

Community Schools: The Solution to the Global Education Crisis?

A case study of COCO's Schools for Life programme in Ruvuma, Tanzania.

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Abstract

Across the Global South, thousands of children do not have access to good quality education. Private provision of education has recently been recognised as a possible means of improving education quality and access, with proponents arguing that low-cost private schools better serve the poor. Opposing research has argued private provision exacerbates inequality and remains inaccessible to the poorest. There is very little research into the role of community schools in education provision. Applying the two opposing political theories of neoliberal institutionalism and postcolonialism, a case study of COCO's Schools for Life programme has been examined to determine the potential of community schools to improve education.

It has found that community schools are effectively providing good quality education to children living in marginalised communities in Ruvuma, Tanzania. The communities welcome external support and believe that the schools are having no wider negative impact. However, due to limitations of scalability, no proof as to the wider implications, and the limited places available, community schools remain second best to free, equitable, quality education provided by the government. Avoiding many of the criticisms directed at other private providers, they provide a middle ground between the two opposing theories. The research aims to contribute to academic literature on the area, arguing that the two opposing theories can complement one another. It also provides practical policy advice for organisations involved in education in the Global South.

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Abbreviations

CBO	Community Based Organisation
COCO	Comrades of Children Overseas
DFID	Department for International Development
GNI	Gross National Income
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IPE	International Political Economy
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

Chapter 1: Introduction

Despite huge international efforts to improve access to and quality of education for children across the globe, the world still faces a “global education crisis” (UNESCO, 2014:5). International efforts to increase the number of children in school in the Global South have been successful, but have catalysed a decrease in quality. The private sector has long been providing education across the world, but has only recently been recognised as an alternative to government provision in the Global South. Community schools have largely been ignored in existing literature. This research aims to examine the contribution of community schools to improving access to quality education in the Global South. To do this, the case study of International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) Comrades of Children Overseas’ (COCO) Schools for Life programme will be researched, using two theories of International Political Economy (IPE): neoliberal institutionalism and postcolonialism.

1.1. Background to the Problem

Education has long been a global priority, seen as a vital component of an individual’s development, which in turn aids the development of a country (Wolf, 2002; Centenera, 2015; Snowden, 2015). In 2000 the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were implemented to improve access to education around the world. These globally ratified initiatives successfully increased the number of children in schools, however as a result of increased demand the quality of education severely suffered and many vulnerable children remained without access (Burnett and Felsman, 2012). Recognising these shortcomings, the subsequent Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs) launched in 2015 moved the focus to “inclusive and equitable quality education for all” (UNDP, 2015).

Tanzania exemplifies these issues, providing a relevant setting to undertake research. It is a low-income country (World Bank, 2016b), but is politically stable with a growing economy (World Bank, 2016a) and decreasing levels of Official Development Assistance (ODA) as a percentage of Gross National Income (GNI) (World Bank, 2016c). Tanzania removed primary school fees and met the MDG of universal access to primary education by 2015 (MDG Progress, 2015), and has now gone on to eliminate secondary school fees to increase access to secondary school (GEM Report, 2015). Despite this commitment to increasing access, education quality remains low (Orodho, 2014).

Private sector education has been a provider of education around the globe for a long time, however has only recently been considered by the international community as a possible means of improving education quality (Dixon, 2013). Proponents of private-sector education believe it can better provide quality education to marginalised children (Dixon et al., 2015), whereas opponents believe private provision is inaccessible to the poor and increases inequalities (Härma, 2015). Debates regarding their contribution are ongoing, as international aid organisations, such as Department for International Development (DFID) and private investors face criticism for supporting private provision (Education International, 2016). Existing research on the subject lacks definitional clarity, and fails to differentiate between the many different non-state actors in education provision. Literature is specifically lacking on Sub-Saharan Africa (Ashley and Wales, 2015). COCO’s Schools for Life programme supports community schools in East Africa, which claim to provide good quality

education to marginalised children. There is very limited prior research into the potential for community schools to help solve the global education crisis. This research aims to contribute to filling this gap.

1.2. The Research

The research will investigate the contribution of community schools in providing quality education to poor children, using the case study of two partner secondary schools in COCO's Schools for Life programme: Hoja Secondary School and Kindimba Secondary School. These schools are community schools, established with the support of COCO and COCO's partner CBO in the region: Hoja Project. COCO is an INGO based in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK. It's Schools for Life programme was launched in 2014 to replicate the success of Hoja Secondary School, which has now achieved top exam results out of 183 schools in the region for five consecutive years (COCO, 2017b). The schools supported are community-led, and ensuring sustainability is a key priority. Hoja Secondary school is now operationally self-sustainable, no longer relying on COCO's support for day-to-day running costs.

This research will study COCO's Schools for Life programme, to determine its potential to improve quality of education for children in poor communities. In-depth qualitative research conducted in Ruvuma, Tanzania, will contribute valuable research to the international community, providing a grounding for further research and recommendations for COCO and other organisations engaged in education in the Global South. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of community schools, two opposing theories of IPE will be utilised. International agreements and organisations,

including the SDGs and COCO, fit within neoliberal institutional theories, which will provide a background for the research and a means of measuring their effectiveness. A postcolonial perspective will provide critical analysis of the research to uncover their limitations and to assess their relevance to the people they aim to assist.

To determine the potential of community schools, five research questions will be answered:

1. What are local perceptions of community schools supported by international NGOs in Ruvuma, Tanzania?
2. What are parents' priorities when choosing where to send their children to school?
3. Are community schools reaching the poorest?
4. What are the barriers preventing parents from accessing community schools?
5. What are the limitations of community schools?

1.3. Structure outline

Chapter 2 will provide a background for the research, introducing the two political theories to be studied and giving a review of existing, relevant literature. Chapter 3 will delimit the research and outline the methods used in collecting and analysing data. The results of the primary research will be presented in chapter 4, and chapter 5 will draw on these results and the existing literature to discuss the research

questions through the lenses of the chosen political theories. The concluding chapter will provide a summary of the findings and provide recommendations for policy and future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter will give an overview of existing literature relevant to this study. It will first define the relevance of the chosen theoretical framework. A summary of existing literature on the provision of education within the Global South will then be given, before establishing the relevance of this research to international development.

2.1. International Development

International development is a “dauntingly complex and constantly changing process” (Green et al., 2012: 8). There are numerous reasons for engaging in international development, from the feeling of moral duty to help others (Pogge, 2010), to maintaining strategic political allies (Alesina and Dollar, 2000). To mention all of these debates here would be impossible, and counter-productive to the aims of the study, however the existence of such a wide body of literature tells us development is something worth studying. This chapter will broadly look at international development from two opposing viewpoints, one supportive and one critical, before discussing the specific case of education in the Global South.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

This study brings in to question the way in which international development is practised, with a particular focus on the way in which the international community works to improve the quality of education in the developing world. To achieve this, two opposing theories of international political economy will be used: neoliberal

institutionalism and postcolonialism. These approaches will help to frame the research project and allow critical analysis of the case study.

2.2.1. Neoliberal Institutionalism

Neoliberal institutionalism claims that international institutions are vital to maintaining global stability. The approach is linked to realism, sharing the belief that states exist in an anarchical world and that they will act defensively to protect themselves and their citizens (Keohane, 1989). Where neoliberal institutionalism differs from realism is in its belief that global stability is possible, but that “the ability of states to communicate and cooperate depends on human-constructed institutions” (Keohane, 1989:2). It maintains the possibility for self-interested states to cooperate and come to a mutually beneficial agreement (Stein, 1982). Emphasis is put on a states’ rationality and motivation; states cooperate to maximise their own gains, but this is in “the non-zero sum game where all parties conceptualize some sort of positive outcome in every cooperative enterprise” (Saryal, 2015:4), generating benefits for all parties (Cerny, 2008).

Institutions are “amalgams of ideas and material power that are a means of stabilizing and perpetuating a particular social order [...] often formalized as organizations” (Hulme, 2010:8). International institutions include any cooperation between states, including not only global organisations such as the United Nations or the World Bank, but any international body from a physical organisation to an informal agreement (Little, 2001). A wide range of institutions working simultaneously “play a critical role in determining the outcome of the international system” (Saryal, 2015:4).

Since the Second World War, international institutions have characterised the global system (Cerny, 2008), the same time that international development entered the global stage when the US provided aid to help rebuild Europe (Esteva, 1992). International institutions play a huge role in international development, shaping development discourse (Koch, 2012). One of the most influential moments in international development was the creation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, and subsequent Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. These goals are an example of neoliberal institutionalism, internationally recognised and agreed targets to combine the efforts of all international development actors from international organisations and states, to NGOs, civil society, and individuals.

The ideas of neoliberal institutionalism align with these international goals, with each actor working with their own motivations towards unified targets. They have been praised for bringing “the international development community closer together” (McArthur, 2013:153), and provoking great progress towards eradicating poverty (Chandy and Gertz, 2011). The goals have moved the focus away from economic growth and markets to other issues, including health, education, and gender. Education earned its own goal in both the MDGs and SDGs. Using neoliberal institutionalism as a lens for this approach will help to align the case study within international agreements, highlighting ways in which community schools supported by international organisations are effectively working towards these globally ratified goals.

2.2.2. Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism is a critical approach of International Political Economy (IPE), aiming to “shift the dominant ways in which the relations between western and non-western people and their worlds are viewed” (Young, 2003:2). It does not come with its own set ideas, but is a critique of the way in which we look at knowledge. According to McEwan (2009), it’s main strategies are to destabilize Eurocentric discourses; disrupt the powers of the North in homogenising the Global South; critique the spatial and temporal metaphors of “out there” into the here and now; and to recover the voices of the marginalised. Postcolonialism critiques development discourse as promoting Western states as superior (Loomba, 2005). In this research terms that further entrench this notion will be avoided, preferring to use the term ‘Global South’ to describe what is often referred to as ‘developing world’.

This approach “speaks to the fact that different imperial and colonial encounters are embedded within expectations of modernity and hierarchy” (Radcliffe, 2005:291), seeking to disrupt unequal power structures in the global order by exposing the stories and truths of those marginalised and silenced. It operates on the theory that “the intellectual and cultural traditions developed outside the west constitute a body of knowledge that can be deployed to great effect against the cultural homogeneity of the west.” (Young, 2001:65)

Postcolonialism is critical of the way international development exacerbates existing unequal power relations, accusing development of being “nothing more than a neocolonial project that works in conjunction with political and economic power, sustaining the continued dominance of the global North” (McEwan, 2009:102).

Acknowledging the good intentions of many working in development, postcolonial theorists maintain that it is a form of Western imperialism, enforcing Western views and values on the Global South in the name of development, whilst maintaining hegemonic power, leaving the Global South with no choice but to conform (Sylvester, 1999).

Postcolonialism is especially critical of the dominance of neoliberalism in development studies, upholding the belief that neoliberalism is the problem, not the solution (McEwan, 2009). In contrast to neoliberal institutionalism, postcolonialism disagrees with the way in which these international institutions dominate development discourse and entrench inequalities (Young, 2001). Global agreements such as the MDGs and SDGs “serve to strengthen neoliberal and capitalist ideology by promising change that barely comes” (Klees, 2017). Postcolonialism maintains that while trends in international development are governed by these institutions, change is impossible (Sylvester, 1999). Even trends which are seen to be different, such as participatory development and creating partnerships between the North and South, sustain the same unequal power relations, with actors in the South presenting themselves and acting in a way that aligns with the North to access funding (McEwan, 2009).

Postcolonialism and international development are generally concerned with the same area of the world, both working with the intention of helping the marginalised, however they rarely talk to one another (Strongman, 2014). Postcolonialism criticises the way in which development works, whilst development studies believe that postcolonialism is ignoring the need for action, it is often cited that “development studies does not tend to listen to the subaltern and postcolonial studies

does not tend to concern itself with whether the subaltern is eating” (Sylvester, 1999). However, this is beginning to change, and the value that postcolonialism has when considering development is being recognised. There is no real alternative to development, postcolonialism presents the opportunity to make it better (Sharp and Briggs, 2006).

By giving a voice to community members whose opinions are often not heard, postcolonialism’s critical lens within this study will expose any concerns that those living in the areas that development is working have about their experiences. It will work to interrogate the findings from a critical standpoint, to uncover the limitations of the community schools, their effects on the general level of education, and the feelings of community members towards international organisations. It offers an opposing view to that of neoliberal institutionalism, allowing for a balanced examination of the case study.

2.3. The Global Education Crisis

The importance of education in international development is evident. Neoliberal theorists see education as vital for personal financial improvement: through education an individual has the potential to reach a higher-earning job (Aslam and Rawal, 2015; Hanushek and Woessman, 2015). Others believe there is no simple connection between education level and earnings due to other contributing factors (Wolf, 2002). At a state level, it is commonly believed that a more educated workforce will promote state economic growth (Snowdon, 2015) through increasing human capital (Barro, 2001; Barro; 2013).

Aside from economic advantages connected to neoliberalism, education also has social benefits, helping to create “helpful, thoughtful and understanding human beings who drive social progress” (Centenera, 2015:492), and promoting social cohesion, equity and citizen participation (Russell and Bajaj, 2015). Even Wolf, who is sceptical of the economic benefits, acknowledges that:

“the public benefits of education are not only enormous, but vital to a society’s survival. Morality, social organisation, basic know-how, basic functional knowledge, religious belief (if one considers that to be important), ability to care for and look after oneself and others, are all necessary for a society to function” (2002: 501).

Education is a global priority: it is a human right (Anangisy, 2011), and was included as goal 2 in the MDGs and goal 4 of the SDGs. This global focus on education has vastly improved access for millions of children, with a net enrolment rate in primary school education increase from 8% to 20% between 2000 and 2015 (MDG Monitor, 2017). However, “poor quality is holding back learning even for those who make it to school” (UNESCO, 2014:3). In many places as access increased, the quality decreased due to lack of adequate resources to meet rising demand (Heyneman and Stern, 2014). Those particularly affected are those already most marginalised. Non-state actors have long been educating children across the world, but their recognition by the international community as a way of providing education is a relatively new phenomenon (Dixon, 2013). Literature on this topic remains limited, what follows will outline existing research to inform this study.

2.3.1. In Support of Non-State Actors in Education

As Pauline Rose states, “the role of non-state providers in education is possibly one of the most contentious aspects of education policy debates today” (2009a:128). The role of private actors is recognised, but there is a lack of evidence as to their impact and existing literature is sparse. There are a wide range of non-state actors, from schools charging high fees, to low-fee philanthropic schools, from those that are registered and recognised by the governments to unregistered schools. Much of the literature fails to differentiate between these different school types and come up with a clear definition for what is usually termed “low-fee private schools” (Languille, 2016:529). Even those who seek to differentiate philanthropic from for-profit private schools, find it difficult to categorise as some schools share elements of both (Wales et al., 2015). As such, this literature review includes research on a range of school types, however they are all characterised by their claim of providing private, affordable education to poor children in the Global South. The two main reasons that proponents of non-state actors give for their relevance are that they provide better quality education, and that they effectively reach the poor.

Studies in a number of places from India to Kenya have found that quality of education in the private sector is significantly higher than in the public sector (Tooley et al., 2010; Tooley et al., 2011; Dixon et al., 2015). Teachers are often absent from the classroom and lack motivation; their jobs are protected by the state meaning they face no repercussions for their failings (Philipson, 2008; Dixon, 2012; Ashley et al., 2014). By charging fees, private schools are accountable to the parents, if the school is deficient parents can send their children elsewhere. Dixon et al. (2015) go as far as to argue that these market forces mean that the private sector provides the only sustainable and

scalable model for education provision, and that aid agencies and the government should not intervene. There has been a recent focus by private investors into the profitability-potential of private education provision (Caerus Capital, 2017). Stanfield believes that local, national or international corporations should invest in education, a profitable enterprise for businesses while improving quality of education (2015). Coulson agrees that the best quality education is in countries applying free-market policies (2009), however he does not differentiate here between elite and low-fee paying schools.

Proponents of low-fee private schools claim that they are accessible to the poorest. They argue that parents prefer to send their children to private school, and are happy to make a small contribution to ensure their children get quality education (Tooley and Rangaraju, 2015). Furthermore, 'free' government schools often have hidden costs, with parents being required to buy equipment or learning materials, which is often comparable to low fees charged at private schools (Philipson, 2008; Unterhalter, 2015b). Private schools are less restricted by government regulation, so are seen to utilise more innovative pedagogies and adapt their teaching methods to suit the needs of their pupils (Wales et al., 2015).

With natural limits to what an overburdened public sector can achieve, the private sector is reducing the pressure and providing a valuable service (Heyneman and Stern, 2015). With higher quality education, parents are voting with their feet and choosing private education where it is available (Dixon, 2012; Tooley and Rangaraju, 2015). Muralidharan and Sundararaman found that in India, having private schools had no negative spill over effects to the education quality in nearby government schools (2015), and Thapa found that in Nepal, the existence of private schools had a positive

effect on government schools (2013). These proponents largely correlate with neoliberal intuitionism, maintaining the belief that education in the Global South can be improved through interventions and strategies supported by the West, including the SDGS, and that neoliberal markets are best placed to do this.

2.3.2. Against Non-State Actors in Education

Despite the growing prevalence of private schools, many remain convinced that governments should be the only providers of education and that non-state actors are negatively impacting on attempts to improve education quality across the globe. Heyneman and Stern maintain that as a human right, the government are the best placed to provide equitable access to education (2015). The main arguments against non-state actors are that they increase existing inequalities; present unjust choices for parents to have to make; undermine the government system; and are not of better quality.

The most prevalent argument given against the effectiveness of low-fee private schools in the Global South is that they exacerbate inequality, as the poorest are still unable to pay even the small fees charged by the schools (Watkins, 2004; Akaguri, 2013; Stern, 2014; Härma, 2015; Maeda, 2015; Languille, 2015). In rural Kenya, Nishimura and Yamano found that the poorest are left attending failing state schools while those already in an advantaged social position access the benefits of quality education (2013). Competition between schools means that those offering higher quality education can charge more, the best teachers are then attracted to better schools which can afford to pay higher salaries (Maeda, 2015). Private schools which

charge lower fees, those aimed at the poorest, pay teachers less, creating a risk of the best teachers leaving (Härma, 2015). Sarangapani and Winch found that in India, schools claiming to offer free places to children from poor families, offered these places to the most intelligent students, who will achieve high grades and further the school's image, and not to the poorest (2010). In rural areas, where many of the poorest live, the smaller population means there is less demand for schools, so market forces cannot be relied on to increase quality, and this already marginalised group are further marginalised (Härma, 2015). There is also evidence that inequalities are exacerbated between genders, as when poor parents can only afford to send one child to school, it is often the boy that is chosen, leaving girls in the inferior government school (Härma, 2015).

A further argument against low-fee paying schools is that charging parents for education places a burden on a family's limited resources, diverting money away from other essential needs such as healthcare and shelter (Watkins, 2004; Stern, 2014, Härma, 2015). Robertson and Dale believe that forcing such a choice on poor parents is an infringement of social justice, and that markets are "incapable of providing socially-just outcomes" (2013:441). Härma found that in India, parents send children to private schools because of the better quality, but that they view their for-profit model with suspicion, and would prefer an improved public system (2009).

Thirdly, private actors are often seen to be undermining the state, "non-state provision may pose more political challenges than the proponents recognize" (Cammett and MacLean, 2011). By providing an alternative, non-state actors are decreasing the pressure on the state system to improve (Stern, 2014). Despite the fact that non-state actors are providing education to many, their coverage is not

widespread and those without access to alternatives are left in schools of declining quality – again further reinforcing social divisions of labour (Robertson and Dale, 2013). Philipson believes that with reform, the state system is capable of addressing the issues which are causing poor quality (2008).

Finally, issues have been identified in measuring this perceived quality difference between state and private schools. Sarangapani and Winch (2010) pointed out flaws in Tooley et al.'s (2010) study in India, including the fact that the indicators used were insufficient, looking only at the resources available to the school and not at the teaching styles. UNESCO have stated that the “public-private gap is likely attributable to the fact that students from wealthier backgrounds typically attend private schools” (2015:216), and Hedges et al. (2016) stress that there are other social and cultural factors which also come into play for parents when choosing where their children are educated.

Opponents of private actors in education associate with critical, postcolonial perspectives. They believe that neoliberal discourses are damaging to countries in the Global South, and that markets are not only incapable of providing an equitable access to quality education, but are damaging efforts made by states to improve the public sector. They see value in education not as solely linked to economic advantages, but "as a site where it is possible to resist dominant discursive practices" (Rizvi et al., 2006).

2.3.3. Community Schools

Views on non-state actors are clearly divided and research in the area is fragmented and weak. Some authors are strongly in support of the possibility for non-state actors to provide education, whereas others believe the government should be the only provider. Many tread a middle ground – they are wary of the negative effects non-state actors are having on wider society and believe that the government is best placed to provide equitable education, however they recognise the immediate benefits that non-state actors are providing for the poor where state systems are lacking (Hillman and Jenker, 2002; Emmett, 2006; Rose, 2009b; Stern, 2014).

Research on community schools is severely lacking. Few researchers acknowledge their existence, but exclude them from discussions (Philipson, 2008; Srivastava 2013), and the majority make no differentiation between different private providers. Rose believes that community schools are reaching remote communities otherwise excluded, but has concerns about their sustainability as they are unable to run without external support (2007). Maeda sees community involvement as complementary to government efforts, however states that “research about family and community connections with schools is still not sufficient and [has] not addressed clear approaches for practitioners to follow” (2015:179-190). Wales et al. (2015) wrote about philanthropic schools which generally do not charge fees or are heavily subsidised by external bodies. In 2007, Glassman et al. undertook a study into community schools supported by Save the Children, which all had the aim of ultimately being absorbed into the state system. Reports from DFID identified a need for expanded ethnographic evidence on user choice and preference of the poor, the role of international organisations in non-state education provision, and an expansion of

evidence from sub-Saharan Africa (Ashley et al., 2014; Wales et al., 2015; Ashley and Wales, 2015). This study will contribute to existing research on private provision, by adding to the very limited existing research on community schools.

2.4. Intersection with the Theoretical Framework

The two theories of IPE, neoliberal institutionalism and postcolonialism, will provide a worthy insight into whether community schools have the potential to address the global education crisis. Neoliberal institutionalism is founded in the belief that international regimes are essential for maintaining global stability, and that organising international politics through such institutions will produce mutual benefits. COCO is an international institution in itself, and is working towards the globally ratified SDGs by helping provide education to marginalised children. From a neoliberal institutional perspective, by improving quality of education and aiding development, COCO and the SDGs are helping to maintain global stability. COCO's work is situated in this global framework, and as such neoliberal institutionalism provides an effective standpoint from which to examine the effectiveness of community schools in providing quality education for the poor, using the case study of Hoja Secondary.

Postcolonialism provides a critical examination of the case-study, uncovering preconceptions and concerns that exist. Postcolonialism questions development and ensures that the voices of those that development seeks to help are heard. COCO, as an international organisation working in the Global North is complicit in forming knowledge about the South, and has a part to play in ensuring interventions and partnerships are to the benefit of local people and are not simply an act of cultural

imperialism. Taking a postcolonial stance will allow a thorough critique of the case study and will uncover any negative impacts that community schools are having on the wider community and expose their limitations.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter will describe the chosen case study and its relevance to international politics, explain the methods used in collecting primary data, and delimit the research. Qualitative research methods were chosen to allow in-depth study of the opinions and views of the people who are impacted by the community schools. These methods “can be used to ensure that development programmes resonate with local realities and expectations” (Skovdal and Cornish, 2015:43), and to give a voice to the otherwise often marginalised (Vaughan, 2015). By listening to individuals, it is ensuring a critical postcolonial opposition and a cognisance of “the position and powers of the research and the politics of doing research” (Brockington and Sullivan, 2003:72).

3.1. The Case Study

An in-depth case study allows in-depth understanding of a specific phenomenon in order to “permit the researcher to effectively understand how the subject operates or functions” (Berg, 2007:283). The case study of COCO’s Schools for Life programme will be used to provide insight as to the potential for community schools to address the issue of poor quality education in the Global South. Two secondary schools supported by COCO, Hoja Secondary School and Kindimba Secondary School, have been visited, alongside one nearby government school for comparison. A selection of parents from all schools were interviewed.

Hoja Secondary School is a community school, set up with the ongoing support of COCO, an INGO based in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK. COCO’s mission is “to provide sustainable sources of quality education to children living in poor and marginalised

communities” (COCO, 2017a). This is achieved by partnering with local Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in East Africa (COCO, 2017a) which have demonstrated a desire to improve their children’s education by establishing a school themselves or asking for support to create one. In Southern Tanzania, COCO works with a local CBO, Hoja Project, in order to implement, monitor and evaluate the programmes.

Hoja Secondary School has achieved the highest grades in the region for the past five years (COCO, 2017b), demonstrating the high quality of academic education being offered at the community school. It has become the model school for the Schools for Life programme, which aims to replicate the success of Hoja Secondary to more children in marginalised communities. Kindimba Secondary was established in 2014, with an additional year group being added each year. It does not yet have form four, so has not participated in national exams, but is faring well in internal Schools for Life exams. This case study provides a rich understanding of the potential for community schools to tackle the global education crisis.

3.2. Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews constituted the main method of data collection. 15 formal interviews were conducted with parents of children in both government and secondary schools, with several of the parents having experience in both sectors. Eight of the parents were male and seven were female; they were aged between 35 and 57. Eight of the parents solely farmed, four more farmed and had an extra source of income, two had other occupations and one could not work due to health issues. Access to the interviewees was achieved through a gatekeeper (Nash, 2000) from Hoja

Project, who also approached and asked parents for their cooperation, using a convenience sample (Skovdal and Cornish, 2015). Interviews were conducted in Kiswahili, using a translator, and were recorded and transcribed at a later time for analysis. The interviews lasted between 15 and 50 minutes, depending on the knowledge and openness of the interviewee. They took place at the parents' homes, or at the school site. Interviewees were asked "open, non-directive questions" (Irvine, 2012:291). Interviewees voluntarily participated, and interviews were conducted in accordance with Newcastle University research ethics and in consideration of wider ethics implications to protect participants (Banks, 2012). An overview of participants and an example interview transcript are attached in the appendix.

The translator often changed between first and third person when interpreting. Interviews were transcribed ad-verbatim, although for consistency were altered to all be in the first person. Thematic analysis was then applied to the interviews, which brought to light emerging themes by allowing the researcher to "index and organize [...] data into themes, with the aim of unpacking a story within the data" (Skovdal and Cornish, 2015:164).

3.3. Ethnography and participant observation

Participant observation involves immersing yourself in a place and living with the people to better understand their lives (Brockington and Sullivan, 2003). Being within Tanzania for over four weeks allowed time for acclimatisation and understanding of the communities before beginning formal research, which helped to give a more balanced and comprehensive case study. A field diary was kept of relevant

observations made at the school sites, records of informal conversations held with teachers, head teachers, and staff at Hoja Project, and to make note of other appropriate observations.

3.4. Limitations

Although all efforts were made to ensure the data collected was accurate and relevant, several limitations must be recognised and acknowledged before analysing data. “No research (or researcher) is completely objective and without position” (Vaughan, 2015:80), to overcome this it is necessary to recognise prior influences and preconceptions to minimise their impact. Both the researcher and translators have an affiliation to COCO: applying a critical perspective, ensuring open questions, and recognising prior biases, minimised any effect that this may have.

These associations with COCO and Hoja Project may also have influenced the way interviewees answered, possibly answering the way they think they should, rather than honestly. This was minimised through being open and transparent about the research aims, guaranteeing anonymity, and maintaining a comfortable environment. Interviewees were open, and happy to share advice and criticisms of the schools and organisations even when teachers and staff were present. Further limitations surround my position as a researcher. Being an outsider and not speaking the language may have affected the way that people spoke in my presence (Razavi, 1992). This was minimised by conducting interviews in Kiswahili with the help of a local Tanzanian. Ethics of undertaking fieldwork in a development setting must also be considered, to ensure sensitivity. This is particularly poignant when applying a postcolonial

perspective, recognising a researcher's role in disrupting or maintaining existing power relations (Scheyvens and Storey, 2003).

Having a male translator and female interviewer present aimed to limit any power-relation issues surrounding gender, and to make all interviewees feel as comfortable as possible. Interviews with male parents tended to be longer than those with female parents, although this was not universal. This could suggest some cultural issues with women feeling less comfortable opening up and speaking to men. Religion could have posed a further limitation. Most of the population in this area of Tanzania is Christian, as were the translators, however there was no difference in the openness of parents or teachers who were Muslim, so no evidence of underlying power relations at play.

Finally, this case study does not aim to give a definitive answer to the issue of global education. "Small scale interviewing cannot and should not strive for 'representativeness', nor should it claim to generalise for the whole population" (Skovdal and Cornish, 2015:71). This research is bound by space and time, "the situation in every region and every country is so context-specific that comparisons and aggregations are extremely difficult" (Kitaev, 2009:108). Even within a region, individual communities will act differently (Maeda, 2015). The aim of the study is to evaluate their impact within these limitations to determine their potential to improve education quality within this area. These results will then provide recommendations for international development policy and for further research on the topic.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter will present the results from the empirical data collected during the primary research, determining the emerging themes and trends from the interviews and observations while in the field.

4.1. Quality of Education

In the interviews, quality of education was discussed in depth. Schools were referred to as either private or government, with no differentiation for community schools, although parents of children in community schools generally referred specifically to them. All respondents agreed that private schools provide better quality education than government schools. Tishala, a mother of a child attending a government school, said “on the side of the private schools we see that there is no problem, the only problem is on the side of the government schools.” Amongst parents of children in private schools, quality of education was the primary driver of school choice. In the interviews, parents discussed the hopes that they have for their children’s futures. All of the parents with a negative outlook were parents of children in government schools. When asked whether he thought his children would achieve their dreams of finding a professional job, Justo said, “I have completely no hope for that, because they are there in a government school.” Aisha’s son attends a community school and would like to become a nursing officer; Aisha believes this goal is achievable, saying “I am quite hopeful, I don’t see any challenge.” It is clear that parents believe that sending their child to a community school gives them a better

outlook, in contrast to parents in government schools. All but two of the respondents stated that they would prefer for their child to be privately educated.

One of the anomalies, Akina, said “for the time being, the education is good” adding that proximity to the school was her primary concern. The other parent, Jeremy, did not explicitly give a preference to government or private schools, although one of his daughters attends a government school in the nearest town, which another parent (Gaston) mentioned provides better quality education than their local government school. Both of these parents are comparatively well educated, and wealthier than the other parents. The first is a nurse, working for a local NGO helping orphans. The second a successful farmer, one of only two parents able to speak English. His house is larger than the others with more luxuries, including electricity. Having a higher socioeconomic status is often linked to higher academic achievement (APA, 2017), which could explain these parents’ contentment with their children’s government education.

The following two sections will discuss the predominant two themes which emerged from discussions, highlighting the two main perceived contributors to better quality education: teaching and facilities.

4.1.1. Teaching

The majority of respondents mentioned teaching during the interviews, typically in relation to their contribution to achieving quality. Shukrani’s four older children attend government schools, but her youngest attends Kindimba Secondary School. When explaining why she felt the quality was better at Kindimba she said: “I

think that the teachers here [at Kindimba] are better than teachers on the other side.” Six respondents blame individual teachers for the inferior quality, believing that teachers in government schools “are not committed” (Shukrani), that they put in minimal effort, with little regard for the students’ performances. Justo explained that the staff and teachers “do not work as they are supposed to work, they simply do as if they are working, but they are not working”, and Gaston believes that the teachers in government schools are “just waiting for their salaries.”

Some parents believe that the lack of motivation is a structural problem, stemming from government authorities and reaching down to school level. Rashidi, who used to be ward councillor for the area, explained that the structure of the government education system is flawed. He described how those in positions of power are often inexperienced and poorly educated, meaning that they cannot effectively assess the quality of education or exercise authority over those below them. Agnes believes teachers are subject to unduly close supervision and harsh treatment in government schools. Others suggested that the government could motivate the teachers by taking better care of them. Tishala said that “the school staff are too low paid, that is the reason for the poor performance.” Agnes told that low wages mean teachers often have to work two jobs, “so they get to school when they are already tired.” Parents also mentioned that teachers and staff should be provided with other social services, including accommodation.

Teachers and staff at Hoja Project and Schools for Life displayed enthusiasm for their work and were evidently proud of their school. When visiting the government school, teachers greeted us and walked us around the school grounds but gave little information about the school unless explicitly asked. At the Schools for Life staff were

eager to show their schools and explain how they are successful. One of the reasons for their high levels of motivation is the organisational structure and governance of the schools by Hoja Project and senior staff. All of the teachers commended the positive environment in the school. One headteacher said: “I enjoy the cooperation from our teachers; that makes our school to be first [in the region] all the time” (Mr Kiongozi). A teacher at the same school also cited the supportive environment as one of the things he enjoys most about his job (Mr. Ndege). It was evident that school staff are appreciated by Hoja Project. Three of the teachers met have been supported through additional training to improve their teaching by Hoja Project. This respect throughout the structure of the schools allows for a conducive working and learning environment. The staff work together to ensure that they are as successful as possible, and feel a sense of ownership and pride in the schools.

Staff in Schools for Life are paid, on average, less than half of their government counterparts, showing high wages are not the primary motivator. Sometimes teachers leave their roles in Schools for Life and take better-paid jobs in the government sector. However, the teachers interviewed were content with their wage, and were more driven by the job itself than the money. The director of Hoja Project was himself offered a job by the government at a regional level, in which he would have received monetary and material benefits, but turned this down in favour of a role in which he can see the positive impact he is having. Some of the teachers mentioned being paid fairly as a benefit of their job, and all mentioned being paid on time, suggesting that this is not always the case elsewhere.

Despite being private schools, one of the most cited grievances of staff and teachers in Schools for Life was the government. The government controls the national

curriculum and national exams. Staff at both government and private schools expressed their frustration that the curriculum changes frequently and that exam dates are often moved suddenly at only days' notice. This inconvenience makes planning lessons difficult and costs the school extra money when new resources need to be purchased. Even this limited amount of contact with the government system is frustrating to teachers in community schools.

Finally, when parents spoke about their children's futures, becoming a teacher was one of the jobs most often mentioned as an aspirational occupation for their children, alongside nursing. Teaching is a favourable career choice, and as such is respected in the community. Teachers are vital to improving the quality of education, and lack of teachers' motivation is a contributor to poor quality education in government schools. In community schools, personal motivations and a supportive environment are more important than salary to motivate staff and improve education quality.

4.1.2. Facilities

It is clear that parents consider better availability of facilities to contribute to higher quality education. Parents at all schools mentioned a desire for increase in facilities, at state schools to improve the quality up to that of private schools, and in private schools to improve the quality further and to increase the access of the schools to more children. Observations when visiting the three schools highlighted the difference in availability and quality of facilities. Kindimba Secondary School has been open less than three years; the buildings are new, well-equipped, and well cared for.

Both Schools for Life have a fully equipped IT classroom powered by solar energy and science laboratories, as well as dormitories, at least one permanent source of water, and a garden in which they grow crops for school meals and to sell. The Schools for Life are highly-efficient, to reduce waste, save money and maximise income to sustain the school while keeping fees low. Facilities in the government school were adequate, the buildings were safe and secure and equipped with the necessary furniture. Notably, their IT classroom was empty, and no science laboratory was seen. It is located in an area similar to Hoja Secondary.

Respondents mentioned facilities most often in relation to Schools for Life, affirming the notion that better facilities allow for better quality education. Zakia said “I chose to send my children to Hoja because of the educational facilities and other social services available there,” which include an on-site clinic and dispensary for students and the surrounding community. Conversely, when discussing ways in which government schools could be improved, increased availability of facilities was one of the most-cited suggestions. Aisha stated that government schools “should have a good source of water, something which is not available right now”, alongside the addition of dormitories for children to sleep in. Parents clearly see a link between facilities and quality of education, the difference in access between the sectors is seen as the second largest contributor to the discrepancies in quality.

Finally, facilities were mentioned by parents at Schools for Life when discussing possible improvements, typically to increase the number of children able to attend Schools for Life. Ahmed suggested that Hoja Secondary management should “build other classes and laboratories and dormitories, so that we can accommodate more students.” Head teacher Mr Kiongozi has similar desires, he said:

“the only challenge that I face at work is inadequate amount of teaching facilities compared with the number of students, because we want to increase the number of students in the school so more children can benefit from the quality of education, but don’t have enough facilities present.”

Some parents would like an increase in facilities so that the schools offer education up to Form Six (A-level equivalent), beyond the existing Form Four limit (GCSE equivalent). At Kindimba Secondary School, Rashidi said: “I would like this school to have Form Five and Form Six, which will take kids from this school and from that government school.”

Access to facilities is viewed as an important factor when considering quality of education. Parents consider the availability of facilities when considering which to school to send their children to, and see the lack of facilities as a reason for the poorer standard of education in government schools. Parents at all schools mentioned facilities when discussing possible ways to improve education quality.

4.2. Money

The third major theme of money was predominantly mentioned by parents of children in government schools. All of the parents of children attending government schools who would like their children to attend private school, said they could not afford to do so. Gaston’s explanation is illustrative of their feelings: “private schools mostly are very expensive to send our children to. Most parents would prefer to send their children to private schools but they can’t because of money.” Parents are unaware that community schools aim to provide education to children from low

income families, and that most of their places are reserved for these children. Rashidi, who sends his relative's daughter to Kindimba Secondary, said "there are many, many more students from outside Kindimba who need the service, just they don't know if they can use this chance here."

Affordability was mentioned by over half of parents of children in Schools for Life as a benefit of community schools. Zakia pays less to send his children to Hoja Secondary than he would to send them to a government school, explaining that "in government schools, they are supposed to pay or contribute a lot in terms of contributions." Parents at the community school were grateful to be able to pay fees in instalments. Only two of the parents interviewed complained of having difficulty paying their school fees. One of these was the parent of children in a different private school, he told us that "over 90% of this [income] I am going to spend on education. I am sacrificing for that, so that my kids are getting quality education" (Sadiki). The other parent, Shukrani, is a single mother of five, who can no longer farm due to health issues. One of her daughters attends a community school; she explained that her daughter "is sponsored, but I am paying a little by cooking local beer, getting money, and paying such a small portion. But I would not be able to pay the full amount."

The research has shown that money is an important factor for parents of children both in government and community schools. Those in government schools feel that their low income is a barrier to their children accessing private education. In community schools, those of low income see the low fees offered and the ability to pay in instalments as an advantage, and that fees in community schools are lower than those in government schools. Paying fees is not a difficulty for the vast majority of parents.

4.3. Further Trends

Aside from these major emerging trends, specific questions were asked to uncover critical opinions of the interviewees. These relate to their opinions on how private schools impact government schools, and their views on intervention by international organisations. Each of these will be briefly discussed.

4.3.1. Impact on Government Schools

When asked whether they felt private schools were having an effect on government schools, parents of children in all schools unanimously stated that they thought they were having a positive effect. All of the parents believe private schools play an important role in education, the majority stating that they believe they are providing a welcome challenge to government schools, encouraging improvement and providing an example to follow. Some parents don't see an active change, Zakia said "the government should just take some of the strategies from the private sector, just like Hoja, then they can implement on their side." Others can see actual effects: "we are having these private schools like Hoja, [so] the government schools are forced to work, they have to put in some more efforts in the government run schools so that they may match up. They are just starting to do that" (Dalila). Some parents see the comparison that private schools provide as essential to improving the general quality: if there was no comparison to make, the government schools would never improve. Two parents expressed concerns, explaining that although beneficial, private schools disproportionately benefit the children who attend. One stated that these children are

wealthier children, but goes on to say that this means less children are in government schools, meaning smaller class sizes and improved quality.

4.3.2. International Organisations

Discussions were also held around international organisations, to expose critical feelings towards their involvement in the education system. All of the parents welcomed their contributions, only two parents expressed any concerns. None of the parents of children at government schools showed any aversion towards the organisations. More than half of respondents stated that they would like these organisations to do more. Tishala, a parent of a child in a government school said: “they are most welcome [...] they should continue working with these schools, and if possible also with the government schools.” Rashidi explained that “the government can never do everything, so some of the things the international organisations are helping like what the government should do.”

Although he believes that in general, international organisations are having a positive effect on the level of education, Gaston expressed three concerns about international organisations establishing schools. Firstly, he had heard of schools running without proper government registration, resulting in invalid qualifications for graduates. Secondly, he worries that some organisations are running schools for profit, which is ineffective, and when there is no profit they close the school, abandoning the students. Finally, he thinks that these schools are only accessible to wealthy children. Jeremy also expressed concerns with accessibility, saying: “but what I know, is that those joining these private schools have very good or high marks, if you have low

marks you won't go there, they won't accept it." This concern is valid for community schools, as Schools for Life hold entrance exams to allocate their limited number of places. Overall, respondents see international organisations as a positive force in education, with concerns mainly being expressed with regards to access, as well as the competency and motivations of the individual organisations.

4.4. Summary

This chapter has outlined the findings from primary research conducted in Tanzania. The research found that for parents, quality is the main concern when choosing where they would like their children to go to school, and all agreed that the quality in private schools is superior to that in government schools. Parents of children who attend community schools have a positive outlook for their children's futures, whereas parents of children in government schools have low aspirations. Staffing and facilities are seen as the most important contributors to good quality education. Money is the third major theme. For parents of children in government schools, cost is perceived as the main barrier to sending their children to a private school. Conversely, parents at community schools mentioned affordability as a benefit. Parents think that private schools are having a positive effect on government schools, giving them some competition and providing an example for the government schools to follow. Respondents also view the role of international organisations as positive, with few giving any criticisms. These major themes will help to answer the main research questions in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter will apply the political theories of neoliberal institutionalism and postcolonialism to the primary research and existing literature. Similarities and differences between the literature and the case study will be outlined in order to answer the five research questions. It will conclude that community schools fit within neither neoliberal institutionalism nor postcolonialism, but can benefit from and offer something novel to both approaches. Community schools provide a valuable and welcome alternative to government schools in the Global South, providing better quality education to the poorest. The model overcomes several of the criticisms made against private provision, however it remains limited in reach and less desirable than good quality government provision. Further research is required to determine the impact of community schools on wider education goals. Each of the five research questions will be answered in turn.

5.1. What are local perceptions of community schools supported by international NGOs in Ruvuma, Tanzania?

This first question situates the research within the broader theoretical perspectives and confronts postcolonialism's critique of international development. Neoliberal institutionalism bases itself on the idea that international organisations create social cohesion and mutually beneficial outcomes (Keohane, 1989). Existing literature has praised the work of NGOs and charities in improving quality and access to education for vulnerable and marginalised children (Rose, 2007; Ashley and Wales, 2015), however postcolonialism critiques development assistance, asserting that even

with good intentions development programmes can entrench existing global inequalities, painting the Global North as saviours and ignoring marginalised voices in the Global South (McEwan, 2009).

The interviews took a postcolonial stance and listened to the views of the marginalised. All parents expressed appreciation of the community schools being established and supported. One parent mentioned concerns surrounding registration with the government, and the fact that some profit-oriented schools have closed due to financial viability, which corroborates similar criticisms from existing literature of relying on market forces (Robertson and Dale, 2013). The Schools for Life model avoids these two criticisms. They are registered with the government, and Hoja Secondary was recognised as one of the most improved non-government schools in the country in 2016 by the Tanzanian government (COCO, 2016b). Community schools are not run for-profit, and income generation and money saving schemes ensure that the schools become operationally self-sustainable, meaning that they are not reliant on external support for running costs. Postcolonialism ensures that the voices of the marginalised are heard (McEwan, 2009), however the voices in the research side with neoliberal institutionalism in that they see international organisations working in their communities as not only welcome but vital (Saryal, 2015). There is no real alternative to development, so postcolonialism can help to make it better (Sharp and Briggs, 2006).

5.2. What are parents' priorities when choosing where to send their children to school?

Education is a priority in international relations, as well as to individual parents. Both the research and existing literature agree that good quality education is the primary consideration when choosing which school their children will attend. Theorists aligning with both neoliberal institutionalism and postcolonialism value education, but disagree as to why it is important and how it should be delivered. Proponents of neoliberalism value education in terms of economics; educating an individual will equip them to find employment, increasing their income and furthering their own and their country's economic development (Barro, 2001; Barro, 2013; Aslam and Rawal, 2015; Hanushek and Woessman, 2015; Snowden, 2015). Critical theorists believe that education should not be about economic gains, and that focussing on these outcomes will further entrench existing global inequalities (Sharma-Brymer, 2009). Instead, they view education as important for individual and collective social development, particularly of those usually marginalised, to ensure equality and to give voices to those usually overlooked (Rizvi et al., 2006; Centenera, 2015; Russell and Bajaj, 2015). Regardless of these disagreements and this important consideration, education is important to all.

The primary research confirmed that parents living in poor areas of Ruvuma region, Tanzania, see education as vital to improving their children's futures. Parents have no faith in the government system, interviewees almost universally believe that the private sector provides better quality education. Parents of children in community schools have high hopes for their children's futures, whereas parents of children in government schools have little hope. Existing literature found that facilities are better

in the private sector (Tooley et al., 2011; Walford, 2011), which the primary research supports. Access to facilities was found to be one of the main signifiers of quality education; facilities were visibly superior in community schools than government schools and were cited by interviewees as one of the main attractions to the community schools and suggested areas for improvement in government schools.

Good quality teaching is vital to good quality education (Bainton et al., 2016). Prior research is split as to whether private schools provide better or worse quality teaching. Härma believes that in private schools “the result of poor pay and benefits is lack of strong commitment and motivation” (2015:183). Whereas Dixon et al. found the opposite to be true, that increased accountability increases teacher motivation and quality (2015). The primary research confirmed the importance of teachers. Many of the parents agreed with Härma’s sentiment that a high salary is key to motivation, and see this as the reason for better quality in private schools – however this was found not to be the case in community schools. In community schools, the evidence shows that it is the management and structure of the schools and individual motivations which improve staff dedication. As teachers are paid less than their government counterparts, a personal desire to teach in community schools motivates teachers to work hard, for a smaller salary. Some teachers do leave for higher-paid jobs in government schools, but those interviewed expressed pride and commitment to their jobs – stating the support network and collaboration between staff, teachers, and management as a key advantage to working in a community school. They also stated being paid fairly and on time as a benefit of their job. Although by their very nature, community schools are set up by, and with the support of, local communities, none of

the parents directly mentioned accountability to them as a motivator for teachers as Dixon et al. (2015) found.

When considering school choice, parents' first priority is quality of education. Agreeing with existing literature, quality is seen to be superior in private schools in comparison to government schools. Teaching and facilities were mentioned as the main reasons for this, in concordance with the literature. However, rather than improved accountability to parents, the research uncovered that the primary reason for improved teaching in government schools is staff structure. Resources are also seen to be an important factor. By interviewing parents and teachers, who often overlooked by development projects, this research has revealed what is important to teachers and parents and what they believe constitutes good quality education.

5.3. Are community schools reaching the poorest?

The predominant barrier cited in the literature to accessing private education is cost: researchers are divided as to whether non-state provision of education in the Global South reaches the poor. Proponents of neoliberal institutionalism and private sector education argue that low-fee private schools provide affordable education even for the poorest families (Tooley and Rangaraju, 2015); that parents are happy to pay a small cost for quality education (Dixon et al., 2015); and that they often provide a cheaper alternative to government provision, which doesn't charge fees but includes hidden costs (Philipson, 2008; Unterhalter, 2015b). Postcolonial research has argued that charging fees makes private schools inaccessible to the poorest (Nishimuri and Yamano, 2012), exacerbating existing inequalities and entrenching the existing

neoliberal global system by focussing on market forces rather than socially-just means of distribution.

For parents whose children are attending community schools, the research found almost no difficulties paying fees. Several parents noted the cheap cost as an attraction to the school, alongside the option to pay fees in instalments. The parents interviewed were predominantly farmers, living in small houses with minimal disposable income. Their lifestyles, homes, and livelihoods were comparable to those of parents with children in government schools. Despite the fact that parents are able to pay, the debate remains as to whether it is moral to charge poor parents for education at all, and whether doing so places an intolerable burden on their low income (Watkins, 2004; Stern, 2014; Härma, 2015). It is preferable for all children to have access to free, good quality education (Heyneman and Stern, 2014) and the only way to achieve that is through the state (Hillman and Jenker, 2002). However, both the literature and the interviews confirm that education provided by the government is not actually free (Philipson, 2008; Unterhalter, 2015b), currently community schools place equivalent or reduced financial pressures on low-income families.

The research substantiates existing limited research that suggests philanthropic schools reach the poor (Ashley and Wales, 2015), however does not disprove the fact that other low-fee schools are unaffordable to the poor. Community schools offer a different model to the majority of low-fee private schools. Operating not for-profit, community schools do not rely on market principles as neoliberal theorists endorse; and effectively provide for and work with marginalised individuals, which postcolonial theory prioritises. As such, they fit in the middle of the two political theories. Charging

the poor for education remains undesirable, but as long as government provision also costs, community schools are providing a better service, often for a cheaper price.

5.4. What are the barriers preventing parents from accessing community schools?

Although community schools are evidently reaching some of the poorest parents, barriers still prevent some from sending their children to these schools. As previously discussed, the predominant barrier expressed in the literature is relative income, with the poorest families unable to afford fees. This is also linked to geography, with low-fee schools largely located in more affluent urban areas, neglecting rural areas (Härma, 2015). Previous studies have also touched upon issues of selecting the best candidates (Sarangapani and Winch, 2010), however this has not been examined in detail. Three potential limitations will be discussed here: cost, geography, and entrance exams.

Firstly, the majority of parents with children in government schools perceive cost as the main barrier to accessing private education, despite the fact that community schools provide for the poor. Although many private schools may be unaffordable to the majority, parents are unaware of the existence of community schools or that they target low-income families. Those parents who had heard of a community school, reiterated that it was out of their financial reach and associated it with other private schools. Although community schools cater for the poor, many parents are ignorant of this. From a critical perspective, this suggests inequality of access. The research does not uncover where this inequality stems from, the main differentiator is geographical location. Families close by are more aware and likely to

have children attend these schools. There could be alternative underlying structural issues, if information is passed by word of mouth through social networks, unknowingly the school could be admitting only children from a certain social background. This is something that further research could uncover, or which could be avoided through more widespread publicity. The second potential barrier mentioned in the literature, is location – most low-fee private schools are located in urban areas, furthering marginalising the rural poor (Lewin, 2007; Härma, 2015). However, this research found that community schools cater for poor rural communities. The majority of parents interviewed were small scale farmers with low-income; community schools are providing a service for this marginalised group, working to counter existing inequalities.

Sarangapani and Winch mention that some low-fee schools in India were found to offer free places as rewards to the brightest students in the school, in order to further the school's image, rather than admitting the poorest (2010). However, existing literature does not mention entrance exams, which was considered a concern by one interviewee. Schools for Life hold entrance exams to select students, as places are vastly oversubscribed, particularly at Hoja Secondary due to its high academic achievements. A minimum of 60% of places are reserved for children from low socio-economic backgrounds; the fees from the remaining 40% are essential to sustaining the school and ensuring low fees for those unable to pay. Regardless, entrance exams pose an area of concern to critical theorists, as they could still favour the wealthiest within the low-socioeconomic bracket. Wealthier parents are likely to be better educated themselves, and their children more likely to be able to access better primary schools or extra academic support (Burkam and Lee, 2002). Even if all children

have equal access to the places, it remains contentious as to whether entrance exams provide a fair means of allocating places, and the impact on the children who aren't selected must be considered. Such a discussion is an important one, and one which should be considered in further research.

Critical examination exposes barriers in access to community schools for children in the Ruvuma region. Existing critical literature states that cost is a barrier to poor parents (Nishimuri and Yamono, 2012), and although community schools are accessible to the poor, parents of children in government schools perceive this barrier. This highlights the fact that many parents are unaware of the opportunity to access affordable education in community schools, something not covered in existing literature. Unlike other low-fee private schools which are seen to exclude the rural poor (Lewin, 2007; Härma, 2015), community schools serve children in rural areas. An additional barrier that this research has uncovered is the utilisation of entrance examinations to distribute places. These barriers may reinforce existing unequal power relations within communities, and advantage already more privileged children.

5.5. What are the limitations of community schools?

Aside from individual barriers, it is important to consider the wider implications of community schools. This question takes a critical standpoint, considering limitations mentioned in the literature and primary research and applying them to the case study of community schools.

The primary criticism of private providers of education is the fact that they exacerbate existing inequality (Watkins, 2004; Akaguri, 2013; Stern, 2014; Härma,

2015; Maeda, 2015; Languille, 2015). There are a limited number of places in the schools, leaving them “out of reach for the vast majority of poor parents” (Watkins, 2004:8). Parents with a higher income whose children fail to get a place in a community school will have the ability to send their children to alternate private schools, including boarding schools further afield. Children from poorer families do not have this option, and will be left in government schools or out of school if places are also limited in government schools, as at Kindimba. Härma found that families who could not afford to send all their children to private school would prioritise girls (2015), this was not found in the primary research, the main determiner of which children access private school is birth order, with younger children taking preference. This could be because the community schools are a relatively new phenomenon, and does not prove that gender is not a consideration.

The community schools go some way to disrupting existing divisions of labour, by providing quality education to a limited number of poor children. However, the scale is limited by the financial resources available to support and establish new community schools. Community schools are providing an alternative, and increased support and acknowledgement of the model by donors and other international organisations could broaden their reach and impact. In reality community schools cannot be built and sustained in every village quickly enough to tackle the global education crisis alone. They supplement government efforts where quality and reach is lacking, however in agreement with postcolonial thought, private schools are “second best to free-access, publicly financed, quality education” (Hillman and Jenker, 2002:27).

A further limitation uncovered in the literature review is that private provision decreases quality in government schools (Cammett and Maclean, 2011). Critical theorists believe that removing some of the pressure from the government sector means it is less likely to improve (Nishimura and Yamano, 2013). There are also concerns that private schools retain the majority of resources, including the best teachers, further disadvantaging those children who are unable to attend (Maeda, 2015). The research contradicts this concern, with parents of children in both government and community schools showing strong support for the private sector within Ruvuma region. Overwhelmingly, parents view private schools as a positive challenge to government schools, providing an example for government schools to work towards. Some parents believe this to be happening, whereas others hope to see it happen. The research showed no animosity towards their existence, even among parents of children who were left in the government schools. The research did not prove whether the participants' views are accurate. Further research into this area is needed. Parents did mention their hope for community schools and international organisations to work with government schools, creating partnerships to help improve the quality of education.

A critical examination shows that community schools have limited capacity so are unable to help all children. It is impossible to determine whether they are having a positive or negative effect on the overall quality of education in the region and in Tanzania. If a negative effect is being felt, this could posit a major flaw in the model.

5.6. Summary

Considering the research through the lenses of two opposing political theories has provided answers to the five research questions to deliver a comprehensive response as to whether community schools provide the potential to solve the global education crisis. Community schools lie between the two perspectives of neoliberal institutionalism and postcolonialism, offering a better alternative to for-profit private schools and a valuable contribution to the education systems in Tanzania, although remaining second best to free, equitable access delivered by the state.

This chapter has brought to light a number of key findings. In agreement with existing literature, for all parents, good quality education is a priority, and can be found in private schools. Better quality teaching as a result of organisational structure and support, as well as improved facilities are the two major contributors to higher quality education. Community schools are effectively reaching poor families, and are not only affordable but provide a cheaper option for parents. However, many parents aren't aware of their existence, pointing to their major limitation: their reach. Inequality of access is two-fold, firstly whether families are aware of the school, and secondly whether children are able to pass entrance exams. On a larger scale, parents believe that private schools present a positive challenge to the state system, however whether this is the case is unproven. Contrary to postcolonial theories, international organisations are valued by the community, and community schools are working to disrupt existing divisions of labour.

These community schools fit into a neoliberal institutional framework, as they involve international organisations and cooperation to work towards a common goal,

linked to the SDGs. However, they differ from other low-fee private schools and avoid many of the major criticisms. Community schools provide a middle-ground, which is filling the gap between an oversubscribed, failing government system, and a market-driven private sector entrenching inequality. Neoliberal institutionalism shows the advantages of community schools and development programmes, but postcolonialism works to ensure they are done in a way which benefits the poorest, and maintains that the government is uniquely placed to offer the ideal of free, equitable provision.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1. Summary of Findings

This research has investigated community schools' contribution to combatting the global education crisis, using the case study of COCO's Schools for Life programme. The opposing perspectives of neoliberal institutionalism and postcolonialism provided a theoretical framework for the research. It was found that community schools avoid many of the criticisms of private sector education in the Global South, and are providing a valuable addition to government-run schools in the region.

Equitable, free access to education remains the ideal, and governments are uniquely placed to be able to deliver this. At present, education systems in the Global South are severely lacking and the most marginalised children are suffering as a result (UNESCO, 2014). In agreement with prior research, the results of this study found that parents consider the private sector to be delivering superior quality education, and that the biggest contributors to better quality are teachers and facilities. Contrary to existing criticisms of private sector education, community schools are providing good quality education to poor children living in remote regions of the Global South, which are usually neglected by private providers. Operating not for-profit, they do not rely on market forces, avoiding criticisms that market competition entrenches existing inequality. Intervention and support from international organisations is welcomed by the local community. Three potential limitations were revealed throughout the research. Firstly, many parents are unaware of their existence and as such are unable to access their services. Secondly, the adoption of entrance examinations to allocate places discriminates against less academically-able students, and could unknowingly be

embedding existing inequalities by advantaging students from families with relatively higher incomes. Finally, although parents are positive about the wider impact of community schools, there is no evidence to confirm whether this is the case. Despite these limitations, community schools are providing a valuable supplement to a failing government system, disrupting existing inequalities by providing quality education to marginalised children, who would otherwise be left in failing government schools or not in school at all.

The findings agree with aspects of both neoliberal institutionalism and postcolonialism, and offer advice to theorists of both perspectives. In accordance with neoliberal institutionalism, interventions and agreements across the globe are having a positive impact. COCO is an example of an international institution, and is providing a valuable service to marginalised communities in Ruvuma, Tanzania. The research was conducted in accordance with postcolonial ideologies, listening to the voices of the marginalised and critically examining the role of international organisations. Going forward, neoliberal institutionalism must acknowledge the fact that market forces maintain inequalities, and work to disrupt these by listening to the needs and wants of the marginalised. Postcolonialism must ensure that its critical lens does not stop interventions supporting those in need. Postcolonialism has an important role to play in development, but must recognise that intervention can benefit the marginalised, and be what they desire. COCO's Schools for Life programme is an example of this, improving the quality of education for marginalised children in the Global South through international cooperation, by listening to and supporting local communities.

6.2. Recommendations

This research was undertaken on a specific case study, and cannot make grand declarations applicable across the globe, as every community's needs will be different. It does provide a base for further research and advice for international development practitioners. Further academic research is recommended on two topics. The major potential limitation to community schools is their impact on wider society, specifically on the quality of education being offered in government schools. The first suggested area for future research would explore this, to ensure that community schools are not disadvantaging children not in attendance. Secondly, research is needed into the impact of entrance exams: whether they are an effective means of selecting children, and whether they are advantaging certain groups.

The research also provides guidance to COCO and other organisations supporting community schools. A first recommendation is to improve awareness of the existence of the schools to a wider audience, to aid equality of access. Secondly, steps should be taken to ensure that entrance examinations don't alienate the poorest, who will be least able to find alternative education. Thirdly, to minimise any possible wider negative effects, community schools should work together with local government schools to share ideas between students and teachers to aid improvement. Furthermore, COCO should be aware that community schools only provide a temporary solution while government schools are lacking. COCO is having a positive impact on the lives of children attending Schools for Life. The organisation should continue working in the Global South, and extend its support to more schools in order to provide quality education to more vulnerable children.

The study offers a number of recommendations for wider international policy. While government provision is failing, supporting community schools offers a means of improving access to quality education in the Global South. Government schools can also learn several lessons from community schools to help improve quality of education. Most importantly, governments should improve the structure of the system; by improving cooperation from the top levels down, staff and communities will feel increased ownership of and pride in their school, which will in turn result in improved teaching quality. Secondly, although free education is ideal, charging parents regular low fees is preferential to unexpected costs; parents are willing to make small contributions in instalments. Money saving and income generation schemes, as employed by community schools, could help eliminate hidden costs and provide money to improve existing facilities.

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Appendix 1: Overview of Interviewees

Interview Number	Name*	Gender	Occupation	Number of children	Schools their children attend(ed)
1	Gaston	Male	Farmer and witchdoctor	9	Government
2	Agnes	Female	Farmer	3	Government
3	Akina	Female	Nurse	6	Government
4	Jeremy	Male	Farmer	7	Government
5	Tishala	Female	Entrepreneur (owns a small shop)	3	Government
6	Justo	Male	Farmer	6	Government
7	Sadiki	Male	Farmer	5	Other private and government
8	Zakia	Male	Farmer	5	Community
9	Ahmed	Male	Farmer	4	Community
10	Dalila	Female	Farmer	5	Community and government
11	Aisha	Female	Farmer and shop owner	4	Community and government
12	Safiyah	Female	Farmer and food vendor	2	Community

13	Rashidi	Male	Farmer	5	Community** and government
14	Shukrani	Female	No occupation	5	Community and government
15	Kafil	Male	Farmer and school watchman	6	Government

*Real names have been changed to maintain anonymity

**He pays for his relative's daughter to attend a community school

Appendix 2: Sample Interview Transcript

Note: interviewer questions are in *italics*, responses come below.

Tell me a bit about yourself and your family.

My name is Rashidi¹, and I am 57 years old. I have four children. The first lives in Dar Es Salaam, he completed Form Four. The second finished Form Four, and is now doing vocational training in Songea. The third one is in Mwanza, and the fourth is in Namswea. One of my relative's daughter, who I take care of, is here at Kindimba Juu.

What do you and your wife do for a living?

I used to be ward councillor for this area, and when this school was in the process of being built, I was ward councillor, and now I'm just dealing with coffee farming, I've got 5 acres of coffee. My wife is doing the same.

What do you think in general about the quality of education in Tanzania?

The situation is really really worse [bad], we don't know what the focus is, but the situation, the quality of education in the country is getting worse.

Why did you choose to send your children to the schools that they went to?

All of my children were chosen by the government to go there. At that time, this school was not there, so if this school was there when my children were studying definitely all of them could come to this school. And even my last one who is now in Form Four in Namswea, started going to Namswea when this school was not

¹ The name has been changed to maintain anonymity

open. But now he's in form four and this school currently only goes up to form three. And that's why I decided to send my relative's daughter to be in this school. When we were doing the education evaluation in our ward, when I was the ward councillor, it is clearly seen that the education in government school is very, very, very down when compared to private school, and it showed that there was no clear focus for the government school, what are they doing? They're just going there by guessing, they were not knowing whether it is a science school, or an art school, or a technology school, so we just chose that school because there were no other options.

What do you think of the quality of education here at Kindimba Juu?

The quality here is good, and here are some reasons why it is good. Here, you have people from elsewhere, who are coming here, and if you have people from elsewhere, from different places, then the quality of education will go higher anyway, but in the government school, there are just people from that particular area. If Ngoni², then it's Ngoni, but in here, people from town and from different places are coming here. So this school being here is very beneficial to the community here. Before this school, parents here, after the selection of government school, those kids that are left behind they have got no school, and they want to go to school, but they have not been selected, so they have to travel very far to find a private school. But now this is here, so all of them can come here. For example, myself, when I was studying there was no private school, and I had to go to private school because there was no chance to go to government school, so I had to go to Moshi, to get education, because there was no good school in the area. So this is very good, that this is here, yes.

Are there any bad things about this school?

² A tribe in Tanzania

When I was ward councillor, the ward was very big, and I managed in my leadership to divide the ward into two different wards. One of that is Namswea, which is big enough to be a ward, and the other one is Mgano, which is big enough to be a ward, but from my observation, most kids who are here are just coming from one of the wards, from Namswea. It looks like people from Mgano have not got the chance to come here, so maybe the boundaries should [be extended] to allow more people to come here, that's one of the things.

But another thing is, we have got a government school called Namswea, which is just a bit further on that way [points]. It goes up to form four, and this school goes also up to form four. What happens when a child finishes form four, where will they go? The whole area here have got no five and form six. So, I was thinking, I don't know how the management is, but I would like this school to have form five and form six, which will take kids from this school and from that government school to be in form five and form six, and that will give them better chances to get employment.

What do you hope for the futures of the children who have not yet finished school yet?

I would like my children to go on with some studies, that is, now, it is very easy to get employment if you are studying science. I think form four education is very common, it is very general, so they should go up to form six so they can be at least recognised that they have gone to school. And I am able, from what I am doing, with my five acres of coffee, to support them. It is just up to the children now to take advantage of him, to go to further studies. I would like some of them to be ICT technicians.

Do you think that private schools are having an impact on government schools?

The government has got good plans, but they are not implemented. We started by having a regional secondary school, ok we did, and then we came to district, they came to ward, and maybe in the future we might come to have one in each village. But still, in each village we might have three or four [primary] schools. For example, Kindima Juu as a village now had got three primary schools, and now they are building the fourth one. This means there will now reach where not all primary school students will have chances to go to government school, so having a private school will at least help people who have missed chance to go to government school, can now go to private school.

But also, the matter of comparison – if it's just one thing going there with no competition, then the quality will not be improved, but having the private school aside, that if the private school is going such good, that will be like our wake-up. Oh, we have got competition here, so the quality of education might go up. Private schools are not suppressing government schools, they are trying to uplift the quality of education in terms of comparison.

Before they were struggling on getting science teachers, and a lab, so government schools were failing in those subjects. So the school was low in academic, people might think because they don't have science teachers or they don't have a science lab, but they have got full geography teachers and Swahili teachers, yet still they are failing in those subjects, but if they compare with private schools, then they [the private schools] are doing better. So in that way, they can even compare in their assessment meetings – ah look, the same history, these have got 99 and we have got 10, maybe they can learn from the rest and then things will become bomba [good].

Specifically, which things are better in a private school than a government school, and vice versa?

There are some things which make private schools being better than government school. Also, just to add to the last question, having a private school here, children have got the freedom of choice, if this school's like that, then maybe I go to private school to get bomba education.

But, with what things are particularly shagalabagala with the government school. For example, I am coming from very, very far, from Ndomgose, and I want my child to go to this government school, to Namswea, my daughter has to go there daily, which is very far, and come back, so she will not [be able to] concentrate on her studies or maybe I have to hire a house here, for my kid to stay in when she is going to school. But who will supervise the timetable of that girl there? No-one. But, if that girl is here, here have got dormitory, so the teachers will know, this time this girl will do this and that and that, and will have much more time of studying, and not like cooking and travelling to school and back. So, this is one of the advantage of having children in private school not in government school.

But I also have got another example, of having, in the government school, like free education, politically free education. You can say it is free education, but you have to pay for it, for the child to stay, you have to pay for food, you have to pay for many many contributions. But for here, you can say you are paying for education, but if you pay once, that is all, no frequent contributions. So, it's better that you know that I am paying, and my child is there, and the education is better, than going there where they say education is free, but it is not, and education is chaotic.

What do you think about international NGOs like COCO getting involved with schools?

If there'll be a person, saying these international NGOs are not helping people in the press, then those people should be checked in the brain. They are really, really helping, the government can never do everything, so some of the things the international organisations are helping like what government should do. For example, we got 19 million, to help to build Bugani Primary School, one of the schools from which many kids are coming here, from the Japanese Embassy. And we got also 12 million to help to build a dispensary, a clinic for women. So, all of these are done by international organisation, they are really, really helping. And now we have got COCO here, who have done this school, and all are benefitting the community. So, if anyone is against them, they should be checked!

How could government schools be improved?

As an education stakeholder, the first thing we try to think about is mobilisation and learning from others. But, I was having some concerns with the structure that was put in place by the former government. In primary school, it's somehow ok, but in secondary school, we have teachers with diplomas, others with degrees, and others even with masters are teaching in secondary schools. But, the ward education officer was placed in that government, who was having [only a] certificate, but leading people who were having Masters, and that was a little bit disaster. So, that person cannot check what that Masters person was doing because he did not understand what he was doing. So that was a little bit shagalabagala. And, if, maybe I, as an education stakeholder, tried to put some suggestions to him, can we do joint exam between Kindimba and Namswea, to improve the education of Namswea, the person looked as though he didn't know how to do [that], and so he was just resisting [of] doing things which are important. So, what I have tried to do, which I think might be

better in the future, I have suggested to the government, while I was a big person in the government, so they have now brought a new ward education officer who has got [better] education than those in secondary school. So now, he can suggest good things, and he can be closely supervising the quality of education in those government schools. If there may be any possibility, they can even transfer the students, they can shift them to this school, they can come and learn what is happening here, and in that way, they can learn. They can come here, do joint exam and then go back, and these students can go there, and improve the quality of education. That was not possible for the last person because his education was lower than people whom he was leading.

Any other comments?

This interview, looks like, what you have done you want to do even more than what you have done, so I could suggest you can use me, or not use me, but you have to go far to extend your margins where students could come, because now they are just from here, but there are many many more students from outside Kindimba who need the service, just they don't know if they can use this chance here. So maybe you can, or the management, can make it go further, then people can come here, because the service here is quite good. But also, I would like to suggest to extend the school, to have form five and form six, and that will benefit even more people, we don't have such a service in this place.