether the Internet and other digital technologies have become agents of transformation or are reproducing the inequalities of the status quo of African women (Robins, 2002). My research project adds to the discussion of women's development and liberation through access to and use of digital technology by documenting how women in Tanzania have gained the skills, and are currently using technology for personal and collective empowerment.

In my research study I build on Kabeer's (1999) conceptualization of empowerment through breaking invisible tethers of culture keeping women moving through their lives unquestioningly. I inquire into how digital technology creates the window that expands imagination and gives space for women to command their own agency. I expand on and contest the theory that women are "creatures of the local, the rural, the periphery, while the men's world is enacted in urban centers that closer to the global center in the web of international relations" (Griffins, 2003, p. 81). I dig deeper into the notion of individual and communal agency as the means for the development (and possible transformation) of a society. I use Sen's (2004) thoughts on the importance of culture as it transcends the beliefs, values, behaviors, and habits of a given society as well as Appadurai's (2004) focus on culture's orientation to the future. Both authors see culture as means to transforming a society if given the proper channels for expression, including voice, choice, community dialogue and decision-making. Through

investigating how technology coupled with life experiences can create a space for women to express their struggles and desires I will situate their narratives in a localized context of what it means to be an urban woman in Tanzania.

In the next chapter, *Design of the Study* I discuss how the chosen method of inquiry along with the analytical lens structures the research process.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

In this chapter I discuss the research methodology and design that guides this study. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the experiences and perspectives of professional Tanzanian women on digital technology and their place in the discussion on well-being, empowerment. More specifically this study examines how digital technology/ICTs contributes to empowerment of Tanzanian professional women through the participant's narratives and reflections on their lives. Through a deep analysis these reflections hope to offer an insight into the trajectories of the women's lives and their profoundly personal journeys.

The outcome of this study is to determine if ICTs and education can lead to empowerment and enhance the quality of life for Tanzanian women through exposure to the global world by means of the Internet, shaping a space for themselves and their stories via connections to others. Through the participants' narratives this study gives insight into how urban Tanzanian women understand and express empowerment in the context of their educational journeys and access and use of ICTs.

Qualitative Methods

Through the framework of the narrative inquiry I implement qualitative research methods that resonated with my feminist lens on life and connection to the capabilities approach. The capabilities approach lends itself well to the components of feminist research, which draws "from a wide array of methods and methodologies . . . [but] ask[s] new sets of questions that include women's issues and concerns" (Brooks & Hesse-Biber,

2007, p. 4). Feminist research is not only based on empowerment and emancipation of women, but ultimately promoting social change and social justice for women (Brooks & Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 4). “Women are increasingly seen, by men as well as women, as active agents of change: the dynamic promoters of social transformations that can alter the lives of both women *and* men” (Sen, 1999, p. 189, emphasis the author’s). The capabilities approach is a normative approach that has clear concerns with issues of injustice, for example those resulting from gender discrimination (Nussbaum, 2011). It is within these gender injustices I witnessed during my life in Tanzania that my desire to understand better how women are living dignified lives emerged. I added the ICT component to the research as I witnessed the rapid infiltration of technology, mobile phones, and access to the Internet, in particular, wondering what effect this phenomenon had on Tanzanian women.

Methodology: Narrative Inquiry

This study uses narrative analysis as a methodology, to explore how the lives and experiences of a select group of urban Tanzanian women use their education and digital technology for empowerment. This research explores the stories of this group of professional Tanzanian women in anticipation of understanding how they negotiate their socio-cultural environment as their experiences with digital technology contribute to their shifting ideas of women’s development and place in society. Narrative inquiry utilizes stories as data (Merriam, 2002) and embeds itself in the “experiences that make up people’s lives both individually and socially” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20). Narrative Inquiry is appropriate for the purpose of this research study because I am

interested in capturing the personal experiences (Kaun, 2010) of the participants through investigating the meaning systems (Polkinghorne, 1988) that form their individual human experiences within the context of their social and cultural milieu. “Narrative descriptions exhibit human activity as purposeful engagement in the world . . . that draws together diverse events, happenings, and actions of human lives into thematically unified goal-directed processes” (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 5).

In particular, I choose to use a narrative inquiry approach because I am interested in the subtle empowerment processes that occur in women as their mental state shifts when they are exposed to a wide range of ideas, information, and processes through digital technology. There are a wide range of studies on women’s empowerment and the use of ICTs, but few investigate the possibilities of social change through a shift in mental spaces and growth in aspirations. As urban Tanzanian women share their stories of how they gained the skills and confidence to enter into the world of digital technology use, this research study will contribute to the discourse on African women’s empowerment: what is considered well-being in the participants’ particular contexts, what they perceive empowerment to be, what socio-cultural practices they accept and which ones they reject, and the role digital technology plays in these understandings.

I chose to use the narratives of the women in this study in order to animate their life experiences that lead to introspection on well-being and how ICTs help enhance their quality of life. Drawing from the capabilities approach I understand well-being to be self-described by each individual, making it an approach that is as flexible as it is unique, because of its personal nature, emphasizing that each person experiences life

distinctively. The capabilities approach asks what can each person be and do? (Nussbaum, 2004a, 2011; Sen, 1999). In this way the narratives of the participants will reflect how their personal histories have shaped their current paths, what they are doing now, and what they hope for the future.

The denouement of the narratives (Polkinghorne, 1995), overcoming culturally repressive social expectations, is set against the plot of the daily challenges Tanzanian women commonly face in their lives. This draws the reader into the twists and turns of the lives of the participants and opens the door for the researcher to situate her own story within the larger picture of living as a woman in Tanzania. “As researchers, we come to each new inquiry field living our stories” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 63), therefore it is important for the researcher to posit herself within the context of the research.

I delve into my own personal narrative as a White American woman who lived the majority of my adult life (16 years) in Tanzania. My narrative helps to position this study situated in my own precarious locus as a partial cultural insider. Working closely with Tanzanians, marrying a Tanzanian man and raising children in a dual cultural home, I gained insights into the life of Tanzanian women that is unusual for an outsider, and hence I dare claim a partial insider’s perspective in undertaking this research.

My Narrative Tale of Positionality

As an American woman having lived and worked for 16 years in Tanzania, married a Tanzanian man, raised three half Tanzanian children, and struggled to find my position within that society, community and family, I acknowledge that there is a personal connection to my study. But the reasons for this study also include my desire to

better understand the complexities of the Tanzanian society as unearthed to me through my work at Mkombozi, a center for street children I co-founded in the mid 1990s with a colleague/mentor and dear friend, and the acquaintances cultivated at the Urban International School¹, the setting of the exploratory study, where I worked as a classroom teacher from 2004–2011. In our work trying to uncover the reasons children left their homes for life on the streets at Mkombozi, we were puzzled by the stress women seemed to endure in the home in a stoic fashion, yet shadowed by a deep resignation of their locus. However, we never uncovered reasons for the position of women within their communities, mainly because we were too overwhelmed by trying to find ways to assist the communities to slow down this migration to the cities where the children faced unbelievable hardships and abuses. Later, as we began to meet some girls on the streets we began to wonder why it is so hard to access the girls who migrate to the streets. Again, this task was daunting and we were only able to conduct some basic research to report to policy makers and NGOs working specifically with disadvantaged girls. Our center focused on disadvantaged street boys and youth. We felt we did not have the expertise to expand into caring for girls or researching how to end their migration to the streets.

When I left Mkombozi to work full-time as a classroom teacher I was fluent in Swahili and became acquainted with some of the Tanzanian women staff members. I was amazed by their stories of resilience, and saddened by the oppression, abuse, and

¹ Urban International School is a pseudonym used throughout.

misinterpretations of their legal rights. I found that through the years some of the women began to trust me with their stories. There was Jennifer, who cleaned my classroom every day, whose husband had kicked her out of their house after many years of marriage and the birth of three children, to co-habit with a younger woman. She had no idea that she had rights within this situation and could demand that the younger woman leave; it was Jennifer's house too after all. She also did not know that she could ask for a divorce and demand that the children live with her, and her husband pay maintenance to support the children from their marriage. She was seeking advice from colleagues who also did not understand the legal system of Tanzania and felt pressured to follow the traditional clan laws, which are not legal and are only considered to be taken as advice, but to those less educated, are believed to be the law of the land.

Another friend, Haika², a teacher, was struggling to get her sister-in-law released from prison on a false murder charge. Haika's sister-in-law had been in prison for two years when I met her. She was the accountant at a major bank in town when a robbery occurred and one of the bank's security officers was shot and killed. The police believed Haika's sister-in-law was part of the team planning the heist, because as the accountant she knew exactly how much cash would be in the safe on this particular day. During the eight years I worked with Haika she spent every Saturday and Sunday preparing food and taking it by bus to her sister-in-law at the prison 80 kilometers away. She spent most of her salary on lawyers' fees only to find the money wasted on two occasions. Two

² All participants' names are pseudonyms.

separate lawyers tricked Haika and her husband into believing he could get the sister-in-law released from prison. Each time they found a new lawyer they had to save for months to be able to pay the extortionist fees, only to be set back when the lawyer could not deliver. Through this frustration and pain Haika found a way to come to work each day, raise her teenage son, invite her married son and daughter-in-law and their two children (to save their money) to live with her and her husband in a three bedroom home. She has buried children of her own and of her siblings, gone without electricity and running water when they were turned off, and has taken an active role in her church mentoring and supporting other women.

As I got to know Jennifer, Haika, and the other women better over the years, I began to understand how their place within Tanzania society left them vulnerable to taking on too many responsibilities and leaving them exhausted. Jennifer is educated through primary school and didn't have the basic skills to seek out appropriate help to navigate through her divorce and custody battle. Haika is a college degree holder and licensed teacher, but still lives under the cultural expectations that her husband has the final say in all domestic (and professional) matters. She must do what her husband expects, even if it means over-stretching her physical and mental capacities. My relationship with these women in connection to my lived experiences as an American woman led me to wonder if there is a way that Tanzanian women can enhance their quality of life while subversively challenging their positions within their communities and the cultural expectations placed upon them.

Feminist Perspective Used as a Lens on Narrative Inquiry

In studying how Tanzanian women are empowered through their access and use of ICTs, how can I not view the data through a feminist lens? This study takes a feminist perspective since it grounds social research ethically in the situation where it makes a difference in the lives of women we research (Bloom & Sawin, 2009). Feminist research positions gender as the categorical center of the research process (Hesse-Biber, 2014). This research study posits gender as the most critical aspect to the participants' lives when defining and expressing empowerment, aspirations, agency, and well-being. I am choosing to look at women rather than a mixed gender group of participants, because I want to better understand how being a female Tanzanian affects access to and use of ICTs. Feminist research perspectives aim to produce research for women, by women, to answer questions women have about their own lives (Bloom & Sawin, 2009). The goal of research conducted using feminist lens is to give women tools to end their own oppression (Bloom & Sawin, 2009). Although the women in this study are not oppressed, they hold a strikingly subordinate position to men and encounter many deprivations and unfreedoms.

From a feminist perspective the data collection, analysis and interpretation are all centralized within the relationship between the researcher and researched (Hesse-Biber, 2014). The relationship is one built on trust and with the purpose of making a difference. The difference can be simply raising an awareness of injustices or it can be as complex as setting a scene for structural and institutional changes. Feminist research perspectives advocate subjectivity in research to enhance the researcher-researched relationships by

creating strong ties with the participants and openly locating researchers within their research by sharing the values and assumptions as the researched (Bloom & Sawin, 2009). It is thus critical for the researcher to position herself within the research and create space during all the research processes to reflect both analytically and reflexively.

As mentioned above I must be aware of my own positionality within this research process for I have much to offer with a dual insider and outside perspective, but I also must be aware of the power dynamics that may arise being a White, middle class, American woman interviewing Black Tanzania women, who are indeed by Tanzanian standards, middle-class, but globally speaking, are deprived economically when compared to me. I bring a much broader sense of freedom and different set of capabilities arising out of opportunities and life choices, which many are entirely foreign to the participants, particularly due to cultural or social expectations of women's roles and their place within the home and society.

Reflexivity is an important practice utilized within feminist research studies and is discussed in more depth below in the data analysis section. It is complex using a feminist perspective, because of bonds that are built between the researcher and researched. In order to connect with the participants the researcher must share her life with the participants, removing the ethical distance found in other methods of conducting research. The researcher must pay attention to the lives and needs of the participants, encouraging them to tell their stories and position their interpretations or meaning-making at the center of the dialogue (Bloom & Sawin, 2009). Hence the use of narrative inquiry is an appropriate methodology for this study.

In this research study the stories of the women participants provide the critical information on the empowerment processes and journeys they travel and how it may have lead to an enhanced sense of well-being in their lives. The voices and experiences of the participants come to life through rich description and reveal the “webs of power that connect institutional and individual lives to larger formations” (Weis & Fine, 2004, as cited in Bloom & Sawin, 2009, p. 340).

The intertwining of the narrative inquiry methodology with the feminist perspective and the capabilities approach is a valuable structure for illuminating the participants’ voices and experiences while validating their personal struggles within a patriarchal society.

Capabilities Approach Used as a Lens on Narrative Inquiry

In this research study I further view the life stories through an understanding of the capabilities approach. In wanting to understand how ICTs affect the well-being and empowerment processes of the participants, I am situating the life stories within the capabilities framework asking “what can a person do or be” (Nussbaum, 2004b, 2011; Sen, 1999). The capabilities approach uses a specific set of terminology that I employ here. In this study I try to better understand the participants’ functionings, which are the various things people value doing or being (Kleine, 2013; Nussbaum, 2004b, 2011; Sen, 1999). It is these functionings that are analyzed to answer the main research question, *whether, to what extent, and how do urban Tanzanian women use ICTs for empowerment?*, where the “whether, to what extent, and how” refers to the stories they

tell of their lives as they are explored through the five subsidiary questions. These five questions investigate the set of capabilities the participants embrace (see Table 1).

Using Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensions of narrative inquiry the questions create direction and place the grand narrative, *Tanzania, women, ICTs and empowerment* within a framework of understanding.

Prior Preparation and Procedures

I am fluent in Swahili and thus was able to conduct all interviews and interpret their meaning. The interviews were conducted in English; however, some participants used Swahili terms and or culturally specific sounds, intonations, accents, and use of words at times. I used one Tanzanian research assistant, who was one of my local contacts in the preparation of the fieldwork. I transcribed one and a half of the interviews from the audio files, and then hired the Research Bureau at Kent State in the College of Education Health and Human Sciences (EHHS) to complete the transcriptions as time no longer allowed me to transcribe the remaining interviews (see sample transcriptions in the Appendix).

Site and Participant Selection

Because research is usually done on someone else's "home ground" (Stake, 1995, p. 57), it is essential to gain consent before beginning the research. I received approval from the Institutional Review Board at Kent State University in April 2015 to conduct my data collection in Tanzania from June through August 2015 (see Appendix). This research has also been approved by the Tanzanian Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) that regulates all research leading to publication in Tanzania.

The location of my research is the Urban International School where I worked until 2011; therefore, the local consent process went smoothly. I interviewed participants, as well as conducted observations while in Tanzania in June and July 2015. Stake (1995) said, “previous experience and talk with knowledgeable people already at the site are important in shaping the requests” (p. 58). In following Rubin and Rubin’s (2012) advice I started with personal acquaintances who were members of the group being studied. These known people introduced me to other interested participants.

This study uses a purposeful selection (Maxwell, 2012) process in recruiting participants. I am familiar with two of the participants from previously working at the school, with one having been a participant in the exploratory study, and served as the key informant for this current research project. She helped me to gain access to the other participants. Being a partial cultural insider also made access easier because of my genuine connection to Tanzania and deep understanding of cultural practices.

Weiss (1994) described this type of qualitative selection as a panel of knowledgeable informants “who are uniquely able to be informative because they are experts in an area or were privileged witnesses to an event; and people who taken together, display what happens within a population affected by a situation or event” (p. 17). In the case of this research study the participants are all Tanzanian urban women who have access to and the capability to use ICTs on a regular basis.

I conducted snowball sampling by asking the previous participant in the exploratory study to connect me with other women she knows who may be interested in participating in such a study. Those who were interested and suitable to the study were

explained the purpose of the research, my data collection approach, as well as the risks and benefits to participating. If they were comfortable moving forward with the research gave informed consent to participate. I recruited a total of eight participants, and was able to arrange suitable times, convenient for the participants to begin the interview and observation processes with seven of the women. The participants filled out the consent forms in Tanzania, which were kept in a secure cabinet.

Characteristics of Participants

Gender, ages, formal educational attainment, and other criteria of the participants for this study were Tanzanian women ages 29–56 years, living in the Arusha region, who have some degree of formal education, access to ICTs either professionally or at home, and use them on a regular basis (see Table 2). A narrative view of the lives of each participant is presented in Chapter 4.

Data Collection

For the purpose of this research study, I used interviews as the primary source of data collection and participant observations as secondary. Because temporality is central to narrative inquiry, reflexive interviews that elicit storied data locating people, events, and ideas in time are a natural way to give meaning to these on a continuum of experiences (Schram, 2006). Through the interviews, I was able to gain insight into the participants' views of the world to better understand how they experience using ICTs in their lives. The interviews helped direct the participant observations (Hatch, 2002) in deciding where, when, and how often I should observe each individual. The goal of the participant observations was to understand more clearly the social phenomena

surrounding whether, how, and to what extent do Tanzanian women use ICTs for empowerment.

Table 2

Participants

Participant	Age	Ethnicity	Level of Education	Current Profession
Naishooki	52	Masaai	secondary vocational training	Manager of a jewelry shop (NGO)
Haika	56	Chagga	post-secondary	Primary school IT teacher
Nanyorai	29	Masaai	post-secondary	Family business (construction)
Teddy	31	Chagga	post-secondary	unemployed
Lisa	53	Kikuyu	Secondary post-secondary	office manager (UIS)
Kisa	40	Nyakyusa	post-secondary	Teacher at UIS
Mary	34	Chagga	Secondary	Shop assistant

Responsive Interviewing

The narrative inquiry methodological approach to the interviews provided a useful framework for this biographical approach, which attends to the person in relationship to society and takes into account the influences of gender, class (Merriam, 1998), and in this study geographical location and educational experience.

This study uses personal responsive interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The interviews were semi-formal in nature, using a conversational style guided by the over-arching concepts of the research questions rather than following a strict

pre-determined structure. This method allowed for flexibility to move in the direction the participants wished (Weiss, 1994). Follow up questions were employed to probe deeper in order to gain a deep understanding and uncover thick descriptions, leading to rich data (Maxwell, 2012) collection. In these responsive style interviews, I broadly set the overall subjects for discussion as suggested by a feminist perspective on the capability approach and encouraged replies that are detailed and in-depth (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) evoking the stories that make up the participants' lives. I created an interview question template and asked most of the participants each of the questions, but presented the questions in different ways for each participant depending on the flow of the conversation.

The relationship between researcher and respondent is a partnership (Weiss, 1994). The partnership is built on trust and is constructed through the conversational style. However, the conversational style of the interview should not be confused with an ordinary conversation. When interviewing, the researcher is eliciting a deeper level of detail and expression than expected in an ordinary conversation (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). "In the responsive interviewing model, you are looking for material that has depth and detail and is nuanced and rich with thematic material" (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 101). Trust was established with the participants; as noted above, I established a relationship with the participants because of my connection to the key informants, and being a partial insider. The history and context (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) of each of the women's lives within this study uncovered the connections between their stories and the larger global picture of how technology is enhancing the quality of life across the world.

The interview designs for my study are semi-formal and flexible (Hatch, 2002). I used a list of questions developed as a guide to ensure I covered each topic of the research study while leaving space for the participants to take the conversational style of interviewing in the direction they wish. In order to avoid gathering answers that reflect a survey style or stray from the research topic, I incorporated the use of probes and follow-up questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). This way of back and forth conversation created a more natural flow to the interview and obtained more nuanced answers.

Because of the nature of narrative inquiry, it was necessary to take extended periods of time with each of the participants. There was a mix of formal interviews, informal conversations, and participant observations held on different days and a final informal connection, either through a visit or phone conversation for clarification, verification and extension of any information as part of the triangulation process and as member checking (Hatch, 2002; Maxwell, 2012).

Participant Observations

Observing the participants both in their professional, domestic, and social environments helped to understand the full picture of whether, how, and to what extent they use ICTs for empowerment. I spent time with the participants at their places of work, in their homes, and in other locations such as at church, at local restaurants, and other shops. In the section titled *The interview process* below I detail each interview and observation structure.

Interviewing Procedures

I spent two months (June–July 2015) conducting interviews and observing the participants at their place of work and at home. In order to gather enough data from the participants I spent between 5 and 20 hours with each participant. The interviews were conducted in English; however, at times the participants used Swahili words and phrases, as well as culturally specific intonations, accents, and words.

I elicited informed consent from all participants through explaining the purpose of the study, the procedures for enacting the research (data collection, methods, risks, privacy and confidentiality, volunteer participation, compensation) and any benefits to the participants individually and the society as a whole. The review of the consent form was presented at the initial meeting with all participants, which occurred at the beginning of each interview. I allowed time for any questions or concerns by the participants to be addressed in detail. During the interviewing process I constructed conversations that elicited the depth and detail Rubin and Rubin (2012) suggested in order to create the thematic material used in the analysis. The entire interview and observation process took about 5–20 hours for each participant.

The interview processes. Below I describe in detail the process I used to gain trust and conduct interviews and observations with each of the participants.

I interviewed Teddy at her home over the course of three hours. Before the interview, we spent time talking about her home and aspirations for going back to work, both at her house and on the phone. I continued to text with Teddy throughout my stay in Tanzania, because she kept inquiring if I knew of anyone who could help her find a job.

I spent many afternoons with Naishooki at her place of work before conducting the official interview. I talked to her about her work, her family, past work, friends and colleagues we have in common, as well as engaged in personal discussions about our families and professional experiences and desires. I conducted a two and half hour long interview with Naishooki in a closed off area at her place of work. Because she was “at work,” we were interrupted a few times and had to restart or “get back into the swing” of the interview each time she came back to the interview. These interruptions did not disturb the flow of the conversation too much, as we had a very good rapport. After the interview was complete I spent many more afternoons visiting with her at her shop observing and talking informally with her.

Nanyorai invited me to her house where we spent an entire morning together drinking tea, talking, looking at her photographs and chickens, and discussing hopes and dreams for the future. The official interview lasted nearly two hours. I continued to stay in contact with Nanyorai through phone conversations, texting, Whatsapp, Facebook, and email throughout my stay and when I returned to the US.

Haika met me at her church for a two hour interview. Before the interview, Haika and I sent emails back and forth for almost a year. I also met her for tea at work twice before I interviewed her. I knew Haika well from when I lived in Tanzania, because she and I were colleagues at the Urban International School for 10 years. She and I continued to email occasionally after my return.

I arranged to meet Lisa at her place of work where we had a nearly three hour long interview. Before the interview I visited Lisa three times at work just observing,

talking informally, and drinking tea together. I met with Lisa informally one last time before leaving Tanzania.

I met with Mary at her place of work many times over the two months I was in Tanzania observing her over 10 times. Her formal interview lasted two hours and she was brought to tears twice when describing her life. I met with her another three times after the formal interview to maintain contact and to show I am genuinely interested in her well-being.

Kisa and I met three times before her official interview at work and then again three times after her interview at her current home and at the home she was in the process of building. Kisa's formal interview took over two hours long and occurred at her place of work. She too was brought to tears twice when describing her life. Kisa invited me after the interview to join her at her home where I went to have tea and cassava with Kisa and her young daughter. Through the interview and participant observation process I was able to gain a deep trust with the participants.

Transcribing the interviews. Upon returning to the US I began transcribing the interviews. It was an arduous task that took many hours to complete just a few pages. In the end one transcription took me over 60 hours to complete. After completing this transcription and starting on a second I decided to send the recorded interviews to the Research Bureau at EHHS, Kent State. These took four months to be returned to me, and they lacked an insider's understanding of the intonation and use of words. Many phrases and words were omitted because the participants had either stated them in Swahili or the transcriber could not understand the participant's accent. I went back through the

transcripts to insert the missing phrases and words, and I inserted the meaning behind participants' emotional reactions and responses in order to gain a full picture as to how the participants were responding. These responses were inserted from my field notes, and by reviewing the recordings of the interviews.

Analyzing the Narrative Interview Data

Analyzing narrative data requires an in-depth review process. I employed dual modes of analyzing and showing the data by using both categorizing and contiguity strategies. In order to categorize the data collected I used Nvivo software for coding. While coding employs a system of breaking data apart or "fracturing," contiguity-based data analysis advocates for finding the connections or relationships between things (Maxwell, 2012) said and observed. I used narrative summaries, found in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 as the structure for the contiguity-based analysis of the data collected. I reviewed the interviews and developed summaries reflecting the context and stories expressed. By combining coding, matrices, and the narrative summaries I was able to obtain a fuller picture than employing one or the other strategies.

The data were analyzed through Nvivo utilizing a coding system whereby I highlighted parts of the transcript and classified these highlighted sections under a variety of themes that were emerging through the process. The themes were based on emerging data, information the research questions sought to find, and common themes found within the already existing literature. Within the larger themes, sub-themes emerged and these were coded as well.

After all the data were coded I ran a query on the Nvivo software to see where the data emerged within clusters from all the participants combined. I used this query to help create a matrix of common patterns. The common themes and subthemes were then pulled out to analyze against the research questions and were set into the empowerment framework (Seeberg, 2014). These data sets were then used to answer the research questions, employing a capabilities approach and feminist lens to unpack the data within both an individual and collective context looking at threads that were common across all the participants and those that were specific to individuals.

The feminist perspective centers on women and the social justice implications of the findings, while the capability approach selects for the dimensions of freedoms, aspirations agency, and well-being achievement. I used a similar framework as Seeberg's (2014) to analyze the data collected, some of which is shown in Table 3.

Ethics

In order to ensure that my research study was conducted in an ethical and respectful manner, specific issues applying to the research context of this study are addressed next.

Reflexivity

In order to achieve a thorough understanding of the data and my place as researcher within the collection and analysis process I incorporated a rigorous self-reflection practice through the use of analytical memos and a reflexive researcher journal. Analytical memos were used alongside the interview and analysis processes to analyze what is being said and observed, as well as any emerging questions and themes, or

Table 3

Design of Capability Approach Analysis

Freedom Dimensions	Capabilities	Functionings	Literature Review	Research Questions
RQ I: Whether, to what extent, and how do urban Tanzanian women use ICTs for empowerment?				
Constitutive Freedoms, Well-being,	Social Control	Connection to others	Nussbaum, 2000; Stromquist, 1993; Kleine, 2013	How do the biographical contexts (including the educational journey) of the participants contribute to their empowerment?
	Cognitive & Psychological Control and Confidence	Confidence in learning/self; Reason things out; Gaining knowledge; Taking part in the knowledge society; Cope with Stress	Nussbaum, 2000; Stromquist, 1993; Kleine, 2013	How do the participants view the role of ICTs in the future of their professional and personal lives? In what ways do the participants reflect on their gender as a contributing factor to their access and use of ICTs and empowerment processes?
	Aspiration	Imagined social change: Advanced schooling; Gender role;	Appadurai, 2004; Nussbaum, 2000; Seeberg, 2014	How do socio-cultural factors influence access and use of ICTs by the participants, and how do these factors guide their aspirations? What challenges and supports do the participants feel contribute to their imagined and real ability to access and use ICTs in empowering ways?

perceived similarities and differences, and inconsistencies. A reflexive researcher journal was used to explore the researcher's perceptions, thoughts, emotional reactions and developing ideas, biases and concerns.

Researcher Positionality and Bracketing of Bias

The researcher journal is a reflective space to discover the researcher's positionality as a woman who was a past resident of Tanzania, and experienced the conflicting relationship between being both a partial insider and an outsider in the culture. It was therefore essential that I continually reflected on my views of cultural, social, and political issues and the impact these have on my interpretation of the data. The reflexive journal was a rigorous engagement that helped to expose biases and confirmed some research interpretations with those of the participants. The journal allowed me to externalize a view into the complex relationship I had with the participants, country, and topic of investigation, and identify possible sources of bias.

Some sources of bias are assumptions I implicitly hold that women will take to ICTs and feel their value as empowering, about Tanzanian culture and society, marriage and household structure in Tanzania; and that Tanzanian women feel oppressed in their current quadruple roles as mothers, wives, professionals and community supporters.

My study is situated within a familiar context with some of the people known to me, which has its pros and cons when discussing ethics. Firstly, some of the participants are past colleagues who already have a relationship with me, which caused them to be more open with me during the interview process while others were more inhibited, limiting their expressions, and their individual thoughts and beliefs. Having a previous relationship with the participants made me aware of addressing the four key considerations: posturing and presentation of self, disclosure and exchange, making public the private, and disengaging and staying in touch for establishing trustworthiness

(Schram, 2006) essential as I oriented my practice and self within the research context. Posturing and presenting as Schram stated is “a foremost consideration in establishing fieldwork relationships” (p. 138) and I worked to direct my ability to “maintain the distinct intentionalities embodied in” (p. 138) my role as the researcher. Schram made it clear that “your dual responsibility as a researcher-to engage (walk together) with others while remaining faithful to the primary aim of conducting research-is a pairing of intentions separate from participants’ everyday lives” (p. 138). This is a delicate yet possible road to walk. It was important that the participants understood from the beginning that although I had an already established relationship with some of them, was more distant with others, the research was meant to bring out a different aspect of our association and that it is being used to inform further research studies and interests of professionals and scholars within a variety organizations and institutions.

Secondly, within my study I did not have the ethical dilemma of how I should pose myself (Schram, 2006) in order to gather the data. I engaged with due attention to the rapport building stage to develop a sense of trust by spending time with the participants on a couple of different occasions, and engaged in conversations through texting, calling, and emails before the official interviews took place. I asked after their families and our joint acquaintances. “Friendship may bias data collection; but it may also contribute an even more potent voice than that gained through rapport” (Glesne, 1989, p. 93, as cited in Schram, 2006, p. 139). I paid “careful attention to the assumptions that underlie” (Schram, 2006, p. 140) my relationship with the participants

in ensuring an ethical representation of my purpose and intent within the context of this research study.

Trustworthiness

In establishing trustworthiness I followed Lincoln and Guba's (1984) techniques, *credibility, transferability, and reflexivity* (addressed above). As a type of triangulation I utilized Hatch's (2002) advice for member checking within a narrative inquiry.

Following these procedures the naturalistic researcher asserts integrity and trust (Schram, 2006) in her study. Ensuring accuracy and plausibility of this research sets a framework of truth-value, rigor, and significance (Schram, 2006).

Credibility

In ensuring credibility it is necessary to undertake activities that provide external checks on the inquiry process (Lincoln & Guba, 1984). I utilized two activities suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1984) and Merriam (2002), peer debriefing and member checking. In engaging in peer debriefing I utilized my advisor to help process the data as I collected and analyzed it. I also debriefed with colleagues who are currently or were recently engaged in doctoral research. The use of a neutral peer helps to explore "aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind" (Lincoln & Guba, 1984, p. 308). This process helped to keep this researcher "honest" whereby a more experienced researcher, my advisor, played the protagonist (Lincoln & Guba, 1984) pushing me to search deeply. Through the peer debriefing process I was pushed into asking questions that led to becoming more fully aware of the research process. Peer debriefing also provided opportunities for testing my hypotheses and catharsis, creating

space for clearing my mind of emotions and feelings that can cloud good judgment or prevent forward movement (Lincoln & Guba, 1984).

The nature of narrative inquiry lends itself to member checking as a form of credibility (as discussed above in the *ethics* section). The research of people's lived experiences can only be verified by those living the experiences. The research enters the study within a specific context; however, the participants are in the midst of living their stories. Their lives do not begin the day we arrive nor do they end as we leave" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 64), therefore having the opportunity to listen to the researcher's conclusions is essential for establishing credibility. I conducted member checking after interviewing the participants and intentionally created space for the participants to volunteer additional information, clarify any misunderstandings or investigator error, and to confirm what was already said.

Member Checking

Because my study is a narrative design, the participants were fully involved in not only the data collection stage, but also the data analysis stage through member checking. The participants' views and beliefs are integral to the research and they were consulted to review the data at every stage of the study. I disclosed the data I collected regarding how the participants use technology. I conferred with the participants throughout the study on their definitions of quality of life and empowerment, and how they view the role of technology enhancing the quality of life through access and use of technology. I disclosed necessary information about myself that was appropriate for sharing in order to continue to build rapport with the participants as we delved deeper into more personal

thoughts, particularly around cultural views of women and individual reactions to these, as well as the private meaning attached to the definition of quality of life.

This was a relatively low risk study; however, as the participants became involved in deep introspection, they reflected on some emotional and very personal issues, which caused them to reveal or divulge information they were not expecting to share with the larger reader audience. A couple of the participants had very visceral responses as they narrated their childhood experiences. These participants felt comfortable having an emotional reaction, and rather than stopping their narration, they continued to explore the source of their upset. I reminded the participants that I was keeping anything they requested confidential out of the final write up and that could can withdraw from the study at any time they wished. None of the participants requested any of their narrations to be removed from the final write up and none asked to be removed from the study. The rich and thick description of the research included the participants' reviews, comments, and suggestions in order to give their input through the final stages of the study.

Transferability

“The naturalist . . . can provide only the thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility” (Lincoln & Guba, 1984, p. 316). I employed thick description through the responsive interviews conducted with each participant. Thick description provided a depth of detail and richness (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) that I used to separate the relevant from the irrelevant descriptors (Lincoln & Guba, 1984). The purpose of my study is to understand whether, to what extent, and how do Tanzanian

women use ICTs for empowerment, and through the thick descriptions in my study I found some connections to other studies using similarly positioned participants; however, the findings for this study are specific to these participants, and can only be transferable within the context of educated, professional, urban Tanzanian women.

Limitations

Conducting research with a small number of participants may seem like a limitation to some. However, in a narrative approach (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) having fewer participants allows for a more in-depth process generating thick descriptions that allow the researcher and reader to gain a deeper perspective into a phenomenon. This study is limited to urban women and cannot be applied to rural women without further investigation. The geographical limitations of North-Eastern Tanzania situate this study within these boundaries and it cannot be assumed to be true for other areas.

The two months' duration for the interviewing and observation aspect of the data collection may seem to be a limitation; however, the intensive upfront preparation by cultural insiders, my assistants and associates in Arusha, as well as my extensive experience in the immediate environment together constituted a much longer period of research. Having more time in the field would have allowed for even richer and more in-depth data; however, the data collected during this time period was rich and robust. Also, because the participants are only located in an urban environment, working in professional settings limits the scope of the study to these specific participants and others with similar demographic backgrounds.

CHAPTER IV

INTRODUCING THE PARTICIPANTS

The findings of the study are presented in two sets, the first is Chapter 4, followed by the second lengthier set in Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Though the research questions developed the interview questions, the narrative methodology, as intended, brought out the participants' individual lives and pathways along the line of research. Hence their stories are presented here first.

The story of the participants' lives (Polkinghorne, 1988) is central to this research. Human experiences are "multilayered, hermeneutically organized, and abundantly meaningful" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 126) and can only have their surface scratched through the production and reproduction of experiences, thus the narratives in this research study should be viewed as one perspective on multifaceted and deeply significant lives. Narratives are embedded and told in conventional rhetoric of a cultural context (Frank, 2002). Through analysis of these stories the assumptions embedded in that rhetoric can be unpacked to punctuate certain moments to find identity within the stories that connect to larger moments and movements outside the self. Therefore, it is important to understand the stories of the participants in this study to find the connections from them as individuals to bigger questions about women, education, technology, and empowerment. Below I condense the narrations of the participants in order to create a full picture of how their experiences shaped their empowerment processes for the findings chapters that follow.

Kisa

Kisa is a 40-year-old woman with a degree in civil engineering and a Bachelor of Arts in primary education. She grew up in a family with strong values, weaving traditions from both Kilimanjaro, in the north of the country where her mother grew up, and Mbeya in the south where her father's family comes from. Kisa grew up surrounded by her mother's sadness. Her mother lost her own father at a very young age and was sent to live with her maternal grandmother, never having contact with her father's family after his death. Kisa's mother's father had been a migrant worker forced to move far away from his village to work. He never took Kisa's mother to visit his family, and when he died from a fatal snakebite, she was taken to her grandmother, so her mother could remarry. Eventually Kisa's uncle brought her mother to Uganda to attend secondary school and college. Kisa's mother never lived in a home between the ages of 14 and 22, missing important skills in how to be part of and raise a family. Once she became a mother she was distant, uncaring, and strict in her approach to child rearing. "When you do something, you will not believe that is your mom. She would get very cross and we were always getting caned." On the other hand, Kisa reflects on her father, saying "he is a nice daddy," playing with her and her brother, helping with homework and providing for the family.

Kisa desired to please her parents, performing well in school, working hard at home, and following the household rules. She woke each day completing her chores before going to school: washing, cleaning, and cooking. Upon returning home, she first completed the chores required of her in the afternoon, which took her into the evening,

making it difficult to study in a house without electricity. In order to have enough light to study in the evening hours she would sit at the base of her neighbor's fence to capture the electric light coming from their house, "because you don't want to fail. My daddy was very nice, but if you fail he is not your friend, and we did not want to make him sad." Kisa grew up with this deep tension; trying to please her father by being the best in the class, which she did succeed in doing. She maintained high grades and stayed at the top of her class for most of primary school. However, Kisa also made time to spend with her father, "playing" when he was home from work early. "Even though my daddy was coming to play, you are thinking while you are playing, 'what's happening next? Tomorrow morning I have to do this,' you know I had a lot of responsibility as a child." Kisa expressed a desire as a child to "just relax" and have time to herself, but there was never enough time. If she wasn't in school or performing household duties, or pleasing her father by playing with him, she was working on the family farm.

Kisa's mother did not allow Kisa and her siblings to play, caning them if they were slow in returning home from chores. They were discouraged from making their own friends and were permitted to only be friends with the children of their mother's friends. Their parents made all the decisions, and independent thinking of any kind was discouraged. Through the encouragement of her parents, in particular her father, Kisa completed secondary school and went on to college to train as a civil engineer. Both her father and grandfather were engineers. Kisa was good at math and had a steady hand capable of drafting designs easily, so civil engineering seemed like the right fit.

Upon finishing college Kisa moved back home, but found living with her mother very difficult. So once she secured a job, Kisa moved in with a friend. After working for one month at her new job, Kisa met her future husband. She came home to tell her mother the news, who was unhappy with this news. Her mother told Kisa she was not allowed to marry this Scottish man. Pushing Kisa further away, Kisa immediately packed her remaining things left at home and moved in with this man. They got married a couple months later and soon had a son. After giving birth, Kisa continued to work, but found it difficult, without someone to help at home to look after the baby. So, Kisa would wake early in the morning and leave home before 6am to drop her son with her mother to watch him while she was at work. After work Kisa would pick up her son and return home, usually close to seven in the evening. This way of life tired Kisa out, and her husband told her to quit her job and stay home to look after their son. Not long after Kisa quit her job, her husband died. Kisa turned to her mother who told her she would not take Kisa and her son into her home. This left Kisa with no choice, but to look for work. Her son was very young and she could not take him on job interviews. Unable to afford a housemaid to look after him, Kisa locked him in the house and went looking for work. The only job she could secure was working as a housemaid for a wealthy Ethiopian woman, who was very cruel to Kisa. Just as Kisa was beginning to feel like life was more overwhelming than she had ever felt, she met a South African woman through church whose husband was a teacher at an international school. Through this new friendship Kisa was offered a job as a teaching assistant. She took the position, even with low pay and Kisa now felt more secure. She proved to be a huge asset to the school

with her natural ability working with children, especially the preschoolers, and was eventually offered professional development in teaching. She took a hybrid diploma course resulting in a bachelor's of education at a university in Nairobi. The Urban International School paid for her tuition and fees, as well as provided a laptop computer with a modem to take home so she could complete coursework on the weekends and in the evening hours.

Kisa is married again to a driver she met while working at the Urban International School. He welcomed Kisa's son, who is now 16, into his life and now he and Kisa have a little girl, age one. They are living in a small rented house close to the school where both Kisa and her husband work. Recently they bought a small plot of land a few kilometers away where they are building a permanent house that Kisa hopes her son will settle in with her and her husband, once he grows up and marries. For now, Kisa is happy, but she dreams of starting an educational center where she can run workshops and courses for community members to learn skills in parenting and how to collaborate with teachers. She feels like her education and exposure to different ways of living and working with children at the urban international school had a profound effect on how she is choosing to raise her children. She is happy her children are not growing up with the same level of stress she did as a child. Kisa is working on forgiving her mother for all the beatings and control she had over Kisa's life, because Kisa recognizes that her mother grew up with limited freedom and a cruel aunt. Kisa's mother had no other example of how to raise a family.

Naishooki

Naishooki, a 52-year-old Maasai woman, grew up far out on the Maasai plains, where traditions dictate it is essential girls learn to become good wives before they reach their adolescent years. During Naishooki's puberty years most of her peers were married before the age of 16. However, Naishooki's father was "something special." He insisted on sending all of his children, boys and girls alike, to school through secondary and to post-secondary, if they so wished.

When Naishooki reflected on her life she expressed pride in how forward thinking her father had been during a time when girls were seen as property to be traded in marriage for wealth. Her father's exposure to other ways of living came through his government job that had him traveling. For some time, he moved the entire family to a large town, where he gained insight into the value of education for all. Naishooki's father encouraged all of his daughters to stay in school as long as possible, selling cattle when there were school fees to pay. With 10 children, his commitment to education was a costly one, but Naishooki's father never complained, listening to his children, allowing them to make choices about their education, which was quite unusual for the time period, and more so for a Maasai man.

Naishooki attended a primary school near her home out in the bush, where roads were few, water was far from home, and there was no electricity. She had many responsibilities to carry out in the home that had to be completed before and after school. She was not permitted to play and would be beaten if she was late returning home from fetching water, "which is like two kilometers away, and we play [along the way], coming

home late, daddy takes the stick [beating us] for almost a half an hour.” Naishooki had to rise early to complete her chores before “running to school,” because arriving late to school meant a beating there. Naishooki remembers the fear of beatings at school was deep. There was one English teacher in particular that stood out to her after all these years. He would ask random questions and if students did not know the answer, he would “beat you with one of his three sticks” he kept in his office. Naishooki would pretend to be sick on the days she had English classes, so she wouldn’t have to face this teacher. She reflected on how hard it was to learn English, because she spoke Maa at home while Swahili was the primary language in school. She remembers how hard it was to even pronounce the names of her classes, let alone comprehend the material.

When she completed primary school, her “leaving exam” results were quite low. She did not qualify to enter the government secondary schools, which were tuition free at the time. Her father wanted her to continue on with her studies receiving advice from a friend that Naishooki should go to a vocational school that specialized in home-crafts for girls. Here Naishooki learned to cook, clean, sew and other domestic crafts, but she did not like it. After one year she returned home and begged her father to send her to secondary school, rather than returning to the vocational school. Naishooki’s father agreed and paid the expensive tuition for her to attend a private secondary school. She attended secondary school for four years preparing her to join a teacher training certificate program. Upon completion of the teacher training program Naishooki joined the national service for three months, which was compulsory at the time for all young women and men. Soon after finishing the national service Naishooki married a Somali man and

converted to Islam. Her marriage lasted about eight years and felt very oppressive for Naishooki. She had to quit working, because her husband did not allow this at the start of their marriage. She found being a Muslim difficult. She had to keep herself covered, pray five times each day, learn to recite the Koran, fast during Ramadan. Staying at home, cooking, cleaning, looking after the children, and serving her husband's family as they came and went was not fulfilling to Naishooki. She desired to return to work. She begged her husband and he finally agreed to let her work as a nursery school teacher, which she did for four years. However, Naishooki wanted to work in a more exciting environment. She found a British curriculum, international school that was hiring nearby. Here she became the special needs teaching assistant. With her new job, Naishooki realized that she was not happy in her marriage and asked for a divorce. Her husband agreed and they separated under the approval of the Mosque, but Naishooki did not receive her legal divorce from the courts for another 20 years. Her persistence and perseverance drove the attainment of the legal divorce Naishooki desired. Her ex-husband did not see any reason to pay the legal fees associated with a court decreed divorce, but Naishooki knew having a legal divorce would free her from any unnecessary ties to her ex-husband.

Later Naishooki left her teaching for work in the non-profit sector. She took a position at a small NGO working with Maasai women in rural areas. There she helped provide non-formal education for improved literacy, numeracy and reproductive health. Her work at the NGO evolved into work at a social enterprise company that set up a beading program for these same Maasai women to create jewelry for an Italian designer sold within Tanzania and abroad. As part of the Maasai women's involvement in the

program they earn an income and take part in the program Naishooki leads. They receive education on life skills such as budgeting their money, reproductive health, and the importance of education for the future of their daughters. This work has inspired Naishooki and she now aspires to start her own school for Maasai girls to help them gain an education to marry later with knowledge about their bodies. Naishooki was circumcised as a young girl in her early teens and fought her husband to not circumcise her daughters. She aspires to advocate for all Maasai girls with the hope of ending female circumcision. Naishooki invites young Maasai girls from villages in her work area into her home during their school holidays, so that they can be exposed to life in town, which she hopes will “open their minds” to the possibilities life can offer them.

Lisa

Lisa grew up in a post-colonial village on the Kenyan side of Mt. Kilimanjaro, which borders Tanzania, with half the mountain sitting in Kenya and the other half in Tanzania. During the time Lisa grew up there were many children and women, but very few men. The men had died in the independence war between Kenya and Great Britain from 1952–1960. The young boys were sent to missionary schools starting at age seven and returned home after completing secondary school. They were being trained for low level government jobs under colonial rule. After completing secondary school they were posted by the colonial government to work in different areas around the country. Lisa’s father was one of those young boys. He met her mother when returning home before his first posting. They married and began a family. Lisa was the fifth born child. However one of her older sisters died as a young child, and Lisa took the fourth born position. She

was raised with her eight brothers and sisters and five cousins, creating a sense of one big nuclear family rather than an extended one. Lisa's aunt remarried after leaving her first husband. Her aunt's new husband did not want to raise another man's children leaving Lisa's mother to raise all 12 children alone, while looking after her aging mother-in-law. The children slept wherever they could find a space, with the girls often sleeping at their grandmother's house and the boys in their own small shelter, all on the same plot of land with the buildings set right next to each other, for safety and comfort. Lisa went to primary school in her village, becoming part of the first class to ever receive early childhood education, and when the primary school was completed her class was the first to have a window.

Lisa's father worked for the national railway company far away in Mombassa, and she and her siblings only saw him on school holidays in December. Lisa and her siblings spent the April and August school holidays at home planting and harvesting on the 79 acre family farm. However, this separation from her father did not affect Lisa negatively, because this was how most family lived in her village. Lisa's older sisters took charge of the home, assigning each child a set of chores each day. They rotated the responsibilities in order to keep the work interesting for the kids. One day Lisa would wash clothes, the next she would help to prepare food, on another day she would gather fire wood or collect water, and then the following day she would plant, weed, or harvest in the farm. The rotation was set for all the children, with the girls taking on more responsibilities within the home. While Lisa still lived at home the only boys in Lisa's immediate family were the last two born, and who were very young, unable to contribute

much to the family responsibilities. Lisa's male cousins took care of the livestock, taking the cows and goats out to graze each day after school. These cousins did not have the same workload as the girls in the home and they "had a more balanced diet," because while they were out grazing the animals they would climb fruit trees eating mangoes, oranges, and papayas. They also would fish in the river and make small fires to cook their catch before heading home. Being confined to the home, Lisa and her sisters did not have access to as many fruits and protein as their male cousin, creating an imbalance in their diets. These cousins did bring home a few fruits that they could carry to share, but the girls viewed them as "lazy, resting and eating whenever they wanted."

Lisa's mother had a "wrathful way" of disciplining the children. "She would probably go to jail if she was raising children today," Lisa said. Everyone was beaten, no matter who was the culprit, and more often than not, it was the girls who suffered the most abuse. When Lisa's mother was angry she lashed out at the children closest to her, and with the boys out herding the livestock they missed out on the violent beatings suffered by those performing chores closer to home. But, Lisa forgives her mother, wondering how she managed to raise such an enormous brood of children alone.

Eventually Lisa like all her siblings was sent to boarding school, by her mother, reducing the number of children to care for in the village. Lisa left home at about age 12, only returning for the planting and harvesting months until she completed secondary school. Upon completing secondary school Lisa wanted to go to college, but policies enforced by the ruling political party and Daniel arap Moi, the president at the time, continued to hindered people from Lisa's tribe, Kikuyu, from entering universities in the

country. So, Lisa opted to enter a secretarial college ensuring she could get some sort of job. Upon completing her certification, Lisa moved to Mombasa to live with her sister finding a job immediately.

Lisa moved from job to job trying to earn as much income as possible, until her father insisted she stay at one company for an extended period of time. After seven years at a company owned by a friend of her father's, she moved to Nairobi to work. Here she met her husband, where they lived for many years before his retirement to Tanzania. Lisa gave birth to three children, her last one, now 12 years old, was born when she was 40. She also helped to raise a young man her husband adopted before marrying Lisa, after learning about his harsh life as a child living on the streets.

Lisa's husband died about eight years ago in a house fire. Lisa's oldest daughter fell asleep one night while studying by candlelight, and when the candle burned down to the wick, the hot wax dripped onto her school papers catching the house on fire. Everyone was able to escape, but Lisa's husband was slow in getting out and inhaled excessive amounts of smoke. He was hospitalized for over a week before passing away. Lisa was left to raise three young children and the adopted son, in his early 20s. Distraught, Lisa was unsure how to manage her new responsibilities raising the children alone. Adding more stress, her in-laws were able to have Lisa's husband's pension sent to them, leaving Lisa with no money other than her small salary as a secretary at an international school. Lisa was left with no choice but to look for higher paying work. She left her job at the school to manage a hotel, bar, restaurant, and club, which paid almost twice as much, but required long hours. Lisa worked until late into the wee hours

of the morning. Sometimes she did not return home until two o'clock in the morning, leaving her exhausted. Along with the pension, Lisa's in-laws wanted to gain control over the children, as is common when women are divorced or widowed in East Africa. However, Lisa did not want to lose control of her children's well-being. So, she decided to send them all to a boarding school near the in-law's village. This way her husband's family could visit the children at any time, and if the children desired they could easily visit their father's family on school holidays. Lisa's in-laws were appeased by the children's new location, and Lisa was able to maintain control over her children's well-being. The children never chose to visit their father's family during school holidays, and instead traveled to Tanzania to see their mother. Although Lisa missed her children while they were away, she continued to live with her adopted son, who kept her company. His child was born not long after Lisa's children went to boarding school and the new baby was a welcome addition to Lisa's family.

The work at the club took a toll on Lisa, and as she was thinking about looking for another job, the administration from her old job at the international school asked her to come back promising to double her salary. Lisa agreed and is now working at the school, earning more, provided with professional development courses and dreaming of owning her own organic farm. She raises a few animals and vegetables at home, but is looking to expand this into a large-scale farm that she can run full-time.

Haika

Haika, a 56-year-old primary school IT teacher, was born and raised in a small village on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro. She is the sixth born out of 11 children. Her

mother was the second wife to her father, a wealthy man. His grown children from his first wife were squandering the money earned from the family maize grinding business, leaving Haika and her family to live crammed into a small house. The girls lived in one area and the boys in another. The house was made of banana leaves and housed not only the people in the family, but the animals as well, including the cows, goats, and chickens. Eventually Haika's older brother earned enough money to build a concrete house on their mother's property, which she moved into after Haika left for university.

Upon entering school, Haika was very clever and was passed directly to first grade without attending kindergarten. She was teased constantly, especially by the boys, but she remained focused all of her academic career completing primary school in the village moving to Dar es Salaam for secondary school, and then eventually back to her village area to attend teacher training college. Haika's mother was very poor and could not afford all that schooling required; bus fare, uniforms, books, shoes, and so forth. So Haika's uncle helped out as much as he could. Her mother's brother had made "good" money in the road building business and paid for Haika and her older brother to finish school through the university level.

Like the other participants, Haika grew up in a home where every child had to participate in some sort of household chores, and they were not allowed to play while working, nor could Haika and her siblings interact with other children in the neighborhood. They only socialized with their neighbors when there was a celebration. It was common for neighbors to invite each other over to celebrate a first communion,

wedding, birth, or death. During these gatherings a family would provide enough food to feed many, many people, so that no one in the neighborhood would feel left out.

While Haika worked hard in the home, she felt that her mother did not treat any of her children differently, with both the boys and girls completing equal amounts of work at home. However, the children had to work to earn their kerosene to put into the lamps to study by at night. If they worked hard and their mother was happy, she would buy them kerosene. If their mother was not happy with their work they had to wait for the moon to rise so they could study in the light of the moon. Also, if the children were slow in completing their chores or misbehaved, they were beaten, and Haika remembers having a deep fear of being beaten if she was late in coming home from collecting firewood and water. She would try to study whenever she got a chance, taking her books with her while collecting firewood, hoping she would not be late returning home.

Haika has almost 25 years of experience with ICTs, making her an unusual woman in Tanzania. She learned how to use computers and the Internet on the job as a teaching assistant at an international school in Moshi. After quite a few years working as a teaching assistant at the school, Haika was sent to Manchester, in the United Kingdom, by the school in order to be qualified to teach IT classes as well as maintain and fix small issues with the computers. Haika spent three months in Manchester, returning home with the new capability to teach and repair the school's computers. With this new knowledge, combined with her excellent written and spoken English language skills, the school promoted Haika from teaching assistant to primary IT teacher on its newly opened

Arusha town campus, 80 kilometers from Moshi. In her new post Haika taught all the students in the primary school, ages three to 12 how to use computers and the Internet.

Before working at the international school Haika was a secondary school language teacher, instructing students in both English and Swahili. She began her teaching career in Dar es Salaam, where she met her husband. When her husband was sent to Russia to get his PhD, through a government sponsorship program set up to create an educated class of citizens after Tanzania's independence in 1964, Haika moved back to the northern part of the country to be closer to home. Here she taught a secondary school in the area, waiting five years to see her husband again. When he returned he was posted through the government sponsorship program in Moshi, and Haika found the teaching assistant job at the international school. It was a higher paying position than the ones she had before working in the government secondary schools, even if it was lower ranking. Haika currently works at this campus, and is now the full-time primary school ICT instructor.

Although Haika's professional journey has been relatively straight forward, she has faced a variety of challenges personally. Haika's mother never attended school, and her father only completed part of his primary school education, so gaining an education through university was a proud accomplishment for her entire family. Haika's older brother helped her to complete her studies by paying for costs not covered by her uncle's contributions, which led Haika to later assist her young brother in completing his education through veterinarian school. Since it was only the three siblings that completed

secondary and went on to higher education, Haika and her two brothers made a commitment to educate all of their nieces and nephews by setting up an education fund.

This “helping others” attitude for Haika did not stop at sending her less fortunate nieces and nephews to school. Haika’s sister-in-law was unlawfully detained during a murder investigation for eight years. Unfortunately, for this woman she was kept in the federal prison while awaiting trial. Knowing the deprivations connected with prison, Haika committed to spending her weekends visiting her sister-in-law bringing food, toiletries, and newspapers. For eight years Haika rarely engaged in other weekend activities spending her days traveling by bus the 80 kilometers to the prison and back home again. She paid thousands of dollars in legal fees, only to be “swindled” twice, losing the fees to corrupt lawyers. Finally, after the trial was heard in court, Haika’s sister-in-law was acquitted and returned home. The adjustment was difficult, so Haika took her in to aid the transition home. Haika continues to help her family and friends whenever possible, providing space in her home, giving advice, and spending what little she has to assist anyone who needs it. Haika dreams of converting her home into a day care center for young children and babies to be cared for while their mothers return to work. Day care centers are unheard of in Tanzania, and Haika feels that if women had an option to leave their young children at a safe facility, they could return more quickly to the work force helping to provide for their families.

Teddy

Teddy is a dedicated Pentecost who finds deep joy in giving back to women in need. Teddy found God through the Pentecostal church not long after giving birth to her

first child, during a very difficult time in her life. She wasn't married yet and without a job was living with her brother. Teddy was grateful for the roof over her head and food to eat, but was embarrassed that she could not care for herself and her young son. She prayed every night for God to help her find work.

Teddy had trained in both hotel management and as a teacher, but she no longer wanted to work in the tourism industry. It proved to be isolating and too demanding for Teddy's liking. Before getting pregnant, Teddy worked at a hotel in one of the national parks where she worked long hours and if she had a family would only see them once a month. Knowing she wanted to have a family, Teddy entered a teacher-training program just in time for her first pregnancy. During the beginning of her pregnancy Teddy moved across the country to stay with her sick sister, found an internship, and finished her teaching program. As Teddy moved into her second trimester she moved back closer to home and moved in with her brother.

As a child Teddy was not allowed to play with children outside her home and thus built a tight bond with her siblings. Like so many other Tanzanian women, Teddy grew up waking early to complete household chores before school and returning home to help out in the kitchen before studying and homework could be tackled. Her family was not poor; with three farms full of food, she and her brothers and sister were never hungry, and their mother always had something to sell to buy school uniforms and supplies and pay any fees. Teddy and her siblings grew up taking care of each other and this bond continued throughout adulthood. They visited one another when possible and cared for each other when sick or in need. When Teddy got pregnant with her first baby she was

not yet married and needed support financially and emotionally. Her brother and sister both welcomed her into their homes.

After the birth of her son Teddy went looking for work. Through one of her instructors in the teacher-training program she was connected to a local Indian woman who ran a school and was offered a job. However, Teddy came to learn that someone else already occupied the job offered to her, and she felt it unethical for this person to be fired and the job given to Teddy. So, she declined the offer and continued to look for work on her own. However, this connection with the Indian woman gave Teddy the needed confidence to approach a variety of different schools. She eventually found a job at a local international school, working there until the birth of her second child.

Teddy is a strong and caring woman. She gave birth to both of her children alone, not even mentioning that she was in labor, taking a taxi to the hospital (both times) and calling her (now) husband only after the babies were delivered. Teddy's second baby had jaundice and she describes staying in the hospital with him:

After we came home, we stayed two days. And my son changed color, then like yellow color. Then we went back to the hospital and they transfer me to [the government] Hospital. And it was very hard time for me, because my body was very soft and I used to wake up after every three hours to go and feed my son. It was really difficult for me . . . and it was really bad because the hospital's bed is dirty and the food is little, and you have to sleep two [women patients] in one bed. So I was like "oh my goodness help me get through it and go home."

Teddy stayed for five days and nights in the hospital with her son, finally calling on the pastor at her church to come and pray for her infant son. Her pastor came to the hospital and prayed for the tiny child, who soon was healed and healthy enough to return home. Teddy believes this was an act of God and thus has developed an even stronger commitment to God and the church.

Together with Teddy's upbringing, which created a strong bond between her siblings and her connection to God she has developed a desire to help others in need. She believes if you "help people from your heart, God will give you grace." Even though Teddy is not working currently, she helps out whenever she can. She is concerned for women who do not have husbands and likes to share her rice, maize meal, and sugar stock with them. Teddy empathizes with single mothers and is grateful for all the assistance she received from her family when she was in the same position. She recognizes that not all families have the means to support each other and wishes to be part of helping other women turn their lives around.

Nanyorai

Nanyorai, the youngest of the participants in this study, grew up as a "traditional Maasai" in a non-traditional Maasai home. Although Nanyorai did not have electricity in her home growing up, and had to walk three kilometers to collect water each day before school, she had a father who believed in education for all. The Catholic Church chose Nanyorai's father for a scholarship to secondary school. His mother wanted him to be a priest, but he was not interested, so he completed school at Form IV and went to work. After completing a certificate in tourism and starting work as a tour guide, Nanyorai's

father bought a big farm so he could raise cattle to pay for his children's education. Through his job as a tour guide in the national parks he met people from around the world giving him insight into how other people live, gaining a new perspective on education and women and girls' rights.

Nanyorai attributes being the youngest girl child out of six siblings to her success, because she says she was spoiled, with everyone in her family wanting to take care of her. However, her father, changed by his education, decided to send all of his children to school, through any post-secondary program they chose. This decision was and still continues to be a radical one for a Maasai man. Girls are often married before they complete adolescence, birthing their first child between the ages of 14 and 16. This tradition of early marriage caused many Maasai families to regard girls' education as less valuable than boys, because they would leave the family and take their knowledge and skills with them to another home. Nanyorai did not marry young. She was able to complete her secondary education and attend a teacher training college. Nanyorai loved English as a young girl and begged her father to pay for extra English lessons after school and on the weekends. These lessons were expensive, but they paid off, with Nanyorai being able to attend a high-ranking secondary school receiving outstanding marks on her entrance exams. She was a successful student throughout her education, taking an internship at a local Tanzanian school, being offered a job at the same school, however, leaving after a year because the salary was low and rarely paid on time. She took a volunteer position at a small international school, where she found out about the larger

international school where the other participants in this study worked. When a position opened up she was hired.

Working at the international school created opportunities for professional development and growth. Nanyorai went from a teaching assistant to a full-time language instructor for the upper years in the primary school, and the beginning and intermediate learners in the secondary school. Others have spoken of Nanyorai as having a special talent for teaching. Unfortunately, Nanyorai witnessed an accident that took place on the school campus after school hours. From her perspective, a parent hit a security guard and drove off. She along with the other staff who witnessed the incident followed the parent in their employee bus to stop him to be sure he came back to care for the guard, and take him to the hospital. When the school administration heard about the story the next day Nanyorai (and Teddy) along with a couple others were put on leave with no pay until the case could be heard. After two months the administration came to the conclusion that Nanyorai had harassed the parent through her harsh tone and threats to call the police on the parent. She was fired. Nanyorai felt betrayed by the school that she once loved so much. She says the police should have been called, because the parent did indeed hit the security guard, injuring him and then he drove away without assisting the guard. She feels the school took the parent's side, because he is a wealthy man paying expensive school fees for his many children enrolled at the school.

Depressed after being fired from a job she loved, Nanyorai felt lost. Thankfully she had recently married and was about to have a baby. When her baby was born she filled her time caring for her new infant and dreaming about the future. Her experience

with computers and the Internet gained through working at the international school helped her to develop a social media presence for her husband's small glass and window shop in the town. She no longer felt ashamed and useless. Nanyorai used a smart phone sent to her from a friend in Canada to create a Facebook page for her husband's company and she was able to search for other teaching jobs in the area. She also spent time watching videos and reading about her baby's development, "learning more than in the weekly clinic" where the doctors give women information on their growing babies. Nanyorai felt empowered by access to information and knowledge. She continued to dig deeper into the virtual world, following blogs, especially those about women in Tanzania.

Although, Nanyorai had not secured another teaching job, because she had no professional references from the international school, she felt like she had a purpose. She was a meaningful addition to her husband's business. She began going to work with him every day, waking before him to cook his breakfast, press his clothes, heat his bath water, wash and dress their daughter, feed her breakfast, and then preparing herself, all before seven in the morning when they left for the shop. Nanyorai spends her days creating advertisements to put on social media and in the local newspapers. When she and her husband return home in the evening Nanyorai cooks their dinner, prepares her husband's bath, lays out his lounging clothes, and brings him a beer. After he has bathed and eaten Nanyorai takes her bath hoping to find a few minutes with her baby before going to bed to start it all over again. She is the first to wake and the last to sleep, with only Sundays as a day to rest and spend with her growing daughter. Nanyorai is not angry about her place in the home, but she does feel it is not fair that she has more work than her husband

at home and yet she spends the same amount of time at the shop with him working during the day. However, she recognizes that this is just the norm for Maasai women, and she was trained by her mother to properly serve her husband.

Nanyorai reflects on her childhood as different from other Maasai girls, because although she did have domestic chores, her brothers did too. They were taught to cook and took turns in the cooking rotation at home. She remembers her brothers coming to cook for her when she was sick while pregnant, something quite unusual for an average Maasai man. Even her own husband would not cook for her. Again, Nanyorai's father's wide view of the world helped change the way his children would interact with the world. However, Nanyorai did complain that now that her brothers are married they do not help out in their own homes, and that the tradition of women engaging in all the domestic labor is difficult to change in the Maasai culture. She said it is tiring, but it is still the women's responsibility.

Nanyorai hopes to send her daughter to an international school when she is older. She feels the education children receive at international schools is superior to local Tanzanian schools. The children are exposed to different people and ideas, which Nanyorai finds appealing. Nanyorai also learned how to discipline without beating or caning students and has changed her own parenting style because of her experience teaching at the international school. Nanyorai feels her daughter has gained so much from her own experience and exposure to different ways of living and being, and she wishes to expose her to even more.

Nanyorai loved being a teacher, but is not satisfied with the low pay and has shifted her dream to creating a larger business for her husband so that they can have enough money to build another larger house far out of town where Nanyorai can feel at peace when she is home.

Mary

Mary, the second oldest child in her family, suffered an unkind, at times brutal childhood. She was extremely bright, doing very well in primary school, passing the exams for secondary school with high marks, having chosen to attend a prestigious government secondary school. However, Mary was a devout Christian and thrived on her time spent at the church and singing in the choir. When two clergy men from her congregation offered her a place in the church's secondary school in the south central area of the country Mary jumped at the opportunity. It wasn't until arriving at the school and studying for two years in the general subjects that she realized that the aim of the school was to prepare future priests and nuns. One day, in preparation for a visit from the head of the congregation in Italy, the students were asked who among them would like to become a member. Mary was eager to enter the congregation and was taken with about 20 other students in training for her matriculation in becoming a nun. Mary and her peers no longer returned home during school holidays, instead involved in community service activities working with the nuns and priest in the church run hospital and primary school for the students' training to enter the congregation. Again, the leader of the congregation came to visit the students to review their academic work and commitment to service. The students with low marks were sent home, while those without outstanding results were

asked to stay on and prepare for the next stage of their ecclesiastic education. Mary had been chosen to go to India with the now smaller group of students to complete her Form VI education and become a nun. She had to return home to collect all the documentation needed to obtain her passport. So Mary, an optimistic 16-year-old girl, boarded the bus that would travel two days over bumpy, dusty roads to return to Arusha to get her birth certificate and medical records. Her mother, excited for Mary's opportunity, placed her birth certificate into an envelope and sealed it. Mary returned to school, taking the long journey again day dreaming about her future. As soon as she arrived she entered the head teacher's office and handed her the envelope. Upon opening it, the head teacher looked at Mary, declaring she could not go to India, because she had been born out of wedlock. Mary was shocked and demanded to call her mother that instant. When Mary's mother picked up the receiver she verified that the man listed on her birth certificate was indeed her father, and that the man she had known as her father all her life was actually her stepfather. Mary was enraged and hurt all at once. She left school at this point, returning home to spend the next few years in a haze of depression. Her mother was unsympathetic about the way Mary found out about having another father, a biological father, and gave her no assistance trying to locate him.

Finally, Mary decided to go to teaching college and was able to complete her coursework gaining employment in a private English medium primary school, but she still longed to meet her father. With no luck, she continued to ask her mother to connect her with her biological father. So, Mary decided to start by asking her mother's childhood friends, but they did not want to cooperate saying if her mother didn't tell her

then it wasn't their place to give her such sensitive information. With no help from her mother's friends she went to her father's village listed as his residence on her birth certificate. She found nothing to lead her to him there, until finally one of her mother's friends contacted Mary again saying she knew a man who knew her father. Mary contacted the man who confirmed he knew where Mary could locate her father, but the man was in Zimbabwe. So, he told her to wait until he returned to Tanzania. A few weeks later she contacted him only to find out he was in the hospital having his appendix removed. The man told her that as soon as he was out of the hospital they would contact her biological father. The man died two weeks later and Mary was back to the beginning of her search. She decided to call her uncle living in Dar es Salaam. After a few calls of just talking and not introducing the subject of her biological father, Mary finally asked if he knew anything about her father. He said yes, and that her mother had gotten pregnant while she was living in Dar es Salaam with him. When he found out Mary's mother was pregnant, he chased her away sending her back to Moshi to live with their parents, giving birth to Mary there. Mary's uncle agreed to contact her biological father for her, but told her she would have to be patient because her father traveled a lot. She tried to be patient, but months went by, so she continued to call when she got a chance to remind her uncle to contact her father. One day she called and it was not her uncle who answered the phone. When Mary was able to talk to her uncle he was slurring and sounded very ill. She asked him if he had tried at all to help her find her father and her uncle just cried. He cried until someone picked up his receiver and asked what she had said to him. Mary said she had only greeted him. Two hours later he died.

It wasn't until Mary got married a few year later that she began searching again for her biological father, this time with the help of her husband. After finding out the name of a company Mary's father had worked for, her husband looked it up on the Internet, called and found out he no longer worked there, but had in the past. The company did have a phone number of her father's friend. This finally led Mary to connect with her father. Mary's husband called her father first in order to protect Mary from the initial shock she might feel after all these years trying to contact him. When he called Mary to tell her he had spoken with her father, Mary standing on a street corner, burst into tears. Her husband rushed to pick her up and take her home. From home they called her father and one week later he came to Arusha and stayed with Mary and her husband for two weeks. This was the beginning of the very slow process of getting to know each other. Mary found out he had no other children and was married. The next visit he brought his wife to visit Mary, staying for a month. Mary's stepmother was not fond of her, perhaps worried, Mary thought, that she was interested in gaining control over his property, which was not at all true. In fact when Mary's husband was ready to give Mary's family the dowry to officially marry her Mary requested the dowry go to the man who had raised her. She felt he was her true father, because he had been there "during the ups and downs." Unfortunately, one year after meeting her father her stepmother had a fatal stroke and died. Mary continues to build her relationship with her father, but says she will do it slowly, occasionally wondering why he never tried to contact her throughout her life. He says he did look for her, but her mother did not want him to make contact with Mary.

Mary's mother was cold and unkind to Mary. She was a businesswoman traveling for days at a time, leaving Mary in charge of the house while she was away. At age eight Mary was in charge of the cooking, washing up, and cleaning in the home. Mary would wake early in the morning to prepare the house for the day and then go to school, returning in the afternoon to prepare for dinner, trying to find time to study at the same time. When her mother would return from her business trips, she would beat Mary and refuse to give her food until the neighbors would come over and take Mary to their home for safety. Mary's stepfather would try to protect her by asking her mother to be kinder to Mary, but her mother continued to beat her until she left for the missionary secondary school. Mary was the only child abused in the family; her sisters and brothers were scolded, but never beaten or refused food.

When Mary left for secondary school she was the only girl who wasn't sad to be away from home. She was also one of the only girls who had no difficulty adjusting to the amount of physical labor expected of the girls; working in the fields, cleaning the dormitories, cooking huge amounts of food, all on top of keeping up with the demanding classwork. The rigorous schedule helped keep Mary focused and to this day she maintains a similar schedule in her home, waking early to complete house tasks before heading off to work, returning to ensure dinner is on the table at six in the evening. However, to her mother-in-law's dismay she does not cook anything separate for her husband, and he prefers it that way. He likes the family to eat together when everyone is home and he makes an effort to come home early so that he can spend time with Mary and their four children.

Mary is now working in a shop in town, but she also runs a small business that sells beverages and household products. She hopes to grow her business so that she can combine it with her husband's party organization business, so that together they can provide the entertainment, food, staff, and equipment for all types of parties and celebrations. Mary got the capital to run her business through a women's microcredit group. It is not a formal group organized by a non-profit, but rather an informal group of women that evolved by connecting friends and friends of friends together. After receiving some formal training which they arranged for themselves, each month they put in a small amount of money into a bank account. One participant can take a loan at a time. When the loan is paid off, another individual can take a loan. The women in the group can take loans of up to \$5000, an enormous sum that they would not be able to access through a regular bank loan or through a microcredit non-profit. She continues to dream of her future; creating a better life for her children and earning enough money to send them to good schools is key to her aspiration.

CHAPTER V

THE CONSTITUTIVE NATURE OF RELATIONSHIPS

The second set of findings on the study are located in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 and are organized by themes. Though the research questions were used to develop interview questions, when coding the interviews overarching themes emerged, which are used to organize these three chapters: the constitutive nature of relationships, the instrumental functionings (education and technology), and empowerment (individual and collective). In order to support the main research question, whether, to what extent, and how urban Tanzanian women use ICTs for empowerment, I framed my study around five subsidiary questions utilizing Clandinin and Connelly's (2002) three dimensional narrative inquiry space: *inward* and *outward*, *backward* and *forward*, and *situated in space*. Using this framework helped to organize the narratives (see Table 1). By telling their life stories the participants reflected on their educational journeys, experience as girls and then as women within the Tanzanian context, their access to and use of ICTs and how these elements guided their aspirations, became the impetus for agency, and contributed to their level of empowerment.

The next three chapters are organized by level of significance in the nesting and overlapping analogy and shown in Figure 1 and are discussed in detail below through the narrations of the participants' lives, by themes and level of significance as each theme overlaps and nests one inside the other.

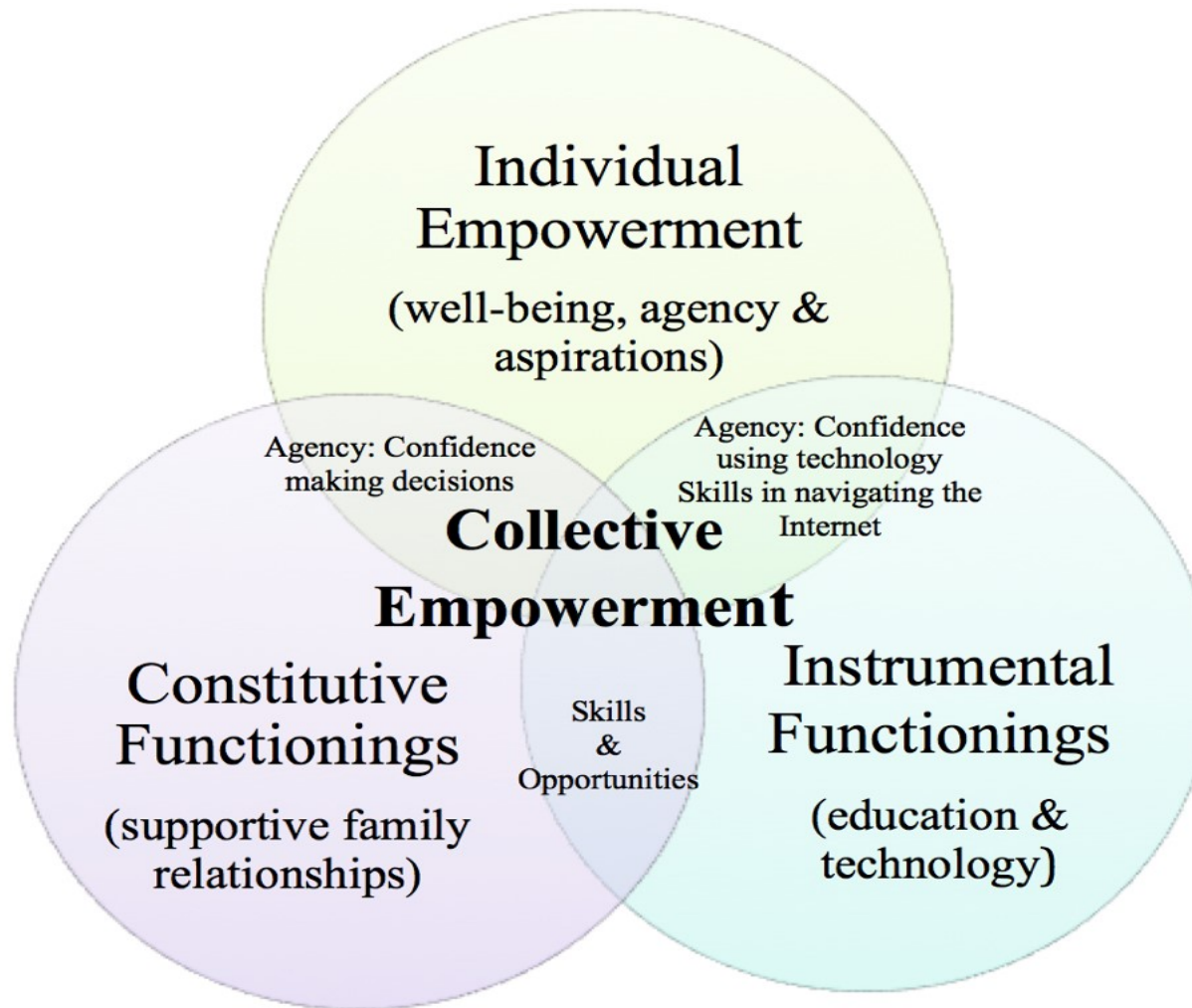


Figure 1. Empowerment diagram

Relationships With Family

As the participants' narratives unfolded, strong and enduring relationships particularly with male family members enabled the participants to achieve what they describe as well-being and empowerment (see Chapter 7). Many of the women in this study suffered significant abuses from their mothers. These abusive relationships were expressed as conflicting as the women became mothers themselves. They developed a sense of empathy for the challenges their mothers faced as Tanzanian women limited by educational and career choices, creating adaptive preferences in relational to the socio-cultural context of the time (Nussbaum, 2000). As the theme *relationships with family* emerged within the narrative it resurfaced in nearly every aspect of all the participants' stories, making it the central theme of this research study.

Relationships with family members were expressed as a constitutive critical piece to the development and empowerment of the women in this study. Relationships with mothers, fathers, and husbands were key in determining the success of the participants. The relationships varied from one family member to the next, but all the participants spoke of similarities across these relationships. The participants perceived their mothers as strict and even uncaring at times. They were burdened by household duties and had high expectations for their daughters to take on responsibilities that were at times too challenging for their age. Fathers were perceived as kind and gentle, playing with children when they came home from work, sometimes helping with homework and providing a patriarchal structure to secure family and cultural traditions. Fathers could be abusive, but never in the same psychologically damaging ways mothers could. In most

instances husbands were perceived as more modern than the participants' fathers, and the husbands of "other" Tanzanian women.

Mothers were described as strict. They maintained domestic order, and carried the weight of the home and cultural expectations to serve their husbands. The participants spoke of their mothers in ways that elicited images of matriarchal figures, waking early, giving orders, standing over children as they cook, clean, gather water and firewood, and serve the adults. Mothers were oftentimes abusive, hurling insults and beatings at their daughters. Each participant stated that this was to be expected, as physical and verbal abuse was (and continues to be) normal in childrearing in Tanzania. However, Mary and Kisa had severed their relationship with their overly abusive mothers, but were working on reconnecting now that they were mothers themselves.

In most cases the close relationships with a male relative such as a father or husband was a defining factor in the participants' feeling of confidence and thus succeeding at work and capability to be part of important decision making processes in the home. The women participants spoke of their fathers as kindly men who had their daughters' best interests in mind as they made sacrifices to send all their children to school, especially the girls. These fathers all had some sort of exposure to life outside their village upbringing, whether it was education, work, or church. In the case of Mary, her stepfather was her father figure, raising her as his own biological child and therefore her experiences and feelings towards him were similar to those of the other participants who lived with their biological fathers growing up.

Husbands were described as both modern and traditional, which created tension in these educated women's ideal lives. Mary and Kisa both married men who were supportive and were inclined to include them in decision-making processes through clear communication and expectations. Nanyorai felt her husband was modern in his business connections, but had traditional expectations of the home. Being widowed, Lisa had to contend with her late husband's family and traditions regarding children and property. Naishooki married a very traditional and religious man, which caused deep tensions in their relationship, eventually leading to divorce where she, again suffered the consequences of cultural expectations regarding children.

Mothers

In this section I reflect the significant themes in participants' reflections on their relationships with their mothers: work and abuse. The relationships the participants had with their mothers were constitutive in forming the way they approached living their lives.

The participants recognized their mothers as role models and forces with which to be reckoned. They viewed their mothers as fiercely committed to their families, even when their means of expressing this commitment was questionable. In the participants' view, a mother's job was to ensure her daughters grew into respectable women who would make good mothers and wives themselves. A few of the participants voiced the mother-daughter relationship as challenging or difficult, even abusive at times; however, each participant felt a sense of duty to respect and love their mothers no matter the extent of abuse they had faced growing up. Others saw their mothers as the epitome of strength,

overcoming the stresses and abuses of their own lives. The participants over 50 reminisced about their mothers as proud homemakers who gave all they had to their family, but expressed an aloofness about the emotional bond they had with their mothers. A majority of the participants saw their mothers as hard working and stern, committed to their family's success, but at times overly harsh and judgmental.

Work. The participants perceived their mothers as hard working and thus noble. They desired to follow in their mother's footsteps, yet acknowledged the tension of a childhood view of their mothers as "super human" and the adult understanding of the hardships women in Tanzania face when trying to care for and financially support their children.

My mom she used to sell the meat, some bananas, some eggs from chickens. She has to do the little things, to take care of some chickens; she has a cow so she can sell the milk. She has a farm, so she can sell the banana. (Teddy)

Teddy was proud of her mother's hard work, viewing her commitment to earning money for her family as more than something mothers do to "help out" within the family, but rather as an example of their "super human" identity. This hard work is characterized as part of the traditional and ideal image of the African woman persona. Teddy's mother owns three farms and there is never a lack of food. Her mother spends her days moving from farm to farm overseeing the farm hands and tilling the earth herself, returning home late in the evening to then oversee the running of the household. Expressing her pride, Teddy said, "my mom was teaching me how to work, how to cook, how to wash . . . I'm proud of her. And she [taught] me also how . . . to live with other people."

Like her mother, Teddy is independent and strong. When Teddy got pregnant with her first child, she was not married and her mother was “shocked,” even though Teddy was an adult woman at 26 years old. Teddy was living mostly alone at the time she was pregnant with her first child, because the baby’s father was working away from town in the bush and her parents also lived far away from her, in the village. When the time came to go to the hospital to give birth she went on her own, in a taxi. She managed to sign the hospital documents for the C-section herself, without her husband or father present, entered the operating “theater” on her own, and once the baby was born she called her family and friends to let them know she had a successful delivery.

Naishooki said, “My mom, she works so much. Spend her life to work, work, work, work. Until now, she is working the shamba [farm].” Naishooki expressed a detachment from her mother, only speaking of her duties and activities, never mentioning any emotional connections or amplifying the sacrifices she made to raise her 10 children living far from town in a remote area where families subsisted on mostly animal products (milk and meat from goats and sheep), both eating and selling as well as some agricultural products. The relationship was expressed as formal, almost business-like, lacking in emotional content. She mentioned being beaten for not performing household duties in the time allotted with resignation that this was *culture* and to be expected.

Abuse. The participants discussed the abuse they suffered at the hands of their mothers as an emerging subtheme under family relationships. They talked about the beatings they received from their mothers and fathers, some in a nostalgic manner claiming culture as the culprit, while others seemed to relive the fear they felt as children

as they detailed the abuse. The participants described beatings as expected by children for substandard completion of tasks, playing when they should be working, and getting poor marks in school. Abuse was also expressed as a form of psychological cruelty. One Mother refused to tell her daughter about her biological father, ashamed that she had engaged in premarital sex as a schoolgirl, and given birth out of wedlock. The participants also viewed their mothers as distant and aloof in their relationships and communication, even refusing to lend a helping hand when their daughters were struggling in their lives.

Mary said, “That’s the thing I don’t want to remember. I’m trying to love her but she was very cruel.” When Mary spoke about her mother she tried to hide her distain, but it seeped through the conversation. She spoke of the abuse her mother inflicted on her as so extreme that her neighbors would have to intervene. Mary was left as head of the household at eight years old while her mother traveled for business. When her mother came home between trips she would beat Mary severely and refuse to give her food, piling on more household work that had to be completed before school, during lunch hours, and at the end of the day, leaving limited time for Mary to study. Mary had younger sisters who could have helped with the household work, but they were never assigned the same amount of work nor were they beaten and verbally abused the way Mary had been all through her childhood.

When she joined a boarding secondary school, Mary said, “it was not hard for me. The other girls were crying and [missing] mommy and what. No, I was not like that. I feel sorry [to be] away from my family.” But, she did not miss her mother. Mary was

thrilled to be away from home and the abuses. She worked hard both in the classroom and outside, completing all the domestic chores with pride.

Mary expressed the confusion she felt to this day, as a grown woman, wondering why her mother was so abusive to her. She said her mother was only cruel towards her, and that her older brother and younger brothers and sisters were spared the wrath of their mother. It is possible that because Mary was born out of wedlock when her mother was quite young and still in school that she harbored some resentment towards Mary. However, Mary's older brother was also born out of wedlock with another man, different from Mary's biological father or their stepfather.

Mary's mother never told her that she had been born out of wedlock to a man different from the one she called "father." It wasn't until Mary was nearly 18 years old and was chosen to go to India to study for Form VI, the final years of secondary school, that she was exposed to the truth in a most shocking manner. Mary was told to return home from the boarding school she was attending in a small south central town in Tanzania to collect all the documents she would need to secure her passport to travel to India with the other chosen students from her school. She got home, collected the papers, and returned immediately to school taking the 30-hour bus journey on bumpy dirt roads traveling through day and night with few stops to eat and relieve herself. When Mary returned to school, she presented the head teacher, a Catholic nun, with her paper work. Upon opening and inspecting the contents of Mary's envelope, the nun told her right there in front of the other students that she could not attend Form VI in India, nor could

she complete her education at the Catholic school she was currently attending, because she was a ‘bastard’ child, born out of wedlock. Mary was shocked to learn this.

When Mary asked her mother why she lied to the school officials (as well as to Mary), her mother responded, “but I didn’t hurt you, I didn’t kill you, I didn’t do anything to you. I tried to raise you up. You are now a big girl, what do you want?” opening the wound that had begun to heal when Mary left home for boarding school hundreds of kilometers away from home. Even though there was no longer physical abuse, this final blow was scarring to Mary’s psyche, and she dropped out of school completely, unable to take her Form IV exams, leaving her without formal certification of a completed diploma and dealing with a deep depression as a young age.

Kisa said, “[Our father] wanted us to know that whatever happened it was because of our mom. So, we were always valuing mommy, knowing mommy is doing a lot of things.” Kisa was taught to respect her mother and value the hard work she did for the family, but she questioned her mother’s kindness. Kisa talked about the abuse she faced as a child, being beaten for not maintaining her mother’s level of household cleanliness. “She would get very cross and we were always getting caned.” Kisa’s mother taught all the children in the house how to cook, and wash dishes and clothes. Her mother was very strict, “always coming and checking” saying “this is not clean, you will have to do it again.” Every morning before going to school Kisa’s mother made sure the children made their beds, prepared breakfast (in turns), and that their uniforms were properly cleaned and pressed. Kisa noted that unlike many Tanzanian mothers she and her brothers were not raised differently. Each child had family responsibilities and was

expected to contribute equally to the household. Even with this egalitarian parenting style Kisa and her siblings suffered. She felt like the amount of work expected from her mother was unreasonable. Kisa's younger brother had to sell sweet fried bread on the streets. If he tasted even just one he would be beaten. Kisa felt so sorry for him, but was struggling at home with her own household chores. Kisa and her siblings were not allowed to play with friends of their own choosing. Instead their mother would choose their friends. Kisa's friends had to be the children of her mother's friends. When she went to school and met other children she was not allowed to bring them home to play.

Kisa wondered if her mother's upbringing affected her parenting style and skills. Her mother was raised mostly in boarding school from the time she was a preadolescent until she completed college. This institutional environment was restrictive and Kisa's mother rarely had freedom to make independent choices.

Kisa's grandfather died when Kisa's mother was still very young. Kisa's grandmother remarried a man who did not want Kisa's mother to live with him. So Kisa's mother was sent to live with her maternal grandmother, who then sent her to live with her uncle after completing primary school. She remained in Uganda until she completed university, which was very unusual at the time. Kisa's mother worked hard in her uncle's house under the supervision of her aunt, who treated her badly. She was a "sad child," and later when Kisa grew up she came to understand her mother better. She accepted her distance and forgave her abuses, stating, "So you see, when I grew up, I realized this is why my mom treated us this way. She is showing us love."

Although Kisa acknowledged the reasoning behind her mother's behavior stemmed from a traumatic childhood, she kept a distance from her mother, as she became an adult. After going to college Kisa never returned home, preferring to stay with friends when she could, and starting work as soon as she could. Within the first month of working after completing college she met her first husband. He was a White man from Scotland and her mother disapproved of him from the beginning. In an action of rebellion Kisa moved out of her mother's house for good and into her then boyfriend's house, getting married immediately and becoming pregnant. This man died when her son was very young, causing Kisa's life to turn upside down. She and her son went from living in a comfortable home able to eat what they wanted, to sleeping in one room on a mat on the floor with limited food and no more toys or special outings for the child. Kisa's mother would not take her back into her home during this turbulent time and even refused to help watch Kisa's son so that Kisa could look for and attend work. She had been out of the workforce for a few years and could no longer work as a civil engineer, leaving her with limited options. Kisa opted to take a job as a housemaid, because it was the only job she could find at the time. She worked in the home of an abusive Ethiopian woman, but it paid enough to feed her son and keep them off the streets. With good fortune, Kisa met a South African woman through this housemaid job who saw how intelligent and clearly well educated she was, finding her a job at an international school where her husband worked as a secondary school teacher. And although Kisa's journey has been unbearable and degrading at times, she claimed, "it has made me a strong woman."

Discussion. In Tanzania mothers are the role models for daughters to learn how to be a good wife, mother, and community member. The layers of cultural expectations for women's responsibilities is overwhelming, particularly when coupled with working outside the home. Women's responsibilities include the running of the household by keeping everyone fed, clean, and healthy, to ensuring children behave and learn to assume their roles as girls and boys preparing them to become women and men, as well as remaining under their husband's patriarchal rule of the home. This tension between domestic matriarch, subservient wife, and employee outside the home seems to play out in an overbearing and abusive running of the home. Yet, within these tensions is a layer of pride in working hard and being regarded as resilient and tough radiates.

Teddy is proud of her mother, because she works hard and feels this model helped her define her own life as she got married and became a mother. Teddy did not talk much about the negative sides of women in Tanzania and connected more with the strength of character that is built from hard work. Naishooki also spoke about this idealized mother who worked hard and made the family proud. Her dialogue about her mother was similar to Teddy's as if her mother held up the family financially and physically ensuring the household was run successfully. These two women lacked emotional depth when speaking about their mothers almost as if they were business managers who were effectively managing a group of employees.

Mary and Kisa were very emotional when speaking about their mothers, both crying during the interview when they remembered the unkindness they were subjected to as children. Mary suffered because of her mother's abusive nature. She lost the

resilience necessary to push her in school and still felt the repercussions of her mother's wrath as an adult. Mary gained strength as she grew older and found a supportive husband. Kisa also spoke of the cruelty her mother imparted on her as a child. However, Kisa, unlike Mary, used that abuse as a springboard to remove herself from her mother's grip and left home as soon as she had the opportunity, striking it out on her own. She gained strength through her childhood experiences and made a commitment to raise her own children differently.

Fathers

In this section I describe the participants' relationships with their fathers. The following themes emerged during the interviews: bonding through play, the importance of fathers in girls' education, and fathers as gentle spirits. The relationships the participants had with their fathers were instrumental in forming the way they approached living their lives. Fathers helped to build confidence through their support of education and independence.

The participants overwhelmingly described their fathers as "nice" and fun loving, playing games with the participants as children. They worked hard to send their children to school. They were a buffer between mothers and daughters. Fathers showed love by creating opportunities for their daughters and occasionally spending time with their families. The participants portrayed their fathers as strict, but this was perceived as understandable, because the punishments they gave out served the purpose to instill discipline and commitment to the family. They were never seen as chastising or overly cruel. They were viewed as the "rock;" the core element to a girl's empowerment,

making decisions to shape the girls' path. The participants' fathers were recognized as the ones who decided whether a girl will go to school or be married. The relationship fathers created with their daughters had an effect on determining how the participants reacted to schooling and their overall life success.

Bonding through play. Kisa's father spent time playing with her as a young child. He helped her with her homework, pushing her to strive to be the best in everything she does. He could be strict, but always supportive. He quietly respected his wife implying his children should do the same, never challenging decisions or actions. Through this lens Kisa internalized much of her tension and stress growing up. She maintained that her father was a stalwart force in her family, and felt his kindness shone through any difficulties she faced in other areas of her life, particularly under her mother's severe child rearing style.

Kisa said, "When dad is around we are happy, but when he goes away we are always being caned." For Kisa her father was the main pillar supporting her family, making the final decisions on all things, yet playful and kind when spending time with his children. She spoke nostalgically of him, interpreting his time out of the country for college at the University of Nairobi as giving him insight into how to be a father that is different from the traditional Tanzanian father role. Spending this time away from home, living in Nairobi seemed to have opened Kisa's father's eyes to a model of fathering that included spending time with his children during down time, playing. The participants rarely mentioned playing as an activity they are allowed to engage in on their own, rather

they talked about being beaten for playing while completing domestic chores. However, when Kisa was with her father she played.

I think it's because my daddy went out [of the country] and was exposed to ideas and people. So he was always having time with us, talking to us, and in the evening, when he comes from work it was our time. He took us for walks and he could play games with us, running and chasing.

Her father told Kisa and her siblings they should respect their mother no matter what. He wanted them to understand the difficulties of being a mother. While Kisa understood she must respect her mother and empathize with the challenges of being a woman working and raising children in Tanzania, she felt her father held a large role in making the family whole.

And always he was saying we should be thankful to our mom. He was always, he wanted us to know that whatever happened it was because of our mom. So, we were always valuing mommy, knowing mommy is doing a lot of things. And we asked him "what about you? What are you doing?" But, behind it was him. So then there was a time when the company he was working got financial problems and had to close. That was the time I see my dad very stressed, but still he was being a good daddy.

The importance of fathers in girls' education. Fathers made important decisions about the participants' educational choices and journeys. They were perceived as "special" and sacrificing their own well-being for their daughters' success. The

participants also recognized that some of their childhood stress was related to trying to please their fathers by working hard in school and at home.

You don't want to fail, because my daddy was very nice, but if you fail he is not your friend, and we did not want to make him sad, so we were always trying to please him . . . And my dad was always saying you have to be the first in the class. So, we were always trying our best to be first in the class. (Kisa)

Even though Kisa viewed her father as a good dad she carried a high level of stress, trying her best in school, not wanting to disappoint him. Kisa was the first in her class, out of often 100 or more students. However, this stress took a toll on her. She had to study late into the night to make up the time lost after school cooking, cleaning, farming, and fetching water and firewood. Her family did not have electricity and she had to sit along the fence next to her neighbor's house in order to use the light coming out of their windows to study by. If there was no electricity at her neighbor's home she used a small handmade kerosene lantern fashioned from old tin cans and pieces of scrap metal. These lanterns created a dense smoke and did not emit much light.

So, with limited daylight hours, where the sun shines from 6:30am to 6:30pm on the equator, Kisa had to attend school, complete her chores, study to remain first in the class, and be sure to play with her dad when he came home. She expressed this time of life as extremely stressful. Kisa claimed she will raise her own children in a more nurturing environment by saying, "It was hard to be honest. I will raise my children differently." Kisa explains:

I was very stressed. Yeah, it was really stressful, because you would think “what will I do if I don’t get this?” You are always like, in the book, in the book, cramming. You don’t understand something—you just do it anyway. My dad was very good in mathematics, so he was teaching us math, and I was good in that. But the other subjects it was hard, and I had to be first in everything. There were a lot of really bright kids at my school, so I had to really study. So, I grew up stressed. Stressed—I need to pass. Stressed—I need to please my mama at home, because my mom was not taking no for an excuse or sorry for an answer. She was always hitting me if I did not do well in my classes. So, I was worried a lot. But, anyway, we grew up.

Kisa’s reflection on her father started out as nostalgic, but the more she reminisced, the more she realized that even taking the time to play with her father added stress to an already busy and demanding childhood. However, her sense of duty towards her father, particularly to be the top student in the class, shows how much she respected him. This respect grew out of the time he put aside for her both while playing and helping her with her school work. This bond was essential in guiding Kisa’s later success in life. She too became a civil engineer like her father and paternal grandfather.

Nanyorai said, “He wanted us to go to school. That’s why we went to school.” Nanyorai, a Maasai woman, attributed her “different” childhood to her father. Maasai girls traditionally leave school after the completion of their primary years and get married, often to a much older man. The purpose of a Maasai girl’s life is to learn how to be a good mother and wife. This was not completely true in Nanyorai’s experience. She

attended not only secondary school, but also went on to gain a post-secondary education, which is uncommon for Maasai women. Nanyorai said of her father, “he took us to school, asking us, ‘what do you want to be?’ I told him. ‘I want to be a teacher’. So he took me to a Montessori teaching college.” She credits her father’s enthusiasm for education to his own upbringing. Her father received an education through Form IV, paid for by his sister and a sponsorship from the Catholic Church. Because of his secondary education he was able to go to a tourism and hotel management institute earning a degree, becoming a tour guide at a safari company. Through this experience he was exposed to many people from different backgrounds, taking them on long game drives into the national parks and spending time with them over dinner, learning about their lives and sharing his own life. “It changed his way of thinking.”

Nanyorai talked about this shift of consciousness by her father as “important and once he realized his kids have to go to school . . . all the money he collected, we go to school.” Her father did not build a concrete house until after the last child finished school. This is an uncommon way of living in Tanzania, especially for men. Owning your own home is a sign of wealth and continued prosperity. The bigger the home using non-traditional building materials, the more respect one can gain in the community. The choice by Nanyorai’s father to raise his family in a mud house, albeit with a tin roof, rather than thatched, is an unusual commitment to the power of education, particularly for girls. The mud house would not draw wealthy suitors for his daughters, whereas a concrete home with tile roofing would attract wealthier (and older) prospective husbands. As it turned out Nanyorai’s father’s choice to send her to school created access to more

job prospects and interactions with people from a variety of backgrounds, which in turn led her to meet her husband who is quite wealthy. She now works with her husband managing the company's digital profile.

My dad and mom, they sent us, at least to school. They didn't want me to marry when I am very young, because as a Maasai, when you are 15 years old the girl should be married. But my dad is something special. (Naishooki)

When Naishooki was growing up she thought her father would only pay for her brother's education, because that is what she saw all around her in the village, boys going to school, girls getting married. However, her father, like Nanyorai's father, was educated, which affected the way he viewed girls, and the value education had for his daughters' lives. Her paternal grandfather worked with the Lutheran church, which persuaded him to send his boys to school. In those days it was only boys who went to school and rarely beyond primary school for those boys living in remote areas like Naishooki's father. As her father grew the Lutheran church influenced him heavily, dressing in western clothes, rarely wearing adornments, like earrings, and neck, arm and leg jewelry, and working for a salary rather than depending solely on raising cattle.

Naishooki's father took a job as a tax collector for the government in their area. With this job he was able to have enough benefits and money to support his family and keep cattle in the village. Over time he had plenty of cattle, herded by a young unmarried man from another family, and lots of land. Each year he would sell cows to send his children to school, and all his children, including the girls went to school, through college.

Once he grew old, Naishooki's father divided his land equally amongst all his children and gave each one five acres of land. This gesture is nearly unheard of in Maasai families. Naishooki explains, "Most Maasai women do not own land. Most of the [women] in the African culture . . . [everyone] knows when you get married it's just bye-bye. You go and stay with your husband." This tradition of marrying daughters at an early age and sending them to live with their husband's family means they will no longer help care for their parents as they age, nor will they contribute to the work needed to maintain the home and farm, drastically lowering their value when it comes to sharing family wealth. Boys on the other hand marry and bring their wives into the family home. These wives take on the role of "daughter" and care for the elderly, cook, clean, manage the home, assist in the farms and caring for small animals. They benefit from any inheritance their husband's claim and are considered property themselves. A man "purchases" a wife through a bride price or dowry. The more potential a man has to inherit the more he can provide in terms of a dowry, making him a more desirable partner for a daughter. Value is traditionally viewed through a consumerist lens; the amount of land and number of animals equates worth. Naishooki's father valued education and therefore reduced the amount of property value each of his children would be able to claim, but instilled an ideology that education is more valuable than land or animals.

Although, Naishooki's father had progressive views on education and the value of girls he still held traditional views about discipline. Naishooki explains:

Our daddy and my mom they have been beating us . . . with a stick. If, for example, they tell you to go to fetch water like three, two kilometers away . . . we

go and play along the way in the sun, and then we be late. Daddy [says] “why you be late?” and then he take the stick [and beat us for] almost half an hour.

Even though she describes her childhood as having many such events, where she is beaten for playing instead of working, she still views her father as a “wise person.” Naishooki brushed off the memories of the beatings claiming they were traditional ways of disciplining children. All the children she interacted with growing up faced the same consequences for misuse of their time and playing when they should be working. Naishooki did say that she chose to raise her own children differently by being firm, but kind.

Fathers as gentle spirits. In many instances the participants viewed their fathers as kind, gentle, and more caring than their mothers. Mary’s story is significant in its power and rawness. Her relationship with her stepfather was critical in her empowerment process, and so I discuss this relationship through her narrative.

Mary grew up in a home where she felt safer around her father than mother. Her father was always kind, supporting her when he could, but never really standing up to her mother when she became vicious and cruel. Mary didn’t feel the strength of her father the way other participants did, but she did relish in his gentle, understated kindness.

And the father was good to us. When I was small, I didn’t understand that I was born out of marriage. And I didn’t understand that I was different from my brother that has a different father, or the one we are living with is another father. I didn’t understand that . . . and the life was just a happy life. (Mary)

Mary is referring to her stepfather who she lived with all of her life believing he was her biological father. It wasn't until Mary was in secondary school and about 16 years old that she found out she was not the biological daughter of the one she had been living with since her earliest memories. Yet, when she got married and her future husband came to pay the dowry she insisted it go to her stepfather. Mary explains,

Even when I got married, that's another Chagaa tradition, if the girl was out of marriage, when I got marriage, everything has to go to my original daddy, but I said no to that. Because, I said he took care of me, he's the one struggling for me, so no, nothing of my marriage will go to that dad in Dar.

The "dad in Dar" she talks about is her biological father. She commends her stepfather for helping her through life's "ups and downs" and making him the appropriate person to receive her dowry payment. The ups and downs she refers to are those she faced from her mother's incessant abuses. He was there for her, trying to reduce the magnitude of those beatings and psychological berating. He would confront her mother saying, "why you do like this to this child of yours, why?" Although her mother was relentless, having her stepfather take her side gave Mary hope, and created the space for her to continue on through her life, growing into a successful woman with a job, a side business, a supportive husband and children.

Mary's biological father only came into her life three years before she participated in this study. Her mother refused to help her locate him and her relatives would not contribute any knowledge as to his whereabouts whether they had any information on him or not. She spent years following hints to her father's location, chasing people all the

way to Zimbabwe who may have known her biological father. Through her search, Mary was emotionally exhausted and empty upon meeting her biological father for the first time. She gradually grew to like him and developed some trust, but said, “I have to slowly get to know him” and continues to build the trust. She still sees him periodically and enjoys the time they spend together, but has no interest in taking on the role of daughter for him. She already has a father who was there for her all of her life and tried to protect her through his love and devotion to her.

Discussion. The participants of this study viewed fathers as more humane than mothers. They felt strong emotional bonds to their fathers, reminiscing about the joy and kindness bestowed upon them by their fathers, dismissing any harsh actions. The participants’ fathers promoted a dedication to education, ensuring their daughters attended school as far as they desired, even though they had to make sacrifices many “other” Tanzanians would not. Their fathers were also kind and playful. They protected their daughters from their mother’s abuses. The participants’ fathers played with them as girls and helped with homework. However kind and playful their fathers were, the participants still felt tension in trying to please them. As girls they already carried more responsibilities in the home than their brothers, and then adding the pressure to be the best was very stressful. This tension between love, responsibility, and stress plays out in different ways in the participants’ lives, but remains a key thread in developing resilience, confidence, and empowerment later on as grown women.

Husbands

It is traditional in Tanzanian households for wives to care for their husbands and attend to their needs. This is true even when a wife works full-time outside the home. The family likely has household help in the form of a “house girl” or maid and cook, but the wife must care for the husband separately. She must rise early in the morning to prepare his clothes, bath, and breakfast and she will come home in the evening to do the same while he rests awaiting his dinner and bath water to be prepared. Many of the participants in this study began their reflections on their duties as a wife without much critique; however, as the interview progressed the women who had more traditional marriages began to express some discontent about their role in the relationship.

Limited freedom and hidden expectations. Nanyorai said, “Even my husband doesn’t do anything.” In talking about her shift from once a teacher at a prestigious International school to helping her husband run his window construction company, Nanyorai explained how even though she left in the mornings and returned home at the same time as her husband, she was still responsible for taking care of her husband’s domestic needs. She explains,

He prefers me to cook. So imagine, we wake up together, I do the breakfast, I prepare the breakfast for him, everything. I prepare his bath and clothes. And then I take care of myself too, so that we can go together.

She continued, “I do that every morning. We go to work and we come back maybe at 7, 7:30 in the evening and then I have to go and cook.” Nanyorai explained that she has a maid who looked after her young daughter, cooking, cleaning up after her, and

washing her clothes. The maid even cooks for Nanyorai and washes her every-day clothes as well, but her husband does not want the maid to cook for him or wash his clothes. He feels this is his wife's duty. Even if she works fulltime, is very busy, and often tired from waking earlier than him, it is still her responsibility to complete the domestic tasks tradition dictates upon returning home in the evening, rather than resting, like her husband. Pointing at the couch, Nanyorai said, "When he comes [home] he sits there, and watch everyone cook." She continued, "It's kind of tiring, but I don't complain. That's how we were raised, that's how he was raised. So, it's my responsibility." She further explained that her mother told her when she got married, "you have to cook for your husband. You have to prepare clothes for him," and she understands that this is her duty as a wife, but she did acknowledge, "It's kind of unfair."

Lisa said, "I can't possibly get remarried when I have these children in the house. They would kill me." Lisa is talking about the pressure she feels from her late husband's family. After the death of her husband, his family interfered with the inheritance process, taking Lisa's husband's entire pension and giving it to his mother, who claimed, "I am old and need looking after." Lisa had three children living at home at the time and also needed the money to look after her children. But she decided not to fight with her mother-in-law, and instead chose to find a way to make ends meet herself. She started a new job that paid more and invested in her animal husbandry project to raise more chickens, pigs and goats.

It is also tradition for the husband's family to take the children if he dies. Children are considered property of the husband and thus when he dies or if he gets

divorced the children become part of the “estate” that is usually controlled by the man’s family. In order to avoid this Lisa decided to put her children in a boarding school in Kenya close to her in-laws’ village. Her in-laws wanted Lisa to return to her husband’s village and live there with her children, but Lisa was already established in Tanzania and did not wish to go live close by her in-laws. She explained that with the children in boarding school her in-laws could go and see and the children anytime and the children could easily go and stay with their father’s relatives when school was closed for holidays. Lisa’s in-laws never visited the children at school nor did the children choose to stay with them during their holidays. By sending her children to boarding school nearby her husband’s family Lisa appeared to be following tradition, but was able to maintain control over her children’s future. She was able to ensure they received a good education and was present for them during their school holidays. She reflected on the severity of the situation,

Women don’t have rights in [East Africa]. When your husband dies, the decision is made by anybody else. I was fortunate because I had my children and I was far from my country so they did not interfere directly with my children, but they [often] split up the family, when your husband dies. You even lose children sometimes.”

Naishooki said, “[I] didn’t have my own freedom.” Naishooki married a Somali man and was required to convert to Islam. She found the eight years of her marriage to be oppressive, because of the demands from her husband’s interpretation of Islam and how women should behave. He did not want her to work and felt a woman’s place is in

the home. Naishooki talked about the difficulties she faced as a woman who converted to Islam; “this religion, is too tough for myself, because you have to fast [sic], and cover everything. I feel like I’m just in jail.”

After a few years of staying home with the children, Naishooki convinced her husband to allow her to go back to work, finding a job teaching in a nursery school. However, the marriage did not last long after this. She explained her transition, “That [marriage] is not freedom, I could feel that way, the time I just want to go back to my family and then explain to my dad I’m not going to be able to continue on with my marriage.” She was granted a traditional divorce from the leaders of the Islamic community at her husband’s mosque. This traditional divorce meant that the religious leaders in the community honored the divorce, but her legal divorce came almost 20 years later, through her own persistence. Her husband either did not understand the importance of a legal divorce deed or did not care, but Naishooki was highly educated and was well aware of her rights and the importance of having legal documentation. However, even being educated did not help her when it came to her children in the divorce. Naishooki explains,

After I left, he took the children. One child went away to study, and the two of my children they stay with me, because he couldn’t continue on just looking after the children alone. And later on, because we did have a big fight, I just be nice person because I knew how he’s working, because of really religion issues.

The two children who stayed with Naishooki were sent to boarding school once they were school age (about seven years old) and she saw them only on school holidays.

The one child who went to live in a sprawling border town between Kenya and Tanzania along the Nairobi/Arusha highway, was sent to live with Naishooki's in laws, because he had already reached the age of seven, which is when children enter Standard I, equivalent to kindergarten in the United States.

Mary said, "He just say, let us share, everybody has to eat. It's something small, he takes a knife and cut pieces; let us share. So, we share." Mary's husband is less traditional in his approach to family life. He believes that everyone in the family should eat the same food and eat together as a family. This way of living is more common among younger men, but still a novelty amongst Tanzanian family expectations. Mary's husband is going against his mother's beliefs of how men should be treated in their homes. She believes men should be cooked for and served separately, receiving the best food. Mary's husband is not comfortable eating meat when his wife and children only have vegetables, and thus shares even the smallest amounts of meat with each person in his family. The family, including the maid, eats all at one table together when everyone is home at the same time.

Although she describes her husband as "modern," Mary does reflect on the hidden expectations of traditions.

According to our tradition, you have to be there. Like when your husband is coming, you are not allowed to let the maid prepare it for him . . . even if she cooks [*sic*] everything you have to prepare it, set it out for him.

She also says she wakes up early, even earlier than the maid to be sure the table is set properly, and prepares any special foods that might be in order for the day. Mary also

talked about how she must wash her husband's "special" clothes, meaning his work clothes and those he wears at his job as a Master of Ceremonies at wedding receptions. The maid is allowed to wash the clothes she and her husband wear around the house along with the children's clothes, but Mary washes the formal wear. In these descriptions of her daily life Mary alludes to the tension between living with more equity than her mother's generation, but feeling the responsibility to follow traditional expectations, and only breaking away from these when her husband so desired, as in the case of sharing food and eating together.

We talk. We communicate. Like if I want to do something, we sit down and we discuss. And I am glad that he takes a lot of opinions from me. I am not saying I am becoming [too powerful], but at least he give's [*sic*] me that chance to decide how many children to have. I am glad he asked me that. (Kisa)

Kisa explained that she did not wish to have any more children, because raising children is "such hard work." She wants her children to have a better education than she had. Also, with more children there would be less money to buy healthy foods, or they would be spread across more people, losing the nutritional impact she wants for her children. Kisa also wants to have time for just her and her husband and feels that having more children would interfere with the development of their relationship. She and her husband make household decisions together. Kisa's sister and mother-in-law feel Kisa is too modern and should listen rather than speak in her marriage, but her husband does not feel they need to follow the advice of his family and instead he says, "We do what is best for our family." Kisa's husband is open to living differently from the way he was raised

in his village. He considers what's best for his family over what tradition dictates. Kisa and her husband have an open line of communication where they both listen to each other, try to see the other's point of view, and make a decision that is in the best interest of the family. When discussing her new position at work, which would raise her income to be considerably larger than her husband's, she reiterates the importance of dialogue.

I talked to him before making the decision. I told him it is not just for me, but for the family . . . We are Christian and we believe this is a blessing . . . So, we talked and I told him I still respect you. Even before that I respect him. I decided to marry him because of the love. Love has no money, love has no PhD. It's love. It's there between us. That's what makes us together—it's the love. I always plan we do things together. He is happy, he is very happy—we are both . . . we buy stuff together . . . it is only because we sit down and talk and this will be helpful to the family.

This relationship is different from the other participants in this study, who focused more on following tradition, even when it did not “feel” fair, than equity and partnership. Also, Kisa is the only participant who talked about having a healthy line of communication as one of the most important aspects to her relationship with her husband. Having open dialogue seems to have created a strong bond of trust which is evident when Kisa's husband is challenged by other men who think Kisa will feel more powerful (and possibly act unfeminine) than her husband because of her income, he says, “not my wife.”

Discussion. Kisa was married and had a son before she met the husband she is speaking of above. Her first marriage was contested by her mother, because he was from Scotland, and when he passed away Kisa was left to rebuild her life without the family support she desperately needed. Much of her strength of character and ability to both make decisions independently and actively seek her second husband's advice may have evolved from the time she spent struggling to provide for herself and her son. She has a sense of independence and confidence that stands out from the other participants, which may be a result of her knowledge and capacity to live independently. Kisa believes in traditions and is proud of her heritage. She finds the morals and value system to be particularly salient in maintaining cultural fluency and remaining connected to something larger than herself and her family. These traditions are rooted in stability without the ephemerality of modern life, where the long talons of globalization reach into homes in towns and cities through television, radio, mobile phones and the Internet, exposing people to new and different ideas. In one breath she states that some cultural traditions can be oppressive, and with the next she reiterates the importance of strong traditions especially as they connect to the preservation of morals and values. Kisa explains how she was taught to be a woman through an initiation ceremony that included being told how to behave as a woman, what to do to be a good wife and mother, particularly how to run a household and have relationships with men. These relations were both how to behave sexually as well as when and how to be submissive.

Relationships between women and men are perceived as critical to sustaining a strong society. All the participants spoke of the tensions between the traditional roles

they felt inclined to accept as women, but also as unfair in their oppressive nature.

Naishooki could not stay married because of the oppression she felt being married to a Muslim Somali man. She felt the expectations to remain covered at all times she was out of the house or in front of male friends and relatives, to pray five times a day, and fast during the period of Ramadan were too strict and incongruent with her upbringing.

Although she is Maasai and was raised in a rural area, the added layer of religious expectations was too much for Naishooki, causing her to ask for a divorce. She had been raised to follow Maasai traditions including the importance of circumcision; however, because her father was educated by missionaries he believed in the power of education for both boys and girls. This access to education provided Naishooki with the knowledge and confidence to make a decision to live independently when her husband's overbearing personality became unbearable. She was able to set herself free first through a traditional separation and then formally through a legal divorce. Without the knowledge from her education and the family support, in particular from her father, she might not have been able to live independently. However modern the decision to get a divorce was, Naishooki still suffered from traditional expectations that her children would live with their father's family.

Nanyorai and Mary both felt their husbands were more modern than most, but they still felt obliged to follow traditional expectations of women's roles in the home. Mary did not see this expectation as too oppressive, and embraced it as part of her overall life upbringing. She reflected that the reason she woke up before and worked harder than the maid was because of her difficult childhood where her mother placed an unreasonable

amount of responsibility on her from a young age, as well as her disciplined Catholic secondary school experience. This more accepting attitude by Mary may be related to her lower education than the other participants, as she did not complete her secondary schooling. Nanyorai on the other hand felt torn between following the customary behaviors of women and a modern life style with more domestic equity. Nanyorai may feel more tension because of her high level of education and exposure to western value systems through working at a well-respected international school for many years as a teaching assistant and later a full-time teacher. During her tenure she worked with administrators, teachers, students, and families from a wide variety of countries, and it was this experience that led her to comment that she will raise her daughter differently from the way she was raised, both in ideologies and the ways she will discipline.

Lisa's situation is unique to this research study. She is a widow and therefore is subjugated to succumb to traditions that expanded beyond the confines of her nuclear family and home. When her husband passed away, his family appropriated his pension and demanded the children. Lisa is educated and worldly, which contributed to her savviness in maintaining control over her children's future while making her in-laws feel they had a say in the children's development. Lisa also worked at the international school Nanyorai had once worked for, and it is possible having exposure to such a wide array of people with varying customs and beliefs along side access to current technologies created a window in which Lisa could envision a different life for herself and her children from the one her in-laws anticipated.

Summary

Chapter 5 discussed the constitutive nature of relationships. “The constitutive role of freedom relates to the importance of substantive freedom in enriching human life” (Sen, 1999, p. 36). Substantive freedoms include the ability to be free from deprivations such as starvation, low nutrition, early mortality, avoidable morbidity, limited or no literacy and numeracy, political participation (Sen, 1999), and so forth. As discussed in the above chapter without these formative relationships the women in this study would have faced deep deprivations. Their fathers and husbands were perceived by the participants as supporting figures, who gave them access to education and decision making. The participants overwhelmingly viewed their mothers as harsh, but with good reason. They forgave their mothers for inflicting pain (physically and emotionally) on them as girls, because they empathized with the amount of pressure their mothers felt caring for the family and working both inside and out of the home. The participants also felt their mothers had to prepare them for life as Tanzanian women.

These relationships the participants describe helped them to expand other freedoms. The relationships were foundational and constitutive in nature, because the participants were able to make decisions as they got older that were meaningful and that the participants had reason to value, as in the case of who and when to marry, or how many children to have.

CHAPTER VI

THE INSTRUMENTAL FUNCTIONINGS

This chapter continues to examine the main themes of this research study. The instrumental functionings discussed below emerged out of the participants' perspectives on their education and access and use of technology. For the participants in this study, a quality post-secondary education, access to and use of technology constituted a capability in itself that was instrumental in finding and enjoying meaningful professional work, as well as well-being in their personal and social lives. The interaction between functionings, that is, educational engagement combined with technological skills, enhanced the women's capabilities, which lead them to seek out professional job opportunities. These professional opportunities embodied educational and technological functionings, achievements, or enhanced professional capabilities (Seeberg, 2014). Education and technology were both perceived as important structures in enhancing the participants' well-being, capability to aspire, and their over-all empowerment processes. The participants commented that without a quality and high level of education becoming technologically savvy would have been challenging. The participants expressed that each level of education they had attained added more depth to their understanding of how the world operated. Adding access and use of technological tools, particularly the Internet, opened more doors or windows into the world, giving them an even deeper understanding of the world and themselves situated with it. The United Nations has identified that access to ICTs is the third most important issue facing women, apart from poverty and violence (Asiedu, 2012). ICTs have been credited with enhancing women's participation

in the development process and economic empowerment. “ICTs open up a direct window for women to the outside world. Information now flows to them without distortion or any form of censoring, and they have access to the same information as their male counterparts” (Asiedu, 2012, p. 246).

This chapter first discusses the themes in participants’ perspectives on their educational journey and its influence in their empowerment process, beginning with primary school through their post-secondary educational experiences. Second, the chapter examines how technology has influenced and continues to impact the participants’ experiences professionally and personally. The themes emerge from their reflections, with the role of gender as a key component in the successes and barriers they have faced throughout their lives.

Education

Education was perceived in an instrumental fashion as the most important piece to gaining upward mobility leading to empowerment expressed in each of the participant’s stories. Completing any level of education contributed to personal pride and better access to stable work. Having a secondary school level of education was perceived as being critical to gaining employment, while any level of post-secondary was key in moving up socially by having more access to a larger network of people and variety in higher paying professional jobs. All the participants were making concerted efforts to ensure their own children received an excellent secondary education so that they are poised to enter a quality college or university.

Summary

The participants had similar feelings about their education citing examples of connections made with others who offered them either advice or skills or helped to find them jobs. Each participant discussed her strong belief that education had provided opportunities to grow both professionally and personally. Secondary education was perceived as critical in developing a sense of independence for the participants both financially, as well as in gaining wider sense of who they are and who they wanted to become while they were growing up. A secondary education also was viewed as opening doors into the world, where the participants began to understand how others live. With a completed secondary school degree the participants could go on to a tertiary program at any later point in their life, as was the case for Lisa, Mary, and Kisa. Nanyorai, Naishooki, Haika, and Teddy all began their post-secondary education soon after completing secondary school, which allowed them to enter the professional world earlier, but was no guarantee of staying in a permanent position. However, having been educated beyond secondary school gave the participants a sense of being capable. This sense led to an expressed feeling of empowerment, that they could be and do anything.

On the other hand, the participants did not reflect on the experience of schooling as joyful, and teachers were perceived as strict, even harsh. The participants claimed that as students, they attended school out of fear rather than the joy of learning. As children, the participants were threatened by their parents with beatings if they did not receive high marks, and their teachers ridiculed and caned students regularly. Discipline and punishment were synonymous, handed out with regularity. If a student were late to arrive

she would be beaten. If a student failed to give the correct answer when called upon in class she would be physically harmed. In both primary and secondary level education students were expected to know more than they were taught, with teachers relying heavily on students' language capabilities and ability to study in the evenings.

Primary

Primary school sets the stage for further education and it is the first place outside of the home students gather to learn about the world. The participants in this study reflected on their primary schooling experiences emphasizing the stress they felt. Being girls, the participants had to wake early and take care of household chores before preparing to go to school. After breakfast they ran to school for the morning exercise regime common across Tanzania. After the whole school morning exercises role call was announced. If a student was not present when their number in the role call was stated they would be told to stand aside upon arriving. The student who arrived late had to suffer disciplinary actions of either cleaning the compound, working in the gardens, or they were told to stand and hold bricks until their arms hurt. These students would then be dismissed to class, where they would enter late getting caned by their classroom teacher as well.

I wake up early in the morning. I go to fetch the water to help my mom—it is two kilometers away . . . I put one bucket of water quickly at home. Then, I just prepare myself quickly and run. When I reach there we are just doing chakumchaka [exercises]. After the exercises there is the call of the number. You

have to have a number and if you are late, after 7:30 . . . they separate you to one side, and you are beaten. (Naishooki)

The fear of being beaten was central in Naishooki's memories of primary school. One particular English teacher was called "one swipe," because he would swipe his stick across a student's shoulders if she or he could not answer his questions correctly. She says,

If you don't speak English, you be hit . . . sometimes I feel I don't want to come to school. When the day comes [for English class] we chose the infirmary, that is I'm pretending to be sick, so I don't go to school, because we will be hurt.

Naishooki's story is similar to the other participants.

The teachers were very strict. For example we would have to come on Saturdays, or when school was finished for the day to get our homework. The math teacher would give us problems on the board. You would start answering the questions from the first classroom, and then you move to the second classroom, and then to the third. [He would say] "When you come tomorrow, make sure you are done with this." And if you go home, mom is waiting for you to do this and this. At the end of the day [there's] no light [to study]. (Haika)

Both Haika and Naishooki reflected on the double burden of being a girl. Not only were they responsible for getting their homework done and studying to keep up in class, but they also had to participate in the running of the household. Their brothers were allowed more time to study and sleep, because they did not have to wake early to

collect water or prepare breakfast, and they could study in the afternoon before the sun went down.

Kisa remembers sitting by her neighbor's fence to catch some of the light pouring out from the windows in order to complete her homework and study in the evening. Few of the participants' homes had electricity while they were growing up, and living on the equator meant the sun rose at 6:30am and set at 6:30pm each day, making for very few hours of daylight once home from school. Although studying by candle or lantern light is possible, and is how these women completed their evening studies as children, it is hard on the eyes, and they all commented how the smoke filled the cramped quarters of the small homes they grew up in.

Secondary

While primary school was attended in the community in which the participants were born and raised, they joined secondary schools outside of their communities, leaving home for months at a time. This new distance from home contributed to furthering their entry into the wider society. As girls they had long journeys on buses, in many cases alone, to reach their school. In other instances the participants traveled alone, but stayed with, or had a brother or other relative nearby the proximity of the school. Secondary school experiences exposed the participants to new ways of thinking as well as to the realities of adult life. They learned about making decisions and how to handle difficult circumstances. Each of the participants recognized the salience of attending and finishing as much secondary schooling as possible in order to continue on to college,

university or a technical training institute. In this way, secondary education was perceived as a stepping-stone to something more.

I can say that if I didn't go to school and see how the other families do things, I wouldn't have known this is how people live. I would have said, "ok, I finish my Form Four and get married" and you see if you get married the man will be on you to do the same thing like our mothers; get married, have babies, and suffer abuses. But, because I was exposed to people through education I could say . . . even if it is to get married, not early marriage. (Kisa)

Kisa's comments reflect what has been widely documented, that the more years a girl stays in school, the later she marries, and the more equity she has within the home. Kisa goes on to express how much of a difference education can make in a woman's life. "I am feeling that every woman needs time to mature so she can at least be independent. Even if it is marriage—you are not going to be dominated" by your husband. She feels that women should have their own business or job separate from their husband in order to make financial contributions to the household. Kisa points out that education is the pathway to earning an income, and an income in most cases means added power within the household, particularly with financial decisions.

Haika said, "My family knows that education has changed them and that's why we want to help those [in the family] who missed it." Haika is talking about a family foundation she and her other two brothers who were able to gain a post-secondary school education set up to help pay for school fees of the children of her brothers and sisters who did not have the opportunity to further their studies. This thread of "paying it forward"

was woven throughout the interviews in different ways with the participants iterating the strong family bonds and commitment to helping raise up disadvantaged people. Haika completed primary school in the village and was taken by her older brother to Dar es Salaam where he was working, to attend secondary school. She was a bright young girl, passing her standard seven leaving exam with high marks, and gaining acceptance into a government-funded secondary school. During this era, government schools were free of charge and only required scoring within a specific range on the end of primary school leaving exam. Haika passed secondary school with high marks as well, and was able to continue on to university. Later, once working, she paid forward her educational assistance from her older brother to a younger one. She was able to pay for his secondary and post-secondary school fees all the way through his completion of a veterinary science diploma in college. When this brother became employed the three educated siblings decided to start a family foundation to support their nieces and nephews through school.

Nanyorai said, “Maasai people have this perspective that only boys go to school—not even Maasai—I think all villages are like that.” Fortunately, Nanyorai’s father did not believe school was only for boys. He worked hard to pay for all his children’s education as far as they wished to attend. Nanyorai fell in love with English at an early age, when she was in second or third grade. By persuading her father to pay for extra English lessons she was able to attend an English medium primary school for the last two years, helping tremendously in her educational and professional journey. She comments about how English is taught in secondary school: “you don’t learn English in [secondary] school. You learn all the subjects in Swahili, and then English is just

memorization—you don't even know what you are saying.” This language boost enabled Nanyorai to have an advantage when attending college and later applying for jobs.

Naishooki said, “Our daddy spend all the cows, selling the cows each year to send us to school.” Like Nanyorai, Naishooki had a father who invested heavily in her education. As a young girl, Naishooki was precocious and doing well enough in primary school to obtain passing marks each year, but not well enough to gain entrance into the highly sought after (and free) government secondary schools. After attending a home craft school far from home for one year learning sewing and cookery, and other useful skills preparing her for marriage, Naishooki convinced her father to send her to a private secondary school where she was able to prepare to go on to teacher training college. The lessons in cooking and sewing did not allow Naishooki to dream big. Instead they kept her mind focused on the home and her place in it as a wife and mother. Secondary school on the other hand opened windows in her mind to imagine being a part of a larger community, like working as a teacher.

We are sorry you did so well in your studies, and we like you, and we want you to go further. You are chosen to go study in India, but we can't do that . . . because we found out the name you are using is not the same name on your birth certificate . . . shocked, I called my mother and asked. It was hard for her to tell me, “oh, you know your father? He's not your real father.” (Mary)

Mary was an extremely bright student throughout school. She passed her standard seven leaving exams with exceedingly high marks, gaining entrance into a government secondary school. However, she chose a missionary school, because of her

passion for the church. At the time she thought she wanted to become closer to God, and thus attending the seminary school seemed like the right choice. The students were initiated into the school through a pre-secondary program ensuring they had the English language and math skills to handle the complicated subject matter they would be studying. The subjects taught were those of all secondary schools in math, science, history, civics and language, but as the students continue up through the years it became clear that the aim was to make nuns or priests out of the students. At first they were not fully aware that this was the purpose of the school and that they were being recruited to further their commitment to the church.

Mary was not turned off by this revelation, thinking that the reason for not informing the students ahead of time about its intentions was to allow room to watch the students as they matured. When the students finished Form IV they were asked to make a commitment to the church, which Mary did wholeheartedly. The elders of the church made regular visits to the students to see how they were doing, both academically and socially. Once the elders approved the students interested in going further in the mission school, they were asked if they wanted to commit to the congregation fully. Mary said she did want to join the congregation, although being so young she reflected in her interview that she is not sure if she really understood what “committing to the church” and becoming a nun meant for her future. Nonetheless, she agreed and was then guided through the social expectations of joining of the church. Along with the other “committed” students instead of traveling home, she stayed on the school grounds during the holidays, volunteering in the church run hospital, nursery, and primary school. After

completing her volunteer requirements she and the other students were asked if they were still committed, and she said yes. It was at this point that Mary was required to return home to gather the necessary documents to assist in securing her passport to travel to India, where she would attend the final two years of her secondary education. As discussed above in the participants' profiles, Mary returned to school with her documents only to be told she was the child of another man, and the father who raised her was not her biological father.

This new knowledge set Mary down a different path. She quit school, completely unsure of how to go forward. She was depressed for a few years, unable to decide how to direct her life. However, after some time Mary decided to attend teacher-training college and was eventually employed as a teaching assistant at a private primary school. Mary recognizes that without the secondary education she would not have been able to enter the professional world and is grateful for completing Form IV. Her relationship with her mother is still tenuous, but with her instilled religious values, the newly blossoming relationship with her biological father, and the experience of being a mother herself, Mary is working on forgiveness.

Post-Secondary

Post-secondary education is the pinnacle; it is the panacea for development. Every woman interviewed for this study who completed a tertiary level education felt they had reached a much higher point in life than if they had only completed secondary school. This positive view was intact even with the two participants who were not currently employed outside the home or family business. The ability to make it through

so many years of schooling required resilience, while the more exposure to ideas and people from different places built confidence. This combination appears to be key in these women's lives in creating a sense of independence and personal strength.

I look to where my daddy came from; most of the men have gone to school and most of them you can see them in the higher institutes and they have graduated, but women now were stopped from going because back then it wasn't thought 'women can go to school' 'women can do that', so, for that time, my mom was lucky to go to school and finish college. (Kisa)

It was this strong sense of education as panacea that led Kisa's family to ensuring everyone received an education. As Kisa described her father in the previous chapter as a man who had been exposed to many ideas, so was Kisa's uncle who looked after her mother as a child ensuring she completed both secondary and a vocational training program in a secretarial college, which was an acceptable profession for a women during that era.

Kisa describes her path to becoming a civil engineer,

Because my grandpa: I remember the time when I was being trained to learn our cultural things, he used to fix a lot of things in the village. People bring things in the village: ok, "can you fix this for me, can you fix my radio, can you fix my wheelbarrow?" Even when I look in our chain behind most of them are engineers. So, it's like something that's in our family.

However, her career as a civil engineer did not last long, because it was too demanding a job for a mother. Finding herself in a very low place in her life, after her

first husband died and her mother refused to take her back into her family home, Kisa found herself working as a housemaid for a verbally abusive Ethiopian woman.

Nevertheless, this was not to be her life destiny. Through church she befriended a South African woman whose husband was a teacher at a local school that catered to expatriate families. This woman was able to help Kisa secure an interview for a teaching assistant position where she was offered a job, moving her out of her bleak situation. Through her hard work, dedication, and skill, Kisa was granted a scholarship from the school to enroll in an online teacher training degree program run from Nairobi. The course took her three years to complete and was quite grueling in its long hours and heavy reading, writing and practicum experiences; however, it was worthwhile, because Kisa is now a full-time primary school Swahili language instructor. Her salary has improved dramatically as well as the possibilities for leadership and further promotions and opportunities.

Lisa said, “I couldn’t go to the university, because at that time we had a political system that would not let Kikuyu’s—you know we were downgraded—and we couldn’t go to university.” Lisa was not able to attend college until she was 38 years old, because when she was young the Kenyan political system was biased against Kikuyu people. It was difficult for them to enter universities, requiring higher scores on entrance exams than other tribes, and difficult to find high paying jobs. But as the years passed and the political landscape changed, Lisa was able to attend a secretarial college. When her husband relocated to Tanzania she found a job working at the same private international school where Kisa is now teaching. The secretary job was low paying, and when Lisa’s husband passed away she left the job to manage a hotel and restaurant down the road

from the school. Every so often teachers from the school would come to see her and ask her to come back, stating she was the best secretary the school had ever had. But, knowing she could not afford to care for her children on the small salary the school offered, she declined their invitation to return to work. Over the years the administration of the school also realized the value and integrity Lisa brought to the front office, and finally made her an offer that exceeded both her old and current salaries. Lisa had returned to the school a few months before our interview and was very happy to be back. She was glad to feel wanted and attributed her fine post-secondary education to allowing her the mobility to have left the job in the first place for a higher paying position, as well as giving her leverage in salary negotiations upon returning.

Technology

Technology perceived as the “window into the world” (Asiedu, 2012) is where the participants gained further knowledge, skills, and information. Through access to technology the participants moved from consumers to producers of knowledge, thus contributing to the “knowledge society.” The participants in this study gained their skills in technology initially through formal courses, but found that learning on the job was more useful in gaining a deeper understanding of how to use technology professionally. They used technology to build business contacts, and many participants had developed their own businesses alongside their contracted and salaried positions. As they became more adept at using technology professionally the participants became more confident in using technology in the personal sphere, connecting with friends on social media, watching videos, reading blogs and news. Many of the participants used technology to

reach out and help or connect with others in need, which again suggests a shift from consumer of information and services to a producer. All the participants in this study enjoyed connecting with others through technology for both personal and professional reasons, and felt that access and use of technology enhanced their lives in one way or another.

Kisa

People put stuff there you can learn . . . stuff you don't know . . . you get news . . . information of what happened, like if there is an accident happening. Or someone is getting married or someone is opening a new shop. (Kisa)

Kisa's experience with technology is vast: both broad and deep in her understanding and use. She has been learning about new digital technologies since her civil engineering program nearly twenty years ago. Technology has mostly served her well, providing opportunities to connect with others, access information, develop classroom materials, and create knowledge through online learning at her university. She is confident in her technological capabilities using computers at work and home, easily navigating the Internet through both computers and her mobile phone to inform herself about current events and to answer questions, as well as to connect with others and conduct business transactions. At work she uses computers for teaching preparation and research, while at home she works on assignments for her bachelors degree. However, her mobile phone is more valuable, because other than writing documents, it can do all a computer can at the fraction of the cost. She can connect on social media, catch up on the

news and explore information; all on her smart phone during her bus ride to and from work.

Professionally. Kisa uses blogs on teaching practices to gain new knowledge about methods for teaching material, ideas for creating lessons and how to make her classroom more accessible for students. If she doesn't understand something that was brought up at a staff meeting or an issue with a student that presents in class she Googles the question to find a solution. She also uses her computer to simplify and make work more efficient.

Kisa began learning about technology through her own precocity. She first saw a computer in college and it sparked her interest, beginning formal instruction in computer use during her civil engineering course work. She learned drafting and how to use tools to draw buildings and landscape, but she felt her professor was not proficient enough in teaching the skills, nor did he give the students enough time on the computers to become competent themselves. So, rather than waiting to be taught through formal classroom instruction, she started asking how things worked, like "how do you open things? What's in the documents? How do you type?" The more she used the computer the more she learned new things. She looked for the students who were going to college to learn about computer programming to satisfy her curiosity. She describes:

I asked about certain programs, maybe I want to attach a letter, how do I do it?

Or maybe I want my work to look more professional, how do I do it? How do I add more stuff in? How do I use it? So at least if someone see my work they will say "wow, I want to read this"—to make people feel more attracted to my work.

Once Kisa completed her diploma in civil engineering and began working she was granted use of the one computer in the office reserved for the boss, because she was skilled in computer use, and also she was a fast and accurate typist. While she was growing up, her mother was a secretary and would bring the office typewriter home occasionally to complete unfinished work. Kisa would have the opportunity to explore it with her mother giving her short impromptu typing lessons. Kisa's new boss in the construction office asked her to use it for secretarial purposes, because they didn't have a hired secretary, and there were only a few letters to type each week. She used this experience to her advantage learning more about how computers work and later when she started her job at the international school she was already prepared with general knowledge about computers, building further on her skills.

As Kisa proved to be a valuable employee to the school the administration paid for her to earn her bachelors in teacher education through a university in Kenya. Through her employer she was loaned a laptop computer with a modem to take home and use for her studies. Having access to this equipment was critical in her success, because even though the discussions were asynchronous, if she read a post she did not understand, Kisa would have to stay up late waiting for her professors to come online to answer any questions. With the equipment, Kisa could email the professors ahead of time to find out when they would be online and available, but more often than not they would be accessible in the "middle of the night," making an Internet equipped computer at home vital to her success. However, Kisa describes this time in her life as difficult with a

full-time job, a teenager, a baby, a new husband, and building a house, but glad that she had the opportunity.

Personally. Social media is a big part of Kisa's personal life. She uses Facebook and WhatsApp frequently. Both of these platforms serve to connect Kisa with people and information. Like she mentions in her quote above, having access to immediate information about if there's an accident on the road somewhere is extremely helpful, particularly in a community where there are few, if any traffic reports. Also, advertising is quite expensive and most Tanzanians, especially women, conduct business in the informal sector, making social media a useful tool for expanding business opportunities. Kisa benefits from this, by gaining access to products not readily available in her area. She also uses social media to access news and contribute to the knowledge society. She says, "I like news and we chat with Salid Kike [a BBC news reporter] . . . He'll say 'you know guys, you in Tanzania, you there in Arusha, what happened there today?'" In this example Kisa's chatting with others on the BBC Tanzania's Facebook page leads to connecting with other Tanzanians she would not normally come into contact with, learning from them, as well as taking part in constructing knowledge that becomes available to others.

However, social media has not always been a positive experience for Kisa. She has had to learn how to manage her online profile so that she doesn't become a victim to predators. She talked about the pressing issue of men preying on women through online channels. Although, she never experienced anything she felt was dangerous, she has had experiences where men she didn't know propositioned her with sex. She also had a

woman from Algeria contact her through Facebook with a sad story asking Kisa to send her money. Luckily, Kisa is savvy enough to know how predators function. She said,

I am always starting with mmmmmm . . . someone who is doing business is saying send me your bank account number? You start having questions! [Of course] there are people who are great at business . . . Like there was this man who was doing a project about solar and charcoal and I was keen to know, and he said “yeah, maybe I can come to Arusha and do a workshop.” So, you learn, you chat, you are friends. Not all people are trying to bribe or kill you.

Although, her last statement is strong in its conviction, she is expressing her thoughts that social media can be beneficial for social, professional, and personal purposes. And in the end she says, “It is helping me to accomplish things, it is helpful; it is a tool to get me what I need. It is a very sweet tool.”

Nanyorai

They change the way you think . . . they empower you. They encourage you to learn . . . for now I can use the Internet, let’s say to seek help maybe when you feel low. Like the one lady who I chat with, she helps these women who are having trouble with their husbands and everything, so when you read that you say, “oh, so I can do this to get help from this person, I can contact this person to do this. So, I can go here to look for help.” So, it opens your mind, because women . . . don’t know their rights, and this Internet opens our minds now. (Nanyorai)

Nanyorai has been using ICTs for approximately eight years. She uses her phone daily to connect with others, update her husband’s business information, and read news to

find out what is going on around the world. She first learned how to use a computer after she completed secondary school, before entering teacher-training college. This short three month long course was based on theory, never placing students in front of computers, because there were only two computers in the entire training center.

Nanyorai felt it allowed her to gain some basic concepts about computers, but it did not provide her with enough support to really understand how to use a computer. However, since completing this formal course in using computers she has been exposed to ICTs in various ways and has become quite adept at utilizing them both professionally and personally.

Professionally. Nanyorai first began using computers professionally when she entered the internship phase of her teacher training course work. She was placed at a small international school where she had access to computers and the Internet. Here she was able to put her theoretical learning into practice. She learned how to prepare materials for the classroom and research topics in the lesson plans. After completing her internship she was hired by another international school nearby and was then able to refine her computer skills both through her work, preparing class materials and research, as well as short courses the information technology (IT) teacher conducted with teaching assistants and staff members during school holidays. Through these courses she was able to further advance her IT skills. When she moved from the role of teaching assistant to full-time teacher she was able to prepare her lessons, worksheets and displays easily, as well as research ideas for improving her methodology.

When Nanyorai got married she started helping her husband advertise his window framing and glass business through social media, which she conducted on her smart phone, sent from a cousin in Canada. Although smart phones were accessible in Tanzania at the time she obtained this first one, a Samsung Gallery, they were quite cost inhibitive. Because Nanyorai was confident in her ability to use a computer and the Internet, making the transition to a smart phone was not difficult. Being able to connect to the Internet wherever whenever has added an element of ease to her life. She can communicate with customers as soon as they inquire about a product, and she can take photos of completed and projects in process, uploading them immediately to Facebook, where they reach a wider audience than if the advertisements were only found in the local newspapers.

Personally. Like Kisa, Nanyorai feels that having access to digital technology, in particular the Internet has changed her life. She states,

The Internet simplifies things. Like when I was pregnant, I go to the Internet, I Google, “how is my baby now? Four months. How does she look like? What does she have now?” . . . [A long time ago] we don’t have that, instead I would have to go to the clinic for them to tell me, “now your baby is like this,” and they didn’t even have ultrasound back then, but now there is.”

Nanyorai is able to learn about her baby’s development on her smart phone, a capability gained through her access to the Internet. Without access to the Internet she would normally have to wait until she went to her monthly clinics where she would be told by the doctor what the baby was doing, and if her baby seemed to be growing

properly. She was able to reduce some of the stress of becoming a new mother through her smart phone and research skills. Importantly, she also mentions how even the introduction of ultrasound machines to the local clinics allowed the medical staff to monitor mothers better and catch issues earlier. This new technology has increased safer pregnancies and births.

After giving birth Nanayorai continued to monitor her baby's development through medical webpages to know what type of food she should be eating, what kind of behavior is appropriate at each developmental milestone and what kind of books and toys will help her with cognitive growth. Without a mobile phone Nanyorai would need to go to an Internet Café found scattered across town in nearly all the neighborhoods, consisting of a room filled with computers. The cafés have Internet access, where people can pay the equivalent of 50 cents an hour to use a computer to browse news and blogs, send emails, check Facebook, and look for jobs. But, sometimes there is a long wait if many people are in line, and these cafés are not nearly as convenient as using a mobile phone. In the comfort of Nanyorai's home or business she can use her smart phone to perform all these functions for the same cost, but for the entire day. Each day she buys a new scratch card for the equivalent of 50 cents to one dollar and enters it into her phone. To this day, she continues to research about babies and children, post information about her husband's business and watch informational and videos for fun. Nearing the delivery date of her baby she watched YouTube videos of women giving birth to become aware of what she will face in the delivery room. Women in urban Tanzania give birth alone in hospitals with the help of nurses. Crying or making any noise is considered a weakness.

Nurses often scold women for acting babyish while in transition, the most painful part of the birthing process, just before the baby crowns. Being prepared for her own delivery helped Nanyorai know what to expect. Armed with this knowledge, added to her confidence in becoming a mother.

Along with learning about pregnancy, birth, and becoming a mother, Nanyorai spoke of using her smart phone to read the news and learning about what is happening around the globe. She said she collected many of the news stories she wanted to read through the Facebook posts of her friends. She also stopped reading the local daily newspapers in print and now reads them online. Nanyorai also mentioned that watching TV is too time consuming, so she prefers to catch up on the news through her phone, while she is traveling to and from work on the bus, or driving with her husband, or during her lunch break. Through both the access to gather information to learn new things, and be part of the dissemination information through social media Nanyorai felt ICTs are empowering, because they help “change the way you think.”

Lisa

Lisa said, “We didn’t take them positively. We were kind of being forced to learn something at that time and we were being told that the computers have come to replace us.” Lisa learned to use ICTs on the job through her work as a secretary. She, along with some other employees, was sent by her company to a local college to learn not only how to use the computers, but also how to repair them. This was during the initial entrance of computers to East Africa. They were “huge, not like the ones we have these days, huge, massive computers,” and Lisa was told, “you have to learn to operate it or you’re out of a

job.” Although her initial contact with these computers was a bit frightening, she quickly learned how to operate the “massive” machines and even to make minor repairs. These skills turned out to be critical throughout the rest of her life as she moved to Tanzania with her family and became employed at an international school where digital technology fluency was necessary. Her confidence pored over into her personal life and she was able to use technology to make huge health improvements, research ideas for her business and assist in helping her children succeed in school.

Professionally. Lisa began her technology journey as a young woman working as a secretary. She learned to use a manual typewriter in secretarial college. Later, after becoming employed she learned to use an electric typewriter, which was soon replaced by the “huge, massive computers” purchased by her office. Lisa talked about the transition from typewriter to computers as “scary.” She said, “imagine moving from the typewriter . . . we were bought electrical typewriters and then in less than a year we had to move from electrical to computers. We couldn’t understand what all of that was.” Although, her first reaction was fear with the introduction of the first computers in her office she quickly adapted with the in-depth training that was part of the transition process. Lisa learned how to use all the Microsoft applications offered, including Word, Excel and Publisher. At this time the Internet was not available and they were still using Telex services to contact people for business purposes. Once the Internet was introduced in Kenya Lisa learned how to send emails and conduct rudimentary “searching” through trial and error. There was no formal training program offered at her place of work for this phase.

As far as maintenance of the computers she was taught how to solve minor problems, because there were no official technicians for the computer companies located within the town she was working. So, all employees who used the computers on a regular basis were taught basic repair and maintenance skills. Lisa remembers learning these new skills as being very hard saying, “we were kind of forced to learning something at the time” and they were all in fear of losing their jobs after being told the computers were bought to replace the employees. In the end she was not replaced, and instead the company paid for her and others to attend training courses; however, these were exhausting times, working all day, attending classes in the evening, returning home to cook, clean, and prepare her children for school the following day.

Personally. Lisa is connected to the Internet at home through a desktop computer. She prefers working on a larger screen saying, “I find it pretty difficult to put my attachments on Gmail on the phone . . . because I am used to the computer in the office.” Her children also assist Lisa in learning new technologies. “Even the twelve year old knows the computer more than I. Sometimes I find out by doing things on my phone and I ask, where did that come from?”

Lisa expressed a connection between empowerment and technology through the access of information. She is particularly interested in reading stories about how other people have become successful in their businesses financially through small loans. Lisa is inspired by these stories to dream about her own business, and how she can develop it further so she no longer needs to work for someone else. The stories turned into friends as she wrote to some of the people she met online and began exchanging ideas and

materials, moving from a consumer of information to a producer of knowledge. Because of the connection she felt to the people on the Internet through their stories, she decided to take a risk and ask for a small bank loan, which she received to start up a small farming business, and is now repaying slowly.

As well as business connections, she uses the Internet to learn from others about diabetes and blood pressure. Lisa reads up on how to care for herself on the Internet, changed her diet and added regular exercise to her routine. Through this exchange of information she has been able to manage her diabetes on her own and no longer needs to take medication to monitor her blood sugar levels. She said her doctors couldn't believe she was able to this on her own, and continually check her to make sure she is in good health. Lisa attributes her Internet conversations to her good health and better understanding of the world stating, "you write people that you don't know and they will respond and tell their story about their health and about this and that," explicitly referring to health and professional development blogs. She learned about organic eating and gardening from these blogs, and now shares her own success stories. She says that these connections "have helped in making our lives healthier."

Finally, Lisa says one of her favorite things to do on the Internet is to track down old friends:

Old friends that I've not seen for many years. It's so easy now to track them down and then you can invite them in the joy of seeing someone you've not seen since primary school, who is still alive somewhere! And then you get her, you

reconnect and then you start talking. She tells you she has so many children with somebody in America. Or he has a new kid, and what not.

Here Lisa rejoiced in her access to friends from long ago, especially in the ease of reconnecting to the individuals but also their geographical location, learning more about where they are living, thus opening her window into the world just a little bit more.

Naishooki

Naishooki said, “I’m using much phones to communicate to the women who are in the villages, to give them orders [for jewelry designs].” Naishooki’s work requires her to be in constant contact with the women in the villages who make jewelry to be sold at the shop in town as well as overseas. She first learned how to use a computer through her work at an NGO in 2007. Later, she wanted to learn about the Internet and initiated the creation of a self-designed course at a local Internet Café. As she became more adept with technology her daughters bought her a smart phone so she can keep in touch with them more regularly.

Professionally. Naishooki has been using technology professionally for approximately 10 years. She was introduced to computers at a job she took with an NGO after working as a teaching assistant at a British school, with special needs students. After a few years of working with students Naishooki decided she wanted to try and work in the non-profit sector and was hired by an NGO that assisted women in relatively inaccessible rural areas. She worked in the education program to teach the village women basic literacy, numeracy and about sustainable environmental practices, like replacing charcoal for cooking with briquettes (man-made, environmentally friendly

sources of energy used like charcoal), as well creating sustainable business practices that too reduced the amount of charcoal produced by the women for sale. In order to create her lesson plans and write up her reports she was required to use a computer. Never having used a computer before, the NGO paid for her to take a short course in order to prepare Naishooki for her office responsibilities. Through the short course she learned the basics of how a computer functions as well as word processing; however, like Lisa, Naishooki was nervous about learning to use the computer, “I was scared so much to learn computer.” She enjoyed her job very much, but after two years her contract completed and the NGO was restructuring, converting her job into something different that she wasn’t qualified for. This left Naishooki with no other option, but to return to work in a school. She found a job assisting a student with special learning needs at an international school. During this job she relied heavily on her mobile phone for communications with the family and the classroom teacher. Naishooki also had to assist and teach this student how to use the computer for class assignments, research and communication, which boosted her own skills. After two years of working with this student Naishooki longed to get involved in non-profit work again and she took a position with the organization where she is currently employed. Here she runs a shop that sells jewelry imagined by an Italian designer, and created by Maasai women. She also teaches basic literacy, numeracy and business skills to the women in their villages, traveling to the rural areas where the women who make the jewelry live a couple times a month to conduct workshops. She now uses her mobile phone to contact the women in the village

about orders; sending them information about changes or updates; as well as to confirm dates for training sessions.

Personally. Until recently, Naishooki did not use technology for personal purposes, other than glimpsing a quick video on a computer at work with a colleague or asking for assistance from the IT department at the schools to help her access some information. However, about a year before this interview her daughters bought her a smart phone so that she could keep in closer contact with them, and so they could send her photos. Naishooki continues to learn about how her smart phone operates, and currently uses WhatsApp to contact her daughters and friends via text messages. She can also access videos and find information and entertainment she finds interesting. She also cherishes the camera aspect to the phone and proudly shared a photo of her 90-year-old father that she took the last time she visited him. Although, Naishooki does not specifically say that technology has empowered her, she did express happiness with her ability to connect so easily to her children, as well as have instant access to music and videos for relaxation and entertainment.

Haika

If I compare myself the others in our village that are my age, I find that they admire me, “Haika, this and this and how did you manage to do that?” I wish they knew what I know, because they are asking questions, which are too easy. It’s like driving car. If somebody knows how to drive a car, she finds that it’s so easy.

Haika has been using ICTs for over two decades, the longest of all the participants. She became an IT teaching assistant early on in her career, where she was

sent to join an extensive foreign study program in the United Kingdom for three months. Later she took full responsibility for teaching ICTs to the entire primary school, ages three to 12. Haika also uses ICTs for personal purposes, but finds she has limited time to really enjoy social media or reading and viewing material on line after working hours. She also wonders if the practice of using technology for social connections is generational, because she does not feel the desire to chat online or engage in the exchange of photos and videos for personal distribution or engagement.

Professionally. After working as an English teacher at a local school in town, Haika became the IT teaching assistant at an international school in a small northern town situated in the foothills of Mt. Kilimanjaro. Through her position at the international school she was sent to Manchester in the United Kingdom to learn computer basics, long before computer courses were being offered in Tanzania. The course covered basics in software, programming, hardware, and maintenance, so that when Haika returned to work, she could not only assist in teaching, but also had the skills to complete minor repairs on the computers and printers. Haika was a skilled technician and teacher with excellent English language skills, which was difficult to find amongst younger Tanzania teachers. Because of her capabilities, Haika was asked to become the IT teacher for a new campus being opened eighty Kilometers away. This new appointment was synchronous with her husband's return from Russia, after receiving his PhD, to a job with the local government. Haika enjoys teaching ICTs to primary age students. She teaches everything from keyboarding skills to word processing, research, file storage and organization, photo enhancement, drawing, and games. She also uses her smart phone to

record lessons to help improve her teaching techniques and assessments. She notes that recording is also a way to help students to listen to their language, especially English as a Second Language learners. Haika uses the Internet daily, as she describes, “And for myself, I use Internet for planning [and getting] information for my teaching.”

Personally. Haika does use her phone regularly for personal purposes, sending messages on WhatsApp, and making phone calls. When asked if she uses social media regularly Haika said, “I don’t have time (laughing), actually I don’t have time. Because I found out I’m busy from school, [and at] home.” She did say that if she is looking for someone specifically to ask a pointed question then she will use social media, but otherwise, surfing different sites and scrolling through profile pages and friends’ walls seemed like a waste of time to her. Haika does use her smart phone for keeping up-to-date on local, national, and world news, claiming she doesn’t have time to sit and listen to the radio or watch TV. Like Nanyorai, she can read news on her phone on the way to and from work, keeping abreast all that is going on in her community and further.

Discussion

Education and technology were viewed as structural supports necessary to enhance the participants’ empowerment processes. They are instrumental in enhancing the participants’ functionings. Each of the participants believed that by having both an education and the access to technology their lives had been significantly enriched. There was a strong feeling of education as panacea, and that without a post-secondary level women could not be fully independent. The participants did view secondary education as important, but suggested that it was their post-secondary education that allowed them the

social mobility they so strongly desired. Secondary education was considered a stepping-stone into “something more.” Secondary school brought the participants as girls to new parts of the country, travelling alone, and spending significant time away from their family for the first time. This physical distance from their families began to open doors into seeing the world through a new perspective. Post-secondary education, however, was seen as opening those doors even wider. It is also important to note that at the beginning of their educational journey primary school was seen as an obstruction to their childhood development. The participants reflected heavily on the “double burden” of being a girl while in primary school. Engendered socio-cultural expectations created barriers within the participants’ capability sets. Without the combination of a post-secondary level education with the ability to have access to and use technology in meaningful ways, the participants felt they were not able to function at their highest capacity, thus inhibiting their capability and freedom to do and be who they aspired to be. The cultural expectation that girls should help out considerably in the home juxtaposed against the belief that all children should attend primary school caused significant grief in the participants’ lives. They were stressed about getting household chores done, while also anxious about performing well in school. Their brothers and male peers had only the pressure of academic success to contend with, because they had significantly fewer household responsibilities.

Once the participants completed primary school and enrolled in secondary they began their journey of autonomy and personal growth. As noted before, secondary school opened the doors in which to view the world in a different way, widening the

participants' perspectives on themselves, and their families. However, if the participants only completed secondary school they would have returned home at about age eighteen to be married soon after. Although they would have been adults at this age and no longer at risk of so many of the issues related to early marriage (health problems, lack of literacy and numeracy skills to contribute to the household organization, lack of confidence in making decisions) they gained so much more by attending a post-secondary institution. It was through higher education that they developed social networks far beyond the reaches of their own communities and gained the ability to earn considerably higher incomes, making their contribution to their household income significantly more desirable, creating a more equal marriage partnership.

A tertiary level education combined with access and capability to use technology added yet another layer of increased autonomy for the participants. With technology skills they could increase their productivity at work, while expanding their understanding of the world beyond the limits of their community and nation. By having a higher education they had the language and problem solving skills necessary to succeed with complex technological tools. Access to the Internet was made easier by having strong English language skills, accumulated over time throughout formal schooling. In this sense the participants expressed a view that education in combination with technology was the true panacea.

All the participants used technology on a regular basis both professionally and personally. Access to the Internet was seen as changing perceptions and opening those doors originally cracked through education, even wider, creating a breadth of aspirations.

They connected with old friends and made new ones through social media, exchanging ideas, and building their networks. Access to technology helped the participants to develop their knowledge base through reading online articles, blogs and journals. They changed the way they ate, taught, raised their children, and interacted with people. Technology also gave the participants the opportunity to construct knowledge through responding to comments on webpages, blogs, and social media strands. They were also able to develop relationships with business owners to create their own businesses, or ideas and aspirations further, thus increasing their social mobility and cultural capital. The participants unanimously expressed a connection between education and technology in their personal and professional development claiming together education and technology are powerful and empowering. Combined, they change the way you think. In this sense education combined with technology created freedoms within the participants' lives to cultivate aspirations of possible achievements beyond what they currently see as possible.

In the next chapter I discuss how the participants' define empowerment and its connection to their sense of well-being and aspirations.

CHAPTER VII

EMPOWERMENT: INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE

This chapter discusses the individual and collective empowerment as expressed by the participants in the study in answer to the overall research question, whether, to what extent, and how urban Tanzanian women use ICTs for empowerment. The research questions seek to find answers about how gender and socio-cultural factors influence the participants' empowerment processes. It is important to note the substantial intersectionality (Sen, 1999) of well-being and aspirations within empowerment. The subsidiary research questions, *in what ways do the participants reflect on their gender as a contributing factor to their access and use of ICTs and empowerment processes*, and *how do socio-cultural factors influence access and use of ICTs by the participants*, and *how do these factors guide their aspirations* directly address issues of gender and socio-cultural factors and their relationship to empowerment and aspirations. This chapter examines data collected on interview questions, as well as the participants' reflections and expressions of empowerment that occurred throughout their narratives regarding schooling, access and use of technology, and relationships. This chapter is designed to follow the interview questions, starting with how the participants define empowerment, and well-being, and finally with descriptions of their aspirations for the future. I will draw out connections between the participants' empowerment processes, well-being, aspirations and agency.

Discussed in the sections below are the participants' responses to questions asked in their interviews about empowerment, well-being and aspirations. The participants

were not directly asked about agency, hence I interpret their varying levels of agency by a reading of their responses to the questions on empowerment, well-being, and aspirations.

Empowerment

In trying to understand whether, to what extent, and how urban Tanzanian women use ICTs together with educational attainment for empowerment, I asked the participants directly how they describe empowerment in their lives in relation to their educational journeys and experiences with technology. All of the participants explained that a sense of empowerment can only occur once well-being has been established, therefore I discuss empowerment and well-being separately. Seeberg (2014) and Appadurai (2004) posited that aspirations are needed for an individual to exert agency and functionings that are empowering in their action and achievement. In this study, aspirations were discussed by the participants as manifestations of the different levels of empowerment.

When asked to describe empowerment, the participants overwhelmingly conveyed a connection between the individual and the collective. Words like courage, determination, believing in yourself, independence, growth, change, and development were used to describe the individual movement towards empowerment. While on the other hand, exposure, listening and reading other's stories, access to information, and sharing ideas were used to voice the collective nature of empowerment. The participants in this study were careful in both defining the word empowerment, and in the telling of their stories and expressing empowerment in their own lives as having both the individual and collective components. For example, to have courage in making a life change there must be a surrounding support system full of encouragement, listening, and aiding

through the sharing of ideas and stories. This collective sharing helps to support a desired change. In this way empowerment was seen as coming from within: having the power to make a change or have a voice; and from without: being pushed or supported by someone else. The participants relied heavily on their husbands, friends, and other family members to be the outside force helping them to realize their dreams through listening, and the sharing of ideas and their own experiences. The participants also recognized that it was their own determination that would ultimately push them into doing what they wanted or becoming the person they desired. Below the participants discuss how they perceive empowerment and I also draw out themes of empowerment from other parts of their narratives and weave them into the data.

Kisa

“I am becoming more empowered, not because of the life I had, [but rather] I feel it is coming from within.” Kisa describes empowerment as “being able to do things,” having the “ability to be independent: financially, in your views, opinions, and you have the power to say something and people will listen.” Kisa’s story is full of stress growing up in the village with a demanding mother, and a father with high academic expectations. These challenges turned into hardships, as she became a woman facing the death of her husband and raising a young son alone with little support from her family. Now, at 40, Kisa is married again, has completed her bachelor’s degree and is working in a highly respected organization. Throughout her life she has struggled to “be able to do things” and become financially independent. Kisa participates in a women’s development group, which has the main objective of saving money through a microcredit-lending scheme, but

it is also a place where she can share her story with other women empowering them, while at the same time becoming more empowered herself by listening to their stories. Kisa talks openly about her life and the “power within” she harnessed to make the desired changes.

Kisa ties her empowerment process to education. “If I didn’t go to school . . . I wouldn’t have known how other people live.” She talks about the importance of exposure to diverse ideas and opinions, and how the mere action of physically going to school can provide a new perspective on living by learning how other people do things and experience their own lives. She believes that without an education it is not possible to question cultural norms, like early marriage and the expected dependence of women on men for decision-making and economic support. Kisa also discusses how technology plays a role in empowerment. Through her access to information, knowledge, and ideas she can compare her own thoughts to those of others and make new decisions about an issue or problem, or to feel strong about her own views. The gathering of other ideas and thoughts collectively leads Kisa to make individual decisions that she can feel proud of.

Kisa gained her inspiration to assist others in becoming informed and empowered through her own educational and professional journey. She faced many challenges as a young woman. Losing her husband, raising a child on her own, and working as a house maid all gave Kisa insight into how many Tanzanian women live their entire lives. Once Kisa secured employment and was given the opportunity to complete her teaching degree she began to imagine how she would be able to help other women reach their dreams,

moving from her own individual empowerment process to participating in collective empowerment.

Haika

“When I compare myself to others in our village that are my age, I find that they admire me.” Haika takes on the role of helping others to become empowered through teaching her peers in the village how to use smart phones and create an Internet search. She describes empowerment as something that gives her “power to do something or fulfill something.” Haika feels that she has been empowered through her access and use of the Internet. She has been lifted professionally by the knowledge that can be acquired through informational websites, because she can now design more interesting coursework for her students. She also shares this knowledge with the teaching assistants at the school where she works. Haika feels her empowerment process is closely related to her education. Without an education she would not have the opportunity to learn to use technology to her current level, and thus never becoming a technology teacher. Education has also made her cognizant of the challenges other women in Tanzania face. Haika spends much of her time and money on helping out her brothers’ and sisters’ children in the village so that they may receive a good education, because she sees how harsh life can be, particularly for village women. When commenting about the difficulties village women face in earning enough money to support their family she says, “they don’t have the power” within themselves to come up with ideas or make independent decisions. Haika feels that if women have someone to share ideas with or teach them, it can help to generate a collaborative process leading to collective

empowerment, where different perspectives can illuminate possible changes. She also believes that because so many women lack education, they lack the ability to work collaboratively, because of a fear that others will steal their ideas. With education, Haika believes women become more empathetic and encouraging. This belief reflects her own situation as a highly educated woman who spends much of her personal time assisting other women or attending women's only church groups where they share ideas and support each other.

Nanyorai

“Empowerment comes from inside and outside. It's a will to do something, or encouragement to be able to do something.” Nanyorai spoke specifically about how ICTs have influenced her empowerment process. She said ICTs “change the way you think, they empower you . . . they encourage you to learn.” For Nanyorai the Internet has been a huge source of empowerment learning so much more about the development of her baby in utero (and now as a child), as well as the stages of childbirth than she would have if she only received information from attending the pre- and post-natal clinics. She also follows a blog written by a woman who purposely finds women and girls “in need” and exposes their stories so that others can both assist them, as well as examine their own lives to learn new ways of approaching situations. Nanyorai comments on these stories, both by sharing her own experiences as well as giving advice to others. Nanyorai feels that her clarity of expression, and ability to access information that she finds helpful and interesting can assist other women through giving researched advice. Becoming empowered has moved Nanyorai from being a consumer of information to a producer, as

seen when she expresses her ideas in writing on the Internet. This transformation is the ability to access her inner power to make decisions or share thoughts, as well as simultaneously take part in the collective empowerment process by reading and digesting other's perspectives and sharing hers.

Lisa

“Empowerment is determination and believing in myself. Believing that I can make it in whatever situation.” Like Kisa, Lisa has overcome significant life challenges. She has maintained a belief in herself, that she can reach her dreams. Lisa also attributes ICTs to her empowerment process, because she can access information and build up her knowledge bank as she reads articles and websites. Lisa particularly likes to read about people who started with very few resources in their lives, and managed through their own fortitude to become financially successful. She finds their stories inspiring, giving her hope that she too may change her own life, and dreams about the possibilities. Lisa was also able to rid herself of diabetes through altering her diet and introducing more exercise. She learned about these interventions on an Internet blog, through correspondence with someone whose life story touched her deeply. Once Lisa learned about the impact food can have on her health she learned about organic gardening, and has now established one at her home. Even when her garden is barren she only purchases foods that are organically grown. As a first step in taking action on actualizing her dream, Lisa recently took a course on large-scale organic gardening to help her pursue two goals: create a much larger commercial organic farm that can eventually become her sole source of income, and to teach the children and staff at the school where she

currently serves as the administrative assistant, so that they too can gain important knowledge about the environment and their health.

Naishooki

“I understand empowerment to be something you can be able to do, like discuss anything, [or] make an effort to go a step forward, and make sure of that.” Naishooki has certainly heeded her own advice in regards to moving forward. After her marriage, Naishooki had to begin her life again, relying on the support of her family to eventually become a program coordinator at a well-known non-profit organization. Through her work she has been able to touch the lives of many women and girls in the Maasai community, helping them to understand the importance of educating girls. Through her efforts the women in her project have all kept their daughters in school longer, asking their husbands to wait to accept marriage proposals by educating them on the benefits of later marriage. The girls themselves are better able to make decisions about their bodies, and later, once mothers, their children.

When reflecting on her own empowerment journey Naishooki specifically recalls her evolution from feeling inadequate and unknowledgeable to feeling like “a big person.” This feeling of confidence and pride came through education in combination with access to and developing her skills in ICTs. Once she learned how to use a computer and the Internet, Naishooki felt like she could experience more of the world. This elated feeling left her wanting to share her knowledge, so that others could gain the capability to feel the same.

Teddy

“Empowerment is inside of you . . . it’s when you grow and change.” While Teddy’s life has not been inundated with the abuses some of the other participants have faced, she has shown confidence in her ability to make independent decisions. The stories of both her children’s births paint a picture of a woman who is capable and calm in the face of a stressful situation. Teddy’s family, although initially shocked at her first pregnancy out of wedlock, later supported her. Once Teddy was married and felt the enormous gratitude of having a supportive family, and the benefit of a good job, she started reaching out to “poor women who don’t have husbands.” Many of the women she supports through giving food stock (rice, sugar, maize flour, etc.) have lost their husbands to disease, divorce and alcohol. Teddy’s empowerment journey began with school. Through her good fortune in receiving a high level of education she was able to gain employment at a well-respected organization, earn a salary that contributed significantly to her family’s income, and thus giving her the resources to share with other women in need.

Teddy recently lost her job and while looking for another job in education she was selling products through an online platform on her mobile phone. Unfortunately, Teddy dropped her phone in a bucket while washing clothes and can no longer access her market. She is looking for a way to buy another smart phone in order to access the Internet, and reconnect with her customers. Education plus access to technology empowered Teddy to build a life she desired. However, losing her teaching job has triggered tremendous stress, because the finances to maintain her business are no longer

available and she is completely dependent on her husband's income. Teddy is confident that with her network she will be able to gain employment again and secure a loan to purchase the needed equipment to rebuild her business. This confidence is the "power within" she describes needed to grow and change.

Mary

"Empowerment is when I have my own ideas, like I want to do something then I go to ask my husband [to get support], but it is my dream, and I feel like I can do it."

Mary is empowered through her relationship with her husband. He is a supportive force in her life and has helped her deal with many stressful situations, being a positive example of how a nurturing relationship can work. Mary's husband helped to find her biological father when her own mother refused, precipitating a renewal in Mary's confidence and belief that she is a loved individual. Through the years of their marriage and with her husband's support, Mary has thought of ideas to improve their financial situation. Mary's husband's encouragement has come in the form of adding to her ideas or providing her with the start up resources to see them through. Mary is educated, and successful both at work and within the community, particularly her women's group that provides business loans through a micro-lending scheme. Education has been a significant impetus in providing a variety of professional opportunities, because she is fluent in English and thus able to work in a variety of sectors. Mary refers to empowerment as "having the courage to do something," that there is something "inside of you to push yourself." But, without the love and support of her husband Mary does not feel she would have been as successful. This kind of relationship provides a sense of

security, and her husband's encouraging nature allows for the risk taking necessary to push an idea into reality.

Summary

In answering the interview questions *what does empowerment means to you?* *How would you describe empowerment?* the participants connected their status as Tanzanian women to their educational and technology opportunities. The participants with the strongest sense of individual empowerment had a desire to engage in developing a deeper sense of well-being in others. Using the examples of Mary and Kisa, the micro-loan was important because these moments of gathering and support offered space for the participants to share thoughts, idea, problems, and financing of individual and collective efforts. The participants with the highest levels of education and advanced technology skills defined empowerment as mostly coming from "within" themselves; however, they did feel that supportive relationships enhanced their sense of well-being, thus increasing their empowerment. With high levels of agency and individual empowerment participants aspired to empower other women who had a more limited set of capabilities, thus moving from the individual to the collective sense of empowerment. This sense of agency encouraged further aspirations within these participants. In contrast Teddy and Mary were both stuck within their weaker sense of agency, because they lacked fundamental capabilities, and therefore were not ready to aspire to collective empowerment. When a threshold of the relevant Central Capabilities, such as bodily health and integrity, secure finances, imagination, thought, and emotional well-being (Nussbaum, 2011) are realized individual and collective empowerment can be achieved.

Well-Being

The participants were explicitly asked in their interviews *How do you define 'well-being' in your life?* responding to the question through their individual understandings of the meaning of well-being. They express well-being in terms that resonate with Nussbaum's (2004b, 2011) *central capabilities* such as having bodily health and integrity, emotions, affiliations, and control over one's environment. Well-being, like empowerment is personal, and shaped by individual life experiences. Sen (1999) noted that well-being is heavily influenced by such determinants as women's ability to earn an independent income, to be employed outside of the home, to have ownership rights, to be educated, and to participate in decision-making processes within and outside the family. The participants described well-being as an individual way of feeling happy or satisfied in life, however it also had a collective association. The participants felt happiest when they were in a position to help others. Giving back, both to their immediate family and more widely to their community with women in need, added a deeper sense of well-being to these participants lives.

The participants described well-being as having good health, a place to live, enough to eat, and the ability to provide for their children. When talking about their children they all desired a better education than they had received. The participants desired this "better education" to be at an English medium school, or if possible, an international school, which would provide an avenue for expanded hopes and dreams leading to their children's achievement. The participants expressed a feeling of security,

such as “peace of mind,” “peace in the heart” or “peace and love” as another critical piece to their personal well-being. Reflecting on the realities for so many Tanzanian women they all voiced some desire to have a home free from violence and oppression. The participants also added that having the ability to share their love and wealth with others helped them to obtain a deeper appreciation of their well-being. A deep connection to God was also seen as key to having a heightened sense of well-being for some of the participants.

Kisa

“Well-being is having a balance: balancing your emotions, work, and socially, [as well as] physically, like your health and your family. If the people around you are happy, then you are too.” Kisa described well-being as a need for physical things, like a home and good education, leading to a healthy life. She expressed that if someone is healthy they can work hard and earn enough to care for their family. She reflected on abusive homes and how even if with good health and enough money to provide for your family well-being is not possible, because you are always sad, hurt or in fear. Kisa’s background, living with high amounts of stress as a girl, and then later struggling on her own with little family support as a young woman shaped her view on well-being. Kisa is driven to make life easier for her children by working hard and constantly looking for opportunities to improve herself. Imagining this “better life” for her children deepens her sense of personal well-being. Her aspirations to create a community education center also contribute to a deeper feeling of “happiness” or “peace” in life.

Haika

“My well-being is to have good health and good wealth.” Haika focused strongly on the physical sense of well-being as the means to leading to financial stability. With both good health and finances she can be sure her family is secure while also helping others in need. In recent years Haika has been so consumed by her sister-in-law’s court case and wrongful imprisonment that she felt her sense of well-being could only focus on the physical, in order to be in the best possible place to assist her sister-in-law. However, Haika is a devout Lutheran and spends most of her time outside of work and family at the church or participating in church functions. Her spiritual health and closeness to God contributed significantly to her personal sense of well-being. It was also the impetus to help others in need, including her sister-in-law, as well as other women in her church community.

Naishooki

“I feel it like love; peace and love. I just make sure I love myself, I love my friends, I love my neighbors and my family.” Naishooki associates her father’s deep and open way of expressing love as contributing significantly to how she views well-being in her own life. She has a deep commitment to her family, spending much of her free time with her brothers cultivating the bond of family love. Naishooki also said she likes, “to see someone happy” and whenever she is in a position to help another person, she does, adding to her wealth of well-being. In an observed event where a woman came by her place of work with a small child covered in a rash, obviously in a great deal of pain and in need of assistance, Naishooki immediately dug into her pocket offering the woman

enough money to take the child to the hospital. She also insisted on giving the woman her phone number (and taking the mother's phone number as well) in order to keep in touch about the treatment, providing an avenue for continued help, if needed. Later, Naishooki said she may not have the resources to continue to help the child, but at least she could be a supportive friend to this woman. This sense of helping, being needed and taking action, contributed significantly to Naishooki's sense of well-being.

Teddy

"Well-being means you have your own house . . . you don't have pressure. My sons go to school. I have money. My son is going to eat, because I have money to buy food." Teddy's sense of well-being comes directly from having the physical needs in life met. Without money she feels anxious about paying the rent each month and is certain that having her own home will reduce this stress (and feeling of inadequacy) tremendously. Money is also synonymous with having enough to eat and being able to afford a decent education for her children. Teddy was unemployed at the time of the interview, which may have shaded her views, because finances were tight at home. When asked how her religious view connected to her sense of well-being Teddy said that being connected to God contributed significantly to her sense of well-being. However, she said what was most important was that she was able to make weekly monetary contributions to her church, and that she had enough extra money so that she could help others in need. Without the money to take these actions in supporting her church and the people in the community she felt she could not reach her highest connection with God.

In her current financial situation it was extremely difficult for Teddy to reach a deep sense of well-being.

Nanyorai

“For me well-being is peace of heart; like to be happy, not fighting everyday, to be happy, not waking up with bruises everywhere. I call it peace of heart, peace of mind.” Nanyorai is referring to the abuse many Tanzanian women face. Nanyorai does not worry about abuse in her life, but she expressed considerable concern for the multitude of abuses many women in Tanzania face from early marriage, to beatings and verbal degradation. Nanyorai knows she is fortunate to be happy in her home and feels pain for women who do not have this privilege. Although, she has not formally joined a group that assists women in need, she wonders what she can do to help. She writes her thoughts and advice on different blogs that discuss women’s rights, voicing the importance of peace in the home. Nanyorai is taking this small action to raise awareness about domestic abuse, because she is fortunate to have a deep sense of well-being in her life.

Mary

“For me well-being is having a good life: to own a house, earn money, be healthy, my children go to a good school.” For Mary well-being begins with physical components in order to reach the deeper more emotional and spiritual aspects. In order to be a “loving and kind” mother Mary expresses the importance of being healthy and strong so that she can work. With work she earns money, thus reducing the economic stress her family feels. When she and her family have less stress she can care for her children with

kindness. Mary's own childhood was riddled with pain; physical and emotional, and she works tirelessly to ensure her children never face this kind of hardship. Mary says that as a mother, "I have to be gentle. I have to be good. I have to be smart. I have to be loving." She does voice concern that her children may not be able to cope with the cruelty they will encounter in the world if she is too kind. However, Mary relates her own depression as a teenager to the lack of kindness her mother showed towards her while growing up. Mary wants her children to grow up with love in their family so that they can enter the world "strong." A sense of tension between wanting to be a good mother and the fear that she is not prevents Mary from having the deepest sense of well-being she desires. Mary wants her children to have an internal sense of well-being that derives from a happy childhood, but because of her own difficult upbringing she is unsure if she can provide this for her children, leaving her with some apprehension, and thus a weakened sense of well-being.

Summary

In answering the interview question *how do you define 'well-being' in your life?* the participants described well-being as having good health, a place to live, enough to eat, and the ability to provide for their children. These elements are the common themes related to their experiences that all participants touched on in this study. These reoccurring themes are related to socio-cultural factors and directly related to the participants' varying aspirations. The participants with a strong sense of individual empowerment described well-being further as having "peace of mind" and "peace in the heart" or "peace and love." Spiritual health and closeness to God was also perceived

important in achieving well-being. For the participants who had achieved the physical components (good health, shelter, food and the ability to provide for their children) assisting other women in need contributed significantly to an increased sense of their personal well-being. While this taking of action or agency provided a deeper feeling of well-being for some participants, others' past relationships or current financial challenges created a weakened sense of well-being, limiting their aspirations.

Aspirations

All the participants in this study were taking agency in their lives through varying forms. The varying levels of agency were described through the participants' answers to the interview questions, *what does the future hold for you? What are your aspirations?* The participants with the highest level of well-being and empowerment were moving from taking individual agency to becoming agents of change in others' lives. The participants in this study articulated agency as the process of taking action. Once independent well-being had been achieved agency shifted to actualizing aspirations of a communal nature. A heightened sense of well-being created space for aspiring to be and do something outside of the familiar, leading to a sense of empowerment, individually and collectively. The participants in this study articulated a need for more women in Tanzania to be empowered in order to create a healthier and more just society.

Expressed aspirations were as varied as the individuals in this study. However, consistent across the participants was the desire to set up a "better life" for their children. Aspirations ranged from dreams of starting up community education organizations to expanding or creating personal businesses, and in one case finding secure employment.

The women in this study who are currently and happily employed expressed more comprehensive aspirations that involved not only their own hope and dreams, but also giving back to the community. This community-oriented perspective is related to the participants' expanded opportunities connected to their high level of education and enhanced technology skills, which enrich their language and networking skills. Kisa and Naishooki's sense of security allows them to open the window of possibilities wider than they had in the past without their high level of education and technological savvy, and thus wider than Teddy who was unemployed at the time of the interview. These profoundly aspiring participants show deep resilience, having overcome tremendous challenges in their lives, and a strong sense of who they are and what they believe in. Mary and Nanyorai both dream of expanding their already existing businesses, while Lisa, aspires to start up a new business. These three participants have all faced different types of financial hardship, without ever having lost all access to assets, leaving them with some sense of security, allowing their dreams to blossom, imagining the possibilities of their future. Haika desires to set up business, based on her skills and knowledge gained through education, technology and her own life experiences, that she hopes will give other women the opportunity to reach their goals while providing her with a steady source of income. Teddy's aspirations have been dampened by her current unemployment status, drawing a connection between well-being and aspirations.

Kisa

“I want two things; first for the children and second for the women.” Kisa aspires to use her knowledge and skills in education to set up a community center for raising

awareness with parents about early childhood development, and how to raise happy, healthy, and positive children. She reflects on her stressful childhood and the pressure she felt from her father to be number one in the class, as the impetus to educate parents on the detrimental effects of pushing their children too hard, and abusive physical punishments. Kisa also wants parents to have a better understanding of nutrition and the benefits of imaginative play. She also dreams holding workshops in her community center for teachers to raise awareness about corporal punishment, and what children can achieve academically at different developmental stages. Kisa dreams of creating a space in her center for children to come and learn a variety of activities not taught in school such as the arts, sports, and crafts after school and on the weekends. She says she is not interested in making money from this center, but rather in bringing more understanding and acceptance of the importance of allowing children to have space to imagine, create and play. Kisa hopes to “open the minds” of the community regarding children.

Kisa feels she can attain her goal through a micro-lending group. Currently she contributes to a micro-lending group to help her family save money to build a house. Once the house is built she can start saving towards a new venture like a community center. She does plan to charge for some of the center’s offerings, but others, like the parenting workshops, will be free and open to the public.

Naishooki

“I’d like to keep the culture.” Naishooki dreams of being financially secure enough to open a center that educates Maasai people about their culture in order to raise awareness on how to live a modern life while maintaining positive cultural features. She

aspires to start a school for Maasai girls that provides education through secondary school with a curriculum focused on opening their minds to the wider world, while enriching their culture, helping them to “appreciate” traditions, particularly the elements of community and respect. Naishooki has taken many Maasai girls into her home as boarders when they attend secondary school in town. Through this experience she has seen first hand how once the girls get a taste for life in town they desire to stay, with few returning to their villages. Naishooki fears this tendency will lead to the “extinction of the Maasai culture.” She thinks if she creates a school specifically for Maasai girls she can eliminate this current trend.

Another issue Naishooki sees as needing attention is the necessity for safe birthing clinics for Maasai women living in rural areas. She wonders if there is a way for her cultural center to encompass the development of a rural birthing clinic where women can receive prenatal and postnatal services, as well as providing an educated, well-staffed, and hygienic birthing clinic. Naishooki discussed how HIV/AIDS continues to ravage rural Tanzania, particularly the Maasai who continue to maintain a polygamous lifestyle. Although, Naishooki does not support multi wife marriages, she does recognize that this tradition will continue until more women are educated, have access to a wide spectrum of ideas, and are in positions of power within their communities. She believes a birthing clinic can reduce the number of babies being born HIV positive, due to the cultural practice of men taking more than one wife, which spreads the HIV virus more quickly. Naishooki expressed an interest in opening a birthing clinic alongside the secondary school for girls.

Mary

“I hope for so many things . . . like to have my own business. I always say to my husband I’m tired of working for somebody.” Mary desires to have more knowledge so that she can continue to build her family business. She currently works in a small business owned by an expatriate woman and has gained many skills in managing customers and staff, maintaining stock, developing and keeping to budgets, and she has improved in technology proficiency. However, her only experience with running her own business has been a very small home-based shop. Mary would like to continue working in her current position in order to grow and learn more so that she can transfer these skills to her business. She has dreams of increasing her beverage business to include catering and service components, merging it to her husband’s already well-established party and master of ceremony business.

Mary has a large plot of land in a nearby town where she hopes to start a pig farming business. She says pig farming can bring in sizeable and consistent revenue, because pigs are easy to raise, and require limited space, unlike cattle. They are also easy to transport, because they can be put on the local busses that pass in close proximity of her farm, therefore reducing the cost of buying or renting a truck to transport them to the slaughterhouse. Like Kisa, Mary feels her dreams are reachable. She too belongs to a micro-lending group that can be accessed for start up funds.

Nanyorai

“I hope for my daughter to go to a nice school, an international school. I want her to have a better life than me. It’s about her now, not me.” Nanyorai is well on her way to

reaching her own aspirations. She has a good education, a family home, and financial security. Nanyorai thinks about how to create a good future for her daughter. She wants to help grow her husband's business from a medium sized shop in town to a factory that makes the products he currently imports. Nanyorai has the capability to dream. She aspires to create this bigger business so that her daughter can have an enhanced sense of well-being as she grows. Nanyorai's dreams are intrinsically linked to her daughter. She also hopes to be able to build another house. With two houses she and her husband can rent out the one they currently live in earning a small profit that may cover the cost of an international school education. Nanyorai's dream house will be located far up the side of Mt. Meru, where there is no pollution from cars, and it is a quiet place to come home to after a long day in busy, chaotic town. This house will also be an ideal place to raise children, with limited distractions and space enough to play.

Teddy

“My hope is to have a good life and to help some people who need help.” Teddy describes having a good life as having a job. She lost her job at the school, which left her with only the mobile business she ran from her smart phone. When her phone fell into a bucket of water she could not afford to buy another smart phone, leaving her without any source of income. She depends completely on her husband now and says his salary is not enough to support their family. Teddy now aspires to have an income. She believes she needs to get a job as a teacher. Teddy would like to have a secure job at a school and then she will reinvest into her mobile business again. She explains that it is difficult to start up a business without money, therefore a teaching job will provide her with a steady

income, of which she can save some to restart her business. Teddy also feels like she hasn't been able to secure work because she is not well connected in the private and international schools arena. She expressed concern that in order for her to secure a position at what she deems a "good" school she needs to know someone in the administration or long term teaching staff. Teddy's aspirations seem dependent upon gaining employment at a school. Once she can gain permanent employment Teddy aspires to start up a small mobile business, giving her the extra income to help out other women in need.

Haika

"I wish I had my own day care center." Haika aspires to use her skills as an educator to open a day care center in her home for working mothers. She mentioned when she was bringing up her own children she did not allow them to be raised by different "house girls," which is the most common way for children to be raised in Tanzania, particularly those of mothers who work outside the home. Haika was saving her money to add a second floor, with its own entrance through an external staircase, on to her home so that she could open her child care center. She wanted to create a space for children ages four months to three years to be in a safe and stimulating environment. However, Haika's sister-in-law was wrongfully accused of participating in a bank robbery and Haika's savings went towards finding a good lawyer for her sister-in-law. For eight years Haika and her husband put together all their extra money to hopefully get her sister-in-law out of prison. In the end they spent their savings unknowingly on two lawyers of ill repute and weekly supplies to help the imprisoned woman feel more

comfortable while she awaited trial. After eight years Haika's sister-in-law was granted a trial, where her conviction was thrown out due to lack of evidence. Haika is not angry about the significant loss of finances she and her husband have suffered due to her sister-in-law's misfortune; she is grateful to have her sister-in-law back with the family. Haika is saving again to build her day care and hopes to be able to run it herself in the future.

Summary

The participants' aspirations connected directly to their sense of well-being. Those with a heightened sense of well-being expressed aspirations reaching beyond their personal desires to help others in need. And the participants with a weakened sense of well-being voiced more concrete aspirations such as to own their own home. Both groups of participants aspired to create better life for themselves, their family and to take action in their communities.

Appadurai (2004) conceptualized aspirations as embedded within cultural norms of the idea of future. Within the context of this research study future-oriented perspectives were in relationship to health and financial and physical security. Once these elements of well-being were achieved the participants expressed desires to obtain quality education for their children. If all the components of well-being were achieved, the participants had the capability to aspire to more collective dreams, adding force to their voices and agency (Sen, 1999) through their personal empowerment.

Chapter Summary

The three concepts, empowerment, well-being, and aspirations intersect on various levels. Empowerment was perceived as the power within an individual to

achieve goals or reach aspirations. Empowerment, although significant itself, was limited if the participants did not feel a sense of well-being in their lives. Well-being was determined to be good health, financial and physical security, the opportunity to provide quality education for their children, to be part of decision-making processes, and to have a sense of peace within. Once well-being was achieved, the participants felt a sense of empowerment that connected with their own educational and technology experiences gave them hope for the future, and thus stirred aspirations for their own lives and for the development of their families and communities. Through the participants' narratives the interplay between empowerment, well-being, and aspirations became evidently interconnected to their educational and technological journeys. People's lives are complex and rich (McCall, 2005) making it difficult to untangle the web of lived experience embodied in learned and perceived realities shaped in the case of these particular participants, through their exposure to education and technology as Tanzanian women .

In the next chapter I discuss the intersectionalities of the findings within and to the theory.

CHAPTER VIII

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Chapters 4 through 7 explored the over-arching themes and sub-themes as expressed in the narrations of the participants. I began with a rich description of the participants' lives in Chapter 4, moving into the first overarching theme, *the constitutive nature of relationships* where the dynamic connections the participants had with their mothers, fathers, and husbands emerged as critical in their empowerment processes. The next overarching theme, *the instrumental functionings*, examined education and technology separately and combined as key to enhancing the empowerment process of the participants and their sense of well-being. Chapter 7 explored both the individual and collective empowerment process of the participants. This chapter looked at the connections between well-being, empowerment, and aspirations and how these perceptions were viewed in the context of the participants social and cultural milieu. Below I return to the purpose and significance of the study.

Returning to the Purpose and Significance of the Study

In the introductory chapter the main research question, and five subsidiary research questions were outlined:

- Whether, to what extent, and how do urban Tanzanian women use ICTs for empowerment?
 - How do the biographical contexts (particularly the educational journey) of the participants contribute to their sense of empowerment?

- In what ways do the participants reflect on their gender as a contributing factor to their access and use of ICTs and perceived empowerment processes?
- How do the participants perceive that socio-cultural factors influence access and use of ICTs, and how do these factors guide their aspirations?
- How do the participants view the role of ICTs in the future well-being in their professional and personal lives?
- What challenges and supports do the participants perceive contribute to their existing agency, both generally and in regard to access and use of ICTs more specifically?

In order to answer these questions, the capabilities approach viewed through a feminist lens was determined to be the most appropriate framework for this study, while a narrative inquiry was employed to capture the lived experiences of the participants' "beings and doings" (Sen, 1999). The choice of the theoretical framework, lens, and methodology are revisited below for further clarification within the analysis.

Narrative Inquiry

In order to answer the main research question, *Whether, to what extent, and how do urban Tanzanian women use ICTs for empowerment?* I employed Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional space, which in Chapter 1 I broke down into five dimensions of space (see Table 1). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) used a five directional approach to narrative inquiry: *inward* and *outward*, *backward* and *forward*, and *situated in place*.

The *inward* question: In what ways do the participants reflect on their gender as a contributing factor to their access and use of ICTs and perceived empowerment, evoked deep internalizations by the participants. They expressed their views on life as women in Tanzania and how gender affected their opportunities, voice in decision-making processes, the cultivation of aspirations, and the choices they have made over time. This inward look created space for stories about the participants' childhoods, where they reflected on the unequal distribution of labor in the home, their level of educational attainment and how they used ICTs in the past to further develop themselves. As discussed in the previous three chapters, the participants saw strong connections between their gender, education, access to technology, and how these contributed to their empowerment.

However, the strongest contributing factor to the participants' access and use of ICTs in connection to their perceived empowerment was education. As each participant told her story, her education was the most significant factor in determining her perception of self and how she contributed to her family and wider community. In this shared perception on education the participants began to create a collective story of education as panacea. However, as they threaded their individual narratives through the collective they began to dissect the socio-cultural factors that created barriers to their access to both education and ICTs. Without a strong and high level of attainment, at least through secondary if not post-secondary education, the participants felt they would not have had the same capability to fully use ICTs in empowering ways.

This brings us to the second dimension of space, *outward*. In asking, *how do the participants perceive that socio-cultural factors influence their access and use of ICTs, and how do these factors guide their aspirations*, the participants had to look towards the environment in which they currently live and that in which they grew. Again, the stories of the women in the study reflected the choices that were made for them as girls, in particular their access to education. Having a supportive father as a girl meant these participants were able to journey through secondary school to some sort of post-secondary educational program. It was through their tertiary experiences that the women gained access to ICTs formally for the first time, introducing them to a world of possibilities that included new skills for better organization and time management as well as opening windows into a world of knowledge and information, and later building relationships with others through online connections. However, with the participants' advanced capabilities in using technology they acknowledged the many barriers they faced over time. As girls they had had more household responsibilities than their brothers and male peers, meaning they spent their "leisure" time working on school assignments rather than exploring the world around them. Boys of a similar age had opportunities to relax, play, and experiment with ideas during their leisure time. As the boys grew, their capacity for risk taking was probably more developed than that of the girls. This is expressed through the stories the women in this study, as they initially felt fear when they gained access to ICTs. For some of the participants, their first encounters with technology were stressful and intimidating. Remember Lisa who felt she would lose her job if she couldn't learn to use and maintain the computers at work? Teddy's first experience with technology was when she became a

teaching assistant and she was unsure how to fulfill the expectations by the lead teacher in creating classroom materials. Kisa, on the other hand, felt her parents had been fair in their expectations of domestic work in the home, allowing time for play for both the boys and girls. Kisa's mother also occasionally brought her typewriter home from work allowing Kisa the opportunity to experiment with it, which built a sense of confidence while providing her with a set of skills.

Even as grown women the participants reflected that they had limited time to use ICTs for business and pleasure. At work they were balancing their many roles of employee, assistant to someone, and the socio-cultural expectations that they would serve their male counterparts. For instance, when the women working in the school would enter the staff room to have tea, they would allow the men to either go first or they would offer to serve them tea before taking their own. The women were also more likely to do small jobs for the men that would take time away from their own work, such as making photocopies or helping to write something up. These small moments of taking time out of their day, which created and increased sense of time for their male peers created a gender divide that is commonly seen in Tanzania. Women tend to work for longer hours than men, giving them less time to relax, or build on and learn new skills in their spare time.

The participants used their time riding back and forth between work and home to connect with others through social media, read news, respond to comments on blogs, and make and maintain business connections. The access of technology therefore was woven into their lives through relevant avenues, and thus they were able to carve out time to

become part of the knowledge society. This time spent during transitions helped many of the participants to guide their aspirations further. The access of information added to their knowledge set, giving them space to think, and exchange ideas both online and with others on the bus to cultivate ideas for their futures.

The *backward* and *forward* questions: *How do the biographical contexts (particularly the educational journey) of the participants contribute to their sense of empowerment and how do the participants view the role of ICTs in their future well-being in their professional and personal lives* express the temporality of the participants' stories, referring to the past, present, and future. Looking back into their lives the participants saw the home as the locus of their understanding of the world. The participants' relationships with their mothers and fathers as young girls were salient in defining the onset of their empowerment processes and how they developed as women and mothers. The participants reflected and remembered the relationships with their mothers as tumultuous, often filled with anxiety, stress, and fear. As girls they were expected to work hard in the home and at school, and they were beaten if they did not fulfill their mothers' demands. The participants viewed their fathers as loving and gentle, but when pressed further remembered the extreme stress related to the desire to always be seen as perfect in their fathers' eyes. They worked hard in school to be the best in the class, like Kisa. But, this conflicting feeling of desire to please and the stress it created made some of the women wonder why their fathers put this kind of pressure on them at such a young age. The participants did see their fathers as kind, protecting them from their abusive mothers, but in retrospect they reflected that their fathers were not at home

nearly as much as their mothers were and in reality they often doled out the beatings as often as their mothers. This realization had the participants wondering if the unrealistic expectations set for Tanzanian women caused a high level of stress in their mothers that pored over into the relationship between the participants and their mothers.

The participants perceived their husbands as modern, different from traditional Tanzanian men, but they talked about their husbands like their fathers, in a distant almost defensive manner when they were expressing their “superior,” modern traits. But, each married participant agreed that she works much harder taking care of household duties than her husband. They all felt this unbalanced home life was not fair, but accepted these socio-cultural constraints “it’s just the way things are” in Tanzania.

Education was particularly important within the participants’ empowerment journey. Without education they all felt their opportunities would be very limited. Education is critical in being able to engage in other aspects of empowerment. With education they could read articles, blogs, watch videos in English, and determine what was factual or quality content on the Internet. Their level of education seemed to determine their ability to access technology both as a tool and as a skill. They all felt strong English language skills were important to access information on the Internet. Once they could access the Internet they learned new skills, like Lisa who learned permaculture or Nanyorai who learned about her baby’s development. In this sense the women moved from consumers to creators of knowledge through informing others of what they had learned, thus weaving new strands into the social fabric of their communities.

The *backward* dimension of space synergistically intertwines into the *forward* dimension of space as the participants looked backward into their lives they were able to see how ICTs had grown into their empowerment processes. However, the participants did not reflect on the question as I presented it initially, and instead they explored what ICTs have done to change their lives and those of the next generation. They viewed ICTs as tools that offered them new knowledge they would not have had access to through the traditional media sources (radio, physical newspapers, and TV). Having access to the Internet meant they could ask questions and search for information that was relevant to their lives, and they could share their new knowledge with friends, family, and colleagues, thus empowering others, creating meaning in both their own lives and the lives of others while contributing to the knowledge society. This access to the Internet also shifted their aspirations. Having a wider view of the world helped to create larger aspirations for their own futures, which overflowed into their desires to help change the future of others as well, like Kisa, Lisa, Naishooki, Lisa, and Teddy who all desired to be part of helping other women. Participating in the social media groups that doubled as micro-financing groups had a positive impact on those participants' lives, both financially and socially, connecting with women they would not have otherwise met, creating a wider social network.

The last subsidiary research question: *What challenges and supports do the participants perceive contribute to their existing agency, both generally and in regard to access and use of ICTs more specifically is situated in place* and again is synergistically woven throughout the entire research study. By looking *inward, outward, backward*, and

forward the participants were able to discuss the socio-cultural challenges of growing from a girl into a woman while acknowledging the importance of strong relationships, education, and cultivating the power within themselves. By situating their lives within the continuum of a broader, collective history the participants helped to link their individual experiences to public issues (Frank, 2002) thus nurturing a deeper understanding of how empowerment occurs through examples of agency, both small and large. “Culture exerts an enormous pressure on people to settle for identities” (Frank, 2002, p. 9), which if left unpacked can lead to an interpretation that lacks elasticity, creating a stagnant sense of what it means to be or do within a given society. However, by returning to people’s stories we can listen for the finer nuances that employ a perspective into the micro developments and changes that affirm that culture is dynamic and so are the lives of people.

In this research study the narrative inquiry seeks to understand the beings and doings (Sen, 1999) of the participants. Thus the participants’ biographical contexts were able to show a unified and whole story of each individual life. However, embedded in their personal narratives were the stories about other lives and the history of their specific social groups (Polkinghorne, 1988) expressing the interconnectedness between seemingly random individual events and the socio-cultural context in which they are situated. The participants each told a distinct story of their life history from childhood until present, but interwoven within each were themes of the importance of family relationships, level of educational attainment, and access to and use of technology in their empowerment journeys.

Theoretical Perspectives

The following two sections seek to demonstrate how the data emerged through the lenses employed in this study, a feminist perspective and the capabilities approach. Below I discuss the findings of this study as viewed through these two lenses explicitly connecting them and demonstrating their overlapping conceptualization. It is nearly impossible to untangle the two lenses from each other, because as discussed below the feminist perspective I utilize and capabilities approach are closely related on many levels, beginning with viewing each participant as an individual with personalized aspirations separate from the larger collective society. Both perspectives also view empowerment and agency as closely linked phenomena and as part of the process of becoming something more (Okkolin, 2015). However, both lenses unpack the existence of an individual, particularly one with less power than the dominant group, within a collective. Like in Okkolin's study of Tanzanian women in university programs this study found that the participants' sense of well-being, empowerment, and aspirations contrast to the socially constructed idea of what it means to be a Tanzanian woman, as experienced in their cultural and social milieu.

Feminist Motive

This study served to research in depth the intersection of multiple categories and to uncover the differences and complexities of the experiences embodied (McCall, 2005) in the participants' lives. Gender emerged as the most important feature in their lives when defining and expressing empowerment, aspirations, agency and well-being. However, gender cannot be extrapolated for study independently and instead it is

important to note that the women in this study lead rich and complex lives, thus making it imperative to recognize the intersectionalities³ occurring within their varied experiences. Therefore, gender could not be viewed as separate from the participants' education or their access and use of technology but rather as intrinsically woven within those experiences. Unpacking the data within a narrative inquiry while viewing it through a feminist lens and using the capabilities approach to frame it allows for the complexities of the participants' lives to surface. Using this multi-layered approach to understanding the research question delineated the salience of recognizing the intersection of the themes within the participants' lives, rather than each theme fitting within a tight categorical box. There is a method of feminist research that specifically uses an intersectionality approach to conducting and analyzing research. It was originally introduced by Crenshaw (1989) to discuss the issues of Black women in the US. Intersectionality responds to research by recognizing the ambiguities of lived experiences and has been useful in avoiding one-dimensional analyses, simplistic generalizations and stereotyping (Cole, 2009). Cole stated,

Intersectionality brings together two significant aspects of feminist thinking; firstly, the impact of race, class and gender (and other intersections) on women's lives, and how relations of power are produced and transformed through this interaction within women's lives and experiences. (p. 566)

³ In order to avoid the recent volatile conversations around the term intersectionalities I have chosen to use 'interplay'

Although, I did not conduct my research for this study purposefully using intersectionality as an approach, the intersections within the narratives of the participants' lives transpired over and over again, creating an impetus to look further into feminist theories of intersectionality. Because I did not use intersectionality as a specific approach I do not go into detail on the method other than to express the uncovered connection between this study, intersectionality or as I prefer "interplay," narrative inquiry and the capabilities approach.

Sen (1987) suggested that because of the systematically inferior position of women within society there is a necessity to treat gender as a classification of its own in development analysis. As mentioned earlier gender emerged as a critical component in understanding the participants' lives; however, when looking deeper into the data it became clear that gender could not be viewed separately, but as part of each theme.

Nelly Stromquist (2015) proposed a holistic approach to viewing women's empowerment. She maintained that education while key in empowerment processes, has been over-estimated as a pillar of social change. It is within this context that this study aligns with Stromquist's theory. In her theoretical framework she used the "demonstrated conditions and sites for social change . . . [centering] on the macro- and micro- dynamics that enable *women's* individual and collective agency" (Stromquist, 2015, p. 308). Stromquist asserted that education must be connected to economic, political, and psychological conditions. Although, there was an overwhelming interpretation by the participants of this study to view education as panacea, it became clear as they continued to narrate their stories that education was indeed an important

force in their empowerment process. However, without strong, nurturing relationships, and the regular ability to use technology were also salient within the participants' empowerment processes.

Another important thinker on women's empowerment who embeds feminist perspectives within a capabilities approach, Naila Kabeer (1999) asserted there are three levels of empowerment: "deeper levels" which embody the structural relations such as the interaction between class, caste, and gender; the "intermediate level," the awareness of institutional rules and resources; and the "immediate level," the individual resources, agency, and achievements. Kabeer's conceptualization embodies the capabilities approach through utilizing resources, agency, and achievements as the dimensions of empowerment. She elucidated that resources (human, social, or material) are only empowering if they can be accessed and used in ways desirable to the individual wishing to use them. Therefore, the participants in this research study perceive their education and ability to use technology as important in developing a "power within" by giving them access to new ways of thinking and doing. However, these are only the material resources that physically "open windows" into the world, while having supportive and strong family relationships are the human resources that helped the participants have access to and positive interactions with their material resources. The social resources came from both the relationships with their families as well as those made at school, work, or through interacting with technology. Thus, in the growing empowerment of the women in this study it was impossible to claim one resource as more important than the other. They were synergistically linked.

The second level of empowerment Kabeer (1999) discussed is agency, the ability to define a goal and act on it. Agency is more complex than observable actions that can be easily measured. It also encompasses the meaning, motivation and purpose individuals bring to their action, including some intangible cognitive processes such as reflection and analysis (Kabeer, 1999). These more subversive portrayals of agency are perceivable in the thought processes the participants of this study revealed, showing that they aspired for a life filled with meaning, assisting others to reach their fullest potential through their contributions of knowledge gained in formal schooling and interactions with technology. Having had access to a high level of and quality education gave the participants the ability to use technology to search out information. In this way they became part of the knowledge society, not just consuming information, but by constructing it also.

Kabeer (1999) claimed that resources plus agency are what Sen (1999) called capabilities, which are all the valued ways of people's "doings and beings." Sen categorized the "beings and doings" in given contexts as people's functionings, while "functioning achievements" are the particular ways of being and doing and are realized by different individuals. These realized achievements are Kabeer's third dimension of empowerment. When these achievements are not realized due to laziness, or insipidness, or desire, there is no issue of power; however, if "the failure to achieve reflects asymmetries in the underlying distribution of capabilities, it can be taken as a manifestation of disempowerment" (Kabeer, 1999, p. 22). In terms of this study, the participants had varying levels of achievement. Kisa, Naishooki, Nanyorai, Haika, and

Lisa's functioning achievements, although still in process, were defined by their ability to harness their resources and agency to aspire to create something more than what they currently have. The five women were working on how to actualize their aspirations, but all were actively engaged in networking and gathering resources to fulfill their dreams, or realize their functioning achievements. While on the other hand, Mary was also working on her achieved functionings, she carried much self-doubt due to stressed family relations, lacking in the psychological dimension, in particular confidence, Stromquist (2015) asserted as salient in achieving empowerment to its fullest level. Teddy too had not achieved full empowerment due to her limited economic situation, her husband's control of the family's finances, her lack of voice in decision-making processes. However, these two women were aware of their position within the empowerment process, and continually reflected on how they could improve their situation, which according to Kabeer (1999), is considered to be engaging in the empowerment process.

Next, I take a more detailed look at the findings through the lens of the capability approach. I expand upon the approach itself and show how the findings of this research study, viewed through the participants' narrations as they express their freedoms, deprivations, and aspirations in personally defined ways of being and doing.

Capabilities Approach

By gaining access to and use of ICTs the women in this study had opportunities to open windows into the world (Asiedu, 2012). They engaged in data collection, online dialogue, and innovating and adapting ideas to fit into new localized knowledge that was shared with others in their communities, contributing to their self-empowerment and

well-being (Ojokoh, 2009). The assumption at the onset of this research study was that the participants who were highly educated and had access to technology, particularly the Internet, would either have the skills to teach others or engage others in empowerment processes by helping them to become proficient in technology. What unfolded in the research process was that the participants used technology to engage in ideas and knowledge that they either specifically wished to share with others, as in the case of Kisa who aspires to open a community center to improve parenting practices and hopefully reduce the amount of stress children face in the home, or they shared through organic processes of interaction with others, like Nanyorai, who now has a deeper understanding of child development and pregnancy, and tells her friends and colleagues about what she has learned by showing them her points of reference, online videos and webpages. In both these examples Kisa and Nanyorai have utilized their constitutive and instrumental functionings (Nussbaum, 2000, 2004b, 2011; Sen, 1999) to enhance their capabilities leading to, in most cases, a heightened sense of well-being.

This research study employed Sen's understanding of development as expanding the freedoms of individuals, leading to "the kind of lives they have reason to value" (Sen, 1999, p. 18). Freedom is articulated as a choice within the lives of the participants, and by utilizing their opportunities to make choices about their lives through the access of technology significantly enhanced their sense of well-being. The freedom to choose the life they have reason to value was voiced in the lives of the participants who were currently employed, had access to a computer or smart phone on a regular basis and had the financial and relational support. In this context these participants were empowered to

live the life they have reason to value (Kleine, 2013), while the two participants who had not reached a full, personally described enhanced sense of well-being were still living a life they valued, based on the accepted ways of “being and doing” within their social and cultural milieu.

Freedoms and Deprivations

Kleine (2013) stated that it can be difficult to determine what an individual may value versus what has been presented to them as the good life (Sen, 1985). The participants in this study all valued their education, and were provided with the opportunity to expand their skills and knowledge sets through access to secondary education and then post-secondary programming. Naishooki and Nanyorai were the only two participants who specifically stated they chose their educational path. Lisa and Haika seemed satisfied with their educational journey in that the end brought economic stability and respect. Kisa studied civil engineering at the beginning of her educational journey, which led to an inability to balance her home and work life once becoming a mother. Once her first husband passed away, Kisa struggled to find work and ended up in a less than desirable position. It was her constitutive functioning that provided her with the ability to develop strong friendships with people from different backgrounds and brought Kisa into teaching, where eventually she chose to further her education to become a licensed professional. Although the decision to become a teacher was indeed Kisa’s choice, it was the only feasible choice available to her at that time. Mary too did not choose her education path. Her initial choice was to train to be a nun, which was taken from her due to her birth status, something completely out of her control. With an

incomplete secondary education her options, like Kisa, were limited and she chose to become a teacher, one of the few professions that would take her into the training college with her level of education. It also came out in the interview that Mary didn't know if she really wanted to be a nun or not as a young girl, but it seemed like the "right thing to do" because in her mind it was the only opportunity available to her. These two participant examples suggest that an individual's capability set is determined largely by what is available to them in their physical and social environment (Oosterlaken, 2015).

Sen's construction of "the kind of lives they have reason to value" (Sen, 1999, p. 18) implies that individuals make choices based on reason and the value they place on these decisions lead to developing an enhanced sense of well-being in their lives. Kleine (2013) suggested that Sen's emphasis on reason as the filter of choice is both a strength and weakness to the approach. She discussed how individual reasoned choices can at times be made at risk of the community at large, using the example of over-consumption by individuals in North America and Europe putting the environmental stability of the earth in peril. Kleine (2013) suggested that individuals may need to rely on collective choices to realize their individual vision of the life they have reason to value, as in the case of the women mentioned above. The educational choices made by their families when they were young girls were made to protect them from the possibility of early marriage, while giving them a link to financial and social capital and security. The choice was collective in the sense that the girls desired to gain an education to the highest level their families could afford, and within their cultural milieu becoming a teacher is acceptable and desirable.

The question of who should determine what *is* reasonable (Kleine, 2013; Sen, 1999) points to reasoned argument, public debates and democratic decision-making processes (Kleine, 2013), and implies that people have different ways of reasoning. I suggest that collective decision-making in the context of this research study is embedded in the social fabric within the communities where the participants live. This assumption is supported by the findings in Okkolin's (2015) study of women in higher education programs in Tanzania. She found that her 10 Tanzania women participants realized the nearly impossible and "defined their educational goals, created conditions, opportunities and freedoms to pursue their own educational aspirations" (Okkolin, 2015, p. 14). The participants in Okkolin's study were indeed constrained by their social and cultural environment; however, they did not perceive their situation as oppressive or restrictive, thus debunking embedded ontological "assumptions of a homogenous group of oppressed women without agency" (Okkolin, 2015, p. 14).

Everyone has an identity and a large part of that identity is related to membership within a larger context (Sen, 1987). Within the socio-cultural milieu of the participants in this study strong identification with their families, clans and tribes suggest their decisions and aspirations are connected to not only their personal desires but also to the larger well-being of their communities. However, the capabilities approach is problematic in its "simplification of the complex ways in which individuals' emotions, beliefs, conscious and subconscious fears, identity conceptions, instincts, intuitions, and dreams all shape their decisions and behaviors" (Kleine, 2013, p. 25). The participants in this study made sense of their lives, as heard through their narratives, in dynamic and complex ways.

They made choices, as mentioned above, about their education, whom to marry, how to manage marital relationships, where to work, and how to present themselves within a professional environment in distinctly individual ways that were not necessarily made through independent reasoning, but heavily influenced by their social and cultural climate.

This is also true of their stated aspirations. As discussed in more detail in the next section, the participants' aspirations were closely related to not only their level of achieved empowerment, but also culturally acceptable ways of being and doing for women in their context.

Dreaming Big: Aspirations

“Recognition of one’s own worth leads to seeing oneself as worthy of visualizing and aspiring to reach one’s own dreams” (Foda & Webb, 2014, p. 122). Worth was determined in two prongs by the women in this study. They described empowerment as “being pushed by someone” and having the “power within” to push yourself, intertwining the individual and collective empowerment processes as one. Empowerment was achieved through the intersection of the constitutive and instrumental freedoms, placing equal importance on the relationships the participants had with their families, the level and quality of education attainment, and the type and frequency of access and use of technology. They described empowerment as the means, but not the end, to a heightened sense of well-being. Well-being in its broadest definition was described as “having peace,” in the home and the heart. This level of well-being could only be reached

through having achieved the constitutive and instrumental functionings, and empowerment with four interlocking dimensions as Stromquist (2015) described:

The economic dimension, or some measure of financial autonomy; the political dimension, or the ability to represent oneself at various venues of decision-making; the knowledge dimension or awareness of one's reality; including the possibilities and obstacles to women's equality; and the psychological dimension, or the sense that one's self has value and deserves a good and fair existence. (p. 308)

Stromquist (2015) continued by asserting that empowerment as a theory of social change cannot stop at the empowerment of individual women, but must endeavor to translate it further into collective action. In this study empowerment was perceived by the participants as being worthy only when both individual and collective empowerment was obtained. The participants reflected on the thought, "what is worthy for myself as an individual to be and do, and what is worthy for me to take part in my community to be able to be and do." With this understanding the participants did not deem themselves empowered if they had only reached an individual level of empowerment, as in the case of Teddy who had not fully actualized the economic dimension, and thus was not in a position to accomplish her goal of helping poor women in need. Mary too had not fully actualized her potential for empowerment, because although she had overcome tremendous childhood traumas she was still deeply affected by her mother's cruelty.

The conditions necessary for attaining the fullest level of empowerment as expressed by other participants were elucidated by their stories of having achieved both

constitutive and instrumental freedoms. Mary had achieved the instrumental freedoms, even if she was continuing to develop her financial security, and felt she had not fully achieved her educational aspirations, she was by no means struggling economically or at an employment disadvantage; however, she had not fully actualized her constitutive freedoms, because she still felt her mother had inhibited her potential to completely embrace motherhood. Mary carries with her a deep fear of not being able to be a good mother. This fear left her with the capacity to dream under-developed. While Teddy and Mary both had a constricted sense of empowerment by way of their functionings, they were continuing to develop their capabilities through reflections on their life experiences.

Appadurai (2004) formulated the phrase *capacity to aspire* explaining it as relative to the environment in which the person lives. Like Teddy and Mary, all the women in this research study had imagined what life could be like in the future and cultivated their aspirations to fit not only their experiences, but also to fit their milieu, thus returning to the *outward* question of how socio-cultural factors influence and guide the participants' aspirations in relation to ICTs. Having obtained a high level of education combined with the ability to access and use technology enabled a sense of being part of a world bigger than the communities in which they live. Armed with knowledge and skills the women in this study grew their aspirations from wanting access to quality health care, financial security, to own their homes, and good quality education for their children, to a desire to own a business while helping other women. This expansion from the individual to the collective aspiration is what Appadurai (2004) suggested that the *capacity to aspire* constitutes as the means for the development and

transformation of a society. With this proposal, Appadurai made clear the dynamic nature of the concept of capabilities as dimensions of freedoms (Seeberg & Luo, 2012). And thus the capabilities of the participants in this study are expressed in their ability to have control over their social milieu, as in Kisa's story of how she and her husband communicate openly, discussing every decision creating equal space for her voice in all matters. Cognitive and psychological control is observed as the participants gained knowledge through their educational experiences and interactions online, becoming constructors of knowledge, adding threads to a new social fabric. This is seen through Nanyorai's commitment to responding to the blogs on women in need, or Haika who assists village women in gaining confidence in using technology; and imagining social change through their ability to aspire to create new knowledge through a parent training center, Maasai cultural center, child care facility, or permaculture garden.

The participants actively conveyed beliefs, values and culture as central to human development within their locus. Sen (2004) asserted the importance of culture and its role in influencing development within the beliefs, values, behaviors and habits of a given society, whereas Appadurai (2004) focuses on an orientation to the future. As the women in this study showed a strong commitment to remain grounded in their cultures (not taking on western values as viewed on the Internet) while orienting themselves towards the future through a desire to raise their children differently than they had been, and hoping for more equity in their daughters' lives. Culture is the means to transforming a society (Appadurai, 2004; Sen, 2004) if people make use of the proper channels for expression, including voice, choice, community dialogue and

decision-making. This was a strand found woven throughout each of the participants' lives and they explicitly expressed their aspirations to achieve individual success while encouraging the development and success of others.

Conclusion and Implications

This narrative study on *whether, to what extent and how urban Tanzanian women use ICTs for empowerment* was significant for a three reasons. First, there have been few studies on the relationship between ICTs and Tanzanian women, or more broadly East African and African women, and therefore this study contributes to this newly growing body of literature on ICTs, women and development. Second, this study looks specifically at empowerment as perceived by the participants themselves through a feminist capabilities approach rather than a functionalist or human capital view. Thirdly, it examines the interplay of complex social, cultural, and biological factors that enhance empowerment in the lives of urban Tanzania women.

Although there have been more studies in recent years on the connection between ICTs and women's empowerment across the developing world, including Africa, these studies tended to focus on learning the skills necessary for using ICTs. The connection between ICT skills and empowerment is articulated as giving women an advantage in the professional realm, facilitating economic autonomy thus increasing their well-being. Many of these studies unintentionally found that increased access to ICTs created a sense of well-being that moved beyond the physical needs and into the psychological. At the outset of this study, I thought ICTs would be the window for realizing higher goals and creating opportunities for new aspirations and possibilities. Instead, I found that ICTs are

part of a more complex intersection of affiliation, relationships, and education. Without at least a secondary level of education in English, ICTs would not be as powerful.

Without the supportive relationships there would not be access to secondary education. If the goal is to have collective empowerment, all three elements must interact.

This study chose to purposefully investigate those spaces of psychological well-being. Building on Phillips' (2003) conclusion that a gender regime has been used in policy language seeing women in the developing world as knowledge- and technology-poor, this research study offers a picture of knowledge- and technology-rich Tanzanian women. This study suggests a need for future research to investigate a wider view of how women use ICTs for empowerment, in what context, and what barriers prevent them from reaching their technology goals.

In the past research on women in developing countries has viewed their challenges and success framed in a generic understanding of gender and power in these contexts (Mohanty, 1988). This research study opens the dialogue further, and continues to build on capabilities literature that well-being and empowerment are individually defined within a specific social and cultural milieu. This research study found that the participants had a similar definition of empowerment, however they were all at different points along their individual journeys of empowerment. It is important for future studies on women, technology and empowerment to take into account individual views and definitions.

The third significance of this study illuminates the salience of examining closely the interplay of social categories as lived experience. The findings in this study point to

the necessity of unpacking the narratives of people's lives fully in order to uncover how and where moments of empowerment occur. The implications for future research of this study are that it is necessary to locate the spaces of intersection of complex social, cultural, and biological factors that may enhance or reduce empowerment in the lives of women.

One final thought is that the specific expression of social relations, education and ICTs formed by their identity as women. For Women, spaces for empowerment and use of ICTs in an empowerment process required the social, at least, and preferably a post-secondary education, and a significant amount of personal agency, "the power from within."

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

Appendix A

IRB Approval Letter

RE: IRB #15-243 - entitled “The Intersection of Technology and Education Creating Agency in Tanzanian Women”

Hello,

I am pleased to inform you that the Kent State University Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved your Application for Approval to Use Human Research Participants as a Level II/Expedited, category 6 & 7 project. **Approval is effective for a twelve-month period:**

April 21, 2015 through April 20, 2016

**A copy of the IRB approved consent form is attached to this email. This “stamped” copy is the consent form that you must use for your research participants. It is important for you to also keep an unstamped text copy (i.e., Microsoft Word version) of your consent form for subsequent submissions.*

Federal regulations and Kent State University IRB policy require that research be reviewed at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk, but not less than once per year. The IRB has determined that this protocol requires an annual review and progress report. The IRB tries to send you annual review reminder notice by email as a courtesy. **However, please note that it is the responsibility of the principal investigator to be aware of the study expiration date and submit the required materials.** Please submit review materials (annual review form and copy of current consent form) one month prior to the expiration date.

HHS regulations and Kent State University Institutional Review Board guidelines require that any changes in research methodology, protocol design, or principal investigator have the prior approval of the IRB before implementation and continuation of the protocol. The IRB must also be informed of any adverse events associated with the study. The IRB further requests a final report at the conclusion of the study.

Kent State University has a Federal Wide Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP); FWA Number 00001853.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at Researchcompliance@kent.edu or 330-672-2704 or 330-672-8058.

APPENDIX B

TABLE B.1

Appendix B

Table B.1

Whether, to what extent, and how do urban Tanzanian women use ICTs for empowerment?

Dimension of Space	Supporting Research Questions	Data needed to answer this question	Projected timeline
Backward	How do the participants view their biographical contexts (particularly the educational journey) as contributing to their sense of empowerment?	Semi-structured life history interviews.	June-August 2015- Life history interviews.
Forward	How do the participants view the role of ICTs in the future well-being in their professional and personal lives?	Semi-structured life history interviews.	June-August 2015- Life history interviews.
Inward	In what ways do the participants reflect on their gender as a contributing factor to their access and use of ICTs and perceived empowerment?	Semi-structured reflexive interviews Observations of events participants. Artifact analysis to develop Follow-up interview questions.	June-August 2015- Reflexive interviews. June-August 2015- Observations/artifact analysis
Outward	How do the participants perceive that socio-cultural factors influence their access and use of ICTs, and how do these factors guide their aspirations?	Semi-structured reflexive interviews. Follow-up interviews after observations.	June-August 2015- Follow-up interviews.
Situated in Place	What challenges and supports do the participants perceive contribute to their exercising agency, both generally and in regard to access and use ICTs more specifically?	Semi-structured Follow-up interviews after observations.	June-August 2015- Follow-up interviews. September-December 2015 – Skype follow-up interviews

APPENDIX C
DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Appendix C
Demographic Survey

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Your Age: _____ Years of experience using ICTs: _____

Do you work professionally using ICTs in your job? _____

How did you learn to use ICTs? _____

Are you originally from Arusha? _____

If not, where are you from? _____

How would you describe your ethnic/cultural background?

What do you identify as being important aspects of your ethnic/cultural background?

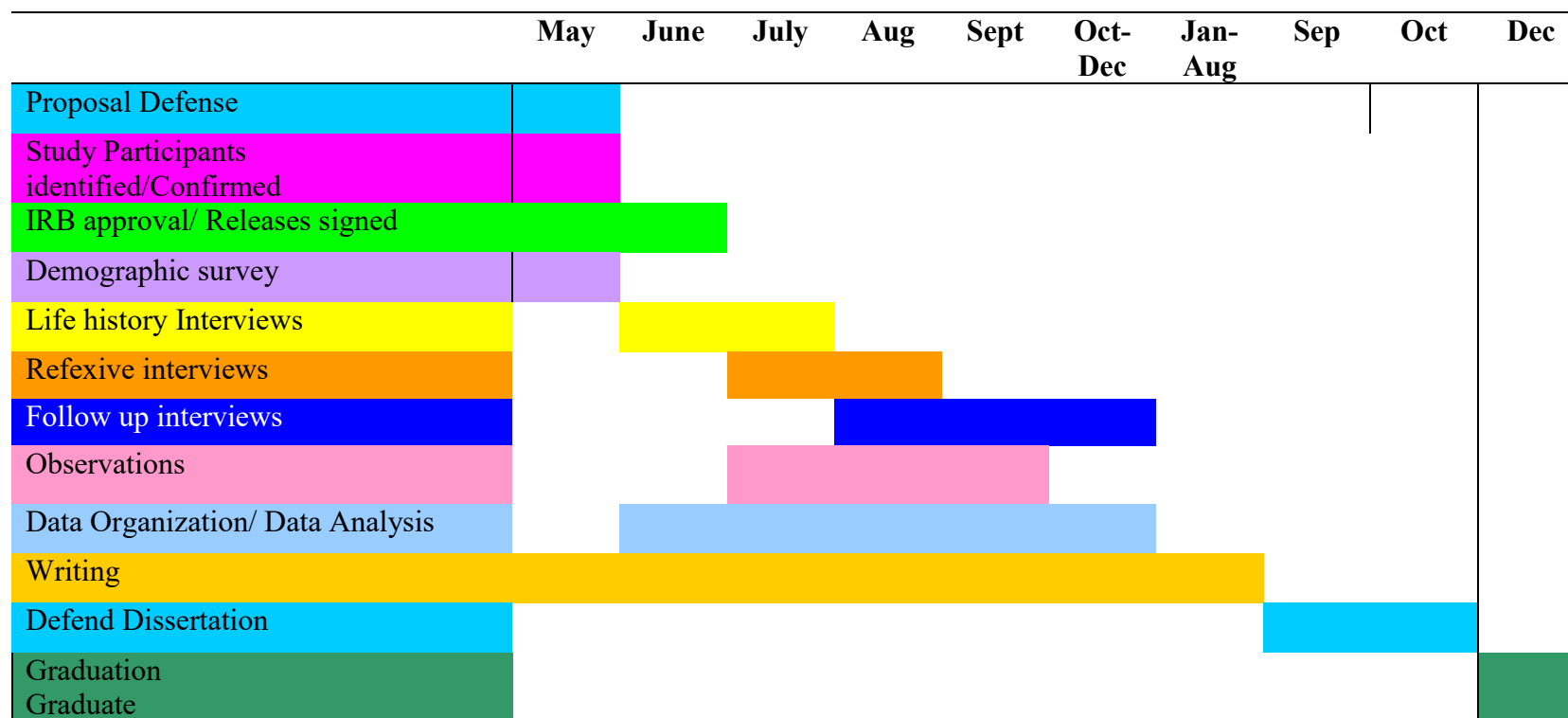
As a participant in this study you will be given a pseudonym to protect your identity. I would like to give you an opportunity to name yourself. If you could choose a name, (other than the one you already have) that would capture the essence of who you are, what would that name be?

APPENDIX D
PROJECT TIMELINE

Appendix D

Project Timeline

May 2015—December 2016



APPENDIX E

LIFE HISTORY INTERVIEW GUIDE

Appendix E

Life History Interview Guide

Date of interview: _____

interview # _____ page: _____

Life History Interview Guide

Adapted from Thompson's (1978) Life-Story Interview (p. 309-323) and Sisson (2011, p. 186-188).

Name: _____

First I'd like to ask you some questions about where you were born. Can you tell me about when and where you were born? How many years did you live there? (if appropriate: *Where did you move then? Can you remember why the family made those moves?*)

Now I would like to talk about your family. Can you tell me about your family? Grandparents? Parents? Siblings? Where did they live? What were their occupations? How would you describe their characters? How did you spend time with them? What were their roles in the family? Who helped in raising you? What do you think were their main interests? Were they religious? How did they get along together? Were you close to them? Were they a strong influence to you?

Now I would like to ask you some questions about your daily life in childhood. Describe where you lived, your home and neighborhood. Who lived in your home when you were a child? What were the roles in your household? What did you enjoy as a child? Who did you play with as a child? How were you rewarded? How were you disciplined?

Now I would like to ask you some questions about your schooling. When did you start school? What school did you go to? When did you leave? What did you think of these schools? How well did you do in class? Did your parents encourage you with your school work? (If appropriate: *How did they support you in your school work?*) What do you remember about your teachers? How did you feel about them? Were they strict? What about? What did they emphasize as important in life? Did they encourage discussion? Was any teacher an important influence to you? Did they treat any of the children differently?

Now I would like to talk to you about your life as a professional. How did you come into your profession? Tell me about your journey in becoming a _____

(participant's profession), include any influences, education, experiences. What other jobs have you worked? What do you think about those jobs? What made you want to work where you do now? What educational experiences have most affected you as a professional _____? How would you define yourself as a _____? How do you think _____ are perceived by others? Do you see yourself as a professional? Explain.

I would now like to talk about your leisure activities. What activities do you engage in outside of work? What activities do you enjoy most? What activities are most important to you?

I would now like to talk a little bit about your family. Do you have a family of your own? Describe your family to me. Describe the current home you live in and the role of each family member. What is your philosophy in raising your own children? Have you modeled this after your own experience growing up? Has your place of work influenced how you raise your children? What are your educational goals for your children? In conclusion I would like to ask you a few questions about yourself and how you use technology. Tell me about how you use mobile phones, computers and the Internet: What do you use mobile phones, computers and the Internet for, in what ways – personally, professionally? Explain. Can you describe how you use social media? What do you use social media platforms for? Tell me how you view the role of social media in your personal and professional empowerment? Do you feel that social media or mobile phones, computers and the Internet have contributed to (or not) your life.

APPENDIX F
REFLEXIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Appendix F

Reflexive Interview Questions

Date of interview: _____

interview# _____ page: _____

Name:

Can you talk about your level of satisfaction with your life right now? What contributes to your feelings of satisfaction (or dissatisfaction)? What changes would you like to create in your life (if you could) to further enhance it?

Can you discuss any issues you think are affecting women in Tanzania that you face in your own life?

How do you define 'well-being' in your life?

Can you talk to me a little bit about what empowerment means to you? How would you describe empowerment?

Can you talk about your own journey to empowerment? (do you feel empowered in your life or as a Tanzanian woman/What does empowerment mean to you?)

What do you feel the role of ICTs has been in this journey of empowerment?

What does the future hold for you? What are your aspirations?

APPENDIX G

SAMPLE INTERVIEW

Appendix G

Sample Interview

Interview with Kisa

Transcribed in full by Kara Kirby

KK: interview with KISA on June 23, 2015 10:34am. I am going to ask you some basic questions. (I did not transcribe these)

How many years experience do you have using ICTs—like Internet, mobile phones, computers?

KISA: It can be more than 10 years, but I can say consistently it can be 5 years. The first years were on and off, because where I was there were not a lot of computers where I was. It was just like you go to the internet to use the internet, and that was not very often because when you go there you have to pay.

KK: Like at the Internet café?

KISA: In five years it has been consistent because here where I am working I have time—when I have time I can access the computers.

KK: Do you work professionally using ICTs in your job?

KISA: Yes, I do

KK: What types do you use in your job?

KISA: Yeah, so as a teacher professionally I go through other bogs to go through and become more knowledgeable about teaching . . . just so I can know more about teaching. Like if I don't understand something I can Google it to read, to know about it. And also to enhance my working, like typing it and putting it into a document, or email, like if someone wants to know about a certain handout I can

send it to them, it's easier to email him or her rather than going to talk to the person.

KK: Great, so how did you learn to use ICTS—did you like go to school or . . .

KISA: Maybe I can say myself it was like curiosity, because when I saw it for the first time was in the college it was like 'what is there?' 'how do you open things?' 'What's in the documents?' 'How do you type?' The more I was using it the more I learned new things. And I also asked people sometimes, those people who are going to school to learn about the ICTs. I ask about a certain program, maybe I want to attach a letter, how do I do it? Or maybe If I want my work to look more professional how do I do it? How do I add more stuff in it? How do I use it? So at least if someone see my work they will say 'wow, I want to read this' to make people feel more attractive to my work, so that's how I learn.

KK: So those are people who are around you at work? You said you learned formally in college. So, was that a short course?

KISA: mhmm. It was. Because first I was taking civil engineering. So, it was helping us. Drafting, drawing some buildings drawing some landscaping. So, it kind of open—like how to open a computer, where do you find a document, all those window's excels, but it was not in details like how to save a document if you want to save it. Or if you want to draw, because it was about (inaudible), how do you do it? Because by then we did not have good teacher. So, they were waiting for someone to come and teach them. So anyway from there, I didn't use a lot, so when I went to work (my first working appointment) I mean place, we only had

one and that was only for the boss. So later he let me use it, because . . . my mom was a secretary and she was always bringing the typewriter at home, and you know as kids we were always trying, playing with it. So, he feels I am not very slow, a bit more, well at least I can type something there. So, he let me use if they want to write something. It was a construction office so they didn't have many typing things, just a few letter. Then he asked me you can type. So, that's where I was learning more. Then when I came to ISM that's when I was learning more, because we have a good ICT person here. And people around know a lot come from different countries so the teachers know how to use them.

KK: Are you originally from Arusha?

KISA: no, I am from Mbeya, but I grew up here. I moved here when I was about 3 yrs. old.

KK: Do you go to Mbeya to visit?

KISA: yeah, we were, but since I got married I don't go so often, because my grandma is not there, she's dead, so is my grandpa. My uncles are there, but they are like all moved all over. So, yeah, sometimes I am planning to, but also it is far and you think sometimes of money and you have to plan ahead and the family, so it's not like someone just go quickly. When I was single I used to go s often because it was easy.

KK: How would you describe your cultural background? Like what's you tribe?

What about your cultural background is important to you?

KISA: I like those morals and values they have. Like especially about the disciplines.

Though it is like no freedom in it. I love it because you can see, maybe me, as me, I feel that will make us feel at least—you know as our culture when I brought up every time as a girl you need to behave this way, you know not like a foreigner, so I felt my culture is very strict on that—how women and men behave. How you should like, I don't say it is like say I give you an example: if I see a man in my culture no matter how old he is, if he is older or smaller—I am the oldest—I have to bow at him, give him more title, so all the respects to men. But women, you are not respected, you can just nobody is going to listen to what you say, so it is kind of like, men, men, men.

KK: Even if he is younger than you?

KISA: Even if he is younger than you—the man has to be the one to decide, no matter if you are older, maybe you have gone to school. I don't mean that if you don't go to school you are not very wise. You see a lot, your exposure to things, you can say 'I think if we do this it will be more easier than we were doing before', but because you are a woman that is not really taken into account. So, men are the ones who say a lot. All the initiatives are from men. I could also see in my family, when we were growing, how my dad was the last one saying of everything, even if you think this is not right. But still I have to like it, because that is where I was born that's how I was raising.

KK: you said you like the discipline—the morals and values of discipline—could you talk about that a little bit more? What do you mean about the discipline?

KISA: What I mean about the discipline is when you are growing—reach to the age of 12 your aunties are coming and taking you, and they teach you all how women's behaves telling you not like sexual stuff, but at least how you can behave as a girl or woman growing up. Telling you how you should take relationship with men. How you can be a decent like, ok, what I can say, I remember my aunty was saying to me, if you play with men, she gave me a gum, and chew it, and she say, 'ok, is it still sweet?' or what do you need to do with it? I say, I need to throw it because it is already. She said this what men will do to you, when you are always playing around with them. So, I was so scared. That made me up to now to think ok men always play around with women and just dump them, so it made me be cautious by then. She was telling us, like that time when I was growing the HIV was around, so I was so scared, like I don't want to be HIV, I don't want to be pregnant. You see, she taught me, it was black and white nothing to be (inaudible) so I could say on the other hand it was very helpful because we know the truth, but on the other side it was like make you so scared. Like, OK, if I try this—it will be .

KK: So you have kind of a fear too.

KISA: Of course I have a fear. It make me traumatized. It made me not like men at the time. I was saying they are my enemies. Which by the end of the day I realized they are not enemies, as long as you are friends you work together, see we need

everybody so we can be a community. We cannot say only girls only women. See that's how it was. When we go home cause we were taken to the village to that culture. So when we eat we don't eat with the men. The men have their separate room, and we eat in the kitchen with our grandma and aunties and eating there, and that time they are telling you how to cook how to do this, how to make traditional food, how to serve to your husband, you don't have to . . . like the husband is everything. Like if there is only a little left, you have to be sure there is something for him no matter about your children. Then later there are values when you go to inside it's not fair. Some are not fair, some are ok, but it is up to you to say this is ok or this is not. But I was only 12 yrs. I didn't know when to say this is fine or this is not. You see you are still very young, but when I grew up I realized I can do this, and I think this not right. But at least they have put me that

KK: What tribe is this?

KISA: Nyakyusa. My mommy is from Tabora. For her she didn't grow there and her dad died when she was very little, so she didn't have any connection with her family. She was only brought up by her grandma, on my bibi's side. So she grew up in Moshi—like a Chagga, because my grandma is from Moshi.

KK: So she kind of grew up like a Chagga?

KISA: Yeah. So it is a mixed family, because my dad is from Mbeya, both his parents are from Mbeya. My mom dad is from Tabora and mom from Kilimanjaro. Because her daddy came, because you know in colonial times they came to these

big plantations in Moshi, there were coffees. There he was working as a Nyampaa (sp). They were called Nyampaa? The elders that are taking care of other's farmers. Then he was bitten by a snake and he died. He died when my mom was still very young. She couldn't have time to stay like going to her family in Tabora. You know when they were coming they were like forced to come, nobody has to know where is someone? You know they were all taken like from the village—they invade, they take them - and the family don't know. By then technology was not like now, at least you can follow up and know where someone is—you can look. But it was very difficult, but my mom doesn't want to look, because she feels very sad, because we have tried to say you because of your second name . . . but she doesn't want, so we didn't want to force her.

KK: To look back and see where her family in Tabora might be from?

KISA: Yeah, yeah. But she doesn't want.

KK: Because her father was taken from Tabora to work on these plantations?

KISA: And then he got married to my grandma. She get married when she was 14. She had my mom when she was 16.

KK: Imagine

KISA: yeah, very young. She didn't know what to do then, She was very young. She got married with my other grandpa who was Chagga. But, he didn't want, because of the traditions he didn't want to raise my mom. So my mom had to stay with her grandma. So, she grew there. Her uncle—good thing he was rich—he took her to Uganda for her studies. So, she at least had an uncle who was at least

open-minded and feel you, ok need to go for your education. And mommy did well, so she graduated and got a job and got married to my dad.

KK: and this was a Chagga uncle?

KISA: yeah,

KK: there seems to be something special about Chaggas? They are very interested in education, no matter if it is boys or girls.

KISA: Yeah, I don't know is—yeah, they are. They don't say yeah ok . . . if I look to where my daddy came from; most of the men have gone to school and most of them you can see them in the higher institutes and they have graduated, but women now are stopped going because at then it wasn't very much 'women can go to school' 'women can do that', because of this thing I was saying, 'men first'. For that time, my mom was lucky to go to school and finish college.

KK: she even finished college?

KISA: Yeah. She went up to college. She is a [bilingual] secretary, she did that, she was working for the government, but she has retired, because she feels that is enough.

KK: So, she even has college ed. She finished all the way through form 6?

KISA: Yes, she started her school middle school; though she went to Uganda, she finished there.

(deciding on pseudonym)

KK: So your mother went all the way through school through university in Uganda. What about your father?

KISA: my father also, He started his secondary school here, then he was like one of those brightest students. So, he got a sponsorship to a university Nairobi—Nairobi University. There he has his bachelors of mechanical engineering. Then he came back to work with the government. Now he is retired still, as well.

KK: So, he is a mechanical engineer? That's where the civil engineering came for you?

KISA: Yeah, maybe, because my grandpa, I remember the time when I was being trained to learn our cultural things, he used to fix a lot of things in the village. People bring things in the village: ok, 'can you fix this for me, can you fix my radio, can you fix my wheelbarrow?' So I think it is in our—even when I look in our chain behind most of them are engineers. So, it's like something that's in our family.

KK: Yeah, it's something that you guys are good at.

KISA: but anyway, I like teaching now.

KK: and now you are a full teacher.

KISA: yeah, I have received my degree in education.

KK: So, you have a degree I n education—what level?

KISA: early childhood

KK: and you got that from . . .

KISA: Kenyatta Unv

KK: and you were able to do that online?

KISA: yes, I was doing it online.

KK: but you also had to go there sometimes?

KISA: yeah, I had to go there for my tutorials days and my exams, because that . . . I feel now they are ready—they had already started. When we started there we were 3 or 4 foreigners. I can say foreigners because we came from out of Kenya. There was one lady from Namibia. She was from Kenya, but she was based in Namibia then she got this job as a teacher, so she had to get her teaching qualifications so she had to go online to do her studies here in Kenya, because in Namibia it was very expensive for her.

KK: to go to the university there?

KISA: yeah, so she decided to take it in Kenya. So her, and another one coming from Rwanda. So we were three. I don't know about the whole university, but on that time in our year we were three. Three ladies. So it was kind of organize staff and find more students from here. Even they were saying if I could be able to give people the brochure and tell people about it, so at least they could open a branch here. To make it easier for people—instead of traveling all the way to Nairobi, find accommodation, the time when you need to go for your tutorial and exams it would be easier if they have a campus here. Even meeting the facilitators. I have to email them and ask, 'what time will you be online?' So, if it is the middle of the night you have to be awake. So at least he can explain something that is not very clear.

KK: So, how did you do that? You had to get one of those like . . .

KISA: I had a modem and the school gave me a computer, and later I was able to get a laptop, because the computer was very slow. So, I managed to have a laptop, and

that was how I was doing it. And we had our forum where at least all the students can post something there, so if you know ‘Ok, I am not very clear of this’ and then everyone can answer in their own time, and even one of the facilitators is in as a member and can say, ‘Ok, you say this, what about this, can go here and read this article, maybe you will get your answer?’—yeah, like that. So, that’s how I got studied. It was hard, but anyhow I managed.

KK: Wow, how long did it take?

KISA: Hmmm . . . it took me. I started 2010 December and I finished this year I can say. I finished 2012 officially, but I had to do the practice, and that one was supposed to be done in Kenya, and I couldn’t go be based in Kenya for three months because I am full-time employed and a mother. Then it was a long process. So, one day I write an email to our coordinator and said, ‘please can you send me anything I can do instead of coming there and doing my . . . maybe write a proposal? I am ready to do anything.’ So, yes, they gave me a proposal. So, I did that for 3 months and then send it. They agree and I was graduated.

KK: and you were already teaching, so you didn’t need to do a teaching practicum.

KISA: I am also glad that the school was very supportive. Because I talked to the head of school and he wrote to explain what I was doing at school and the year I when was a covering teacher for M. So, he explained everything. Even though it is a different organization it was something higher than what they were expecting. Because if you take our education system here at ISM and the education system in East Africa is quite different. I can say this is more higher than what we have

there. Though I can say the challenges are more there, because of the number of students in the classrooms, the resources.

KK: Yeah, so you had quite an advantage. But, that's great. Congratulations for finishing that. So, it took maybe four years to finish the while thing?

KISA: Yeah, because they say doing online is like crashing thing. So, imagine you have to do everything in 2 years. It 's like phew, phew, phew, but anyway, it took me 4 solid years.

KK: Yeah, well, congratulations! Now you are finished and you can breath again. And you even had your little one during that time too?

KISA: Yeah, by the time I finishing my last year I was already pregnant. So, I had to go through that whole year with my baby and try to do this proposal, and (deleted son's name) was still young as well.

KK: How old is (deleted son's name) now?

KISA: now he is 15

KK: so he was still only 12 or 13?

KISA: yeah, he was still like 'mommy, mommy, I need help'. Leaving him. I know it has been hard for him, because after his dad's death we had a very close bond. I never in my life left him somewhere. Whenever I was going I was taking him, but those year was hard because I had to leave him either with family or a very close friend. So, I was sometimes leaving him there and go for week and coming back.

KK: to go to Kenya?

KISA: So it was also hard for him. But anyway he was being patient for mommy.

KK: and he was getting bigger.

KISA: Yeah

KK: well I am glad. I ma sure he is very proud of you too.

KISA: he is.

KK: So, you were kind of starting to tell me about your family—your grandparents and all that. I was wondering how you would describe their characters, how did you spend time with them, their roles in the family . . . could you talk a little bit about that?

KISA: yeah, sure. My grandpa was first a farmer. I am saying that because he had big farms of rice—normally in Mbeya they do a lot of rice. And my grandma was a house mama, just being a housewife. They also had a farm close by the house so she was going to the nearest one. She had to move to another town. In the town they were living she was always sick because of the malaria. It's near the coast and there were a lot of mosquitoes and she was always sick from malaria. So, she had to move to another town. It's like a 1hour drive from where my grandpa was and my grandma. So, they were separated. It was only when we go there or my grandpa finished harvesting then he comes to visit my grandma. So, they grew up that way. But, I could see . . . you know African men . . . so my grandpa because of living there alone he decided to married another woman. So, it was very hard for my grandma. She felt very sad. I could see. She even died because of that. It was too much for her. (32:42) She was very sad, I could see, because when he

was coming back he was no like having more time with her. Ok, I come and say hello, and he goes and doesn't take her like as a wife as it was before. And for her it was a lot. It happened in the old age, you see already she had grand children, my dad is the first-born and he has his 5 siblings. So, for her, imagine all those years and at the old age your husband married again without your knowledge. Sad. Then she got like a heart attack and she died. So, it was not a very, I can say, a very close family bond, because of my grandpa tried to end the life and my grandma is here. But still, she was always very caring to us, and always singing songs to us. Telling us stories, it was nice. My grandpa was Kali.

KK: So, you didn't spend as much time with him?

KISA: No, no, no, no when he was coming to Arusha to visit us. That's when were always praying at least, well, actually not really. He was actually a very kali grandpa. So, it was kind of *OK*—very traditional, very principled, "I want this this way" "I want this this" no more, no less, and that's it. My mom had to say 'I want my food this way' . . . he was giving orders to my mom. So, I want you to cook my food this way and that's it. So, you see for the kids when you are growing you won't get that close, because you feel like 'mmmm . . . ' You want your grandparent to be caring, and then you'll be able to go closer and play and play

KK: so you feel a little bit scared of him

KISA: I am glad my dad is not that way

KK: He's not?

KISA: No, he's not. He's a very nice daddy.

KK: and this grandpa is your father's father? What about your mom and dad? What kind of people are they?

KISA: They are very nice. I can say it's a very close family. I have never seen them fighting.

KK: Oh, nice.

KISA: because I know African normally—I know there were differences between them—but at least I could see they were very careful not to show us. When you grow up you realize 'oh, that time when my mom was like this, maybe they were fighting', but when you are little you don't realize. And my daddy, I think it's because he was, he went out and he was exposure, so always having time with us, talking to us, in the evening when he comes from work it was our time. He took us for a walk. He could play games with us. He teaches us a lot of games with us. Luckily at that time we were living at a place that had a big playground so we can run, chasing him. And always he was saying we should be thankful to our mom. He was always he wanted us to know that whatever happened it was because of our mom. So, We were always valuing mommy, knowing mommy is doing a lot of things. And we asked him 'what about you? What are you doing?' But, behind it was him. So then there was a time when the company he was working got financial problems and had to close. So, that was the time I see my dad very stressed, but still he being a good daddy.

KK: so how did you get disciplined when you were a child?

KISA: Oh, we were *chapwa* (beaten). My mom was . . . My daddy was very nice, caring, my mom was too, but when you do something, you will not believe that is your mom. She would get very cross and we were always getting caned. And she was always teaching us how to work in the house: how to cook, how to wash, if you do your dishes she was always coming and checking—this is not clean, you will have to do it. She is making sure every morning before we go to school we are making our bed, prepare breakfast if it is your turn make sure it is on the table. And you go to school, before you go she is checking are you wearing your uniform properly, is it cleaned. She is not telling you in the evening to clean so you will have to know from school I'll clean my uniform, if it is my turn to cook, I will have to cook, because we were three girls. So, we were taking a week turn to cook. So, you come from school, you cook. And the house we were living in first had no electricity, so we were using this *kuni* (firewood). So, you have to cook, make sure everything is ready, then you have to study. And imagine, how do you study with a korogowe—you know a korogowe?

KK: It's like a lantern?

KISA: Yeah, they call it a ubliquoquoi

KK: a little one with a wick in the middle? Like an oil lamp?

KISA: yeah. So, yeah, this technology thing I am talking now—because on the other side of the road was a very rich person who had electricity. So, sometimes—it's hard to study with that. So, you go and look through the fence [to capture the light], because you don't want to fail, because my daddy was very nice, but if you

fail he is not your friend, and we did not want to make him sad, so we were always trying to please him.

KK: So, you were three girls. Any boys?

KISA: 2 boys

KK: so, 5 children. (39:25)

KISA: by then we were 4 because the last-born was born at the last minute and he hadn't gone through all this. So, that's how it was. And my dad was always saying you have to be the first in the class. So, we were always trying our best to be first in the class.

KK: And were you?

KISA: yeah, I was. But it was really hard, because sometimes I was very stressed.

KK: I bet

KISA: yeah it was really stressful, because you would think "what will I do if I don't get this?" You are always like, in the book, in the book, cramming. You don't understand something—you just do it anyway. My dad was very good in mathematics, so he was teaching us math, and I was good in that. But the other subjects it was hard things, because I didn't know and like, when I grew I didn't go to an English school, so the English—you want to be first then everything has to be first. You see. The school I was it was a real challenge. There were a lot of really bright kids, so I had to really study. So, I grew up stressed. You see. Stressed—I need to pass. Stressed—I need to please my mama at home, because my mom was not taking no or for excuse or sorry for an answer. She was always

(hitting sound) ‘you did this? Come here’ (hitting sound). No explanation. So, it was kind of worried a lot. But, anyway, we grew up (laughter).

KK: you did. You did very well.

KISA: It was hard to be honest, but I am glad she—I don’t know. I don’t think it was the way, because I am now knowing. I feel no.

KK: Do you think, based on the way you were raised you raise your children differently?

KISA: MHMMM . . . Differently, not like that. Because I was very stressed. I had no saying “Ok I don’t want this,” You know even though my daddy was coming and we go play—but, still you are thinking while you are playing, ‘what’s happens next, tomorrow morning I have to do this’ you know like a lot of responsibility as a child. You knew which sometimes you feel like I no want to do this. I just want to have a relax and maybe just have time for myself, but you don’t get that chance.(41:54) And our daddy was doing that, like playing with us because we didn’t have much play time. When we go home we have to go to the farm. We were farming still even though we were living in town, but we had some farm.

KK: OK, so you had to go out there. Was it far?

KISA: Not very far. It was like here and behind where Eanna and—you know those houses behind here.

KK: Oh, so you could walk there?

KISA: yeah, so we would walk there and doing farming and come back. And at home we had big gardens where we planted vegetables. And when there are many we

bring them to the market and bring money home. So, it was a lot of helping also financially to the family.

KK: What about your brother, did he have the same responsibilities?

KISA: Yeah, my mom was not raising us differently. So we were all the same.

Although, he was the youngest so he had his responsibilities, like my mom was making this mandazi. So, his job was to sell them, and he had to bring the money. He was like Gabriel (8 years old). He has to go sell manadazi and bring the money, and don't even taste one. It was so hard for him. When I remember that I feel so bad for him. He would always say I don't want this for my children. Because he could see other boys playing football and he is sitting there waiting for customers to come. When I began learning about children I realized how much we were missing as our childhood—my childhood and my siblings—playing with others. We were told 'don't play with this one, you play with this one. You don't go to this house, go to this house.'

KK: So your parents told you who you could play with and who you couldn't play with?

KISA: mmmhhmm, and for how long. Like one hour come back. So, anyway, still we were feeling like we wanted to have more time with friends, playing.

KK: so you were allowed to choose your own friends?

KISA: No.

KK: they told you who you had to play with?

KISA: No, it was only mommy who choose for us. Especially those friends—her friends who had children. And you can maybe feel like you don't like him or her. So when we go to school we meet other kids, but they were not allowed to come to our house, because they would ask a lot of questions: Where are you coming from? Where is your house?

And I don't know why my mom was that strict. I don't know why. I feel . . . when I grew up I ask her “when you grew up did my grandma put up a boundary? Was she like overprotective?,” and she said, “You know when we grew up I was put into a school where there was no freedom” You know she was put into that school in Uganda, so she didn't know how to raise children. I think it's not her fault. She never learned, all that time no one to tell her this or that, and she came back when she was already a big girl.

KK: She was an adult—she finished secondary—or even university

KISA: she even finished her university there. So she was coming for only a short time, and when she was coming she had to stay with my uncle, because she could help with the house. And she says that her auntie was very bad on her, she didn't treat her very nicely.

KK: this was the uncle's wife?

KISA: Yeah, so she was always like a sad child. So you see, when I grew up, I realized this is why my mom treated us this way. She is showing us love, but it was, you know . . .

KK: This is the only way she knew how to show it, because of her life experience.

KISA: Yeah, so for her life to be only with her mom was just last year, when my grandma got sick. So there was not a very strong bond between them. It is only because she knows ‘this is my mom and I have to take care of her’, but otherwise, because when she talks to me I feel she doesn’t . . . mmmhhmmm . . .

KK: well, she didn’t grow up with her mom

KISA: Yeah, yeah, she cried a lot when her grandma died. She even lost weight. Because she was the one who raised her.

KK: Her grandma was like her mother

KISA: yeah, so I can say my mom and dad yeah—as I said, maybe because it was my daddy was such an understanding man that he could put up with my mom. Otherwise there could have been a lot stress in the family. Because my mom is that way, and my mom is that way. Because I could always hear him say to my mom, ‘I don’t want you caning my kids’. So, when dad is around we are happy, but when he goes away we are always being caned . . . so . . .

KK: I wonder how he got to be so open and caring

KISA: He was raised—he said it was his mom. She was very caring. Because the time I went there it was a year when I was 12 with my auntie and my grandma. And I could see the difference, because of mommy and her, she listens, she is asking you how you feel, do you think you can do this, maybe this is too much for you . . . so, you see, it’s like ok, yeah, but my mom says ‘you have to do it, I know you can do it’ and you will do and sometimes you will find that ‘mommy this is too much for me’, yeah.

KK: So you kind of got that taste of what being a mother is like through your grandma.

KISA: so when I got my first boy, it was hard, because I didn't want him to go through that, and I didn't know what to do. And then what helped me a lot—the exposure around me—I don't know, I got involved with friends, how they raise their children, I was reading books. I remember that was the first thing I saw—it was saying, a child has his own personality—she has the right, he has the right there is a time he needs you to listen - there was an article I read it and so I was saying I don't want to raise my child in that way. I will show him, and the much more he can do, and 'pole pole, he can grow up'. I have a friend—I don't know if you remember her—Renee? Derek's wife? Our children are the same age. So I could see when we visit—every week we would go to her house and I could see how she was taking care of her son. So, I was copying—oh, she is doing that, how she talks to him, that makes me impressed— and then I started working here and I saw how people were treating their children—So I was adapting. Maybe I wasn't born that way to be (growling) to kids, but slowly I adapt.

KK: Yeah, I feel like you have been at ISM forever, but you haven't. How long have you been working here?

KISA: since 2007, December—so like 8-10 years

KK: Where do you work before ISM?

KISA: I was working in that building construction company, so I stopped, because I had to raise my son. I didn't have anyone by then, like someone to help. And engineering work take a lot of time. Like I was leaving home at six n the

morning, I don't have someone to take care of my son, so I have to take him to my mom—and remember how I was being growed up—so I was saying 'oh my son' so you see. Then come back late in the evening, then go again to my mom, take my son, then we go home. Then there I start cooking . . . Then my son's daddy say 'you need to stop working, I don't see why you should torment yourself this much'. So, then I had to stay home with (deleted son's name). Then, he passed, and I had to restart the life. Then Renee said, "there's a job," and I say, 'I am not a teacher, I don't know if they will accept me' yeah, I was very honest—yeah I needed a job, but I didn't want to lie and say this and that, so I was offered first to stay with one child and from there the school saw, and said 'I think I can hire you', so that's how I got the job.

KK: So, I didn't realize that (deleted son's name) father passed away—because as a woman you have to restart your whole life.

KISA: Yeah, because when I finished my college my mom was very strict, I didn't want to go home.

KK: Yeah, I could see why.

KISA: I was staying with my friend—I was saying 'I don't want to go there', so I started to work . . . I finished college I had no choice, I had to go home. So, the first month at the working place I met Francis' dad—he came to do his building things there and he started doing his things there . . . so, my mom said, 'no, I don't want this man' She was very opposing . . . VERY.

KK: He is not Tanzanian? He's from somewhere else?

KISA: He is from Scotland. So she didn't want him at all. So, I forced—I say Ok, you don't want, I am going. She was in the church and I moved out, I sneak and went out, because I was saying I don't want to stay there—I am already an adult . . . my mom saying 'you don't go here', I was not going anywhere—It was like from school to home, unless daddy is saying 'ok, lets go somewhere guys'—and you are an adult. And When I was in the college we were going here and there, like music . . .

KK: Yeah, freedom

KISA: Yes, so I didn't want that, so that I can say is what force me to get married earlier than I was planned. I had Francis. So when he died my mom say, 'I don't want you here' 'you have to go with your son', so it was very hard, sorry I am crying

KK: I am sorry

KISA: It was very, very hard then I had to lock Francis in to go look for a job—because I couldn't afford to pay for the housemaid. I had to go . . . because the money left was finished and you don't have money coming, so I started looking for a job—any job—then I get a job, but it was not paying much, and that was when I met Renee. She find me in that job she say, 'why are you working here? Why are you doing this job?'

KK: What was the job?

KISA: I was a housemaid

KK: Oh, ok, for Renee?

KISA: No, a certain lady, she was from Ethiopia, but she was very rude (Ha!). But anyway I was a humble person I didn't want to show her. So, that's when she said, 'I feel so sorry for my friend, maybe I can find you a job' So, that's when she introduce me here. So, I started the job and manage at least . . . you know my son he used to have everything and then all of a sudden everything stop and he was still young, so it was very hard for him.

KK: Yeah, he didn't understand.

KISA: He didn't understand, so he was wondering, why, why, why we have to sleep on the floor, shy we have to . . . a lot of things . . . but then we adjusted and I started working here, yeah, so now I am here.

KK: and now you are married to Jefari So you met your husband here as well

KISA: Yes, that is why I was saying there—everything has a reason—it is a step moving

KK: Well, it is a journey. It is never stagnant, sometimes it is down and sometimes it is up.

KISA: But it has made me to be a strong woman

KK: I am guessing you were a strong woman before—so now you are like super woman!

KISA: I feel I am very strong. Whatever comes I am able to face the challenges and try and—encourage other women as well—you know if you keep sitting there nothing will happen, but if you stand up, take one step something will happen and you know what? You will see that from where you were sitting and that step now there is a distance. So, stand up where you are and take it and do it no matter

what it is. It will take you slowly. The only thing is to have a positive attitude and don't mind about what. We all face the challenges, we don't run away from the challenges, because otherwise you will never reach anywhere, because you run and where are you running too? Because wherever you are running too you will face more challenges.

KK: True

KISA: So better face the one you have and do it. You will see yourself one day and say, 'where did I come from? And now I am here. I can pay my son's school fees without and nobody can say . . . ' I can pay the house rent without someone coming to say 'you need to pay the house rent' and I say 'sorry I will try' You see? I am not worried much—I know I don't have much, but not like I have nothing in my hand. So, I keep saying to other ladies, 'you have to move' if you sit there and don't move we can't see you, but if you move, at least we can see someone is moving here, at least they will see you.

KK: And you are the right person to give that advice, because you have moved.

KISA: I have gone through a lot if I was just sitting and saying life is worth nothing—like I am going to commit suicide

KK: Or even give up and say I can't push myself—I know I am in this situation now, but what can I do, how can I push myself

KISA: yeah, my mom after that, she is now very proud of me—she is saying 'I didn't know you could be the one now, here who you are' She is the one who is coming to me. Now we advice each other, we are friends . . . though, I don't want to

remind her that there was a time she didn't even want to see me, and my daddy was very sad. But, you know you cannot stay in the house if mommy doesn't want and most of the time you are with here . . . And I have this heart . . . when someone says no to me, I don't push it. I just say, whatever will come I will face it. I am that person. I don't know why I am like that, but I don't like to push people to do things for me or feel pity. I just want to try my best. If you say so, I will go. That was a good way for me as well.

KK: Well, you made it through.

KISA: Yes, it was a long journey

KK: Yes, it was a long journey—so, maybe that was your journey to empowerment?

KISA: Yeah.

KK: So, let me ask you. How would you describe the word empowerment?

KISA: For me—it is when you are able to do things like (ngoja)—I am trying to find the right words on it. I can say it is the ability to not be dependent. Like you be independent—financially, in your views, opinions and you have the power to say something and people will listen. Or you can be financially able to do something or advice people—things like that.

KK: So, do you feel that throughout your life—this journey you have had to take you are more empowered?

KISA: I think so, I feel so, but not only that I am saying—I becoming more empowered not because of the life I had, I feel it is coming from within, inside me, because I want not to be here I want to do changes. And to show people that thought this is

where I am from, but still I can make a difference—Like I was saying I don't want to raise my kids the way my mom was raising us. That is me (1:04:01).

That is my view and that is my opinion and I am sure no one will come and say 'Ok, you have to' because already I am independent. And I have strong reasons why. That is why I say it is within you first you have to decide yourself that OK this was happening, maybe I went to here, I learn a lot but I don't want someone to go through this same path to learn or get where they are. There is another way to help a person to get here—and which way is that? That is now becoming the way to show and convince the person. That's what I am feeling

KK: and you said it is something like power within yourself to make changes

KISA: yeah, within yourself to make changes. And also I can say, the education—I can say that as well. It is . . . If I didn't go to school and see how people live, how the other families, because I am a person who look around and see what is happening. I wouldn't have knowing this is how people live. I would have just say ok, I finish my form 4 and get married and you see if you get married the man will be on you and you will do the same thing (she's talking about the cycle of early marriage/domestic abuse). But, because I was exposure to people through education I could say this is how the life is, and even if it is about getting married, not early marriage. That's what I am feeling myself. I am feeling that every woman need time to mature enough so she can at least, be independent. Even if it is in the marriage you are not going to be dominant (dominated is what she means) the husband is not doing everything for you. You have to have, even if it

s not a big job you have something you can do, 'I have this small shop here. I have this so I can contribute something to the family' and your husband will say—because normally it happens when you are dependent to the man—you get married earlier, you have not been exposed, you do not have education, so you are always like—'ok sir' like that. But if someone is educated and been exposed things and see what life is it will help. What I am saying is like now I see the difference when I was growing when I was 20 and someone who is 20 now. I see the differences. Even if they come from the village you can see the differences because of this technology. People see things - we have this technology in our hand.

KK: So you think that technology . . .

KISA: It also brings a lot of changes. The girls are saying, 'no' not forced to do things.

Before you have to be chosen—who is going to be chosen to marry you—I remember I finish my form 4 my form 6 high school and one man come and said "I want to marry your daughter". I am glad my dad said 'What? No way!'"

Imagine there are people who say—yeah you can still continue with your studies—it is not true. There are some very big responsibilities in there. And that is something that has to come from within. And the girls now are ready to say 'NO' and they mean it. They have - those have who have exposure have a saying not like the one who hasn't been exposed, and they'll say, 'ok, I have to, I have no choice'. Like one time I took a girl from the village and lived with her for three years and in the 4th year her daddy came from nowhere and said—because her

sister was in the village, and this is why I am saying where the difference is—there were both ended in standard 7 and they were staying in the village and her sister was forced to marry someone, someone she didn't even love so it was always a lot of problem. Because I knew that—they way the sister was living—so when I took her, she was 15 and I stayed with her for 3 years, then her daddy came, she was nearly 18, and he say, 'oh, now you are old enough because your sister got married when she was 16 and you don't have to have children. You can stay with your husband for a few years and get used to him.' And she said 'no'. She ended up in standard 7, but because she has been in town she sees how the young girls are behaving, and we have technology at home and she can see, even if it is the TV, the phones, talk to people, she said 'no, I have my view, my plan' and yes, she was saying she wanted to go learning how to sew- to be a tailor, that was her plan—and she did, she finished. Now she is having her own place doing her tailoring. While she would not have been exposed like her sister in the village. Though, she didn't get education to higher—college—but that was enough, talking to people—that is another knowledge, seeing things around—that is not what we are supposed to do—we can do this and she..

KK: so just by having that exposure changed her life from what her sister could do.

KISA: So that's what I am saying empowerment also is comparing—she was empowered to say 'no, I can do this, yes, I am here and I am strong to do that'

KK: I wanted to ask you some questions about technology—could you tell me a little about how you use . . . technology for personal use

KISA: Yeah, I do. I have these social medias like Facebook, WhatsApp

KK: So, you are on Facebook?

KISA: I am on LinkedIn that's all I have for now—I am not in the Instagram, because I feel you take a lot of time there—especially when I am on the Facebook there's a lot of friend. I see someone from a long time ago who is there in Europe and then I start chatting, “tell me, what's it like there. How's life there? What are you doing there?” So, it needs a lot of time.

KK: that's for Facebook or whatsApp?

KISA: Yes, Facebook and WhatsApp

KK: Do you use them often? Like every day, every week?

KISA: Not every day because it is a challenge. When I had my my second born I realized I have a very time limit. And at the time I was studying and now I am working, so there's a lot of limitations. But, when I am on my way home I can chat a little bit. On my phone. If I don't have my phone, then I don't.

KK: So you said you chat with other people on Facebook and WhatsApp. Um, so do you feel that like these things have contributed to your life in any way? Having access to technology, has it contributed to your life in any way?

KISA: A lot in my life like learning new things?

KK: I don't know

KISA: Yeah, I am sure with this new media—it's not just 'hi and what, what', there's a lot there. people put stuff that you can learn there. People puts stuff there you don't know—like that one person I was telling you about—you get news—you

get information of what happened. There's an accident happening here. Or someone is getting married or someone is opening new shop, and says 'this is what is available there' You can do business with people—they say "you want this?," "yeah," "OK you can't come to Dar es Salaam? Ok, I'll put it on the bus, you just send me money through the Vodacom or airtel." So sometimes I don't have to waste time to go to Dar es Salaam, I can just get it right there.

KK: Do you ever . . . are you friends with someone you don't really know on Facebook or WhatsApp?

KISA: Normally I prefer people who I know. I don't like people I don't know. There is a lot of things I hear about people getting problems from people they don't know (face to face). But the other I can say is we are on the Facebook together, this BBC thing. You see I like news and we chat with Salid Kike (news reporter)—he is the person who has friends and we chat with them. He say 'you know guys you in Tanzania—you there in Arusha, what happened there today?' So, things like that. And I know he is taking that because of his job

KK: So it's more professional

KISA: Yeah, but other people I don't know I try not too. Because there are people who use these medias in a wrong way. I try to ask new people some questions and then I can be like 'uh, uh—no' I can say like where are you? What are you doing? I think no.

KK: you just block them or whatever?

KISA: yeah, you see you there are these people that say things that are not ok. In this social media there are people who are very positive and they know why we have this and there are people who are wrong and feel they can say you know whatever.

KK: I never had anyone I didn't really know talk to me on social media.

KISA: In Tanzania there are people who kind of like see a woman and mmmmm . . . men especially.

KK: So men contacting women?

KISA: But ladies . . . No

KK: They are not contacting other people?

KISA: yes, contacting you saying, what are you doing? How are you? Then I remember one lady from Algeria. She started with a very sad story, so I was keen to know where she end up. Then she started saying I should send her money . . . So, things like that—So it is always like that. I am always starting with mmmmm . . . or someone who is doing business is saying send me your bank account number. So you start having questions—there are people who are great who are business people—like, 'oh, I see you have this in your profile, are you having a business? I would like this.' Or 'I would like to know more about your project'. Like there was a man who was doing this project about solar and the charcoal. So, I was very keen to know—he said yeah maybe I'll come to Arusha and do a workshop. So, like that. So you learn, you can chat. You are friends. Not people who are trying to bribe you or kill you

KK; yeah, or are men trying to make sexual advances on you..

KISA: yeah, like that. So, this is why when I see someone like that, sorry I don't continue.

KK: Yeah, I totally understand—I guess I have a couple of things about—a couple more questions—one, I wanted to ask you what well-being might mean to you in your life

KISA: I feel like it is balancing everywhere. Balancing your emotional, balancing your work, socially, physically, your health, your family—if they are happy—if the people around you are happy.

KK: So, it's like this idea of being balanced.

KISA: Not really 100%, but at least 50% you will be ok. Like if you have a problem emotionally, like stress then you are not well-being. If your family has a problem or you have a problem at work or with your husband. There may be problem, but not so much you feel out of track and I can't take it anymore. SO, that's what I feeling like WB i

KK: So, having a balance of all these parts of your life. Can I ask you about three more questions. One—how do you feel the role of ICTs has contributed to your journey of empowerment?

KISA: OK, so then I feel first I became knowledgeable—I learn things there about ICT. I know about other people's experiences of life—all those things are ICT—it also helps my life to be easier. Let's say like when I was doing my study—instead of going to Nairobi and sitting there for all those years, but because of ICT

technologies it was easy for me. I just sit here still working and at the same time I do my studies—finishing up. It makes life easier—doing a lot of stuff in a minimum time, because time is something we have to value, I feel, because if you count 4 years just sitting at the college a lot would have been shut down. But if you are working those four years, and the same time you are doing your studies at the same time I am taking care of my family, while I have something here in the middle helping me to accomplish all those things—it is helpful—it is a tool to me to get what I need. It is a very sweet tool

KK: Great way to describe it. And, well, you kind of touched on this one, but I wondered if there is anything else you can tell me about any issues that affect Tz women—Tz women in general—like issues that have affected you in your life. You have talked a lot about your journey, your struggles, like your mother not accepting you, just the struggles of having to start your life over again. But, do you think there are big issues for Tanzanian women that either effect you or that you are helping other people to deal with or overcome or understand?

KISA: I say the first thing I would describe is first Tanzania is a poor country. So, financial is a very big issue for Tanzanian women. If you compare the number of women who have there own money or who say I have this and the number of men . . . the number is minimum, why it is because, as I was saying before. It is the way they are raising it is always manship—like if a I take example of this Maasai family—the woman do the farming, the woman go to the market to sell things, the woman do everything, but at the end of the day it is the man who comes and says

‘ok, I am going to do the budget for this house. I ma the one who decided where this money will go’ You can realize they give very little to the woman. So she find her economical situation it is very hard. And why is that? As I was saying, it is the exposure. It is the education. Because many have not gone to school, so education can be another thing. so if the can be educated then they can go to a secondary and realize ok this is what I should do or what if I am married what if I can do decisions in the family, not just my husband. I can do decisions, I can have my own money. What will I do in the marriage—will I work or will I stay at home? If I stay at home, what will I do? Will I be dependent on him? Obvious! He will be dominant on you like saying ‘I am the one’ because he is the one who is providing everything. So, you are getting married and you are going to the new house to the family where they are saying ‘we have paid the bride price a lot of money, so you don’t have any say’ it’s like you have been sold. So, even the bride price especially in the village a lot of women still suffer form that. This other thing I see, like I said, in town, you know I don’t live in the middle of town, if you compare the people who are living in the middle of Arusha and the people living out of Arusha most of them you will see the big difference. You can see the woman with many children and ask, ‘why do you have all this?’ and she will say, ‘my husband doesn’t want me to do a family planning and it’s really hard for her to raise all those kids, financially it’s problems, she needs to take them all to school—it costs money—herself she doesn’t have any say ‘I don’t want any more children’ so I can say it is manship is more in most of the houses than the woman,

because I see the women in town they can decide like ‘I want this number of the children’, and ‘I’m allowed to go to the hospital to do my family planning and be advised’ and how does that lady know about that? Because she has been educated. But in the village she will be told to use the traditional means. Or if you are in the family where they don’t believe these things—they don’t believe—there are still families that use the traditional means. They are in town, they have been born here then you realize they have 4 children . . . I have my neighbor, she has 5 children and her husband is this mkokoteni driver and she has 5 kids, she is sitting there, she has no even clothes for herself. One day I went to talk to her and I say ‘why are you having all these children anyway?’—I am sorry, first I get used to her then I say to her one day, ‘let’s talk’ ‘why?’ she say ‘no, it’s a b c d—my husband doesn’t want to do family planning’ and I say ‘why? You have five kids, and they are like this (showing with her hand that they are all very close in height/age)’ (1:29:40) It’s really hard for you, even for yourself let’s say now if I say—let’s do something, would you be able? She said, I won’t, because all these kids are at home with nobody to help. You see it’s also, can also make a woman shows she is not independent, because of the marriage. She doesn’t want the husband to feel sad, otherwise he will divorce her and she will not be able to cope, because the family will not accept her and say they have already paid the dowry or bride price—they will say- you have to stay with your husband no matter what. So, if there are going to be changes it has to start with the family. A lot has to be

done in the family—families has to know—be given an educated that this is not the way—we have been living this way, but now we are in another century.

KK: education is the key piece. And in your family? How do you guys manage these kinds of issues?

KISA: We talk. We communicate. Like if I want to do something, we sit down and we discuss. And I am glad he is the person who says—Ok, what did you feel here? He takes a lot of opinions from me. I am not saying I am becoming . . . but at least he give me that chance to decide how many children do you think you can have? Yeah, I am glad he asked me that. It was a good one for me. Imagine I am already 40.

KK: Right—do you want to have anymore children (laughing)

KISA: But, I can see his family from his side keeps on pushing—I should have one more—they say, you need to have another one now

KK: do you want another one now? It's such hard work.

KISA: no, no—it's such a hard work, because I want them to have a better school, better education. I want us to have time for us, as we are all full-time employed. Life is always today is better . . . I mean tomorrow is always harder. Like healthy, if you think of the health things, maybe cooking things, we have to consider these—what if someone gets sick? Will we be able to take them to a good hospital? What about a good school? Can we give them a good education? What about where we stay, can we give them a good environment? So, what helps up is a lot of education. I know my husband was brought up in a village lifestyle, but

coming here—working in town has made him a lot of changes, so we do talk. No matter what the family says, we decide and what our families says we do. He says, Just because my mom or sisters says this we don't have to do it. We do what is best for our family.

KK: So, you are probably going to earn more money than him. Does that affect your relationship?

KISA: No, I respect him still.

KK: it doesn't make him feel lower or anything?

KISA: no, because I talk to him before. He is a human being so he might feel like that.

So, I told him it is not coming for me, but for the family. Either if it was not for me, it could have been for him We are Christian we believe there is a blessing. either if it comes to you, it comes to me. So, if you are the one who had it . . . So, we talked and I told him I still respect you. Even before that I respect him. I decided to marry him because of the love. Love has no money, love has no PhD. It's love. It's there between us. That's what makes us together—it's the love. I always plan we do things together. He is happy, he is very happy—we are both . . . we buy stuff together . . . it is only because we sit down and talk, let's do this, what do you think? I think this will be helpful to the family.

KK: That's great. That's how it should be.

KISA: Otherwise I am sure he would have been . . . I know people are saying to him—oh, you know your wife is like this and that, but he keeps saying, not my wife.

KK: Good for him (1:35:42). So, my last question is what does the future hold for you? What are your aspirations for the future?

KISA: I have a lot of stuff in me (laughing). First, I was thinking, I was saying, I want two things, first for the children, second for the women. You know education in Tanzania that is what I wanted to do as the first thing. I learned this early childhood thing and from there I learned a lot how those kids—from the time you are pregnant, from infancy, early childhood to when you are a teen. And if you can see—I am saying not all the women in Tanzania have that education or that knowledge. That is the very time when we need to be very careful or it is a delicate time. I could see that in schools and I could see that in houses. So, I was telling friends if I could open something I would, to give workshops telling them about raising children—we want children to be this way, we have to start from here and grow—if we miss somewhere here it will be difficult, especially in the early age. Do you want your child to be caring and showing love—you have to start from the time she was born. Do you need your child to understand things? You know when I was going to school my dad was saying ‘you need to be number one’. Imagine I was feeling very stressed. So, it’s about accepting everyone the way they are. Everyone is about to do something the way they are—we are different, we have different needs, have different personalities—so I feel if we are to educated parents on that teacher it will make a big changes. No pushing kids, caning them in the schools, you have to be number one. You know people are saying ‘children these days are very rebellious’ It’s about the way we are with

them. If we sit with them, teaching them morals, talk with them . . . do we sit with them, sit with them, talk to them in a caring way—you have to do this because of this—or do we say ‘ YOU HAVE TO DO THAT! Because I did that. I went to school and I was always being caned—you see now here I am’ This is not this generation—it’s very different. It is way we find a lot of kids who end up in the streets. They don’t listen to their parents, their teachers. If you see how they perform it is very low. It is not because they can’t do it. They can, it’s because of the way the teachers are teaching them. The standard - It is not helpful—it is very harsh. I am a teacher—you have to do this—you have to write this way—if you don’t write it is ok - and every one is thinking of themselves of the advantage. How can I get money. If from there—if you don’t study it’s up to you—take yours and I am running. Those are not caring. I am feeling I want to do more workshops. I don’t know if people will take it or not, but that’s what I want to do.

KK: For teachers or parents?

KISA: I will start with the parents and later I will ask if I can do it with the teachers.

Teachers have gone to college and they are qualifies, but the way of their teaching—I don’t know. And also youth—you know many youth are doing things because they have nothing to do. See? You finish your school you go home, you start late you don’t have—you go to school early from there you go home, there is nothing else for you to do. We have CCAs it helps. It help them to be—do things—to challenge themselves—little projects to help the to be ok—I

ma not going to be doing a big things to make money—I am going to make beads—or what about sports—or even if we are Tanzania’s cant we start a small group here? Like a small group in the streets. Come let’s dance—or play football—I know it takes time—the government needs to help—even just a place to get people together—just a small place—let’s get together and say ‘what can we do? Where can we clear a space to get people together?’ especially youth now a days like to do acting—start a small a group where we can practice acting—I am sure from there we will see talented people who can move on. So we don’t need money, we just need time to do it. Cause I know it’s all about the society, the community—starting from there and going up.

KK: Your big goal is to have your own place where you can run some kind of training programs.

KISA: Yeah, that’s what I feel—it’s a big dream, but that’s what I feel I was also thinking the youth—like mama’s taking yaya’s with out being trained—taking them to their house to take care of the children—you see it is hard for the yaya—you want the child to be talked to this way, but the yaya doesn’t know—and they don’t value it as a job, but if they go somewhere and you show them - this is the job they will know the job—you wake up you do the schedule—ok after I wake up I do this then this—and the diet to give the child. You don’t have to have a lot of money to have vegetables here. We are lucky. So you can plan at least today I have mchicha with ugali and tomorrow I have marahagwe with wali. It is something that will give you a lot of nutrients without a lot of money. You don’t

need to eat nyama to get protein and to be honest Marahagwe has a lot of protein.

The little they have they value it and use it. SO, I feel that is also helping the community, and the community needs to be healthy. And If I start there at least everyone will be healthy.

Also, I belong to this women's organization.

KK: Uh, huh. Which one is that?

KISA: Vikopa

KK: Kikopa is like a group of women—it is only in Tanzania—it is a group of women who meet every week. Though you are bringing money—to help each other financially. There are ladies who don't have nay money—they are thinking ok where do I start? Where? So, if you join vikoba you can at least get some money and start something. And every week you bring something. Kidogo kidogo. Also in those vikopo we have small projects that everyone is talking about. Like bring everyone together to make hats. For that one hour you are sitting there you are making something and then when you are done—wherever you are (making the sound of closing up a box). So the time you are there we can talk things. Like what about this? Like a topic. And then someone can say oh yeah. You see— from there you can find more people coming and joining. So, I am also thinking about youth and things.

KK: So it is vikoba or vikopa

KISA: Vikoba

KK: Also those conversations help too

KISA: Yeah, they help to widen up things. Like many women have things—but they are like ‘so what?’ but if you put it in mind they will be like ‘yeah, OK’ so it’s like you open up their mind. So, there are women from different places from cast—everyone is invited to be there - like they don’t say from a certain class there—so you meet people in the society there. You talk something—someone might be more knowledgeable than you. You can say ‘what about this?’ and she might say ‘oh yeah’ - Someone can hear you—you know from there she can go make a change—you know I had this person say this, so maybe I can make a change here. So, I am thinking this a way to change things. You know when you are in groups as women you can change things.

KK: Yes, great! So you do projects together and put money together and that money goes to one member who can start up a project and they have to repay it back and then the next person can get the pot of money.

KISA: You don’t have to take the money if you don’t need. (1:48:12) It’s not a must. I like it though because they talk and we talk.

KK: Oh, Ok. Where do you meet?

KISA: in Njiro.

KK: is it a place owned by Vikoba or in a bar or restaurant?

KISA: We have rented a room—so we meet there. And where I am living they meet on Friday, but there they meet on Saturday.

KK: OK

KISA: So at least I can go in the afternoon. For one hour and then I am back.

KK: every week?

KISA: Every Saturday we meet. If you want money it's once a month. Every Saturday we meet to do something and once a month we give money to someone.

KK: and you go every week?

KISA: Yeah. If I don't have any other commitments I go.

KK: How many members in the group?

KISA: 20—it's a big group. We are trying to be as minimum as possible, because if it is becoming more . . . The main thing is to know each other properly . . . we help each other—if you have someone sick we come—you have this, you have that . . . so, it's just to have a minimum number—because we need to know each other. So, if we have others who come we say this one already has another one. And then if we have more people coming we have someone from this group to go and be the chairperson [to the new group], because they have more experience. So, we open more—there are like three branches already. Because there a lot of women coming.

KK: Oh wow. So how much do you put into the pot each month?

KISA: It's 10,000Tsh. Not a lot.

KK: But that's 200,000Tsh that someone can get in a month.

KISA: yeah and you return with 2%. So, that's how it goes.

KK: that's not very much—you can afford 2%

KISA: yes, it helps I have seen a lot of women get help. There was one woman who was asking all the time. Now she has a small vegetable shop out there. And she is not

asking anymore. You can see the changes in her. Even the way she looks you can see 'Ah, you can see she is now changed'. She no longer looks sad.

So, I was saying those ladies I have there I would try to say ok now this is what we do I can really start this project –I can say I can train you, and then you go train others. That is what we are, that is what we say. That was our vision (she's talking about *vikopa* or community-based micro-financing organizations) to help the women and children as much as we can. So, that is what my visions is.

Although, I will be the main source still if train them this is what we do, this is how it goes this one will train this one and that one will train another. Like that.

KK: and that is how communities develop

KISA: even if you have a lot of knowledge without a lot of people it won't go anywhere.

KK: and it's great that you have that group to help you with that.

KISA: yeah, because there are a lot of ladies there.

Interview ends (1:53:08)

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