

HELPLESSNESS TO HOPE: CULTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS FOR THE  
MAASAI GIRL-CHILD

By

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University

April, 2011

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Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

April, 2011

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## ABSTRACT

Kelly Suzanne Bingham. HELPLESSNESS TO HOPE: CULTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS FOR THE MAASAI GIRL-CHILD. (Under the direction of Dr. Randall Dunn), School of Education, April, 2011.

This study examined how the life dreams of the girls at the MTH Center of Hope in Kenya are being altered as a result in a change of cultural experience. The center was built as a place of rescue to protect Maasai girls from early marriage, FGM and extreme poverty while allowing them to stay in school. The phenomenological study included observations, interviews, focus groups and a questionnaire that was used to elicit responses and begin dialogue. Results indicate that there is a definite need not only for secondary and tertiary education for the girls but also to train the girls toward gainful employment. Other results include educating the Maasai men on the destructive practices toward females within the patriarchal society and allowing morality associated with Christianity to permeate the culture that is imploding because the moral fiber of society is being destroyed by witchcraft, evil and corruption.

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank my husband, Lance, for his unfailing support, input and encouragement during this process. Not only did you read every word written multiple times but you allowed me to read and write as you tended to the needs of our home and family. I could not have found a man like you on my own – so glad God brought us together. And to our two children by birth and now an additional one by marriage, Brittany, Cody and ‘Blue’ who always knew I could do it and encouraged me to keep doing the next thing. You guys inspire me so much more than you will ever know. Thanks for loving me and allowing me to ‘stress’ every now and then.

I would also like to thank the many people who have partnered with our family in our ministry in Kenya and provided both financial and prayer support for the three trips. Thanks to the Bingham, Caswells, Rowlands, Johnsons, Parkers, my mom, Jean Harris, and many others for your sacrificial giving to see the Kingdom of God advanced. Your love for the Lord shines brighter than any star in the sky.

Thanks also to my Kenya family, the Hagens, for allowing me to stay in their home with the most amazing view over the Rift Valley and driving me everywhere, every time I needed another interview. You are amazing and your selfless example is such a testimony to me. Thanks to Jacob and the staff at the rescue center as well as the 31 girls. You are changing history and you probably don’t even fully realize it – your light is shining and others see your good works and will glorify your Father in Heaven. How privileged I am to participate in your lives. I pray our relationship continues for many years and that you all become the culture changers that will improve the quality of life for many girls who will follow.

Finally, thanks to my chair, Dr. Randall Dunn who encouraged and challenged me. You are a great teacher and I’ve been privileged to have your guidance. Thanks also to Dr. Jeff Ritchey, who was so willing to jump in and help accomplish the task – so glad our boys have pole vaulting in common! Thanks to Dr. Al Snyder and his dear wife, Evelyn. Dr. Snyder was not only a committee member but he and his wife took me to Africa for the first time in 1987. My eyes were opened on that trip and my love for the continent began – for that you will always hold a very special place in my heart. Thank you so much. Finally, a very special thanks to Elizabeth Dalenberg who is an amazing editor and dear friend – thank you for sharing your gift with me.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	ii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background.....	3
FGM.....	5
Gender Disparity.....	6
Problem Statement.....	9
Purpose Statement.....	9
Significance of the Study.....	10
Research Question.....	12
Research Plan.....	12
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	15
Introduction.....	15
Conceptual Framework.....	17
Kenya demographics.....	20
District demographics.....	21
African religion.....	23
Pastoralists.....	24
Background of the Maasai.....	26
<i>Community</i> .....	31
<i>Communally held land</i> .....	31
<i>Polygamy</i> .....	32
<i>Female genital mutilation</i> .....	34
Background of education in Kenya.....	35
Integrating indigenous education.....	39
Schooling options in Kenya.....	40
Missions organizations and the Maasai.....	43

School feeding and uniform programs.....	45
Poverty .....	46
Parental concerns .....	47
Pregnancy and education .....	51
The government’s responsibility.....	53
Microbusiness ventures.....	54
Summary .....	56
<b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>58</b>
Introduction.....	58
Research Question .....	58
Design .....	59
Participants.....	60
<i>Girls.</i> .....	62
<i>Stakeholders.</i> .....	62
Setting/Site.....	62
Procedures.....	69
Meeting the girls. ....	70
The Researcher’s Role .....	71
Data Collection .....	73
Focus groups.....	74
Interviews.....	75
Observations. ....	77
Document Analysis.....	78
Data Analysis .....	79
Trustworthiness.....	82
Transferability.....	82
Ethical Considerations .....	82
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS/FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>84</b>
Overview.....	84
Personal Experiences .....	86

The Sisters.....	86
Zahra .....	90
Poppy .....	92
Lotus .....	94
Nydia.....	95
Linnea .....	97
Asphodel .....	98
Themes.....	100
Poverty .....	102
Education .....	106
Culture .....	116
Religion.....	126
Hope.....	130
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION.....	135
Summary of the Findings.....	135
Discussion and Implications .....	136
Poverty .....	136
Culture .....	138
Religion.....	140
Education .....	142
Hope.....	143
Limitations and Recommendations.....	146
Limitations .....	146
Delimitations.....	146
Recommendations for future research .....	146
Conclusion .....	147
REFERENCES .....	149
APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL.....	161
APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM FOR MINORS .....	162
Background Information.....	162

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study .....	162
APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM FOR STAKEHOLDERS .....	164
Background Information.....	164
Risks and Benefits of being in the Study .....	164
APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE.....	166
APPENDIX E: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STAKEHOLDERS .....	169



## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

This dissertation is a report of a phenomenological study that sought to understand how the life dreams of the girls at the Mary and Tim Hooper (MTH) Center of Hope are being altered as a result in a change of cultural experience. The MTH Center of Hope is a rescue center in Southern Kenya for Maasai girls being forced into early marriage and/or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Construction of the center began in 2008 under the direction of a church in the Southwestern United States. The globally minded church congregation had been praying about a ministry opportunity in Africa for some time. Through a series of events the church came into contact with Christ Church Missions (CCM) in Nairobi, Kenya who informed the congregation of specific needs for the Maasai girl-child.

The church then sent Tim and Mary Hooper to Kenya, and along with CCM and the senior chief in the area, Chief Saitoti, the project began. Tim, who had owned his own construction company in the U.S., began the process of constructing dorms that would house rescued Maasai girls. Tim and Mary's sending church raised the funds for the purchase of the land and construction of all initial buildings. As girls began to arrive at the center, individuals from the U.S. sponsored them. Sponsorships cover costs associated with education, food, clothing, and medical care.

Everyone in the area knows of the center and is so appreciative that something like this is available to girls in desperate need. A community center is also being constructed on the site to host activities for families and community members. The current capacity of the center is 31 but will eventually be 100. The first 31 girls arrived

at the center in April of 2010. Early in the selection process of the girls who would eventually live at the rescue center, the Program Manager, Isaac Kimeli, realized that there was a need to rescue girls from other tribes as well. With the approval of CCM, the first 31 girls consist of 25 girls from the Maasai Tribe, one from the Luo Tribe, one from the Meru Tribe, two from the Kikuyu Tribe, one from the Kamba Tribe, and one from the Luhya Tribe. In this area of Kenya, a girl is referred to as a Girl-Child. This terminology is used throughout the research study.

The girls have gone through an intensive screening process to prove desperate need and legitimacy before being accepted into the program. Normally, the pastor, head teacher, and chief of an area meet to discuss a girl in need. If it is deemed necessary, because a girl's life is in danger or she is to be immediately married, the chief may pull the girl out of her home or living situation and house her temporarily in his own home. Teachers also take girls into their homes temporarily to provide protection until a permanent solution can be found. The chief then alerts the Children's Department (which receives over 100 calls each day for girls and boys in need and has local offices throughout the district). The Children's Department then contacts CCM. CCM headquarters contacts Isaac Kimeli who conducts the interviews and field research for the particular case. Isaac then meets with the committee, and they review the documentation and determine if the center can take the girl.

The study was based primarily upon van Manen's (1990) Hermeneutical Phenomenology suggestions for human research utilizing observations, interviews, interactions with and documentation of 31 girls living at the MTH Center of Hope. The participants' names as well as the name of the center, the names of schools, etc. are

pseudonyms to protect the participants' identities. The first chapter of the dissertation introduces the background, identifies the problem, states the purpose and significance of the study, and provides an overall research plan.

## **Background**

According to Aikman and Unterhalter (2006), “nearly three quarters of a billion girls and women are being denied education” (p. 1). The 2010 United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Education for All (EFA) Report stated that two-thirds of the 759 million adults lacking literacy skills today are women. Sifuna (2006) added that, “the low levels of educational attainment, especially for women, represent a very serious constraint on development in most of the Sub-Saharan countries in general, and Kenya in particular” (p.85). The Maasai tribe of Southern Kenya and Northern Tanzania has traditionally been a nomadic tribe, dependent upon cows for their livelihood, traveling many miles in search of pastures, often in remote locations. Because of this, their children often remain outside the system of formal education. The development of schools and policies in remote areas has been a slow process. The Maasai Association (2009) website stated that up to 60% of the Maasai children in rural areas do not attend formal schools, and “only 8% of all girls in rural areas of Maasailand have had a chance to complete Secondary School education” (p.3).

The greatest hindrance to Maasai girls receiving an education is that they are being sold into early marriage after undergoing Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Once married, the girls are no longer allowed to attend school. Because Maasai girls are seen as having less value than cows, “fathers are more interested in acquiring cows than in

their daughter's happiness. Many times girls are sold against their wills to old men because the young men they really love don't have the wealth of the older men" (Ludwig, 1972, p.104). Hofmann (2005), a European living among the Maasai said of her first days in the area, "There were several marriages in the neighborhood. Mostly its older men marrying their third or fourth wife: always young girls whose misery can be seen written on their faces. It's not unusual for the age difference to be thirty years or more" (p.201).

Dr. Bill Rice (1968), who spent many months over several years in Africa said, "The wife is completely the possession of her husband. The ordinary native is likely to regard his wife in much the same way he regards his goat. She is important to him in proportion to what she can do for him" (p.20). These words are still applicable today in many parts of the world, certainly among many of the Maasai. Dineson (1938), a European who lived in Africa for many years and owned her own farm there witnessed an accident involving a girl being trampled one day and shared her thoughts,

I knew this would also mean a heavy loss for them (her parents), for the girl had been of marriage-age, and would have brought them in her price of sheep and goats and a heifer or two. This they had been looking forward to since her birth.

(p.102)

Another tradition still in practice among some Maasai today is shared sex among age sets. Since the Maasai men are grouped together in age categories, when an older man buys a new wife, no matter her age, she can be shared by any man in her husband's age group for sexual relations.

**FGM.** A Maasai custom which goes along with early marriage is Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), once termed Female Genital Cutting (FGC). It is an issue that has been “at the heart of the controversy in sub-Saharan Africa for the past century” (Prazak, 2007, p. 21). The procedure “surgically alter(s) and/or remove(s) portions of female genitalia” (Coffman, 2007, p.21) in an effort to take away any sexual pleasure. The men in this patriarchal society believe that this practice removes any sexual desire from the girl so she will, therefore, remain faithful to the husband who purchased her. Dr. Devereux (2006), a Scottish doctor who travels cross-culturally to carry out aid work, came across a refuge of sorts outside of Nairobi where Maasai girls are taken in to protect them from FGM. She said, “The girls, aged between seven and 10 years, have been brought in with agreement from their tribal leaders. If these girls had remained in their villages, they would have been forced to have FGM and been married soon afterwards” (p.63). FGM is illegal in Kenya, but according to Casal (2010), “the law is rarely applied against practitioners or parents who make their children undergo it. The Maasai are a close-knit community who live largely by their own rules, and have resisted modernisation” (para. 38).

I found it interesting, albeit maddening, to note that while FGM/FGC is also illegal in the U.S., elusive wording from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) (2010), suggested that nicking or incising the clitoral skin “is no more of an alteration than ear piercing” and would “satisfy cultural requirements” (p.1092). In its recommendations section, the AAP said that it “opposes all forms of FGC that pose risks of physical or psychological harms” (p.1092). The question could then be posed, who is the judge of physical or psychological harm? Is the nick just an appeasement of the

cultures requesting so much more? Since there are so many forms of FGM, where will physicians stop in their accommodation of the cultural, religious or ethnic traditions of the parents?

**Gender Disparity.** Another issue that has been greatly researched is gender disparity in access to education on the continent of Africa and specifically, Kenya. According to the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) (2009) website, well over half of the out-of-school children worldwide are girls. Only 65% of African girls who enter primary school (grades 1-8) will finish, and only 21% of African girls will attend secondary school.

AIDS continues to be a growing concern and a major factor keeping girls out of schools. Over 60% of those infected with AIDS are women, and there are over 1,000,000 orphans in Kenya because of the AIDS epidemic. When children are orphaned because of AIDS, girls become the family care-takers (FAWE, p.4, and p.18).

Among the Maasai, culture and tradition keep the girls at home. Phillips and Bhavnagri (2002) said that “the girls are expected to help their mothers in drawing water, hewing wood, and plastering houses” (p.7). Isaac Kimeli (2009) who lives among the Maasai and is the project manager for the center said that the Maasai men look at the girls as a way out of poverty. By selling them, they can acquire cows, educate their boys, and get food.

Given this cultural context, it is clear that mandating school for all is not sufficient –educators and policy makers must also consider gendered cultural expectations. We can’t ignore that these expectations are powerful forces within

any society and must be renegotiated if girls are to attend, be included in, and remain in schools. (Gilmour, Burrell, Frederick, 2007, para. 3)

According to a 2005 report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), gender parity has made great gains; gender equality still faces many challenges. The report added, “What, then, does the transition from parity to equality mean? It means intervening more proactively to address the structural roots of gender inequalities” (p.10). The transition from parity to equality means getting beyond policies that seem ambivalent and moving toward meaningful change for the students involved. Gender parity can be measured quantitatively whereas gender equality is measured qualitatively. The focus must be on the *process* of education, which includes the learners themselves, the educational systems in which they are involved, and the total environment, in order to determine equality.

Many organizations provide students in Kenya with a uniform and books so they can attend school. While this has helped to get many children who would otherwise not be allowed into the classrooms, it is not enough to bring about real change in society. Meeting “on a common ground of human need” (Jenkins, 1992, p.14), is important but not the stopping point. Corbett and Fikkert (2009) stated that “if we treat only the symptoms or if we misdiagnose the underlying problem, we will not improve their situation, and we might actually make their lives worse” (p.85). What changes long-term if a girl is allowed to receive an education for a year, or maybe even several, if she must return home to the same life of poverty, servitude and early marriage to an older man?

The oversight committee for the MTH Center of Hope believes that just as Jesus, in the New Testament of the Bible, ministered to the physical needs of people, he also

ministered to their spiritual and emotional needs. His was a holistic concept. Yamamori, Myers, Bediako and Reed (1996) stated that, “Jesus’ ministry embodied the idea of welding evangelism with social action. The apostle Paul’s teaching and the life of the early church continued the theme” (p.3). The belief of those who founded the center is that they cannot simply provide relief from distress if the desire is to see long term, societal change.

Yamamori et al. (1996) also said that people must “see themselves as witness to the coming of the kingdom of God to a people, which in turn will reshape that people’s sense of their past, their self-understanding and their vision of the future” (p. 186). Isaac Kimeli (personal communication, December 28, 2009) said that the culture of the Maasai Tribe hinders the development of the girl-child to become a whole person.

The genesis of this research formed during the summer of 2009 while I was visiting the Maasai Tribe in Kenya, working mainly among the women and girls of the tribe. With what was already known about oppression and abuse of the women and lack of education among the females especially, hope seemed an anomaly. What could they possibly hope for? According to Western standards, the people were poverty stricken; the girls were enduring early forced marriage and FGM. Since these girls were observed in school settings, could the hope be partially found in education?

In an effort to rescue the Maasai girls out of oppressive cultural traditions still practiced by many in their tribe, the MTH Center of Hope is accepting girls that the government agrees need to be removed from their current situations. The center is new in the area and still undergoing construction. The first girls arrived at the center in April of 2010. While it was begun specifically because of the needs of girls in the Maasai Tribe,



the oversight committee realized similar needs in girls of other tribes and so has also brought in a few girls from various tribes in the area. The staff and stakeholders are committed to offering hope to the girls by allowing them a quality education and providing a safe and nurturing atmosphere as well as nutritious food and other necessities. They have begun to teach the girls trade skills and have started micro-businesses so that the center can become self-sufficient as well as giving the girls the tools to become self-sufficient adults.

### **Problem Statement**

The lived experiences of the girls and women in oppressive, patriarchal cultures are often ignored or at least set aside in favor of the overall humanitarian statistics – and the statistics are staggering. While the official word from the 2008/2009 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey Report is that just over one-quarter of women in Kenya have been circumcised and fewer than 40% have been sexually abused. In working with the Maasai and other tribes, one discovers that these percentages fall far short. While many quantitative studies exist regarding poverty, early marriage, and FGM, this study, being phenomenological in nature, seeks to understand how the life dreams of the girls at the MTH Center of Hope are being altered as a result in a change of cultural experience.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to examine the sociocultural and educational impacts of the MTH Center of Hope on the lives of 31 girls. Information regarding family backgrounds, attitudes toward education, FGM, and early marriage as well as cultural pressures was vital to understanding their situations before coming to the center and how those issues impacted life while there. Factors leading these girls to become residents at

the center were varied and complex, although the common denominator was that someone of influence in their family had chosen or was choosing a husband for them, and they were to be married quickly.

### **Significance of the Study**

Research on female oppression, tribal customs, and gender parity (or the lack thereof) appears inexhaustible. Also much documentation is available regarding statistics about improved quality of life for girls who have the opportunity to stay in school (see Ferré, 2009, Aikman & Unterhalter, 2006, Sifuna, 2006). This study discusses the intervention of a specific residential facility on the lives of Maasai (and other) girls. The opportunities afforded the girls who come to live at the center could have dramatic bearing on their lives, even changing the course of their futures.

The benefits of female education, especially in Third-World nations, are well documented. Children born to educated women have better nutrition, a lower mortality rate, and are more likely to be educated (see Duflo, Dupas & Kremer, 2010, Lesorogol, 2008, and Chirwa, 2008). Female education appears to reduce fertility rates, especially for young girls. The longer a teenage girl stays in school, the less likely she will be to have a child during school-age years. Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang (2004) stated that, “econometric studies within individual developing countries looking at the effects of education on fertility found that an extra year of female schooling reduces female fertility by 5-10%” (p.398). In a 2009 study conducted by The World Bank, Ferre` found that, “One additional year of school curbs the probability of becoming a mother each year by respectively 7.3 and 5.6% for women with at least a primary and at least a secondary degree” (p.15).

Educated women play a more active role in their communities by becoming involved in civic responsibilities and the labor force. As household income increases, it positively affects the community and beyond. Education also impacts communication skills which assist in dispelling the superior/inferior roles in a patriarchal society;

In principle, education makes women more aware and capable of claiming their rights and less dependent on others (particularly male others such as fathers, husbands, and brothers) for survival, expanding their opportunities and enabling them to exercise more voice and choice in their lives. (Lesorogol, 2008, p.553)

Although there are other all-girl boarding schools in the district, the MTH Center of Hope is attempting to minister to the whole person by providing nutritious food, a beautiful facility, professional counseling, a quality education, instruction in faith and personal responsibility, as well as learning different trades. As Paulo Freire (2009) put it, the oppressed “must perceive the reality of the oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform” (p.49). The center will soon house at least 100 girls who have been rescued out of similar situations and who most certainly must believe that they have the ability to transform their culture.

Discussion generated by this study may provide other ways to help girls in third-world nations living in poverty, under oppression, and without hope. UNESCO (2010) admitted that the Education for All commitment is one of the most daunting tasks of all “in a world with 700 million people living in forty-two highly indebted countries”. Their challenge is “how to help education overcome poverty and give millions of children a chance to realize their full potential”. In helping children to reach their full potential, the

key appears to be a whole person approach, not just providing education, employment, counseling or other resources as stand-alone entities.

### **Research Question**

How are the life dreams of the girls living at the MTH Center of Hope being altered as a result of a change in cultural experience? I sought to examine specifically the sociocultural and educational impacts of the center on the lives of the predominantly Maasai group of girls living at the center.

### **Research Plan**

The research study was analyzed from a qualitative perspective emphasizing a phenomenological view into the perceptions of Maasai girls and how their culture, which tends toward female oppression, affects them as a whole person. The leadership of the MTH Center of Hope desires that the girls who come to live at the center will, once they have completed their education, become active members of society, take responsibility for their own actions, and become role models for other girls. Freire (2009) said that, “in this way, the presence of the oppressed in the struggle for their liberation will be what it should be: not pseudo-participation, but committed involvement” (p.69).

The girls were observed and interviewed both in their living environment, places of activity outside of the center, and in their school settings. They were interviewed to gain insight into their thoughts regarding being able to stay in school, living in a safe environment, having proper nutrition, and other issues of life. Other local and national officials were interviewed, both formally and informally to gain a better perspective of the Maasai culture and also of their feelings toward the center itself.

On three separate occasions during a sixteen month period, I traveled to Kenya, once to observe and twice for active research. On the first trip I observed girls in school environments and as they participated in a track and field camp conducted by my husband. On the second trip I observed and interviewed the girls in their living environment at the center during their first month in residence and visited one of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) schools where some of the girls were receiving remedial tutoring. I also interviewed several local officials and other key stakeholders. The third trip consisted of spending time with the girls at the center and visiting them in their schools, as well as interviewing the minister of education for the district and other officials and stakeholders.

Through a variety of interactions, I was able to gather data on a broad range of behaviors, thoughts, opinions, traditions, and policies. The typical life-course for the Maasai girl includes a discontinuation of education at least by the end of Grade 8 if not before, with circumcision and marriage to follow closely. By removing girls from this sequence of events, the benefits to be gained by the girls are further education, skills in income-producing trades, assumption of personal responsibilities, and trauma counseling. Many of the girls studied have suffered malnutrition for quite some time. Because of this, the oversight committee for the center hired a cook who is responsible for preparing nutritious meals in conjunction with adequate portions.

As the oversight committee looks toward the future for the Maasai girls, they believe that the bonding with those sharing a common goal of hope for the future will encourage each girl to maintain the individual goals she sets for herself. The word hope is broad in this context and can mean different things to each of the girls, but as they seek

to pursue productive opportunities, that pursuit can become an inspiration to others. This could have a significant impact on the lives of the girls, their families, and potentially the society as a whole.

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### Introduction

Hofstede (1980) defined culture as “The collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category or people from another” (p.260). Much has been documented with regard to the oppression and abuse of women and children on the continent of Africa. Throughout the previous six decades, the United Nations and other organizations have addressed issues surrounding female rights and oppression. In 1948, just after the Second World War, the U.N. adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948). While it was designed to protect the rights of all, many believe that it fell somewhat short when it came to women and children. Theresa Tobin (2008) believes that it “failed to provide adequate protection for women” (p.522). She goes on to add that “the scope of rights *protected against* abuses within the public realm, the realm of work and citizenship, and *protected from* external interference in the private realm of family, religion, and culture” (p.522).

In 1959, the United Nations adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. In this document, it was declared that each child has a right to “develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually, and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity” (United Nations, 1959). Unfortunately, exceptions are made to this declaration in different cultures and societies.

In 1979, the United Nations convened regarding the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. While it was a significant landmark in developing strategies for the protection of women and women’s rights, it still met challenges

regarding what happens in the public versus the private sectors of life. In 1995, an international women's conference was held in Beijing. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted to further aid in protecting the rights of women and children as well as addressing issues such as poverty, education, and violence. In reviewing the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing +5 review, Guerrina and Zalewski (2007), say that there is evidence "that there remains an enormous gap between the rhetoric and realities of women's human rights, whereby women's rights continue to be contested in countries across the world and governments are often unwilling to fulfill their international obligations" (p.5).

Elijah Baloyi (2010), a university professor in South Africa, says that, "It is indisputable that African people, like many institutions in South Africa, are patriarchal, hence the fact that many women are victims of the system" (p.1). Baloyi goes on to add that, "cultural and traditional laws, rules and regulations were shaped by men alone, for the benefit of masculine seniority at the expense of women" (p.1). This is evidenced in tribes throughout many countries in Africa, including the Maasai tribe of Kenya.

This study focuses on issues within the Maasai culture, specifically regarding adolescent and teenage girls. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1968) and Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed (2009) are both examined in relationship to the plight in which the Maasai girls find themselves. An analysis of the literature for this study found that the topic of female oppression is as widespread and as varied around the world as there are societies and cultures. Since it appeared that education was a key factor in helping girls and women to overcome oppression, this study approached overcoming oppression and other issues specific to the Maasai culture through an educational lens. Relevant research



covering education, religion and cultural issues such as early marriage, FGM, and poverty are explored.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The MTH Center of Hope in a Southern district of Kenya is becoming a safe haven for some Maasai girls still living in some of the most extreme circumstances. As the oversight committee brought girls in to the center, their main concern was protecting the girls from early marriage and FGM and allowing them to stay in school. They have now realized that even more is being accomplished. The study of the Maasai girls' struggle closely parallels Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory. This is certainly not to imply that these girls or those trying to help them are striving for self-deity or "that we are simultaneously worms and gods" (Maslow, 1968, p.61). Rather, it describes a systematic approach by the oversight committee to meet the needs of young girls as they put into practice Matthew 6:33: "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (English Standard Version).

In Maslow's (1970) book, *Motivation and Personality*, human needs were categorized in a 5 tier pyramid (he later added an additional two tiers); progression to higher levels occurs through motivation. Once the needs at the lower level are met, the individual can progress to the next level of needs. Those who have always had their basic needs satisfied will be better equipped in the future to handle the deprivation of those needs. The girls in this study, however, did not have their basic needs met as young children and, therefore, struggle in several of the lower levels, unable to progress to the higher levels.

Maslow's (1970) first tier is what he called our most basic or "physiological needs": food, water, shelter, sleep, etc. When humans are deprived of these basic needs, they may resort to desperate means in order to obtain them. This was certainly true of many of the girls in the study. Once the needs at this level are met, individuals are able to move on to the second tier in the hierarchy which is that of "safety needs": freedom from fear, security, protection, law, order, limits, etc. Most, if not all, of these girls have lived for some time in fear of early marriage, FGM, and abuse. The third tier is that of belongingness and love. At this tier Maslow talked about the destructive effects of moving too often, not having roots, and being taken from home and family. While the Maasai consider themselves a tight-knit tribe, the girls are not allowed the luxury of love and belonging to their birth family. Maslow's fourth tier is called "esteem needs." Those who get their needs met at this level are secure, confident, and strong. Maslow added that the "thwarting of these needs produces feelings of inferiority, of weakness, and of helplessness" (p.21). Humans need to feel that they are contributing to something worthwhile and are needed by their community, whatever that looks like. While females play a vital role in the Maasai community, they are not respected or esteemed for their roles. The last tier is "self-actualization." This is the tier with which Christ Church Mission (CCM), the mission organization that oversees the center, takes the most issue. When taken to the extreme, it can mean that humans are trying to become little gods by 'becoming one with the universe', 'true to themselves', or 'masters of their fate'. This is obviously not what is meant by CCM or the oversight committee for the center since their belief is that God has created humanity with a void only He can fill. The highest goal is not self-fulfillment but a relationship with Jesus Christ. They believe and stress to the

girls that He created each person uniquely, with a specific plan and purpose for their lives. While there is nothing wrong with understanding and expressing potential academically, athletically, artistically, or through any other gift, their desire is that the girls acknowledge the Creator and seek to understand His calling on and plan for their lives. CCM, the committee, and all of those involved with the MTH Center of Hope trust that each girl who comes through the gate will know that they have potential to become culture-changers, that they can grow personally, and that the same God who created them also loves them unconditionally and seeks an intimate relationship with them. In this way, their faith in Christ is the fulfillment of the hierarchy of needs.

*Hope* is a term that is discussed over and over at the MTH Center of Hope. Hope is also a term that Paulo Freire (2009) addressed extensively in his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*: “The dehumanization resulting from an unjust order is not a cause for despair but for hope, leading to the incessant pursuit of the humanity denied by injustice. Hope, however, does not consist in crossing one’s arms and waiting” (p.92). Freire believed that dialogue is a key element in bringing about change in culture and society. He stated, “to alienate human beings from their own decision-making is to change them into objects” (p.85). In order for the change to take place, the oppressed must not internalize what the oppressor thinks, believes, and dictates. In a situation of isolation this would be a difficult task, but where there are peers striving for change together, they are able to find their voice, and hope becomes reality. When united with others, there is a stirring of hope, and dreams can come to life. Out from under manipulation and domination a sense of dignity emerges, change becomes a possibility, and the oppressed become involved in their own process of liberation.

But it must not end there. In order for society to change, there must be hope for the oppressor as well. As Freire so aptly put it, “as the oppressors dehumanize others and violate their rights, they themselves also become dehumanized” (p.56). He added,

In order for this struggle to have meaning, the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity (which is a way to create it), become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both. (p.44)

That is why the oversight committee is made up of many Maasai people (both male and female) and why the district chief has gotten so involved with the project. The project is about more than just saving girls; it is about coming alongside those who realize what is wrong in the culture and helping them to bring about lasting change. While the center is rescuing girls in desperate situations, the leaders also want to reach out to the girls’ families and communities. It is only through a unified effort that the real, lasting, societal change will occur.

The Maasai girls, being taken out of the environments where they are subjected to physical and sexual abuse and placed in an environment where there is not only protection and provision but cohesion of purpose and freedom of expression, will potentially gain strength and purpose within the community. As the girls are empowered, (if the theories are correct), communities will be empowered and lasting societal change, negating abuse and oppression, will take place. Focus will shift away from quality of education for some and be placed on quality of life for all.

**Kenya demographics.** Kenya is on the east coast of the continent of Africa. The Equator runs through the middle of the country. The Indian Ocean is on its southeast border, while also bordering the countries of Tanzania, Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia and

Somalia. According to an International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) Report in 2004, Kenya's population is currently over 30 million. English is the official language and Kiswahili is the national language. Christianity is the largest religion followed by African Worship, Islam, and Hinduism. Eight provinces are divided into 75 districts. Fifty-six percent of the population lives below the poverty line. Just over 90% of the primary age children attend schools, and only 50% of those students will move on to secondary education (pp. 21-22).

**District demographics.** According to the District Strategic Plan by the National Coordinating Agency for Population and Development (2005), the district in which the center is located is one of 18 in the Rift Valley Province with a population of just under a half million. Nairobi is to its north, and Tanzania is to its south. The topography of the district consists of flat plains and volcanic hills. Life expectancy in the district is 43 years. The doctor/patient ratio is 1:66,412. HIV prevalence is 13% and increasing at a rate of 2.5% every five years. There are a recorded 6,000 AIDs orphans in the district. Just over 50% of primary age children in the district attend school, and only about 5,000 of the 36,000 secondary age children attend school. One issue associated with education that the district is seeking to address is the "accessibility and cultural issues to improve school enrollment and completion rates in the district" (Education section, p.6).

Additionally, according to the District Strategic Plan, the district officers formed teams of people to look at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) (p.2) in their areas. Findings show that the largest threat in the district is illiteracy, which is directly attributed to poverty (p.7). Parents' inability to finance their children's education as well as the early marriages of many young girls are contributing factors to

the illiteracy problem. The HIV/AIDS crisis plays a major role as well, especially in the urban areas of the district where there is drug abuse and an uncontrolled commercial sex industry. Because of the close proximity to Nairobi, many people have migrated to the district.

The Maasai live in the drier, less populated areas of the district. Chief Saitoti (personal communication, April, 2010) said that they continue to be pushed further and further into the semi-arid and arid areas because of land development and farming. This takes their children further away from schools and a chance at education.

In “Chapter 4: Gender Perspectives in Development” of the District’s Strategic Plan, the identified “Main Issues/Problems” were the following:

- Low representation of women in education and employment
- Harmful cultural practices (e.g. FGM)
- Low representation of women in key institutions
- Low participation of women in the decision making process
- Female headed households
- Profound gender disparities in provision of education and attainment of education at all levels of schooling

The District Strategic Plan outlined programs and key institutions that can help address problems in the area and have also set in place monitoring and evaluation efforts to analyze the effectiveness of its programs (p.21). They have quarterly meetings and reports, as well as annual reports and field visits. The evaluations then determine the impact and success of the programs for the people.

**African religion.** The Maasai, and African people in general, think and act communally rather than individually, knowing that any decision an individual makes affects not just themselves but their community as well. Communities dictate who their children are and what they can become. Samuel Kunhiyop (2008), in his book, *African Christian Ethics*, said, “The idea of ‘we’ and ‘us’ is entrenched in Africans right from childhood, so that as they grow they know that they belong to and must function within the community in which they are rooted” (p. 20). Traditional beliefs and assumptions run deep in African societies. Therefore, while a community, tribe, or society may convert to Christianity or any other religion, they are still rooted in tradition associated with gods or the spirits of ancestors and their ethics are based on African morality. While many believe in God, they feel He is distant and has assigned His duties to intermediaries. It is to these intermediaries that the African may feel allegiance. Elizabeth Gilbert (2003), who lived among the Maasai for several years while photographically journaling their culture said,

The Maasai believe in one God, Enkai, who is the master of creation. They pray to him daily, often asking for rain and prosperity. But for spiritual guidance, and on pressing matters of health, business, or love, the Maasai consult *laibons*, who are the vision seekers of the tribe. *Laibons* prefer to live in the hills, where the altitude and the view inspire spiritual connection. (p. 27)

While many African Christians believe in the Triune God and salvation through Jesus Christ, they also believe in witchcraft, which is responsible for sickness, death and any form of evil. Whatever cannot be explained, the coincidental or a natural cause can

be accounted for by witchcraft. Christians must take seriously the *belief* in witchcraft as it has been firmly planted in the lives of many Africans from childhood.

One is forced to ask the question: why does the African, in times of human crisis, revert back to non-Christian practices? This appears to be the rule rather than the exception because the African's past has been ignored and no attempt has been made to penetrate it with the regeneration power of the gospel message.

(Oosthuizen as cited in Kunhiyop, 2008, p. 385)

With that in mind, it is easy to see why the Maasai, as well as other African tribes, function under an ethical system that is greatly flawed.

### **Pastoralists**

Pastoralist societies in East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda) face more demands on their way of life than at any previous time. Population growth, loss of herding lands to farmers, ranchers, game parks, and urban growth, increased commoditization of the livestock economy, outmigration by poor pastoralists, and dislocations brought about by drought, famine, and civil war are increasing throughout the region. (Fratkin, 2001, p.1)

Thirteen million pastoralists are said to live on the continent of Africa; that is roughly half of all the pastoralists in the world. While only five percent of Kenya's populations are considered pastoralists, they occupy seventy per cent of the land (p.23). Since they are in the minority, they have very little voice in government policies and economic issues. A typical pastoralist diet consists of milk, blood obtained from a living cow by sticking a dart in the jugular vein, and meat. *Ugali*, which is a type of cornmeal mush, is also eaten. Fratkin (2001) says that the caloric intake of pastoralists is around



1,000 calories per day. The people tend to have low body mass, vitamin deficiencies, as well as energy deficiencies.

Knowing that there are predictable droughts every five to six years in East Africa which will account for devastating livestock losses, the pastoral Maasai told me in 2010 that they try to build up their herds in years when there is more rain. They are not as much concerned about quality as they are quantity. One such drought occurred between two of my visits. In the summer of 2009 I was part of a team who took 2,000 pounds of food into two different villages within a couple of hours from the center. One of the villages had just lost seven children to starvation. Before I returned in April of 2010, a devastating drought occurred, and the Hoopers related that they could not go anywhere in the area without smelling decomposing cattle. In Northeast Africa, tribes are involved in violent clashes over water and pasture resources. A high population growth rate in much of Eastern Africa creates more of a strain on valuable natural resources. Fratkin (2001) stated that “In the Maasai area of Kajiado District in southern Kenya, for example, the population grew from 22,000 (1948) to 86,000 (1969) to 149,000 (1979) to 250,000 (1989), yielding an average growth of 3.5 percent” (p.12). While the Maasai and other pastoral tribes seem to adapt well to drought conditions, part of that adaptation is a simple acceptance of death and destruction during those times of severe drought.

Historically, pastoralists have not owned land or water resources. They were simply free to roam and graze wherever they could find resources for their livestock. To a certain extent, this is still the case in Kenya; however, in the 1980s with help and encouragement from the World Bank, the government began deeding land in five to ten

acre plots. This created permanent grazing boundaries for pastoralists, further limiting their natural resources in already arid or semi-arid areas.

### **Background of the Maasai**

The most picturesque people in East Africa are those of a tribe which has changed little of its ways since the advent of the White Man—the Masai. The tourist, when he spots a Masai herding his beloved cattle, or leaning gracefully on the haft of his long bladed spear, cannot but feel the spirit of Africa of yesterday. (Kilusu, as cited in Hodgson, 1999)

According to the Maasai Education Discovery website, the Maasai, who were originally from Northern Africa, migrated south and settled in what is now Kenya and Tanzania in the seventeenth century. They have traditionally been pastoralists, raising cattle, goats and sheep. They were once fierce warriors, feared by the Europeans who were trying to settle the area. During what is now known as the ‘Scramble for Africa’ (1890-1900), many countries sent exploration teams to the continent to start colonies. Because the British especially liked the rich highlands of Kenya, they began to push the Maasai to the lower plains which were not nearly adequate for the grazing of their livestock.

The British built schools and forced some of the Maasai to attend them. Most Maasai rebelled against this. In fact, during the colonial period,

The Maasai couldn’t understand why they should send their children away to receive knowledge for which they felt they had no use. Preferring to keep their children at home, the Maasai kidnapped dozens of Kikuyu youths and enrolled them in school as their own. (Gilbert, 2003, p. 47).

The Maasai began to detest the British and Western education. They weren't the only tribe to feel the pressure from the British, and in 1952 the Mau Mau Uprising began. This was a conflict between the British Army and many tribes in Kenya, mainly the Kikuyu. The conflict lasted for eight years and led to eventual freedom from the domination of the outside world. In 1963 Kenya gained her independence, and the government focused on educating its people. Many ethnic groups began integrating with Western education, but the Maasai continued to feel that their cultural education would benefit their communities the best. Today, some of the Maasai are realizing that education is the key to helping them progress in a modern and changing world (Maasai Education Discovery website, History and Education sections). Some of the ones who feel that way have been asked to sit on the oversight committee for the MTH Center of Hope.

The Maasai are now localized in three districts in Tanzania and two districts in Kenya. According to the Kenya Information Guide website, the Maasai tribe only account for about 0.7% of the population of Kenya (Authentic People section, para.1). Children walk many kilometers in the region to reach their schools.

Cultural beliefs among the Maasai, who are the dominant ethnic group in the district, have affected children's education and especially that of girls. The practice of early marriage was found to be most pronounced in the Kajiado district, where girls are married at a young age (under 15 years) and often to older, wealthy men in order to fetch a good dowry, which in this region takes the form of cattle. (Elimu Yetu Coalition, 2003, pp.107-108)

The Kenya Maasai live in a country where the economy is poor, placing them at a greater disadvantage because of drought and lack of available land for grazing. While they focus on survival, oftentimes the resources simply are not available to send children to school. Besides, for many their “basic argument is that school curricula are developed by sedentary people for sedentary people (or even by urban dwellers for urban dwellers) and are therefore largely irrelevant to nomads’ experiences and concerns” (Carr-Hill & Peart, 2005, p.55). They also complain that if their girls go to school, it would cause a breakdown of tradition and culture. Hodgson (2005) found that “if a Maasai girl did not marry, there would be no bridewealth or new alliances with other families, and her father and later her brothers would probably have to support her throughout her life” (p.123).

Maasai huts are made from cow dung and sticks. A group of these huts forms a *manyatta*. A thick fence of thorn bushes usually surrounds a manyatta to keep wild animals out. Cows and goats are brought into the manyatta each night for safety. Usually all who live inside one manyatta are descendents from one or two great-grandfathers. Since the male gender of Maasai is grouped together in age sets, traditionally, when they reach the older teen years they become *morans*, or junior warriors. Isaac Kimeli explained the moran age set in great detail to me in April of 2010. The morans are initiated together and circumcised and then sent away from the manyattas for several years while they hunt, steal, and carouse. It is at this initiation time that boys who want to stay in school must make a very difficult decision. Those whose parents are becoming enlightened to the benefits of education have a much easier time convincing their parents to allow them to remain in school than those whose parents are of the old ways and believe that the morans will protect the manyattas, communities, and cattle. As

a moran, these boys were traditionally expected to kill a lion to prove their manhood. This custom is slowly dying out because of the laws preventing the killing of lions in Kenya.

The typical traditional, Maasai dress for men is a simple *shuka* or red plaid cloth or blanket that is tied around the waist and over one or both shoulders. According to Chief Saitoti (personal communication, April, 2010), red, they believe, is a symbol of power. He also said that they believe that their cattle are their wealth and that God gave all cattle to the Maasai. They do not care about the quality of the cattle, only the quantity. They carry a ball-ended club called a *rungu* which can be used as a very dangerous weapon. The morans also dye their hair with red ochre, a type of clay that they sometimes mix with the blood and fat of cows. The women also wear brightly colored fabrics that are tied in much the same way, only with more modesty. Both women and men wear ample amounts of beading. Oftentimes, the earlobes are stretched to make all-flesh earrings which nearly touch the shoulder. Most Maasai also knock out one or two of their bottom front teeth which is seen as adding to their allure and also as a convenience for drinking milk through gourds.

The Maasai women know their place, which at different points in their sons' lives can be very important. Some of the Maasai women related to me that the women are typically the ones who pray to God (*Eng'ai*) on behalf of their families and animals. The older their sons become, the more they are respected. When their sons leave the moran stage of life, it is the mothers who are privileged with shaving their long hair which is symbolic of the son becoming a junior elder. The women make up songs about their sons and husbands, telling of their accomplishments or even ridiculing those who have failed

to live up to the standards of the clan. In fact, “elders who transgressed age set regulations about incest with their real or classificatory daughters faced even harsher repercussions: groups of women (*olkishiroto*) mobbed to beat the guilty elder and seize and slaughter his cattle” (Spencer, 1988, p.206). Dorothy Hodgson (1999), who has spent years studying the Maasai, said,

The reputation of each homestead depended on the success of each category of person in fulfilling these responsibilities. Women played central roles in the pastoral economy as milk managers, caring for young and sick animals, and as traders. They controlled the production and distribution of milk within the homestead and held rights in other livestock products such as hides. (p. 125)

Different groups, and even the government, have tried at times to modernize the Maasai, especially in Tanzania. However, ‘modern’ often looked very ‘Western.’ According to a 2006 article by Leander Schneider, at one time, the government of Tanzania even tried refusing medical attention, public transportation, and access to restaurants to improperly (according to Western cultures) dressed Maasai (p.107). There are those who, under false pretense, want to preserve the traditional dress and customs of the Maasai because of their desire to please tourists. Neither position has seemed to faze the Maasai as they appear preoccupied with a simple dislike of other tribes and cultures. According to Chief Saitoti (personal communication, April, 2010) most traditional Maasai do not feel that they are in a ‘predicament’ or affected by poverty or ignorance. They consider their culture and traditions to be meaningful, and they are fully dedicated to the perpetuation of them.

**Community.** The Maasai are a tight-knit community. They see themselves as collectivists rather than individualists. They are defined by their family, community, and property. Those who have grown up in the same village, surrounded by the same family and friends show the least amount of self-awareness. Their goal is to live in harmony with others while practicing the same cultural and social lifestyle that their ancestors have for hundreds of years. Ma and Schoeneman (1997), who studied self-concepts in Kenya said that “childrearing practices emphasize teaching children that they are an organic part of that unit. As a result, children are trained to work together and help one another” (p.264). They also point out that since the focus is on the whole, parents rarely spend extensive individual time with any one child. In the Maasai tribe, socialization for the men is centered on their age groups and initiation ceremonies. For the women it centers on home life: children, beading, drawing water and collecting fire wood. Interestingly, Ma and Schoeneman’s findings state the female tribal responses were even more collectivistic than the men’s. This is attributed to the women staying closer to home and having fewer opportunities to attend school. The men spend more time away from the home around towns and interacting with others which, in turn, gives them more Western exposure.

**Communally held land.** Where once there was free, open range in the district, fences are now seen dividing the land into individually owned plots where cattle can no longer graze without restriction. Where once herds of 100 or more cattle per family were normal, today because of drought and the declining open range, there are more herders than cows in some areas. This has been devastating to the Maasai. In a 1994 article, Hillman stated,

Deprived of economic security, the gradual disintegration of the Maasai ethnocultural world is predictable, thereby increasing dramatically the numbers of destitute young men roaming about without the guidance of their traditional norms of human behavior, and without the restraints of their social institutions. (p.64)

The Maasai never set out to sell off their land. According to Isaac Kimeli (personal communication, April, 2010), because of their lack of education and understanding of modern land laws, they have been deceived and manipulated. Some who have lost their cattle but still have a few acres have tried their hand at farming. Long term prospects for farming in Maasailand are tenuous at best. Rains, especially in the researched district, are erratic, and drought is certain every few years. The soil is non-conducive for regular crop growth, and the Maasai do not have formal training in crop rotation or soil conservation. Because of diminishing livelihood, some, including Hillman, are suggesting that the Maasai could be headed toward cultural disintegration and their land toward an ecological disaster.

*Polygamy.* Many Maasai still practice polygamy. In a 2008 study of polygamy in Africa, Falen said that “most scholars contend that polygynous marriage shows no clear signs of decline in Africa and is unlikely to disappear in the immediate future” (p.56). Christian missionaries have fought against this issue and tried to convince Africans that monogamous relationships are the ideal since first encountering the concept a hundred years ago. In spite of this, Kunhiyop (2008) said, “polygamy is not dying out. It is still practiced by old and young, educated and uneducated, religious and pagan, Christians



and non-Christians” (p.223). In some cultures and tribes the missionaries have been convincing, but the Maasai are resistant to change even in this area.

Not every man can afford to have more than one wife. Hetherington (2001) said that “the ability of a man to take a second wife depended on his accumulation of enough resources to provide a second payment of bride-wealth” (p.162). Those who can afford more than one wife may not always have their wives live in different areas. Chief Saitoti, the chief for the district under study, is an example of this. He has two wives, and they both live within the same manyatta and appear to get along rather well. Oftentimes, there does seem to be a certain amount of a hierarchy among the wives, though. Kandiyoti (1988) found that “Subordination to men is offset by the control older women attain over younger women” (p.279).

Isaac Kimeli (personal communication, April, 2010) discussed the Maasai and their beliefs regarding marriage with me. He said that the Maasai girl-child has no say in whom she will marry. In a patriarchal society, all matters related to females are dictated by fathers, husbands, brothers, and elders in the name of preservation of the tribe. Cattle, goats, beer, blankets, etc. must be exchanged for a marriage to take place. However, in times of severe drought when animals are scarce, even a token bridewealth is acceptable or may be paid out over several years. Other tribes such as the Gusii, who live in Southwestern Kenya, have allowed women to argue their miserable marriage arrangements in court. Although most tribal women realize that physical abuse will be part of their marriage, according to a study on the Gusii tribe, if women feel that the abuse has “risen to an unacceptable level of brutality” (Shadle, 2003, p.253), they may protest the marriage in front of a tribal court. Other reasons for potential dissolution of

the marriage could be infertility or failure to pay the full bride wealth payment. Shadle also found that for the Gusii, “Couples pushed the elders to look beyond the cold facts of cattle exchanges to what was (to their minds) the other essential aspect of marriage, a woman’s consent” (p.252). While most Maasai women would agree with this statement, most Maasai men would find it laughable. For some of the Gusii women who could not convince the elders that their marriages needed to be absolved and did not have the backing of their birth families, running away and choosing a life of prostitution to support themselves seemed the only solution. Others who did not want to give up their dreams of marriage and children consented to live a life of servitude, at times under the worst of circumstances.

***Female genital mutilation.*** Along with polygamy and early marriage in the Maasai culture is Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). This can occur anytime between birth and age 13. According to Chief Saitoti (personal communication, April, 2010) FGM is so deeply ingrained in the Maasai society that many believe to not perform this ritual would cause terrible repercussions for the girl, her family, and anyone who would dare to marry her. The often overlooked realities of FGM experienced by many girls are that many suffer from infections, mutilation, and even death from the procedure.

President Moi, who was Kenya’s president from 1978 until 2002, outlawed FGM in 1982 after 14 girls from one district died from associated infections. While the Maasai still perform FGM in the bush with a sharp piece of glass, razor, or knife, many other tribes now have licensed medical professionals perform the procedure in clinics and hospitals. No anesthetic is given since none is available in the bush, and generally, several strong women hold down the girl who is undergoing the procedure. Both men and women

perform FGM, and they are usually considered the witchdoctor in their area. As mentioned before, the practice is illegal in Kenya; however, no one seems to be prosecuted even though it is a common practice. According to Gruenbaum, “this lack of commitment may be attributed to the fact that the laws enacted to criminalize this practice were the byproducts of external pressure and did not reflect the desire of the local people to suppress the tradition” (as cited in Wangila, 2007, p.401). In a 1996 study of women who said they would not allow the procedure to be performed on their daughters, the three main reasons cited were that it violated teachings from the Bible, that it was difficult to find someone to perform it, and that it was expensive. The authors of the study found it interesting that no one cited the fact that it was illegal as a reason for not allowing it (Robertson, p.630).

**Background of education in Kenya.** Since its independence, Kenya has operated on the 8-4-4 system; eight years of primary education (called ‘standards’), four years of secondary education (called ‘forms’) and four years of college or university. According to the 2005 Sessional Paper from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Kenya, the “longer term objective of the Government is to provide every Kenyan with basic quality education and training, including 2 years of pre-primary, 8 years of primary and 4 years of secondary/technical education” (p.1). One of the main purposes in setting this goal is to help eliminate poverty, disease, and illiteracy in the country. The government does realize it has its work cut out for it because later in the same Sessional Paper they stated that “despite increased enrolment, the sector is still faced with issues of access, equity, and quality” (p.4).

While many factors contribute to the negative impact on education, economic issues in recent years have come into the spotlight. These include the decline of agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing. “It is important to note that the poor performance of the economy has been manifested by low enrollment, low transition rates, dropout and completion rates, especially among girls and children from poor households” (Sessional Paper, 2005, p.14). The paper added that the population living in poverty has risen from 48.8% in 1990 to 56.8% in 2004.

Another factor weighing in heavily and keeping children out of school is the HIV/AIDS pandemic ravaging much of the continent of Africa. While statistics vary among organizations as the exact percentages of those infected with the virus, it is safe to say that between eight and fourteen percent of all Kenyans are currently infected (Sessional Paper, 2005, p.18). Children who are born with HIV/AIDS do not live long enough to go to school. Most children who are orphans because of HIV/AIDS find it difficult to stay in school. Others must stay at home and care for family members infected with the disease.

Primary education targets children ages six through thirteen and students must pass the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) exam which determines their admission to secondary school. Ozier (2010) said, that “when students take the exam, they indicate a list of secondary schools they would prefer to attend, including one or two from each of three tiers of secondary schools: national, provincial, and district” (p.2). The higher one scores on the exam, the better secondary school he or she may be able to attend, provided he or she has the funds. Secondary education targets children ages 14-17, and at the end of form four students again take a national exam called the Kenya

Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). Depending on how well one does on this exam, he or she may be able to gain admission into tertiary institutions with the help of low interest loans from the government or enter the workforce.

From its independence in 1963 to the early 1980s, education was free in Kenya. Omatseye & Omatseye (2008) said that “education provided in these public schools was free, but in the 1980s, with their economy deteriorating and government funding to schools reduced drastically, fees were gradually introduced in 2001” (p.105). As the fees increased, more children from poor and rural areas had to drop out because they could not afford the costs. In 2003, President Mwai Kibaki’s government declared that *primary* education must once again be free and compulsory for all children; it was called the Free and Compulsory, Universal Basic Education program (FCUBE). Once again, education on the primary level became attainable for poor and rural children. However,

An estimated 1.5 million children, who were previously out-of-school, have turned up to attend classes...classrooms are bulging like never before...In many schools, teachers have been forced to do shift work with separate groups of children in the mornings and afternoons, for no extra pay. (Mathooko, 2009, p.152).

Parents still have to pay for uniforms, books, and other essentials which continue to keep some of the poorest out of school. The Maasai Community Partnership Project website stated, “Standardized curriculum promotes Christianity, English language to the exclusion of mother tongues, and is typically critical of pastoral lifestyles. All of this and more impose challenges on Maasai families desiring education for their children” (Education section, para.2). Secondary schools still cost money to attend, and many

students, in order to obtain a secondary education, must have a sponsor if their parents cannot afford tuition, fees, books, and uniforms. President Mwai Kibaki initiated free *secondary* education in 2008, but the success rate has not been at the same level as the free primary education initiative because the criteria seem to benefit the wealthy (Mr. Koyati, District Minister of Education, personal communication, October, 2010).

Much has been discussed about Africanizing curriculum used in schools across the continent. As stated elsewhere in this paper, the Maasai believe that education begins in the home and community. Young children are taught everything from religion to medicinal herbs and all other cultural issues in between. Education is seen as a part of the people which cannot be separated from who they are. Since much of the Maasai culture is based on age sets or grades, children learn specific things at certain times with other children their same age (Ruth, Maasai Matron, MTH Center of Hope, personal communication, October, 2010). Learning which plants can be fed to cows during a time of drought is imperative for the Maasai child to know, although this is typically not something the child would learn in a conventional classroom. The Maasai are dependent upon natural resources and must know and understand a certain amount of management of them. Most, if not all, of this type of education is passed down orally from generation to generation through stories, songs, proverbs, etc. It is how the Maasai preserve their identity and perceive themselves in their communities. Older, illiterate relatives are not despised for their lack of formal education; rather they are praised for the knowledge of history, culture, custom and tradition. The ideal situation for Maasai children in a traditional school setting would be one that combines the education and oral traditions of the past with reading, writing and arithmetic.

Curriculum planners therefore need to understand and appreciate variations in “local knowledge” by identifying unifying themes, which can provide a direct link to the experience of most, if not all of the learners in a particular area, and can be readily adapted through participative processes to fit each local situation.

(Omolewa, 2007, p.606)

When teachers and curriculum can take students from their point of origin and actively integrate school subjects with previous knowledge, both types of education are validated, and the older generations would potentially accept formal schooling for future generations.

**Integrating indigenous education.** Jenipher Owuor (2007) studied this concept extensively. She believed that the uniqueness of each society and its indigenous knowledge must be incorporated into formal education. This is quite a challenge in Kenya where she said there are 42 ethnic communities, most living in rural areas (p.23). Indigenous education has developed over hundreds of years and involves every aspect of life, something formal education does not attempt to do. Initially, formal education was a Western concept brought to Kenyans by missionaries trying to use it primarily as a proselytizing tool. It included no indigenous education simply because the missionaries had no long term knowledge of tribal life.

The Ominde Report of 1964, Kenya’s first education report post-independence, was the first to suggest an integrating of both indigenous and formal education. The goal was for education to be the intercessor between cultures from the macro level down to the micro level. As one can imagine, integrating 42 different ethnicities into formal curriculum has proven to be quite a task. Owuor and others believed that one cannot

group all ethnicities into one and package it as indigenous knowledge and then incorporate it into the national curriculum. She believed that each group deserved to have its unique features highlighted during curriculum development.

Unfortunately for Kenyans, the British influence and the influence of many foreign teachers is still impacting curriculum development. Until indigenous personnel have a stronger voice, the validity of the kinds of knowledge that need to be disseminated will be determined by someone outside of the culture. This is also affected by Kenya's dependence on foreign donors to help with educational reforms. That dependence has caused the curriculum to look more global than national or cultural. Oftentimes, this means a curriculum addressing issues that do not apply to the socio-economic problems in rural Kenya. Owuor (2007) concluded by stating:

It is only through playing leading roles in shaping their own destiny in development of their communities that Kenyan students can be able to appreciate working with outsiders in a reciprocal way with the understanding that both parties have knowledge that can be shared and valued. (p.35)

**Schooling options in Kenya.** Harambee schools, also known as self-help schools began to populate the landscape in Kenya between 1963 and 1977. Keller (1983) stated the following:

The tradition of self-help, it was argued, more than anything else made it seem only natural that the people begin to do things for themselves, when the government was unable to meet all their demands. It was in this context that the modern-day *harambee* school movement began. (p.57)



Recognizing the need for schools for their children, communities got together, gathered funds however they could, and erected a school. In Swahili the word Harambee means “let us all pull together.” Oftentimes, as the government saw that a school was showing some success, it would take over and provide the support needed to maintain it year after year. Today, there are hundreds of Harambee schools in Kenya among many tribes, but for the Maasai communities, there is only one (Mr. Koyati, personal communication, October, 2010). Whether this is because of a traditional dislike for education outside their culture or because of poverty or maybe a combination of both is unclear. Sifuna (2005) believed that “the pastoralist communities’ inability to finance the expansion of educational facilities reflected the unstable nature of the pastoralist economy along with the lack of policy to develop the livestock market in these areas” (p.504). Sifuna continued, “Given such relatively deep-seated conservatism, many pastoralist communities generally regard schooling with deep suspicion, as it is said to make their children abandon their cultural practices” (p.514). One Maasai father was quoted in *The Economist* as saying, “We pick out the brightest children, those with the most potential, and then send them off with the goats. It takes brains to identify each animal, find water, and ward off cattle rustlers. School is for those who are less quick” (“No Swots, Please”, 2002). This father’s brightest son tends the flocks; the other goes to school. Since the Maasai rely on their children for labor, time spent in school with books is seen as wasted to those who hold to the most traditional values.

According to a 2008 Inter Press Service (IPS) news article, there are roughly 18,000 primary schools in Kenya. Because of the dense population of urban areas, most of these schools are located in and around cities. In the district where the rescue center is

located, there are 198 Primary Schools in an area covering almost 22,000 sq. km. (National Coordinating Agency for Population and Development, 2005, p.10). For children living in rural areas, and especially the Maasai who favor sparsely populated areas, children must walk many kilometers just to get to a school. If walking is not an option, then parents must pay for transportation as well as food and uniforms.

There are just fewer than 3,000 secondary schools in Kenya. While many have a reduced rate for tuition, parents must still pay for uniforms, books, and other fees. Obviously, with the lesser number of secondary schools, their locations are even more of a factor for the Maasai.

Private schools have also begun to flourish. According to the same IPS news article, there are now 2,000 private schools in Kenya. Because of the overcrowding brought on by the free primary education initiative, parents who want their children to have a quality education are turning to private schools. Private schools are funded by a myriad of proprietors from churches to private entrepreneurs. They must still register with the Ministry of Education and comply with their conditions.

There are also now private boarding schools for girls. Some are showing great success. A study of several Sub-Saharan African nations found that, “the educational outcomes for girls attending single-sex schools are better than girls enrolled at mixed schools” (Swainson, 1995, p.31). Single-sex boarding schools appear to be the very best. The main reasons seem to be the fact that there are positive female role models and no sexual harassment. It has also been found that girls speak up more in classrooms where boys are not present. Teachers encourage the girls to achieve and to even be competitive, something that would not be encouraged in a co-ed school with male teachers. Often

extra tutoring and counseling is available for girls in an all female environment. Another benefit of a boarding school is the fact that the girls get more nutritious food more often than they would in their poverty-stricken homes. That, in turn, promotes better concentration in school and overall performance.

Browne (1991) said that “almost all of the children who never go to school or who fail to complete will be illiterate for their adult lives” (p.6). Adult literacy campaigns found throughout Sub-Saharan Africa are oftentimes ineffective. Although literacy correlates with economic achievement, the cost of adult literacy programs is often even higher. There are several factors for this. One is the cost of printing materials in many different local languages and dialects; another is timing (Mr. Koyati, personal communication, October, 2010). Those who may be most in need of the programs are often those who are nomadic and may not be in one area long enough to take advantage of even the minimal amount of lessons needed to gain a basic understanding. Also there are seasonal issues that come along with those involved in agriculture. Women, charged with oversight for the home, find it difficult to get away for several hours each week. Because of these issues, it is critical that children are allowed to attend school and to stay in for as long as possible.

**Missions organizations and the Maasai.** Since the late 1800’s many mission organizations have attempted to reach African tribes in an effort to start churches and schools utilizing the native language or ‘mother tongue.’ The Maasai, being one of the most remote and mobile, have been difficult to reach. The Church of Scotland Mission (CSM) was one of the first organizations to push into the interior of Africa. They believed that education was a crucial part of their evangelization efforts. According to

one of their missionaries, Horace Philp (as cited in Wamagatta, 2008), “the mind...must be opened to receive new ideas, and this cannot be done without education...In seeking to reach the hearts of the Africans, therefore, the mind cannot be ignored”.

Another organization involved with the Maasai people, Maasai Association (2009), believed that education is one of the three most critical needs for the Maasai people along with clean water and health clinics. According to their website, “Maasailand has the highest primary school dropout rates in Kenya, mainly because of poor facilities and lack of support from those in power” (Opinion and Concerns section).

Many other organizations have either been working or just begun work with the Maasai. CCM has been the catalyst and facilitator for the MTH Center of Hope. CCM was founded in Africa by David and Laura Kenner in 1986. Their work spans the countries of Kenya, Uganda and Sudan. Their focus is to help people help themselves. Their goal is to “provide assistance, training, and resources so that the people we serve can continue along the path to self-sufficiency rather than make others dependent on us” (CCM Website - Who We Are section). Their theme verse is evident in everything they do, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” (Galatians 6:10, NIV). Their mission is accomplished by training and supporting nationals (community leaders, pastors, etc.) to be the advocates and implementers of programs that address poverty and other needs of the African child. Their desire is to reach unreached people groups with the Gospel, and they have planted over 4,000 churches in just over 20 years. In an informal interview with David Kenner in April of 2010, he stated that in their work with children, CCM has built schools, provided uniforms, textbooks, and other supplies so that children are able to

attend school and also provided nutritious meals at schools, since it is the only meal many children will have in a day. They work in several slums in Nairobi and other cities, as well as remote rural areas where government services and Non Government Organizations (NGO's) do not reach. In Maasailand, starvation is a very real threat because of the harsh, arid environment. CCM is there teaching environmental conservation and techniques for growing food under such conditions. They teach the care and planting of tree seedlings, and teachers then start gardens and nurseries. This, in turn, becomes one of the many micro-finance possibilities that CCM is involved in.

**School feeding and uniform programs.** According to the World Food Programme (WFP) website, many children will receive their only meal of the day at school. They said that in their first year of assistance alone, school attendance increased by 22-28% in schools receiving WFP food. The WFP is currently providing meals to 1.2 million children in Kenya. They added, “among Kenya’s pastoralist communities, it is estimated that close to 306,000 children under five are moderately malnourished and 43,000 severely malnourished” (Kenya overview section). Feed The Children and the U.N.’s Food and Agriculture Organization are among many organizations providing school meals for Kenyan schools. At a school in the Mathare Slum, where I visited, children were being fed potatoes, greens, meat, and ugali for lunch. It was their only meal of the day, but it was a generous portion and nutritious. At another school in the bush where my husband conducted a track and field camp, students cooked a mixture of beans, rice, and grains for lunch; also quite possibly, their only meal of the day. At a third school, an FAWE boarding school for girls, I saw that the students had porridge for

breakfast, beans and rice for lunch, and something similar for dinner. Occasionally, there was meat.

According to a World Bank (2004) report, fees for uniforms, textbooks, and other materials keep the poorest children out of school. In 2008 a study was conducted in Kenya to determine the impact of distributing free school uniforms on children's education. The findings were astounding: "We find that giving a school uniform significantly reduces school absenteeism by 38%. Effects are much larger for poorer students who did not previously own a uniform: a 64% reduction in school absenteeism" (Evans, Kremer & Ngatia, p.1). Although the government stated in 2003 that children should not be forced to leave school for lack of a uniform, according to the District Minister of Education, Mr. Koyati (personal communication, October, 2010), many headmasters do send children away for not having on the proper attire. While I visited many schools in Kenya during my three trips, I never saw a child at any of the schools without a uniform. In another ongoing uniform study in 2010 in Kenya, "the dropout rate among girls decreased 20% among girls in uniform schools" (Duflo, Dupas & Kremer, p.13). The results of these studies and others like them confirm that the cost of a uniform for many parents is a barrier to education for many children in poorer sections of Kenya.

**Poverty.** Poverty among the Maasai from the eyes of Westerners appears devastating. According to an article in *The Journal of African History* though, defining poverty among a tribe such as the Maasai is difficult at best.

For international agencies charged with the task, it has always been difficult to assess degrees of economic well-being and poverty among communities largely supported on their own subsistence, occupying their own land, and living in

homes they have themselves fashioned, since cash 'in-comes' per se are relatively inconsequential to their livelihoods. (Anderson & Broche-Due, 2003, p.183)

The pastoral Maasai, who depend almost solely on cattle for their livelihood, have watched over the last few years as that livelihood has diminished because of drought conditions and lack of available grasslands for all livestock. Homewood, Coast, Kiruswa, Serneels, Thompson and Trench (2006), stated that "increased restricted access to key resources of pasture, water and through-passage have increased pastoralist vulnerability to drought herd loss" (p.1). Rampant death of cattle and other livestock during times of extreme drought translates into economic disaster for the Maasai. Boundary fencing because of development has limited open grazing. Attempting to reach a water hole now may take several extra kilometers of walking. For cattle that are already undernourished, this can mean disaster.

Isaac Kimeli stated (personal communication, April, 2010) that a Maasai man without cattle, who knows of no other means to produce income, finds even the obtaining of food for his family to be the most difficult of tasks. During these times, sending a child to school is impossible. Even with free primary education, the fees, books, and uniforms are simply out of reach financially. Men turn to selling their daughters as an only source of income. Survival becomes the order of the day.

**Parental concerns.** In a study conducted by Eloundou-Enyegue and Calves (2006) regarding the ability of daughters to benefit the parents in their old age, they said, "parents worry about losing access to the fruits of their daughters' education when they get married, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa" ( p.1). The cultural belief is that once the girl marries, the parent has lost any investment they put into her as well as access to her

resources. In a culture where it would be hard to educate all of the children in a household, the parent must decide between boys and girls. Parents may be more willing to invest in their sons' education, believing that the payoff for them will be greater. The parents also weigh the difficulties daughters may face in a school setting, "harassment, lack of teacher support, or unplanned pregnancy" along with difficulties that can come with employment later on, "discrimination in hiring, wages or promotion" (Eloundou-Enyegue & Calves, 2006, p.4). Although there is much skepticism and worry, the findings of this particular study show that the more education the women receive, the more likely they are to remit, even to their own biological families.

Another apparent concern for parents is the higher cost for educating a daughter over a son. May Rihani (2006), in her article, "Keeping the Promise," called this phenomenon "the opportunity cost." By this she meant, "Loss of her labor within the household, in the field, and at the market place" (p.1). Girls are often caretakers for younger siblings and provide labor in the fields. The loss to the household economy would be too great. Lloyd and Blanc (1996) said, "dropout rates are also significantly greater for girls who have younger siblings and their attainment levels were also lower than those of boys when they have younger siblings" (p.270). Because girls typically have many chores to do before they leave for school, they are often tired when they get to school and don't perform well. This, in turn, makes the parent decide that a son could do a better job in the classroom. It is also the girls who are oftentimes sent from the classroom to help with meal preparation and cleaning which boys are not likely to have to do.



Another cost incurred by the parents is in providing transportation to school since walking could be dangerous for a girl. Parents also have safety concerns for the girl-child once they get to school. In some areas, the male teachers will sexually harass the girls and think it is their 'right' to take advantage of them. In talking with Mr. Kimeli in the summer of 2009, he said that there are male teachers who are sexually promiscuous even though they are married and are infected with HIV. These same teachers will have sexual relations with their female students and infect them as well. Owusu-Banahene (2000) found that "some irresponsible teachers refer to their female students as 'bush allowance'; hence they abuse and violate these girls sexually to compensate their posting or transfer to the rural area, which they (the teachers) see as punishment" (p. 14).

Further compounding parental concerns for sending their children to government schools is that the teachers at times emphasize farming over a traditional pastoral lifestyle. Elizabeth Bishop (2007) studied this phenomenon especially among the Maasai and believed that "whilst schooling has not been the sole or even necessarily the major influence on the spread of farming, it has encouraged and facilitated this change" (p.13). Bishop raised concerns about the marginalization of pastoralists. Since many pastoralists live great distances from schools, if their children are allowed to attend, they must live closer to the school with other family members or friends who are not pastoralists. This exposes them to negative ideas about pastoralism and the Maasai lifestyle in general. Some of the Maasai interviewed in Bishop's study feel that teachers had a hidden agenda, believing that farming was the next best thing to having an education. They felt that their teachers wanted them to learn to farm in case they couldn't stay in school so that they would have a means of gainful employment. The Maasai, in general, believe that

farming is a sign of poverty; their non-pastoralist counterparts think of Maasai as uneducated, poor, and ignorant.

Schools often teach self-reliance which is counter to the Maasai culture's value of community. While teaching self-reliance in schools, as I observed, many administrators have the children work in gardens or with small livestock, although rarely with the Maasai's beloved cattle. Children help to grow grains and vegetables to help with school lunches. They raise chickens and goats for the occasional meal with meat. Parents take offense at this because part of formal education seems to be teaching the children that self-reliance means farming. It is very difficult in the researched district to be both a farmer and a pastoralist. Stationary grazing doesn't last long and farming without crop rotation produces soil erosion.

In an article on the AfricaFiles website from 2005, author Timothy Gachanga discussed some of Kenya's challenges in achieving the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. While Kenya's government is committed to promoting and developing its rich and varied cultures, the emphasis in schools is on competition and exam scores instead of enculturation. While the government entrusts the teachers with fostering indigenous cultures, there has been no college training to help them execute that. "Thus, the infusion of aspects of indigenous traditions depends entirely on teachers' perceptions of these traditions. If a teacher's perception is positive then s/he will include them in the classroom and, if negative, s/he will not include them" (Teaching Indigenous Culture section). While the Maasai focus on community, sharing, and cooperation, the classrooms of most public schools encourage students to compete for the highest exam scores to see which few individuals will be able to attend the next level of education.

Unfortunately, those who are the driving force behind this type of education are those who are in urban areas or workshops away from the cultures and people who will be the most affected by their decisions (Dominant values promote conflict section).

**Pregnancy and education.** When girls are found to be pregnant outside of marriage, the associated stigmatism is often not shared with the father of the baby in Sub-Saharan Africa, regardless if the girl was raped or if the sexual relationship was consensual. This is a form of gender inequity. It needs to be mentioned here as well that there is no word for ‘rape’ in the Maa language (Isaac Kimeli, personal communication, July, 2009). If a man wants to have sexual relations with a girl, she must allow it. Most girls are forced to leave school for at least a year, and *if* there is a policy in place for them to return, it is often so stringent that the girls give up hope of ever returning. Chilisa (2002) found that because of superstition associated with lactating mothers, it is feared that these girls would affect the ability of their classmates to learn or that they would make them sleepy if they were in the same classroom (p.28). And yet, the milk of cows is considered a symbol of peace when sprinkled over the Maasai as a priest prays for them in a church setting (Bowen, 2009, p.79). A pregnant girl is considered “spoilt, damaged, defiled, or deflowered” (Chilisa, 2002, p.29). The older Maasai as well as other nomadic tribes force the girl to stay inside for six months to a year so that she will learn her place in the home and as punishment for the pregnancy. Some areas have policies that state that the girl cannot go back to the same school she was attending when she became pregnant; interestingly enough this leaves room for more boys in the classroom. If there are no other schools in her area, then she has lost all hope of further education.

In a study conducted in South Africa by Madhavan and Thomas (2005) where there is a high value placed on education by the government, girls seem to have higher academic aspirations than in other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa (p.454). This includes girls who have babies during their school years. Girls are actually encouraged to return to the school in their village after having a baby. Most are dependent on their family's economic status and the availability of child care as determining factors as to whether or not they actually return. If they do return, this presents another set of problems as many of them will not be on grade level. They went on to find that "in terms of grade progress, 68 percent of girls who have not had a child and 30 percent of those who have had a child are at the age-appropriate grade" (p.464). Regardless of grade level though, South Africa is proactive in keeping its girls in school and getting them back into school once they've had a baby. They are realizing a much higher success rate than much of the rest of the continent of Africa.

If the Maasai girls are given opportunities to make decisions, receive a higher level of education, and have the opportunity to become productive members of society, they will feel differently about themselves and parts of culture will begin to change. When something as basic as a cultural structure changes, "it follows that schooling, itself a cultural action, and other deliberate attempts to improve culture while transmitting it, can change all social structures, including those that are very basic" (Hoppers, 2001, p.14). Can the culture of the Maasai become blended with Western forms of education? Martinez and Waldron (2006) seemed to think so, "Historically, culture has been transmitted through practices at the home. As education was formalized and organized,

numerous cultural aspects were integrated and institutionalized” (p. 409). Former Kenyan President Kenyatta (1965) also believed so when he said,

Education, instead of creating confusions, might help to promote progress, and at the same time to preserve all that is best in the traditions of the African people and assist them to create a new culture which, though its roots are still in the soil, is yet modified to meet the pressure of modern conditions. (p.123)

**The government’s responsibility.** In a paper presented to the Midwest Political Science Association by Andrea Messing-Mathie (2008) the idea of an educational model based on economic theory is discussed. Messing-Mathie said that this theory, “created by economists who utilize economic analyses,” is ineffective as it plays out in villages around the world. It reduces teachers to “manual workers . . . acting as the conduit of information to students” (p.20).

Because international aid and lending agencies dominate the development activities in developing countries, local resources, such as local NGOs [Non Government Organizations] and community organizations, are not consulted when developing policy or determining the most appropriate recipients for funding. (p.20)

Because of this, communities are not empowered, students’ lives are not changed, and the educational system cannot function as it should.

Nelly P. Stromquist (2006) argued that education in and of itself will not facilitate long lasting change for girls and women. The content of the curriculum and teacher training in gender equality must be addressed. “The discussion of quality has been framed to centre on performance in standardized tests in reading and maths, and to avoid

issues of citizenship right and duties and oppression and conflict in society” (p.148).

Beyond just access, retraining in gender issues must filter down from the government to local districts. In many schools in Third World nations, female teachers are prominent in primary schools while male teachers are more likely in secondary and tertiary schools as well as in leadership positions at all levels. This sends a strong message to both genders.

What is needed is not a variety of uncoordinated projects, each operating on the basis of its own paradigm of development, but a national pastoral multisectoral strategy developed in conjunction with representatives of the pastoral communities and recognizing their specificity. (Carr-Hill & Peart, 2005b, p.19)

As Ray and Korteweg (1999) put it, what is needed is “a shift in focus in comparative work, from the macro level to the local where larger political, cultural, and economic processes are played out” (p.66).

**Microbusiness ventures.** One way to help combat the poverty, oppression, and exploitation in which many women in Third World nations find themselves is by helping them to start microbusinesses. It is a way to help women turn their talents into earnings to help support themselves and their families and to give them options for their futures. In a study conducted in Africa by Ephraim Chirwa (2008) using male and female subjects, Chirwa found that women typically choose low-risk and low-technology endeavors with an outcome of low-income and low-status. He found that lack of access to formal financial institutions, lack of education, and poor government policies were major hindrances. For those women who had gained higher education, Chirwa found that their profitability margins were significantly higher. Those with access to credit showed a

significantly higher and faster growth in their business ventures. In his conclusion, Chirwa discussed at length the need to invest in women in multiple ways.

Investments in female education have the effect of not only improving the profitability of their enterprises, but also generating paid employment opportunities. Similarly, increasing female entrepreneurs' access to credit facilities is more productive than increasing this access for male entrepreneurs. There is a need therefore to promote microfinance institutions that target financing of non-farm economic activities, with a deliberate bias towards providing credit to women entrepreneurs. (p. 361)

E. Aminata Brown (2008), an African American woman who acquired a vision for investing in microbusinesses for women in Africa, is using some of the funds from the business ventures to support girls' education. She believes microenterprises are designed to be "programs or businesses that offer a combination of credit, technical assistance, training, and other business services to disadvantaged people for the purpose of helping them launch small self-employment projects" (p. 73). She not only pays her workers a salary, but also pays for healthcare and subsidies for housing costs. The workers make Afrocentric patchwork quilts that are exported to the U.S. and Europe. Each year as the business grows, she is able to hire more women to make the quilts and pay the tuition to keep even more girls in school. Others seeking to help marginalized women in Third World countries establish purchasing and shipping arrangements with groups of women from those areas and sell the products on the internet or at trade shows, fairs, and conferences in the U.S., Canada and Europe.

## Summary

Theorists state that in order to have secure, confident and strong individuals, they must have their needs met, from basic to complex (Maslow, 1968 and Freire, 2009). If these individuals have been oppressed, they must also be given the ability to be involved in the process that allows them liberation and dignity. In order to change culture or society, there must be hope for individuals to become unified, striving for quality of life for all. The present study surrounds the Maasai girl-child and the oppression under which she has lived. The MTH Center of Hope has offered a place for girls to live where their basic life needs are met, they are allowed to stay in school, and are being taught skills for gainful employment in an effort to observe the cultural impact this might have. Mainly from the Maasai Tribe, 31 girls have been rescued out of desperate circumstances and brought to the center. They have not only food, shelter, and protection there, but they are also living in community with others in the same situation. They have been provided with educational opportunities because of the sponsorships of individuals in the U.S. They are also starting microbusiness opportunities in an effort to help their new home, as well as themselves, to become self-sufficient.

The Maasai are a pastoral people, gravitating to rural areas in search of grass for their cattle. In so doing they have taken their children away from close proximity to schools. Because of expense and the dangers associated with girls traveling many kilometers to school, many simply stay at home and tend to the needs of the family. These girls are forced to undergo FGM and then sold into early marriage so that their families can have more cattle. Severe drought over the last few years has caused a level of poverty so perilous that children have died simply from starvation. When there is no



money for food, there is no money to afford tuition, fees, and uniforms for school, and the older Maasai see no need for education that doesn't apply to their lives anyway. Because of a strong belief in witchcraft, ethics and morals have diminished, and the girl-child continues to be abused and oppressed. While many missions' organizations and NGO's are providing food, water, uniforms, and other items for children, it is rare in Maasailand to find an organization that seeks to address the past, present, and future needs of the girl-child. This study seeks to understand what impact counseling, the meeting of basic needs and preparation for an independent future through living at the MTH Center of Hope has on the lives of the girls who live there.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of the study is to understand how the life dreams of the girls at the MTH Center of Hope are being altered as a result in a change of cultural experience. I desire to learn how this new life experience is impacting the way they see their future. This chapter includes a section on the design of the study as well as detailed descriptions of the setting and participants. Details of the study are outlined in the procedures section, and my role is explained. The data analysis section describes the analysis procedures.

### **Research Question**

How are the life dreams of the girls living at the MTH Center of Hope being altered as a result of a change in cultural experience? I sought to examine specifically the socio-cultural and educational impacts of the center on the lives of the predominantly Maasai group of girls living at the center. A prayer card sent to potential sponsors in the U.S. states that a “sponsorship fights economic, physical and spiritual oppression by giving Kenyan girls a way out!” (A Ray of Hope, 2010). One of my goals was to discover how this statement translated practically into the lives of the teen and pre-teen girls. The question of ‘Life Dreams’ was asked over and over of the girls in many different ways. For most of the girls, simply being able to have choices and make decisions regarding their futures seemed to surface first. In questioning them further regarding what that meant to them personally and specifically, they began to relate that they dream of obtaining secondary and even tertiary education. Many would say, “I hope to...”. Several girls stated that they do want to marry someday, but they want to have a

voice in who they marry. They also spoke of adequate food and medical care as well as protection and the freedom to worship. For the purposes of this study, the term 'Life Dreams' translates into 'Hope' which, to these girls, includes having choices in their future with regard to marriage, education, food, medical care, protection, and freedom of worship.

## **Design**

The research study was analyzed from a qualitative perspective utilizing a hermeneutic phenomenological design. Creswell (1994) described phenomenology as "...human experiences [that] are examined through the detailed descriptions of the people being studied" (p.12). Max van Manen (1990) added, "What first of all characterizes phenomenological research is that it always begins in the lifeworld" (p.7). I attempted to immerse myself in the Maasai culture through the study of relevant literature and documents as well as spending time in direct contact with their world, traveling to Kenya three times in a 16 month period, from July 2009 to October 2010, in order to gain insight into the experiences of the participants.

The point of phenomenological research is to "borrow" other people's experiences and their reflections on their experiences in order to better be able to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience, in the context of the whole of human experience. (van Manen, 1990, p.62)

Since I had a prior deep interest in the Maasai people and a desire to aid those who wanted to help the girl-child, a human science research approach seemed fitting. Max van Manen (1990) describes this type of research as investigation of meanings.

Researchers conducting this type of research will “gather data, describe a phenomenon, and construct textual interpretations” (p.1). All inquiry, including specific questions for interviewees is tied to the research question. The researcher must have the ability to interpret the phenomena in the lifeworld of the participants to see the significance of their experiences.

### **Participants**

The research population consisted primarily of Maasai girls, ages 10-23 from a district in Southern Kenya, who are under the guardianship of Christ Church Mission (CCM), a mission organization whose presence has been felt in Kenya for over 30 years. While CCM knows specific ages for some of the girls, there are some whose age is estimated because a specific birth date is unknown; this is not uncommon among the Maasai. Most of the girls are thin and lanky as is typical of Maasai and look younger than their actual ages. The girls have been accepted into the MTH Center of Hope primarily to be protected against FGM and early, forced marriage. See Table 3.1 for the participant demographics.

**Table 3.1***Participant Demographics*


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<u>Name</u>	<u>Year of Birth</u>	<u>Husband picked?</u>	<u>Abused?</u>	<u>Father Living?</u>	<u>Mother Living?</u>	<u>Poverty?</u>
Linnea	1995	in process		no - AIDS	yes	yes
Ivy	1989	Yes		yes	yes	yes
Asphodel	1989	divorced	yes	yes	yes	yes
Ayanna	1985		yes	no	no	yes
Zinnia	1994			no	yes	yes
Amantha	unknown			yes - AIDS?	no-AIDS	yes-slum
Dahlia	1993	in process	yes	yes	yes	yes
Calla	1992			no	no	yes
Ilanthe	unknown	Yes		yes	yes	yes
Clantha	unknown	Yes		no	yes	yes
Flora	1995			no - AIDS	yes	yes
Poppy	1990	Yes	yes	yes - AIDS	no - AIDS	yes
Nydia	unknown		yes	no	no	yes
Camellia	1993	Yes		no	yes	yes
Rose	unknown			no	yes	yes-slum
Delphine	unknown	Yes		no	yes	yes
Zahra	unknown	Yes		yes		yes
Leilani	unknown	in process	yes	yes	yes	yes
Lily	unknown	in process	yes	yes	yes	yes
Yolanda	unknown	Yes		yes	yes	yes
Jasmine	unknown	Yes		yes	yes	yes
Ilima	unknown	yes	yes	no - AIDS	yes	yes-slum
Calantha	unknown	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
Hana	unknown	in process		yes	yes	yes
Peri	1993	prostitution	yes	yes	yes	yes
Lotus	1994	prostitution	yes	no	no	yes-slum
Iris	1995	in process		no	yes	yes
Aven	unknown		yes	yes	yes	yes
Kaeya	unknown		yes	yes	yes	yes
Rosalia	unknown	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
Bryony	unknown	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

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***Girls.*** For this study I utilized a purposive, unique case sampling of girls, mostly Maasai, to provide relevant information about the topic. These particular girls would be considered atypical compared to other girls in their tribes because they have been removed from their cultural settings and are attending school and not marrying as teenagers. They can provide great insight and understanding into their experiences before coming to live at the rescue center and how living there is now impacting their lives.

It is believed that the majority of the girls are between the ages of 14 and 17. All 31 girls arrived at the center on April 1, 2010. The nine girls who are in primary school stay in residence at the center all year. The other 22 girls are at the center during the months of April, August and December, as well as term breaks three to six times each year. The girls are all from Southern Kenya and within 100 kilometers of the center.

***Stakeholders.*** The stakeholders interviewed were selected through snowball sampling. The Hooper's suggested that I interview Isaac Kimeli and the oversight committee who then recommended several school teachers as well as the education officer for the district. Through attending church with the girls, I met a well educated Maasai government liaison who also suggested interviewing a retired Maasai colonel. Isaac also facilitated an interview with the head chief of the district who, in turn, suggested that I interview one of his wives. One of the girls at the center introduced me to her mother who invited me to her home for a meal. All of the stakeholders interviewed live within 40 kilometers of the center, and I was able to interview most of them in their homes, schools, or offices. Most of the stakeholders interviewed were Maasai.

## **Setting**

The setting for the majority of the study was the MTH Center of Hope in a district of Southern Kenya which is considered part of Maasailand. People in the area refer to it as a *rescue center* since the girls are seen as being rescued out of oppressive cultural rites of passage. The district is one of the poorest in all of Kenya. Accessibility to the rescue center from any direction is only by dirt roads littered with potholes and rocks. The district covers approximately 22,000 sq. km. According to many of the leaders in the various areas, including the head chief, the Maasai do not like to be counted because of the superstition that once there is an accurate number of them, children will begin to die. Therefore, a true estimation of the number of Maasai people residing in the district is nearly impossible. Government calculations assess that there are around 470,000 total people in the district, which includes several tribes. Because of severe drought over the last few years, much of the land is desolate. Where cattle, goats, and sheep once traveled the district in large herds, now only humble herds scattered over many miles remain. Early in the mornings Maasai women wearing traditional red shukas can be seen carrying jugs of milk to the nearest town, to sell for a few shillings. Children in uniforms can be seen walking to school, some of whom started their journey as early as 4 a.m. In the evenings as the sun begins to set, young men are seen heading toward home for the night with a few cows, sheep, and/or goats. Children returning home from school and women bent over under their great bundles of firewood also dot the landscape.

The MTH Center of Hope is in the middle of this land on a 10 acre section totally enclosed by fencing with a large ominous metal gate and guard shack at the entrance. An old water tower on the property has been restored to working order and provides the water for household use at the center as well as some for nearby neighbors. This is

especially important to note, because in this area most women walk many miles each morning just to obtain enough water for daily use. If the girls were required to do this, school would not be an option.

No buildings on the property existed in 2008, so all construction is new. Currently two dormitory buildings are on the site, and a third is under construction. They are constructed of cinderblock and steel on a concrete slab with windows on each side, and a separate, attached room for the dorm matron. Originally, each dorm was supposed to house 10-12 girls, but with the number of girls in need, there are now 15-16 girls in each. Eight sets of metal bunk beds are covered with unique, brightly colored bedding. Upon arrival, each girl is given sheets, a pillow, and a quilt for her bed. The quilts were handmade by a church group in the U.S. The girls are required to keep their space within the dorms tidy at all times. They are not allowed to wear their shoes inside the buildings, to prevent tracking mud or dirt. The girls are also given a box with all toiletry items that they will need for their first month in residence. These items are replaced as needed.

The dining/multipurpose building is also constructed of cinderblock on a concrete slab and is where the girls have their meals as well as meetings or group activities. Windows on each side allow breezes to blow through on warmer afternoons. There are long, heavy metal tables with enough plastic chairs for the girls and some visitors. While there are enough forks, spoons and knives for all to use, the girls typically still eat with their fingers when company is not present. When I was there, the youngest girl fixed her plate and hid in the corner to eat with her fingers while the rest of the girls awkwardly used forks or spoons. A temporary metal room is attached to the outside of the dining building which is used for food storage and cooking over propane burners. When not in



use, the plastic plates, cups and bowls for each girl are stacked neatly on a table in this room.

A shower/bathroom building is also nearby with two showers and six toilets. Water for showers is heated by a large solar panel on the roof of the building. This is the only shower and flushable toilet facility for miles. Most of the girls who have come to live at the center have never used a shower, but as is typical of adolescent and teenage girls, they've adjusted quite well. The guardhouse is a smaller cinderblock building with two rooms. The back room is where building supplies, generators, tools, and other items are stored. Only Tim and Mary Hooper have keys to that particular room. The outer room has a table and a couple of plastic chairs. Bookcases are kept here that temporarily hold the books for the library. Both day and night guards have keys to the outer door. A newly constructed goat pen with several sections is also at the center for the girls to raise goats for milk and cheese. This is one of several microbusiness opportunities being discussed to help the center become self-sustaining.

Living at the site with the girls are several people who have been hand-selected by the program manager, Isaac Kimeli. Ruth, the dorm matron, is a tall, wiry Maasai woman who is probably in her late 20s. Although she has a husband and three small children, she lives at the site with the girls because it provides an income for her family. Although Ruth is quiet, she also has a sternness about her which commands respect. Della, the Maasai cook, is shorter and stout. She is quiet but has a warm smile and is easy to talk with. Both women speak three languages, their Maa dialect, Kiswahili, and English. While neither woman has much education and have probably been through the cultural rituals that the rescue home is helping girls to avoid, they are both in agreement

that the Maasai culture needs to change, and they are proud to help nurture the girls who are there.

Sam, the day guard at the center, is also an overseer for the project when Tim and Mary are not in Kenya. Sam is Luo and has been educated through secondary school. Sam speaks fluent English and often translates when non-English speaking Kenyans come to the site to sell something or to see what is going on. He is a strong Christian, an avid reader, and is the interim librarian. Sam also believes that the devastating practices within the Maasai culture need to change.

The two night guards for the center, Joe and Johnny, were both considered fierce Maasai warriors in years past. While not very old, since both are married and have children, they are no longer in the warrior age set. Both men are thin and have long, stretched earlobes. Neither man speaks English nor has much formal education. They both carry the typical Maasai weapon, a rungu, which is a heavy wooden stick with a ball on one end. The ball also has an additional, small knot which is on every rungu and can be used to kill. It is well known that Johnny has killed two lions.

Others who can be found daily at the site or who at least have great influence over what goes on there include the oversight committee, the Hooper's, Isaac Kimeli, and Chief Saitoti. The oversight committee consists of one Maasai mother, three Maasai pastors, two Maasai teachers, a Maasai nurse, and the program manager who is from the Luo Tribe. Others involved in the study include family members of the girls, community members, local leaders, missionaries, developers, teachers at local schools, and committee members. Those who play the biggest roles in the lives of the girls include Tim and Mary Hooper, Isaac Kimeli, and those who work daily with them at the center.

Tim and Mary Hooper, the couple from the United States, have committed their lives to this project. Tim first visited Kenya with friends from college years ago and fell in love with the people and the country. After an extended stay, he returned to the States, married Mary, and started a construction business. The Hooper's now have three grown children and three grandchildren, and while most people their ages are beginning to look toward retirement, they began a long-term project in the bush of Kenya in 2008. No two days ever look alike in Maasailand for the Hoopers. The Hoopers often struggle with being burdened with time consuming tasks that were unforeseen, but when they hear the rescued girls singing and see their smiling faces, they are reminded all over again why God has called them to the 'Land of the Zebras' which is what the area is referred to.

Isaac Kimeli, who has served as an invaluable resource and cultural expert for me, is from the Luo Tribe and is a rather large man with a deep voice. He has a heart for ministry and is especially concerned about the African girl-child and the oppression she faces. He has worked for CCM for many years and was the perfect fit for this particular project. He is the program manager of the rescue center and often the one who physically removes the girls from their living situations. Isaac lives and has an office in the district and has first-hand knowledge of the girls who are most at risk for early marriage, FGM, severe poverty, and abuse. Since Isaac is custodian of the girls under the direction of CCM, he signed the guardian consent forms for each of the girls.

A final, very important figure in the life of the girls is Chief Saitoti. Chief Saitoti is the head chief in the district, over many other chiefs. His manyatta, or homestead, is conveniently located within view of the rescue center. He is very much in support of the project and has been instrumental in helping to obtain the land and in rescuing several of

the girls. He said that the chief is the governing administration and liaison between the government and the people. He added that most chiefs take their jobs seriously, but others accept payoffs to avoid punishment or reporting of crime, so there is some corruption. He also served as a cultural expert since he has lived the entirety of his life in the district and was raised as a traditional Maasai. His perceptions of the way things have been for the Maasai for so many years and his beliefs on how things need to change for the good of the tribe were priceless.

The school for the primary girls is located about a half mile from the center. It is a Catholic day school, and all of the teachers are nuns. The matron walks to school with the girls each morning. The secondary girls still travel to boarding schools during the trimesters and then return to the center during each of the three, month-long breaks. I was able to visit one of the boarding schools and an elementary school attended by the girls. Isaac Kimeli regularly visits the girls in their boarding schools to check on grades and overall well-being. Over the last year, one of the secondary girl's grades improved so much that Isaac was able to obtain entrance to a better quality boarding school for her.

The church where the girls attend each Sunday is about two miles away from the center, about a 40 minute walk since the Maasai don't go anywhere quickly. The church building itself is metal and corrugated tin with a dirt floor. Windows are on each side of the rectangular building and wooden benches and plastic chairs for the congregation. I was able to attend and observe in five different Maasai churches over my three visits, and all five were very similar in size, construction, and attendance.

Groups from the U.S. travel to the MTH Center of Hope up to three times each year. Each time a group arrives, more construction and landscaping takes place. Many

trees and plants have been set out to help provide nutritious fruits and vegetables for the girls. Among them are banana, mango, avocado and papaya trees, many of which are now producing. Mounds of flowers and native, decorative rock line the fences, road and buildings. The center has become a place of beauty in the middle of a barren land. One of the groups also established a water collection system by putting gutters on each building which drain into tanks behind the buildings.

Tim and Mary Hooper's home church in the U.S., as well as a nonprofit organization, are the sending and supporting agencies for Tim and Mary. While the Hooper's still have a home in the Southwestern U.S., they also rent, almost year around, a home in the district in Kenya where the rescue center is located. Their Kenyan home overlooks the Rift Valley and is about an hour's drive from the center on exceptionally rough roads. Their home in Kenya has no electricity, and water for their bathroom and kitchen facilities is pumped from a tank using a generator.. To heat the water for the house they must build a fire in a pit in the back yard which heats water in a tank above it. Their neighbors are baboons, and the view from the front porch is breathtaking. The Maasai in the area tell the Hoopers that all Maasai for miles around know when they are in the country and when they leave.

### **Procedures**

Because of my plan to interview Maasai girls and other stakeholders for the research study, full approval was obtained from Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). (A copy of the IRB approval can be found in Appendix A.) The Maasai girls were the primary participants, but others who were directly and indirectly involved in their care and education were also interviewed as collaborators in the research project

to aid me in my understanding of the experience. After an initial trip to Kenya, I was advised to return two additional times for follow-up research. It was at that time that I also secured verbal approval to conduct the research at the MTH Center of Hope from Tim and Mary Hooper's sending church in the U.S., the nonprofit organization that is involved, and Christ Church Missions in Nairobi.

**Meeting the girls.** During the first of the two research gathering trips, I met on my first day in country the first 31 girls who had been rescued and began establishing rapport with them. Since each of the girls had been in public schools, they spoke and understood English quite well. Their English has a very formal British sound. I first shared tea and biscuits with the girls, which is a traditional way of beginning an afternoon visit with someone in Kenya. I then showed the girls pictures of my family and different places in America and answered any questions they had. The girls were especially interested in pictures of a deep snow from the previous winter at my home. While snow is on the peaks of Mt. Kenya and Mt. Kilimanjaro, it never falls in their district. I also showed the girls pictures of the track and field camp my husband had conducted for ten area schools in the district the summer before. Some of the girls had heard of the camp, and some had actually seen it. They even recognized friends in some of the pictures. The girls were intrigued to know why I had returned to their country. It was then that I was able to share my research interests with the girls. I told them that I loved the beauty of the Maasai people. I also told them that I was glad they had been rescued from difficult situations and would now be safe and able to stay in school. They were also thankful. I told them that I was interested in studying them to see how they adapted to the changes of living at the rescue center and in helping to rescue other girls. The girls

appeared quite appreciative. I asked if they would be willing to allow me to observe and interview them. They each smiled and nodded in agreement. Many of the girls made statements about wanting to help other girls. I told them that if they wanted to participate, I would first give them a short questionnaire to complete and sign (this was also used as the assent form). This was to help the girls feel valued in the research project. Each of the girls wanted to do this. The questionnaire, found in Appendix D, was designed by me and was used, not for gathering statistical or quantitative data, but simply to demonstrate to the girls that I valued their opinion and to show them the type of information I desired. I also wanted to see if the girls understood the intent of the rescue center. It was used more as a triangulation instrument than a statistical one. These questions became stimuli for thinking and aided me in developing further questions to ask of the girls and other stakeholders.

I then told the girls that I may additionally want to interview them individually using a video camera or tape recorder. Since the girls were intrigued with pictures of themselves, they were excited to do this. I also told them that I would like to have a couple of focus groups, one for the secondary girls and one for the primary girls. Again, they all agreed to participate.

### **The Researcher's Role**

During the summer of 2009 my family and I traveled to Kenya on a missions trip which involved a track and field camp as well as women's ministry activities. At that time I saw the MTH Center of Hope for the first time and learned of the plans to rescue Maasai girls from early, forced marriage. I became fascinated with the Maasai culture and the lived experiences of the people. In the brief two and a half week trip, I

participated in a track and field camp, observed students in school settings, attended Maasai churches in remote, bush locations, participated in women's ministry in the second largest slum in Nairobi, spent an afternoon at a bush hospital, helped with food distribution to widows living with HIV/AIDS, and helped with construction at the rescue center. My husband and I decided to start the only library in the area for the girls at the center. In the two subsequent trips I was able to pack all of my clothes and personal items in my carry-on bag and use my checked luggage for books. I was able to take over 400 books to the girls. The girls were overwhelmed by all of the books, and some were moved to tears.

For the first research trip back in the country, I traveled alone to Kenya but was able to stay with the Hoopers. Mary Hooper not only made sure that I had quality time with the girls in their various activities, but she also scheduled many other interviews with key stakeholders. During that trip I was able to interview the chief, the district education officer, CCM missionaries, the oversight committee for the center, pastors, the matron, the cook, and many of the girls. I also went to one of the girls boarding schools and was given a tour and interview with the head mistress. I had the privilege of taking the girls to an ostrich farm for lunch and hike in the Rift Valley. I also visited in the home of a British couple who have lived in the district for years and run a well drilling business. I participated in a workshop that CCM conducted for the girls regarding cultural issues. During the second research trip, I was able to interview a retired Maasai military colonel, have a meal in the home of one of the girls from the center, attend an ancient moran celebration which only occurs every 15 years, interview one of the chief's



wives in her home, visit a local primary school and interview the principal and teachers, and visit with Sam, the day guard.

Max van Manen (1990) says, “pedagogy requires a hermeneutic ability to make interpretive sense of the phenomena of the lifeworld in order to see the pedagogic significance of situations and relations of living with children” (p.2). In studying the girls at the rescue center I spent hours reflectively writing about the significance of their world. I tried to understand the essence of their experiences through thoughtful deliberations of their expressions of those experiences. Interviews were conducted for the purpose of gathering narrative material, and close observations allowed me the proximity for alertness to situations of daily life. As I reflected on these lived experiences and interpreted their meaning in relation to the research question, themes began to emerge.

I used a video recorder to capture the individual interviews with the girls as well as other stakeholders who agreed. I met with no resistance in interviewing anyone in the area regarding my study. My family and I are committed to helping with the MTH Center of Hope on a long-term basis, and research will continue for years.

### **Data Collection**

Each day in Kenya I spent time conducting interviews, observing the girls and other stakeholders in normal routine activities, participating with the girls in reading, baseball, soccer, weeding, cleaning, and cooking. Upon returning to the Hooper’s house in the bush each evening, which is about an hour’s drive from the center, I spent hours transcribing interviews and other data. I was able to create Word and Excel documents to save onto my hard drive as well as a back-up USB device.

**Focus groups.** Max van Manen (1990) says, “A research method is only a way of investigating certain kinds of questions” (p.1). I came to the study with a prior interest in the Maasai community, as well as an interest in the specific cultural issues surrounding the females of the tribe. After learning of the detrimental experiences of the Maasai girl-child, I developed simple questions to be used in focus groups at the center as a starting point for dialogue and to begin to explicate the meaning of their lifeworld. These questions, tied to the research question for this study, followed van Manen’s (1990) hermeneutic phenomenological interview question suggestions. These include staying close to the experience, being very concrete, and asking for specifics. These questions then facilitated dialogue as to why the girls came to the center and what they hoped to gain from the experience. The questions were as follows:

1. Why did you come to the MTH Center of Hope?
2. What do you hope to gain by living here?
3. How much education do you want to obtain?
4. What do you hope to do with your life?
5. How likely do you think this is?

The girls were relaxed during the focus groups as they reclined with friends on their beds. The focus group for the primary girls took place in their dorm while the focus group for the secondary girls took place in their dorm. Only four girls attended the primary focus group indicating to me that all of the other 27 girls were in secondary school. I later learned that while five other girls were actually in primary school, they were embarrassed to attend that focus group because they were old enough to be in secondary school. After I asked her questions, dialogue began in the secondary focus

group, and the girls elaborated on their family backgrounds and asked me comparative-type questions regarding my childhood and educational experiences.

I took notes during the dialogue, also noting the interactions among the girls. Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh and Sorensen (2006) say that “topics and ideas expressed in the focus group can help the researcher to identify questions and other important aspects of the phenomenon to pursue in the study” (p.481). To achieve face and content validity, all of the focus group questions were asked of missionaries with CCM and the dorm matron first to be certain that they were relevant and meaningful to the girls. Since the topic of living at the center and obtaining an education was important to the girls, the questions appeared valid. All questions were also deemed age appropriate for all of the girls since they could answer as simply or deeply as they wished.

**Interviews.** Knowing that I would not be able to individually interview all participants and stakeholders, I developed two separate questionnaires that were tied to the method and research question. I developed the questions based on the review of the literature and time spent within the culture, with cultural experts. Max van Manen (1990) suggests that the purpose for interviews and the development of interview questions is as follows: “to study ways of doing and seeing things peculiar to certain cultures or cultural groups; to study the way individuals see themselves and others in certain situations; study the way people feel about certain issues” (p.66). Before use, all questions were e-mailed to the Hoopers at their church in the U.S., as well as to the directors of CCM in Nairobi and Isaac Kimeli, to check for understandability, cultural appropriateness, and validity. That all participants understood the basic intent of the rescue center was important to me. One questionnaire was developed specifically for the

girls and was used as a way of allowing them to give their consent to the study; the other was developed for stakeholders. The questionnaire for the girls was the initial one given to the girls before the focus groups were conducted.

The stakeholders who filled out the questionnaires were ones with whom I was not able to conduct one-on-one conversational interviews. The questionnaires utilized closed format questions with three to five answer choices. I was always available while the girls and stakeholders filled out the questionnaires to check for understanding. I kept the questions as simple as possible for all participants since English was the second or third language for most of them. The questionnaire for the girls can be found in Appendix D while the stakeholders' questionnaire can be found in Appendix E. The guardian consent form can be found in Appendix B and the stakeholder consent form can be found in Appendix C.

Each interview with seven different Maasai girls took place at the rescue center and was more of a listening exercise on my part, while the girls each told their stories. I considered having the girls write out their stories for me, but van Manen (1990) said that in his experience, having a conversation with the person is more personal. He said that at times "writing forces the person into a more reflective attitude, which may make it more difficult to stay close to an experience as it is immediately lived" (p.67). Individual interviews with adult stakeholders were held in the setting of their choice - oftentimes in offices, homes, or the rescue center itself. Questions for the stakeholder interviews also followed van Manen's suggestions of staying close to the experience, being very concrete, and asking for specifics. Specific questions for the stakeholders were the following:

1. If the girls are not circumcised, will Maasai men want to marry them?
2. Do you think that these girls, waiting until they are 20-25 to get married, will have trouble finding husbands? Will there be men that age who have never been married?
3. What do you think is lost or gained by removing these girls from their homes/culture?
4. How many Maasai still have the diet of curdled milk and blood? Would that have been the diet of any of these girls?
5. How do you think teachers in mixed high schools feel about these girls staying in schools and graduating? Is there much harassment of the girls by male teachers?
6. What do you think about the MTH Center of Hope?
7. What do you think is the main reason fathers are marrying off their daughters at a young age? (poverty, tradition, money)
8. How many Maasai are still nomadic?
9. Are parents unwilling to educate their daughters because of the potential money they will earn only going to their husband's family?
10. What is your understanding of the process of a girl getting to the MTH Center of Hope?
11. If these girls receive a high school/college education will they be perceived to be of benefit to the Maasai culture/society?

**Observations.** I spent about two months in Kenya conducting research over a 16 month period of time. Much of the time was spent in close observation of interactions

and activities of daily life. Max van Manen (1990) says, “Close observation involves an attitude of assuming a relation that is as close as possible while retaining a hermeneutic alertness to situations that allows us to constantly step back and reflect on the meaning of those situations” (p.69). Much of the time I was a participant observer. I played games, cooked, helped with chores, ate and just talked with the girls most days. When a researcher observes in this way, according to Ary et al. (2006), he or she “becomes an insider in the event being observed so that he or she experiences events in the same way as the participants” (p.475). Other times I was strictly an observer. These times included observing in schools and churches as well as watching the girls at the center singing in Kiswahili or during family meetings with the adult authority at the center. While it would have been awkward and potentially made the girls uncomfortable had I taken notes during times of observation, I spent hours each night writing reflective notes over the activities of the day. The notes were both descriptive and reflective and included, at times, pictures and video of the day. I recorded what I saw, heard, and felt during the events of the day.

The settings for stakeholder interviews included houses, schools, offices, churches and the rescue center itself. I carefully noted the settings, others within the setting, and the level of ease or anxiety the interviewee exhibited. Most seemed quite at ease answering the interview questions and seemed genuinely concerned about the same issues with which I was concerned. Most also went into further detail in answering questions to help me gain clarity of the culture, traditions, and the Maasai people.

**Document Analysis.** Several different types of documents were analyzed to help me gain an understanding of the Maasai culture, people, and the phenomenon under

study. Documents obtained from the internet include the Republic of Kenya Sessional Paper from 2005 which is a policy framework for education, training, and research. The District Strategic Plan for 2005-2010 for the district where the center is located was also downloaded from the internet. I was also able to obtain the participant profiles that CCM keeps on file in their local office, as well as grade reports for the girls when available. Isaac Kimeli gave me a copy of the five page admissions document that is filled out for each girl who comes to the center. Within this document are sections to be filled out by the chief in the area where the girl lives, her head teacher, a children's department officer, the pastor or priest, as well as a section for the police report where applicable. A final, impressive work is a pictorial book by Elizabeth Gilbert (2003) entitled, *Broken Spears: A Maasai Journey*. This 192 page hardback is Gilbert's pictorial journey over a four year period of time spent with the Maasai.

### **Data Analysis**

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) say, "By *data analysis*, we mean the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, fieldnotes, and other materials that you accumulate to enable you to come up with the findings" (p.159). In order to reduce the stress of an overwhelming amount of data from the two research trips, I created a file system of 31 file folders, each one representing a day of active data collection from the two research trips. Since all of the transcribed audio and video interviews were saved to a separate external hard drive, printed copies were made with which to work. I transcribed all of my own interviews and when possible had follow-up conversations with the interviewees to clarify and verify the transcriptions. Tim and Mary Hooper watched the video interviews, as well as listened to audio recordings of

conversations each evening to help synthesize the information with what they knew to be true of the culture and the individual in the recording. On several occasions I was able to have discussions with Isaac Kimeli regarding the transcriptions, and he provided clarity and helped with meaning. Transcribed interview notes, questionnaires, field notes, memos, and consent forms from each day were placed in the appropriate folder. A dated reflective log was kept simultaneously to the other ongoing research but not in each folder. Each piece of data in the file folders was then copied in order to cut apart and put into categories. That way I had stored originals in chronological order to refer to when needed later.

Once all of the information was put in order, I spent hours each day carefully reading through the data looking for a preliminary list of possible coding categories. Ary et al. (2006) say the following:

The most common approach is to read and reread all the data and sort them by looking for units of meaning – words, phrases, sentences, subjects' ways of thinking, behavior patterns, and events that seem to appear regularly and that seem important. (p.492)

I read through each piece of data at least three times, memoing reflections. During this open coding, I, at times, used in vivo codes of the interviewees and other times created words that stood for sociological constructs that I felt were being expressed or uncovered. I used these words as my codes. After the open coding phase was complete and I had reviewed each transcript, questionnaire, and other forms of documentation, 96 unique codes emerged.



I then looked at the codes using the constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 28-52) to see which ones could be combined into larger categories or themes or eliminated altogether. Ary et al. (2006) say the following of this process:

Once the data pieces have been coded, they are merged into categories that are refined through several iterations. After the categories have been refined, the researcher explores the relationships or patterns across categories, identifying major themes. The integration of data into themes yields an understanding of the context and people being studied. (p.494)

During this process, identifiable information was stripped from the girls' data and pseudonyms were assigned to each. After reviewing the codes, five themes emerged that transcend throughout all of the literature, interviews and observations. These themes - poverty, education, culture, religion and hope - impact the girls' lives both before and after their rescue.

I began summarizing data and connecting categories in an effort to find pieces of information that were important to the alteration of the life dreams of the girls. In using a combination of interviews, observations, and focus groups, I was able to have a fuller understanding of the life world of the Maasai girl. Every effort was made to present the reality of this life world as accurately as possible. During this time I solicited feedback from the Hoopers regularly to check for accuracy and meaning. On the second research trip I was able to get participant feedback to help with clarity and to identify inaccuracies from Isaac Kimeli, Sam, and about half of the girls who were on break from school. I was able to gain further insight and confirm initial findings. This took place by spending hours each day with the girls and other people in reflective conversations.

## **Trustworthiness**

I have done my best to represent the realities faced by the Maasai girl-child as accurately as possible. I was in contact with CCM missionaries throughout the course of the study to validate descriptions, explanations, and conclusions as accurate and recognizable to the phenomena being described. I also conducted follow-up interviews during my final trip to Kenya with key stakeholders to verify the validity of my interpretations. In utilizing observations, focus groups, and interviews, I was able to understand the phenomenon under study from various points of view. I also utilized the code-recode as well as an audit trail as strategies to enhance dependability. All data was read and re-read as I looked for the units of meaning. These units were initially coded according to similarities. Specific codes were then put into larger categories, some of which were linked to become the final five themes. Every effort was made to keep thorough notes and details of activities, experiences, and decisions.

**Transferability.** I have provided rich, detailed descriptions of the context of the study to assist the reader in determining transferability. While generalizability was not the goal of this research project, I have provided sufficiently accurate descriptions of the participants and setting of the study so that a potential user of the qualitative findings, could apply them to another study.

## **Ethical Considerations**

Every effort was made to be certain that the 31 participants understood that their participation was voluntary. The research interests were presented and permission to proceed was granted. I gained assent from the girls through an initial, brief questionnaire that the girls could sign their name to if they chose to participate. Since the girls did not

know me prior to the initial conversation about the study, my hope was that there was no pressure to please an authority figure. However, I acknowledge that in the culture of the Maasai, there is, at times, a pretense of compliance to please a Westerner who may be a potential donor. Written consent was also obtained from the guardian of the minors. Pseudonyms have been assigned to each participant, location, and specific setting to protect the privacy of all involved. The stakeholders interviewed were given a time frame for the interview ahead of time, and I made every effort to meet them where and when it was convenient for them. Each stakeholder also signed an informed consent document which can be found in Appendix C. Results presented were reported truthfully. All original data transcription is stored on the password protected hard drive of my computer. All original hard copies of questionnaires, documents, and other artifacts related to the research are stored in a locked file cabinet in my office to be used for the ongoing research.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS/FINDINGS

### Overview

As stated in chapter one, the purpose of the study is to understand how the life dreams of the girls at the MTH Center of Hope are being altered as a result in a change of cultural experience. The expanse of the interviews covered not just the girls' lives since the time of their rescue, but also their childhoods and the circumstances that brought them to the rescue center. The themes are broken down into the girls' past, present, and future. While the themes do overlap and are multi-dimensional in all three phases of the girls' lives, in an effort to comprehend the alteration of life dreams, I chose to process them in this way. Max van Manen (1990) says that "phenomenological themes are not objects or generalizations; metaphorically speaking they are more like knots in the webs of our experiences, around which certain lived experiences are spun and then lived through as meaningful whole" (p.90).

Since the girls are now out of the painful experiences of (a) poverty and oppressive (b) cultural practices, those two themes are considered to be in their past. All of the girls now experience quality (c) education and freedom of (d) religion so those two themes are considered to be in their present. The future theme of (e) hope or life dreams is covered through self expressions of the girls as well as plans those in charge of the rescue center have to help make those dreams a reality.

The participants, rescuers, school names, and other locations are pseudonyms to protect the identities of all involved. Most of the participants' exact dates of birth are unknown; however, many know at least an estimation of the year in which they were born. Their demographics are varied, although most came out of extreme poverty, and, according to the stakeholders, most have already undergone FGM.

The experiences of many of the girls who participated in the study led them to feelings of hopelessness and even, at times, to suicidal thoughts. Paulo Freire (2009) said that "hope is rooted in men's incompleteness, from which they move out in constant search – a search which can be carried out only in communion with others. Hopelessness is a form of silence, of denying the world and fleeing from it" (p.92). While the oversight committee believes that the rescued girls have been silenced and are searching for their significance, they believe that hope is rooted in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and that humanity was created with a void that only He can fill. Hope and meaning for life are derived from the knowledge that the Lord of Creation has a specific plan for each life. That is why Jeremiah 29:11 is the foundational verse for the rescue center. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (New International Version).

Communion with others who have feelings of hopelessness only produces more of the same. As this research study evolved, an awareness of more than just an environmental change unfolded. As I witnessed, the longer the girls were at the center, the more expressive they became, the less fear they exhibited, and times of spontaneous praise and worship became more frequent. During the six month period between the two data gathering trips, I observed that the physical appearance of the girls changed as well

because the quality of food was an improvement over what they were used to, and the regular meals remained consistent. They also began to trust that education would remain a long term possibility and so conversations regarding the future broadened and deepened. As Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, and Sorensen (2006) stated, “The participants in a phenomenological study are chosen because they have been through the experience being investigated and can share their thoughts and feelings about it” (p.461). I utilized different types of interviews, focus groups, observations, and the review of pertinent documents for data collection.

This chapter is divided into three main sections: personal experiences, themes, and summary of findings. While it would have been impractical to elaborate on the personal experiences of all 31 girls who first came to live at the center, I chose 7 of their stories to share here in hopes that the reader might understand the lifeworld that is typical for so many. All seven chosen for this section are Maasai. The evidence is compelling that the lives of many of the girls would have been cut short had it not been for the rescue center.

### **Personal Experiences**

**The Sisters.** The interview took place in the front room of the guard house on the property of the rescue center several days after I had spent time getting to know them informally by participating in their daily experiences. The sisters, Lily, Leilani and Aven whose specific birthdates are unknown, believe themselves to be respectively 17, 16, and 11. They are the oldest of nine children, and both parents are still living. They are beautiful Maasai girls with easy smiles. While the center never intended to take several girls from one family, the lives of these girls were in jeopardy and rescue was the only

option. During my final trip to the center, a fourth sister, Kaeya (10) had also been rescued. All four girls now attend a local primary school together where Lily and Leilani are both in Grade 7, and Aven and Kaeya are in Grade 4. The love and protection they have for each other is evidenced daily in their awareness of where the others are at all times and in helping each other complete chores or other tasks at the center.

The girls are from a town which is about a 45 minute drive from the center. Their father has only one wife who is expecting their tenth child. Lily did the majority of the talking during the interview, although Leilani and Aven added significant information. Their trouble started in 2006 when Lily was 12. Her father called the local witch doctor to circumcise Lily and Leilani to prepare them for marriage. The girls ran when they realized what was happening, but the women of the village chased the girls and held them down on the ground while the witch doctor circumcised them, using crude instruments. Things became worse from there. Lily shared,

My father began to hassle me to have sex with him. I refused him because I heard in church that it was dishonoring to God for a father to have sex with his daughter. When I kept refusing him he kicked me out of the house and told me that he would kill me if I came back. I walked for two days to my grandfather's house that was about 30 kilometers away. I stayed there for a while and my grandfather promised to talk to my father.

After a period of time with her grandfather, Lily walked back to her home. She talked with her mom about the situation, and her mom said that the Lord would provide. Her father was in and out of the home over the next few years as he traveled great distances to find water and pasture for his cows. The attempted sexual abuse repeated

itself several times, and Lily even went back to her grandfather's house. She also talked to an aunt who went and talked with her father. This enraged her father, and he severely beat Lily causing brain trauma. At this point in the story, Leilani spoke up and talked about how she knew something was wrong with Lily at school,

We were in class and the teacher told us to stand up. Lily kept sitting. Then the teacher told us to sit and Lily stood up. I knew of the beating and that my father had hit Lily repeatedly in the head with a large stone. I was so scared because I didn't know what had happened to Lily. We were afraid to tell anyone.

The school administration, not understanding what was wrong with Lily, sent her home. Her father refused to take her to the hospital and would not give her any food. She begged food from neighbors but they refused her as well. Lily became despondent at this point because she felt there was no one who could help her. After a few days her father left with the cattle again. While he was away Lily's mother became quite ill. A neighbor man gave Lily 2,000ks (Kenya Shillings) to take her mom to the hospital. There it was discovered that her mom had an amoeba in her intestines. When Lily took her back home they found themselves destitute. A neighbor gave them a little flour and sugar. Not long after, their father returned. Lily reports,

My father told my mother to leave with the younger children. She refused. He beat her severely. I think he wanted her to leave so he could have sex with the older girls. When I denied his sexual advances he would go to Leilani. Leilani also refused and so he put a curse on me so I would die and the other children would not act like me. He told me that he had many children so that he could have sex with them. He gave Leilani money to go back to boarding school but



told me he would not give me anymore school fees. My mother was afraid he would kill me so she somehow got the funds to send me back to school.

At this point in the story Aven took over. For some reason the mother finally left the home taking only the youngest four children. Since Lily and Leilani were back at school Aven was the oldest of the three left in the home. She says,

My father was away with the cows again and so neighbors took us in. When he returned he was very angry and brought us to the house. One night when he was drunk he woke us and made us take all of our clothes off. He just stared at us. Somehow we got away from the house and locked it from the outside. Our neighbors told us later that he broke the door down. We ran for our lives. I grabbed some clothes on the way out of the house. I think my siblings went to neighbor's houses, but I ran into the bush to hide. I was so scared. I stayed there for two days. Finally, a pastor came by with his cows and found me there. After he listened to my story he took me to his house. I told him about Lily and Leilani too.

The pastor who rescued Aven is a volunteer with the rescue center project and immediately began work to have the girls placed there. He found out that the witch doctor was to have circumcised Aven two days after she ran away from the home. Thankfully, she has been spared. In filing the report for the girls, the pastor and Isaac Kimeli took them to the police station to have that portion of the report done as well. The girls did not enjoy doing that but are so afraid for their mother and the other children.

The four sisters look healthy and quite happy now. There is a manhunt of sorts going on for the father who, if found, will be placed in jail for an extended period of time.

The girls are hopeful that now they can move forward in their education at a normal pace, since they have missed so much schooling in the past years because of turmoil in the home. They miss their mother but are not allowed to visit her because it is not safe until their father is found. In visiting with the girls, they maintain that marriage is a good thing after girls have gotten their education. They each want children someday and are very much against circumcision. They love the Maasai culture but not circumcision or forced marriage. They would tell other girls in their situation to tell their teachers what is going on at home or go to the police. They are so happy to be at the rescue center and want to help other girls to be able to come. They feel safe and protected and cheerfully do whatever is asked of them. They are all in the youth choir at church and can be seen weeping as they praise the Lord with uplifted hands, knowing that they have been rescued and given a second chance.

**Zahra.** Zahra was in grade six when her father decided to marry her off. She relayed her story in the front room of the guard house on a beautiful sunny day. The windows were open allowing a soft breeze to blow through. Zahra is soft spoken but has such a warm, genuine heart. She had on a skirt and a sweater with a collared shirt underneath. It was a warm day, but Kenyans always seem to want more clothing on than Westerners would. Zahra knows what she wants out of life and seems determined to reach specific goals. She doesn't know her exact birth date but thinks she is about 16. She wanted to tell her story because she believes it might help other girls who could potentially read it.

Zahra has six younger siblings, most of whom are in school. If Maasai girls are allowed to begin primary school, they are typically allowed to stay until they take the

KCPE at the end of Grade 8. For Zahra things were a bit different because her father had lost so many cows during the drought. She disclosed,

My father is a good man, but he doesn't have many cows or goats anymore because the drought has been so bad. When I was in class six my father wanted to marry me off. The man I was to be married to was 76 years old. My teachers intervened with the chief, and my father wasn't allowed to sell me. He allowed me to stay in school until grade eight but began making plans for me again when I was about to take the KCPE. I was very stressed when I took the test. At this point I was circumcised since my father had no intention of letting me continue in school after the KCPE. I was hurt that my father planned to sell me but there was nothing to do. I kept quiet but was trying to formulate a plan in my mind of how to get away. I have friends who are married, and they are not happy.

In the three years of drought (2006 to 2009) in Zahra's area, which she says is quite a distance from the center, 98% of the Maasai livestock have died. Fathers look to their daughters as the only solution to replace their cattle. They are even settling for two to six cows and a blanket in trade for a daughter which is much less than the normal price. Since the female chief in Zahra's area knew of her situation, she kept a close watch over Zahra. She knew that the girl placed well on her KCPE and qualified for secondary school, although the family had no funds to send her. When the husband-to-be started bringing cows to Zahra's father, the chief knew it was time to intervene. She contacted the district office who, in turn, contacted CMA. Isaac Kimeli investigated the situation and brought it before the committee. Her case was approved and she was able to go immediately to the rescue center. Zahra now says,

I want to get my education as quickly as possible so that I will have a voice in my community. I want to go back and get my sisters out of that situation before they are circumcised. Then I want to become a doctor. I want to understand what our rights are so that I can help others girls understand as well and so that they will be able to say no to things they do not like.

After Zahra shared her story she also answered a few questions. She said that she does want to marry someday after she has finished her education and she wants to choose her own husband. She loves the Maasai culture but would someday like to visit other cultures, even homes in the United States. She loves being in the choir and youth program at church. She believes that the churches will help the older generation to see that some things in the culture are not good for the children, especially the girls. She has been an average student in school but believes that her grades will now improve since she does not have to worry about being married off.

**Poppy.** Poppy's story was relayed by Isaac Kimeli whose permission was obtained to use it in print. Poppy's mother, Lini, was 14 when she was sold to her husband. Lini had her first child within the first year of marriage. Just after the birth of her first child, Lini's husband became sick, and the sickness went on for a long time. He later found out that what he had was AIDS, but they did not know at the time because HIV testing was expensive and they could not afford it. Eventually Lini began to complain of the same symptoms. Her husband sent her away to live in a slum, and that is where Poppy was born three months later. Lini tried to work with different kinds of small businesses to help provide food for her two children. She eventually became so sick that a neighbor took Poppy in. No one could afford school fees for Poppy so she

never started school. When Lini died from complications of AIDS, the neighbor did not want to continue raising Poppy and so took her back to her father's house. The father had taken another wife and they were both very ill. By this time Poppy was 11 years old. Nursing her ailing father and his second wife along with the chores took all of Poppy's time and she still could not go to school. After several episodes of attempted rape by her father, Poppy ran back to the slum to see if there was anyone there who would take her in.

Life in the slum proved extremely difficult for Poppy as she had nowhere to stay, and people were constantly trying to take advantage of her. She tried going back to her father's home, but he was in terrible shape and the second wife had died. She went to live on the beach with the fish-mongers. Life there was even worse for her. The only way to make money along the lake shore was through prostitution. One day she ran into a lady who had known Lini, and she told Poppy that she could come and live with her and her husband. Poppy was finally able to start school. After several years in this home the man of the house decided that since he had helped to raise Poppy, he would marry her as his second wife. Poppy ran again. Finally the area chief became aware of her situation and notified the district office as well as CMA. Her case was reviewed quickly and she was able to become a resident of the rescue center right away.

Poppy is a sweet girl who loves to cook. She is very thankful for food, clothing, and a bed. She hasn't quite begun to dream big enough to know what she wants to do with the rest of her life, but during my final trip Poppy smiled more and seemed more relaxed around strangers. She even talked one-on-one but still seemed to keep many

things bottled up. She is one of the girls that Isaac realizes needs extensive counseling and he is working to get that for her.

**Lotus.** Lotus's story was also told by Isaac Kimeli who authorized permission for its use. Lotus was born in 1994 and was able to attend school from grades one through five. At some point in her childhood her father became quite ill, and the extended family chased him and his family away. This was so traumatic for his already sick body that he died from the stress. The mother took Lotus and her two siblings to another town where she was able to do laundry for Somali families, and Lotus was able to stay in school. They lived in a 10x10 foot tin building with a dirt floor in the slum in that town. Lotus passed her KCPE when she completed the Grade 8 but there was no money for her to go to secondary school. She decided to repeat the Grade 8 in order to stay off the streets.

Eventually Lotus began working for the Somalis who lived near her home. She worked after school and on weekends. She washed clothes and dishes and cleaned houses and collected water. They would provide her with breakfast and lunch on the weekends and give her 50ks (about 40 U.S. cents) at the end of the day to buy flour. The school was aware of her situation and allowed her to stay in classes even though she could not pay the levies. She sometimes worked for the Somalis until 10 p.m. and would then go home and study. At times she had no paraffin for the lamp so she could not do her homework. While working for the Somalis, the men began to take advantage of her sexually. They told her that they would give her money to take care of her mother and siblings if she would have sex with them. She agreed because her family was destitute, but it traumatized her because these men knew how impoverished her family was and yet they still took advantage of the situation.

At the end of her second eighth grade year Lotus took the KCPE again. The head teacher at her school told her that she could not grow old in the eighth grade, and he would not allow her to repeat again. She told her mother this, and her mother went to the chief to see if there was anything that could be done for her daughter. Her teachers encouraged her to be patient and told her that God is in control of her future. They even promised to look for a place for her. One of them approached CMA, and after investigation, her application was approved and she was able to go to the rescue center. Isaac was able to get her into a secondary boarding school with some of the other girls from the center, and she is beginning to make progress.

While she is a hard child to get to know, Isaac sees great potential in her and believes that through love and care she will turn her life around. Presumably because of the sexual abuse she has suffered, she acts out occasionally around the male workers at the center by wearing her clothing in provocative ways. The women at the center lovingly correct these kinds of behaviors and Isaac has even addressed the situation.

**Nydia.** Nydia has the sweetest, kindest eyes and smile one has ever seen. To look at her and watch her worship the Lord in song one would never know the pain and suffering she has endured. She is relatively short for a Maasai, probably not taller than five feet. She usually wears a denim jumper with a t-shirt underneath when she is not in school. While she seems fairly shy, she is usually one of the first girls to lead the singing during praise and worship times at the center. Parts of her story were told by Isaac and other parts were expressed by Nydia herself during one-on-one work situations with me. Nydia thinks she is about 16 years of age. Her parents died when she was young, and

after a long search by two chiefs for a relative who might take her in, she was taken to stay with her sister who was already married.

Things at her sister's house did not go well, as her sister's husband began sexually abusing her when she was in grade six. By the time she was 13 she became pregnant by him. She was sent away to the town where her parents had lived to deliver the baby. Culturally she was not allowed to nurse the baby, and so the baby remained under the care of her aged grandmother.

After the delivery of the baby the chief in her parents' area gave her a letter to take back to the chief in the area in which her brother-in-law lives. The letter stated that the brother-in-law should be arrested and made to face charges. However, the man disappeared and has not been found. Nydia said that her sister would not speak against her husband because he was her only source of survival. This hurt Nydia greatly. She decided to step out with courage and walked back to her school. There she confided her story to one of her teachers who decided to help her so that she could recover from all that she had been through. This single lady took her in, and with help from other teachers, she was able to feed and clothe Nydia and keep her in school. Nydia was able to pass her KCPE in 2008. Another teacher in the school happens to be the chairlady for the oversight committee for the rescue center. She brought Nydia's case before the committee and was given approval to allow Nydia to become a resident at the rescue center. Nydia is so grateful for the opportunity to be at the center and to be sponsored to go to a boarding school where she can finish her secondary education. She said she could not imagine ever being in secondary school. She has shed many tears of joy and



thankfulness since her rescue. She thanks her sponsors and the employees of CMA continually.

**Linnea.** Linnea is a small, rather reserved girl who seems serious much of the time. During breaks from school she can usually be found in the dining room working on extra physics or biology lessons. Her story is also used with permission from Isaac. Linnea was born in 1995. Her father died soon after of complications from AIDS. Since her father did not own property that she and her mother could live on, they were chased out of the area by family members. They moved to a different town where Linnea's mother lived with a man who became a temporary foster father to Linnea. Linnea and her mother regularly attended church, and Linnea was sponsored by a member of the church to go to the Presbyterian Church School. She was a leader in Sunday school, and the adults could tell that she was a bright girl. Her foster father did not have a job and her mother relied on support from well wishers and non government organizations that brought food into the area.

Because of their poverty, some of the Maasai elders who knew of their situation began planning for Linnea's marriage saying that she was once under their care which gave them the right to make the decision. The local administration stepped in and contacted CMA. Isaac went to her home to conduct the investigation and found that her family was living in a small rented metal house which he deemed 'pathetic.' Because her grades from primary school were so high, as well as her score on the KCPE, Isaac was able to get her into a good boarding school as well as a place at the rescue center.

One interesting note regarding Linnea, when she first came to live at the rescue center, she said that she wanted to be an engineer someday. Because of her love for

reading, she read one of the library books at the rescue center about Ben Carson (2009) called *Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story*. She was so impacted by the book that she has changed her mind and now wants to become a neurosurgeon. She says that she wants to help people and desires for God to aid her in healing people with dire needs just as Ben Carson does. During her first year at the rescue center, her marks in school were so high that Isaac was able to get her into another school that is known for its tough academics. Linnea is excited about her future and is looking forward to all that God will do in and through her life. She studies hard because she knows she does not have the funds to pay for a university education but she is hopeful that she can receive low interest loans from the government or that a sponsor will see how well she is doing and want to help pay her way through the university.

**Asphodel.** Asphodel, born in 1993, is one of the oldest girls at the center. Her story is unique in that she has already been married, although she will never again live with her husband. She is tall and reserved and yet commands respect. She is very willing to share her story because she is so thankful to have been rescued out of such a bad situation. Asphodel and I had extended periods of time over several days to visit. Since she is Mary Hooper's sponsored daughter, Mary had already related much of her story.

Asphodel was born and raised in Maasailand and was sold into marriage at the age of 14. Her husband was a *matatu* driver. A *matatu* is a minivan that is used for public transportation. She says she was so naïve when she married that she didn't even fully know what it meant. When she went home with her husband, she found out that her mother-in-law was a witch doctor. She lived in that home for three years. During that

time she did not conceive a child and was beaten regularly because the infertility was assumed to be her fault. Her mother-in-law also wanted her to practice witchcraft, something she refused to do. Her refusal also brought on more beatings. Finally, she had enough suffering and ran away from her husband's home and back to her father's. She says that her parents were bitter with her for not staying with her husband as it is disgraceful for a daughter to run back to her father's home once married. Her parents gave her food, but she was made to sleep alone under a tree at night. Her parents would not pay for any more education as they had younger children who were in school. Asphodel sought readmission to school on her own. She was allowed back in school and was allowed to wear pants since she could not afford the uniform.

During the summer of 2008, Mary Hooper and a group from the U.S. conducted a volleyball camp at Asphodel's school. When she heard the Hooper's plans to start a rescue center in a nearby town, she spoke with Mary alone one day and told her the story of her marriage and abuse. Isaac went to her home and verified her story. At that point there were no dorms on the site, so Mary began sponsoring her to go to a boarding school and then stay with teachers during the breaks. Asphodel was very thankful for the opportunity. As soon as the dorms were ready, she was one of the first girls to arrive at the center. She was overjoyed to see Mary again. She is trying hard in school, but her education has been so fragmented that she struggles even to obtain Cs. Her GPA is usually a 1.0. This is discouraging for her, but she is willing to continue trying. She dreams of becoming a doctor someday, possibly to show her former mother-in-law what real medicine is.

The girls at the center know much about the art of beading, so one of the microbusiness opportunities that has come about is for the girls to make jewelry for teams from the U.S. to take back to the States to sell. The money is then put towards daily operations at the center. On Mary's first outing to purchase beads, she and I took Asphodel, since she knew of a bead shop in the closest town. This particular town is quite crowded with several thousand people in a confined area. It is a major thoroughfare between other towns and actually has paved roads. The town has many small shops and offices, but most people who live there do not have jobs. Hundreds of people stand around all day, and donkeys roam free, eating from garbage heaps that are piled along the road. Mary and I followed Asphodel through the town and down a small alleyway. Since Mary and I were the only white faces around, our entourage drew many stares and comments in Kiswahili. Asphodel seemed a bit uncomfortable and stated that she was embarrassed because she wasn't used to being with people who drew so much attention.

### **Themes**

As previously stated, the themes that came out of the research transcend throughout the girls' stories, the interviews, many of the observations, and the literature as well. As van Manen (1990) says, "Themes are the stars that make up the universes of meaning we live through. By the light of these themes we can navigate and explore such universes" (p.90). While the five themes discussed here tend to overlap each other in some respects, each is a foci around which the phenomenological descriptions of the lifeworld of the girls in the study could be built. The theme of culture overshadows many aspects of the girls' lives and may be the very element that, if changed, would most effectively alter the other four themes of poverty, education, religion, and hope.

Not all Maasai would consider themselves to be poor or in constant search of food and shelter, but certainly each of the girls in this study came from economically and emotionally impoverished situations. For some of the girls, the abject poverty was life-threatening. All of the girls have had some education, but for most it has been fragmented because of multiple moves, inability to pay fees consistently each year, or desperate needs within their homes requiring their attention. Most of the girls realize that their educational foundation is not solid and that it will take initiative on their part to spend time reviewing and studying outside of the classroom and during breaks. That is one reason the library at the center has become so vital for the girls; it is filled with educational books beginning at an early primary level, so that the girls have additional tools for their educational success.

While many of the negative cultural experiences the girls have endured cannot be reversed or forgotten, each of them hopes that they can now be facilitators of change for their younger sisters and their own daughters someday. Some of the girls resisted these cultural experiences, but many did not understand that they could, and obviously did not have the means to aid them in resistance. Most of the girls profess a strong faith in Christ as well as a fear of witchcraft which has been interlaced with painful and frightening experiences. The girls love to sing praise and worship songs in English, Kiswahili and their own dialects. The Maasai are quite expressive in church - dancing and shouting in the aisle, falling to their faces in anguish, raising their hands or shouting out in agreement with something the pastor says. The hope for the future of the Maasai girl-child is a theme explored as its own entity but tied directly to overcoming poverty, achieving as

much education as possible, finding their voice within their culture and developing their relationship with Christ.

In all of my travels throughout Southern and Western Kenya, I never heard a negative or even hesitant word about the MTH Center of Hope. Countless people offered their praises and words of thanks for what CCM is facilitating in Southern Kenya.

However, because it is still considered a Third World country with uneducated and sometimes uncivilized people in the remote areas, Westerners are warned not to travel at night whether in towns or in the bush. They are told that some tribes view white people as having money, and while most Kenyans would not harm a white person, they would potentially rob them. The Hoopers tried each day to leave the center, shopping area, or interview with plenty of day light left. While I was with them, traveling at night was unavoidable a handful of times. All but one of those times was uneventful. On one particular night in a remote area of the bush the Hoopers along with my husband and I were forced to drive about an hour's distance back to the Hoopers home well after dark. On this occasion, a pickup truck carrying an unknown number of people followed us for quite a while before finally attempting to run us off of the road. Thankfully, the Hoopers pickup proved the better of the two, and we were able to get away. The incident was proof of one type of danger that exists even when trying to help the people of the area.

**Poverty.** The very nature of poverty is complex and multidimensional. By broad definition it can mean having an income lower than what is necessary to provide food, clothing, shelter, and other necessities. It can also mean the inaccessibility to education and medical care, not having a job, being unable to read or speak properly as well as living day-to-day, uncertain of how needs will be met. Samuel Kunhiyop (2008) says,

“A number of factors have contributed to the problem of poverty on the African continent. These include overpopulation, inadequate health care, illiteracy, war and civil unrest, corruption, and famine” (p.139). Kunhiyop quotes a Nigerian Human Development Report as saying that the manifestations of poverty are “prostitution, exposure to risks, corruption, robbery, street life, increased unemployment, living in squalor, shanties, shackles, high infant mortality, acute malnutrition, short life expectancy, human degradation, living in overcrowded and often poorly ventilated homes” (p.138). While the Maasai can survive on 1,000 calories a day and build their houses out of simple, accessible natural resources, and by choice have very few articles of clothing, their measurements of poverty are considerably different than most of the rest of the world. The reader will see, however, in the narratives that follow that the manifestations of poverty described above permeate the stories of the rescued girls.

The role that poverty has taken in the lives of the girls is multifaceted. Ilima and Flora are examples of girls who survived for long periods of time off of just the noon meal at school during the week and whatever they could beg from neighbors and teachers on the weekends. When Zinnia showed up for classes the first day, her clothes were in such tatters that the principal hid her until the teachers could come up with a uniform for her. Lotus, Rose, Amantha and others came from slums where there is no security walking to and from school or even in their own shack as there are no locks on doors or covers on windows. Rape and abuse are prevalent. Even in the slums people must pay a meager rent, and when there is very little money, the people must choose between paying rent and eating. Flora’s parents were often forced to choose paying the rent over eating and that meant days without food for the entire family. This can be devastating for

students who rely on the school meals during the terms but then are at home during the month-long breaks. Many NGO's work in the slums in Kenya and provide food and other necessities for the people living there, but when there is a shortage, children die simply from starvation.

As mentioned in the story of the sisters, medical care is often inaccessible unless someone outside of the family intervenes. Several of the girls spoke of one or both parents dying and not even knowing what they died from because they couldn't afford medical care. Cliantha and Calantha were to be sold into marriage simply because their families could no longer afford the school fees. Delphine, Jasmine, and Ianthe were to be sold to help feed the rest of their families. Isaac Kimeli said that marrying off daughters is now the only source of income for some families who have lost all of their livestock to drought. Rose's father abandoned the family because he could not provide for them. Her mother cleaned the school in exchange for Rose's fees to attend. The local chief considered Rose's case one of extreme poverty because she and her mother had nothing to eat and were trying to survive alone in a slum. Peri and her mother also lived in a slum and could not afford the fees to attend secondary school. Peri's mother was determined that she would rather die than to see her daughter end up in the streets where there was HIV/AIDS. She talked to many people in an effort to get her daughter out of the slum and was finally connected with CCM who was able to obtain a place at the rescue center for Peri. Yolanda is from a town that is extremely poor as well. The people of the town rely on food distribution from NGO and other Christian organizations. It was during one of those food distributions by CCM that Yolanda was rescued. Her grandmother approached a CCM worker and pointed out the men who had come to take her to be



married. The CCM workers provided a ride for the girl and her grandmother and took them to a place of safety while her situation could be verified. Iris's mother was a prostitute and did not take care of Iris. Their situation became so pathetic that Iris decided to commit suicide rather than continue to witness the things that went on in her life which included the potential of marrying a 90-year-old man. Before she could carry out her plan, a pastor and his family took her in. They were then able to get Iris in touch with CCM and the rescue center. Ayanna was able to attend school through Grade 5. At that time her mother died, and community members couldn't find other family members to take her in. Most of her relatives had died of AIDS. An elderly woman in the village finally took her in so that Ayanna could fetch water for her and prepare her food. She stayed in school, although she did not perform well. The local administration knew she could do better and contacted CCM who secured for her a place at the rescue center. Camellia and Ivy were to be sold into marriage simply so their families would have money to pay to educate their brothers. Hana's father denied that she belonged to him; therefore, he refused to pay for her school fees. Her mother struggled along trying to pay the fees as long as she could but was overwhelmed by the burden. When she was no longer able to pay and it appeared that the girl would be sold, the teachers and chief in the area brought her situation to CCM.

Once the girls have been accepted into the rescue center, it is Isaac Kimeli's responsibility to see that they have all of the necessities for life there. He makes certain that each one has plenty of clothing, including uniforms for school, and shoes. He also keeps in close contact with the matron at the center so that there is always plenty of nutritious food and any medicines the girls might need. The dorms have been decorated

by teams from the U.S. and are beautiful and secure. The chief is very impressed with the conditions the girls are living in now and says that they are being fed and clothed better than ever before. The chief's wife who is on the oversight committee for the center said that most Maasai want their daughters to come to the center and will sometimes fake desperate need. She says that the center is not a place for those struggling with poverty; it is a place for girls whose lives are in danger or who are to be forced into early marriage and FGM.

**Education.** Since education was thought to be one of the key factors that could affect change in the lives of the girls living at the rescue center, much of my effort was focused on gaining information from and about schools in the district as well as teachers and curriculum. I visited four schools: two are co-ed day schools for primary students, another is a co-ed primary and secondary combined school in a slum, and the fourth is an all girls' boarding school for grades one through eight. I was able to interview several teachers and two head teachers at the schools, as well as the Assistant Director of Education for the district, Mr. Koyati. Valuable information was gained from each conversation, especially the insights that differed between the male and female respondents.

During the focus group with the secondary girls at the rescue center, I found that each of the girls has the desire to attend college. When asked how likely they thought it would be for them to attend college, the general consensus was that it would be very likely. When asked how they hoped to fund the additional years of schooling, they responded by saying that they hoped to find a sponsor who would see how hard they were trying and would be willing to sponsor them. Later, during a follow up interview with

Isaac Kimeli, he shared his thoughts on how difficult the issue of tertiary education is for these girls. While a few may be granted low interest loans because of obtaining high grades, working to pay their way through is out of the question. Isaac said that because of the high unemployment rate in the country, those working in food service or janitorial areas in colleges and universities already have college degrees and have not been able to find any other gainful employment.

**Table 4.1 Participant Questionnaire**

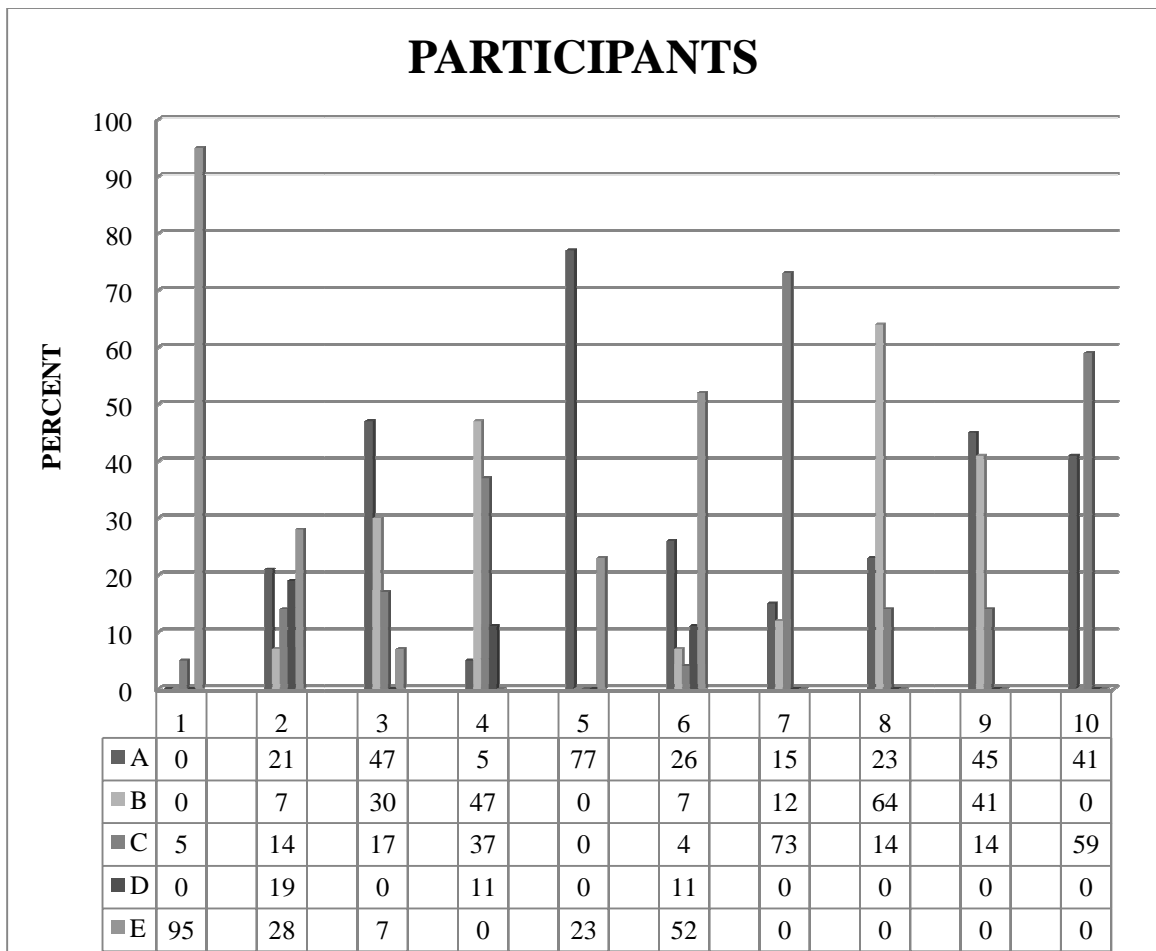


Table 4.1 displays the results of the questionnaire that can be found in Appendix D. The girls at the center were given a 10 question document and were instructed for most of the questions to choose the best of three to five possible answers. Four of the questions allowed the girls to choose more than one answer. Question one asked how long the girl would like to stay in school. The overwhelming response was until she graduates from college. Question two asked why the girl wanted more education. The top response was to become more knowledgeable about many areas of life, followed by to get a good job and to provide for her family. Question three asked who in her immediate family had attended school. The majority chose their brother(s), followed by sister(s). Question four asked about the highest number of years someone in their family had attended school. Most responses for this question were five to eight years followed by nine to twelve years. The fifth question asked the girl what she would like to be doing in five years. The majority of girls said that they would like to still be in school. The only other answer selected by the girls for this question was that they would like to have a job.

Question six asked what the girl would like to be doing in 10 years. Over half of the girls responded with the answer that said she would like to have a job, followed by still being in school. Question seven asked the girl what she wanted for her own children educationally someday. The vast majority of responses indicated that the girls want their children to go to a university. Question eight asked the girls how they think their female teachers feel about girls getting more education. The majority said that they believe the female teachers want the girls to get as much education as possible. Question nine asked how the male teachers feel about girls getting more education. Most responded that they

think the male teachers feel the same about girls and boys getting an education. Question 10 asked the girls how they think the boys in their schools feel about girls getting more education. Most responded that boys think girls shouldn't get as much education as boys should.

One of the head teachers said that a public teacher's college costs about 25,000ks each year which includes tuition and boarding but not extras such as books and fees. A private teacher's college costs twice that much. There are technical institutes and vocational schools that train mechanics and electricians but no other skills that would be suitable for girls. In order to become a teacher one simply must have graduated from form four and received a high score on the KCSE. To become a head teacher one must have graduated from a teacher's college which is a two year program and have five years of teaching experience. Mr. Koyati says that female teachers are paid the same amount as male teachers and even more if they are better educated. The district does not offer any in-service training for current teachers.

I discussed at great length the past and present condition of schools in the district with Mr. Koyati. He was very honest and yet surprisingly positive about the challenges that he faces in a district that is considered to be a hardship area. In 2003 when the government first announced its Free Primary Education initiative, schools were flooded with students. The overcrowding became so bad that parents who could afford to pull their children out of public schools did so in favor of private education. Mr. Koyati says that there are still classrooms with 90-100 students and only one teacher. Overcrowding was something I witnessed in each of the four schools I visited. He admitted that students in private schools perform better on exams than their public school counterparts

because those in the public schools continue to deal with overcrowding and understaffing.

Since some of the schools in his district are remote, Mr. Koyati encourages families in those areas to build proper houses for teachers. In areas such as this where teacher housing is not an option, the schools end up being quite understaffed because the teachers do not want to travel great distances to teach at those schools. He did add that over the last ten years there has been a fourfold increase in schools in the district, which make them more accessible to both the students and the teachers. He also confessed that he knows students in his district who walk up to 20 kilometers to school each day and start their journey as early as 3 a.m. I asked about mobile schools which have been tried in other areas of Kenya, but Mr. Koyati says that no mobile schools have been tried in his district.

The issue of school feeding programs came up in most conversations with educators and is an issue that has affected many of the rescued girls. Mr. Koyati says that the World Food Program provided the school feeding programs for many schools in his district up until 2007 when they were phased out. The government then initiated the Home Grown School Feeding Program which was designed to empower communities by having local residents to grow the food to sell to the schools. In the semi-arid areas such as Mr. Koyati's district, the program failed due to the lack of rain to grow the crops. For schools in and around slums, NGO's have continued to provide lunches knowing that it is the only meal of the day for the majority of those students. In 2009 many of Mr. Koyati's schools in less populated areas of the district closed simply because there was no food. Today most of them have reopened.

At one of the primary schools I visited, there is no feeding program, but the head teacher is seeking ways to provide food for her students who walk an average of four to five kilometers to get to school each day. Understanding that her students cannot perform their best in the classroom if they are hungry, this head teacher is starting gardens and a water collection system from which to water them. She has ideas of putting in fish ponds and raising rabbits for food. She wants the students to be actively involved in each of these areas so that they can go back to their homes and do the same things.

The other co-ed primary school I visited does have a school feeding program. The students are required to bring a stick with them to school each day. These sticks are then used for the cooking fire over which large pots of beans and rice mixtures are cooked which were provided by Feed the Children. The co-ed primary/secondary school I visited is in the second largest slum in Nairobi, and the noon meals are provided daily by an NGO. While visiting in the home of one of the rescued girls, Cliantha, I met her sister, Azami, who was at home because her school was currently out of water and had no electricity. The students are on strike because of this. The school is an all girl's boarding school with 500 students, 10 teachers, and 1 matron. Azami feels that if her school were an all boys' school, the government would see to it that it had water and electricity.

FAWE has opened all girls' schools, which they call Centres of Excellence, all over Kenya and other countries in Africa. I was able to visit one of those as well. It was very interesting and provided insight into what many of the girls from the MTH Center of Hope experience at boarding school. This particular school opened in 1959 as an African Inland Church (AIC) school. It was started by missionaries and was originally a rescue

center as well. In 1963 the government took over and began paying the teachers' salaries and providing supplies. There are now 706 primary girls living and studying at the school. The school employs 20 teachers, two counselors, and a head teacher. The head teacher granted an interview and very openly discussed the issues associated with running an all girl's school. She said that all of the teachers are Christians even though some of the students are Muslim. The library is kept under tight lock and key since there are few books. The girls are allowed in the library once a week for an hour each time and are not allowed to check the books out of the library.

Two of the girls from the rescue center were at this school because they needed extra tutoring even though it was during one of their term breaks. The head teacher allowed me to visit their classroom which was filled with 98 Grade 7 girls being taught math by a female teacher. All of the students were well behaved and attentive even though they were in very crowded conditions. The head teacher allowed the two girls from the MTH Center of Hope to come out of class so that I could give them treats and visit for a few minutes. As the tour continued, the head teacher spoke to other students who were playing games in different areas of the school. She said that these girls did not need tutoring but were rescued girls who could not go home on breaks because it was not safe for them. The head teacher was quite proud of the level of academics at her school. She said that last year all 92 of her Grade 8 students passed the KCPE with high enough scores to qualify them for secondary schools.

The head teacher explained some of the rules and policies for her Centre of Excellence. She said that their motto is 'Girl Taking Care of Girl.' They have a hierarchy of sorts where the older girls are responsible for taking care of behavior and



even some counseling issues with the younger girls. If issues are not resolved on that level, then they are taken to the teachers. If a girl is found to be pregnant, she is asked to leave. If a girl is found to be HIV positive then she may stay, and the school will supply her with the necessary medications. Girls are not automatically tested for HIV/AIDS, but the teachers understand the signs, so when a case is suspected, then the girl is tested.

The school is typical of so many in the district in that the water supply is limited. Most schools allow the girls one bucket of water each for the week. It is to be their drinking water as well as the water they use to bathe with and wash their clothes. Each of the dormitories houses 44 girls in 22 bunk beds which are covered from ceiling to floor with mosquito nets. Food in this and other boarding schools is not extravagant but adequate and nutritious. Breakfast is typically some form of porridge. Tea is served at 10 a.m. Lunch consists of *githeri* which is a combination of ground corn and beans. Supper is usually rice and ugali. Meat is generally served one day a week as is some kind of fruit.

Several issues arose consistently during interviews with teachers and other adult stakeholders. One of the issues was “who encourages female students to stay in school, the male or the female teachers?” The opinions were very strong. While most female teachers and stakeholders said that female teachers encourage the girls more, most male teachers and stakeholders believe that male teachers encourage the girls more. The adult males who answered this question reasoned that female teachers are jealous of the female students and do not want them to achieve more than they had. Other male participants said that female teachers suppress the female students because they are seen as competition. One of the female head teachers interviewed said that her male teachers are

more encouraging, and it seems that the female teachers are always punishing the female students. The other female head teacher believes that the female teachers are more encouraging because they see girls as the culture changers of the future. Interestingly enough, from the questionnaires given to the rescued girls at the MTH Center of Hope, the majority of the girls said that their male teachers are more encouraging. In listening to the girls' stories though, it was both male and female teachers who rescued some of them. Most of the educated adults interviewed agreed that all students need to be encouraged to stay in school if the culture is to change.

An issue that is not discussed as much is that of female students being sexually harassed or assaulted by male teachers. None of the teachers or other stakeholders brought this up, but when I questioned them about it, they each admitted that it is a problem to varying degrees. Mr. Koyati feels that it rarely happens and in isolated instances only. He says that when it does happen, the girl is required to tell her parents first and then may be allowed to report it to school officials if her parents give their blessing to do so. He also admitted that there is corruption involved even in cases such as this, and male teachers might bargain with the girl's father so that he won't prosecute. Others said that it does happen, but when it is found out, the government takes action. If a boy in a co-ed school rapes a girl and it is found out, then he will be beaten. One problem within the Maasai culture is that there is no word for rape in their language, so it is not seen as a crime.

When asked why the educated teachers and stakeholders were allowed to obtain additional years of schooling, most said that one or both of their parents had been educated as well. Some said that their father was the least favored of the sons, so he was

allowed to attend school. That, in turn, made him want to educate his own children. Some said they begged their parents or gained sympathy from the chief or local administration personnel who then required their parents to allow them to attend. Others said that local missionaries sponsored them. All were extremely thankful for their education and are educating their own children as well as helping other relatives to stay in school.

**Table 4.2 Schools in the District**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Private</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Total Number of Schools</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
Early Childhood Development	161	92	253	Boys - 3,751 Girls - 3, 501
Primary Schools	115	110	225	Boys - 13,730 Girls - 12,605
Secondary Schools	48	24	72	Boys - 1,900 Girls - 2,317
Teachers Colleges	2			
Universities	1			
<b><i>Teachers in the District</i></b>				
<b>Level</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	
Early Childhood Development	31	475	506	
Primary Schools	294	381	530	
Secondary Schools	225	305	530	

Table 4.2 is a compilation of information given to me by Mr. Koyati and applies to his district only. It details the number of schools in the district as well as enrollment in

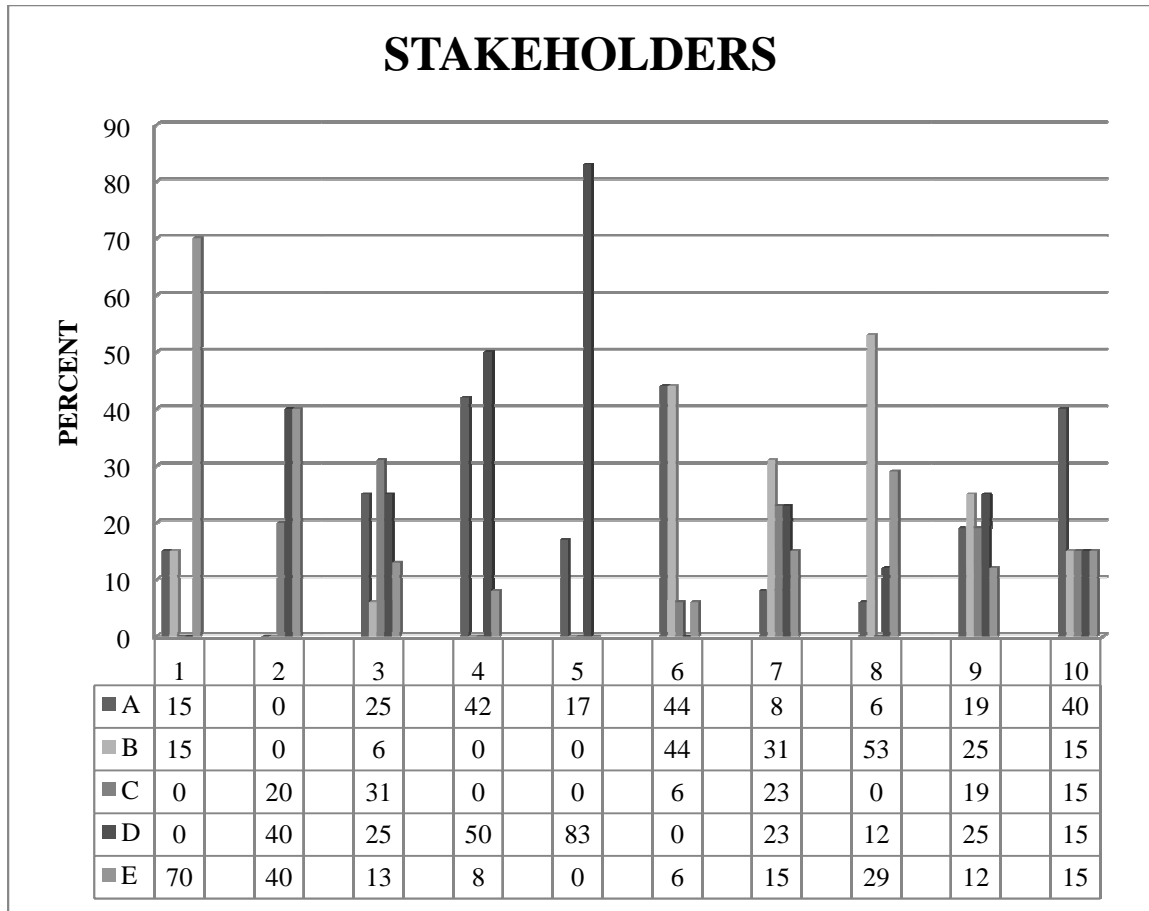
the schools where data was available. Also reflected is the data on the number of male versus female teachers at each level.

**Culture.** In seeking to understand the cultural issues facing the girls at the MTH Center of Hope, I spent hours in both formal and informal interviews in many different settings. As previously mentioned I was able to visit four schools, five churches, five homes, several small and large towns within a three hour radius of the center, a moran celebration ceremony, an oversight committee meeting, and a host of other scheduled and unscheduled meetings or visits. These encounters took place in locations which varied widely, from the center of Nairobi to the most remote areas in the bush where there are more wild animals than people. All of these experiences gave a broad and vivid picture of the Maasai culture and how it compared to the way other Kenyan's live. Table 4.3 displays the results of the questionnaire given to the stakeholders.

Question one asked the stakeholders what they believe is the main reason a girl would come to rescue center. The majority chose the answer that mentioned avoiding early marriage and FGM. Question two asked how much education they think the girls will now be able to pursue since they are living at the center. An equal number of responders said that they should be able to attend some university classes or graduate from a university. Question three asked how well the girls would be received back into their communities if they only stay at the center for a year or less. Most thought that the communities would be suspicious of them, others thought they would be welcomed back or that they would bring a higher bride price. Question four asked the stakeholders how well the girls would be received back into their communities if they graduate from secondary school. Most responses indicated that the girls would be treated as more

valuable and that they would be welcomed back with open arms. Question five took the previous two questions one step further by asking how well the girls would be received back into their communities if they graduate from a university. The greatest number of responders by far felt that the girls would be treated with respect.

**Table 4.3 Stakeholder Questionnaire**



Question six asked the stakeholders how they think Maasai parents feel about sending their girls to school. The majority chose either that they think it is a waste of time and money or that the money is better spent on a son. Question seven asked who they believe is most in support of Maasai girls receiving an education. The answers were close with the majority believing that it is the mothers who are most in support, followed

by teachers/school administrators and the government. Question eight addressed five of the concepts that the Ministry of Education in Kenya believe are aims and objectives for primary education. The stakeholders were to choose the one they personally believed most important. Over half believe that helping Maasai girls grow toward maturity and self-fulfillment and becoming useful members of society was the most important.

Question nine listed five subjects taught in schools and asked the stakeholders to choose the one they felt was most important for Maasai girls. The same amount of responders chose home science/domestic science and mathematics as the most important, and religion as least. Question 10 asked the stakeholders whom they believe should be responsible for the costs associated with the education of Maasai girls. By quite a margin, they believe that the parents are the ones who should assume the responsibility.

The movie *The Lion King* (1994) made the phrase ‘Hakuna Matata’ one of the most well known phrases from the Kiswahili language, literally meaning ‘there are no worries.’ This is very true of the Maasai people. They are easygoing and never in a rush to get anywhere. In some ways the lifestyle is to be admired, but other times it can be very frustrating. On several occasions interview times and locations were changed at the last minute because the interviewee was detained or forgot to mention that they needed to meet somewhere else. One key informant was only interviewed informally after church one Sunday because he never arrived at scheduled times or places. My structured, precise, and organized interview schedule was changed over and over again because of “African Time.” However, it is also culturally appropriate and even encouraged to stop at someone’s home without an invitation. I did this on a few occasions and was graciously welcomed in and treated to tea. The Maasai homes I visited were neat and

very similar and considered some of the nicer homes in the area. They had concrete floors that were either painted or covered with Linoleum. The walls were either particle board or painted wood with pictures tacked to the walls. The homes were primarily furnished with up to six simple couches in the living rooms, and a coffee table in the center. Not all of the houses had indoor plumbing. While I saw many of the cow dung and stick homes as well as the shacks in the slums, I did not visit inside any of those.

One such visit was to the home of one of the rescued girls. Since the rescued girl's name is Cliantha, her mother is called Mama Cliantha. Mama Cliantha is a large, proud Maasai woman who does not speak any English. She dresses in the typical bright red shukas with multicolored beading covering much of her head, neck and waist. Through a translator at a warrior celebration, she invited me to her home for tea the following day. Around 10 a.m. Mary Hooper and I arrived at her home. It was very nice for a traditional Maasai. Mama Cliantha met us in the field in front of her home and ushered us in to her living room. Mary and I were shown where to sit on the couches, and a younger daughter who was at home and spoke English came in and visited. Mama Cliantha disappeared.

Mama Cliantha was gone for quite some time, and when asked, the younger daughter said that she was actually preparing a meal. Mary asked if we might see the kitchen. The group, which by now included a couple of small grandsons, went outside to a small wooden building. Since there was no electricity it took a few minutes for eyes to adjust to the dimness and smoke of the interior. Mama Cliantha was sitting in the middle of the room on a stool stoking a small fire. The room had a dirt floor on which were several pots that held raw meat, potatoes and vegetables. Mama Cliantha appeared quite

satisfied with the feast that she was preparing and indicated that she wanted her picture taken with the food. After several pictures were taken from different angles the party was led back outside where the daughter gave a brief tour of the property. She narrated that when Mama Cliantha's husband passed away, the land and animals were divided between the two wives. An NGO came through the area several years before and put in a windmill for several families in the area. Mama Cliantha started a garden at that time which has done quite well, generating enough produce to sell at a local market.

The uncles in the family have come several times in an attempt to sell Cliantha for cattle. Mama Cliantha has intervened and even been beaten because she hid Cliantha so that she would not be sold. Cliantha contacted Chief Saitoti who took care of her until the rescue center opened. Mama Cliantha, who is now 55, was married at 15. She did not know her husband before she married him. She said that did not even fully understand that she was married to him until she was 25. She never went to school, although her brothers did. She always wanted to go to school and; therefore, has made certain that both of her girls get an education.

I discussed at length with each stakeholder the issue of Maasai marriage. They agreed that most marriages are not for love but are born out of necessity. Even though there are laws against early marriage and the selling of daughters, the Maasai continue to defy the law in favor of their traditions and culture. Wives will help choose new wives for their husbands based on who can cook or is healthy enough to take care of the manual labor around the home. In cases of divorce within the tribe, the dowry is not returned, and any children born during the marriage stay with the husband. The wife is the one who must leave the home. Dowries must be paid, or the belief is that something bad will



happen in the marriage or the marriage will not be seen as legitimate. Dowries can be paid out over several years. Because the drought has claimed the lives of so many cows, the universal price for a bride now in Maasailand is three cows, two sheep, a few goats, blankets, beer, honey, and money. If a girl has more value the price could be ten cows and 150,000ks. The price is always negotiable. Maasai men believe that it is better not to have daughters than not to have cows. As cows die from drought or disease, the age of girls being sold into marriage decreases as well. Some girls are sold at such young ages that they are not even aware that such an exchange has taken place. The girl might simply go to live with another family one day and be raised with the rest of the children. When she reaches the age of puberty, she will be told that she is actually married to the man of the home and be taken to him that night. From that day forward she is treated as a wife with all of the duties and responsibilities. Wife sharing among the men's age sets still occurs today although most stakeholders agree that it is beginning to phase out.

In a conversation with the chief one day, he was the first to talk about the beatings men may get if they attempt or actually commit incest with a daughter. He said that when the village women find out, they organize early one morning and go to the man's house and beat him, sometimes maiming him for life. This was confirmed by several of the female stakeholders who said they have witnessed such a thing but never participated. Each of the stakeholders also admitted that sexual molestation does occur in the bush, but it is never reported and life goes on. Towns with police can be quite far from areas in the bush, and the police rarely travel out into the rural areas. As mentioned in the literature review, there are laws in Kenya against early marriage, FGM, incest, rape, etc., but they are not upheld in remote areas. The chief says that he, along with the churches and

schools, are trying from different angles to teach the people that these things are wrong. The churches teach that these things violate the laws of God. Schools teach about respect, as well as educate students about the diseases that can be transmitted. The chief is trying to lead by example. He will not circumcise his daughters and is allowing them an education and will allow them to choose their own husbands. He also brings educated women into the villages so that the children can see positive female role models.

Another area of marriage that was discussed with stakeholders is that of how the girls receiving more education will affect them in finding husbands. Some believed that the girls will not marry true Maasai men because the girls would have gotten beyond the age that the Maasai men prefer. Others think that as the culture changes as a whole, both girls and boys will receive more education and will graduate together and be ready for marriage at the same time. Some feel that highly educated women will be seen as having more value and will, therefore, marry men of higher social and economic classes. The chief does see one man and one wife for the future of the Maasai, but he believes it is a gradual process and will take time. He believes that the reason so many men still have multiple wives is because of Nomadism. Men are gone for up to a month at a time with their cattle, so they have a wife in each of the locations where they travel to find grass. A man who cannot afford more than one wife will most often travel with the entire family to find grazing for the cattle. The chief believes that over 50% of Maasai are still nomads today.

I also discussed the issue of FGM with the stakeholders. It is something freely discussed among men and women because it is prevalent and accepted. Since most of the stakeholders have known girls who have died, contracted a disease, or been maimed from

the practice, they do believe that it should be abandoned. Because it is the first qualification for marriage, some younger girls who will eventually be allowed to stay in school have already undergone the ritual. Most of the older generation of Maasai men is uneducated and, therefore, have either not been taught about the negative outcomes from the procedure or hold to the belief that the benefits outweigh the potential threats. Their belief is simply that if a girl is uncircumcised she will not be able to have children; she will not be sweet and will not be faithful. Some of the older women said that when they were girls, they wanted to be circumcised because it was one of the few major milestones in the life of a girl and symbolized that she had become a woman. They understand now that there are so many risks involved with it, including contracting HIV/AIDS and uncontrollable bleeding that could lead to death. The risk of infection is also high. Girls and women sometimes have chronic bladder and vaginal infections after the procedure. This has been discovered to be true for some of the girls at the rescue center. Tim and Mary Hooper have transported many girls to clinics for treatment of urinary infections.

While the focus of this study is the life world of the Maasai girl-child, it is interesting to note a few of the cultural issues affecting their male counterparts. After the girls take the KCPE at the end of Grade 8, they are most often removed from school and married off. After the boys take the KCPE, they traditionally are circumcised and go through the moran initiation process. This is the reason that there are fewer Maasai boys in secondary schools than any other tribe. Historically the morans were the boys in transition to manhood. The stage begins when the boys are 14-16 years of age. This is the first time that they are put together into an age set. This stage usually lasts about five years, and during this time the group of boys will stay out of school and go into the bush

to live together away from their families. Years ago morans would have to kill a lion or another moran in order to prove their manhood. Isaac Kimeli believes that morans still kill each other today to prove manhood, but it only happens far out in the bush and is never reported. He also believes that about 80% of Maasai boys still go through the moran stage. Alcohol is a major issue during this period. The morans steal a cow, take it to a nearby town and sell it to purchase beer. In the bush they live on beer and the meat of other stolen cows. After the five years are over, the morans may go back to their families and marry or go back to school. Every 15-20 years there is a monumental celebration, which is one of the final initiations into manhood and signifies the end of the moran era for all of those who have been through the process. More and more young men are allowed to participate in the ceremony, even if they have not been through the true moran stage since it is so much a part of the Maasai culture. Most of the stakeholders interviewed believe that the ceremony itself is fine as it is not tied to witchcraft; it simply represents something from the past in the culture that the Maasai hold on to.

I happened to be in Kenya on my final trip when one of the moran 15 year celebrations took place. My husband and I were invited to witness this ceremony with a handful of other Westerners. The drive to get to the area took quite a while through the bush where there are no roads and had to be guided by several young men who rode along in the back of the truck. The area, they said, is known for leopards and venomous snakes. Well over 1,000 people were there when we arrived. Maasai of all ages, in the traditional shukas and ornamental clothing, made up 95% of the crowd. Most of them had been there for several days preparing for the ceremony. A traditional sacred cow had just been cooked over an open pit fire. The Westerners were brought plastic chairs to sit

in and were offered warm bottled drinks. An elderly Maasai man brought a chunk of the sacred cow on a stick for the Westerners and cut off pieces for each of them to sample. Since it would have been an insult not to partake, each of the Westerners, myself included, ate what was offered. Most of it was not fully cooked, and some of it just barely warm. The rest of the Maasai were eating from a huge buffet of all kinds of meats and traditional foods that had, no doubt, been cooked by all of the women over the last few days.

Once the meal was over, the dancing began. All of the Morans to be initiated gathered in groups and performed their traditional jumping dances in circles. The wives and mothers also performed their traditional dances. One of the Maasai girls said that the women mimic giraffes when they dance because they are graceful and have long necks. This part of the ceremony continued for a couple of hours. Other foreigners, dressed in safari gear, were taking pictures with large, expensive cameras. Some were members of NGO's, and others were magazine reporters. After a time dancing, all of the morans went into the field adjacent to the property where the celebration was being held. Once they had lined up, they began to slowly file their way into a corral where the sacred cow had been cooked. Inside the corral were the elders who would pronounce blessings over them, as well as wives and mothers who would feed them pieces of the cow. Originally, our small band of Westerners was told that we would not be allowed inside the corral because it was for pure Maasai only. At the last minute, we were ushered inside and given a spot on the ground where we could clearly see the ceremony. The morans stood and then knelt around most of the edge of the corral. Blessings were spoken by many different men. While the women did not speak, they were the ones to feed their sons or

husbands the sacred cow. This part of the ceremony lasted a couple of hours and was followed by another brief period of dancing. After the official end of the ceremony, the Maasai stood around talking. As typical of the Maasai, no one seemed to be in a hurry to go anywhere. When I left with the group, the landscape was still thick with red shukas and smiling faces.

**Religion.** During my first trip to Kenya, I observed two different Maasai bush church services. Since no one in those churches spoke English, everything spoken had to be translated either to English or Kiswahili. It was uncomfortable at first being the minority in a church so far in the bush with worshippers who expressed their faith in such different ways than I was accustomed to. The congregations in these churches, made up of mostly women were very poor; the houses they had come from were made of cow dung and sticks. The pastors said that the people walk many kilometers every Sunday faithfully. A typical Sunday morning church service lasts several hours, since the people arrive at different times all morning. There are no Sunday school or nursery services for the children so everyone is in the one-room building together. CCM missionaries translated the salvation message which is the normal Sunday morning sermon. The time of praise and worship lasted about an hour with all songs being sung in Maa or Kiswahili. During the time of offering an elder stood at the front of the church with a cloth sack, and the congregation filed to the front of the church to place their offering in the sack. Many different people spoke during the course of the services, some shared verses, made announcements, or just spoke words of encouragement.

On the following two trips to the area, I worshipped in churches closer to the rescue center. I was able to attend two times with the girls from the center. On one

occasion the girls were late to arrive and were chastised from the pulpit by one of the elders. Another time the Hooper's and I had to leave a service before the sermon started in order to get to another appointment even though we had been there for several hours already. The final sermon was actually preached in English and translated into Kiswahili. The speaker that day was an educated Maasai man from a neighboring town who was a guest speaker at the church. I was able to visit with him after the service. He said that while most normal sermons cover salvation or a simple truth from scripture, he likes to preach from scripture about some of the things in the Maasai culture that need to change. He hopes to see internal transformation in his people rather than just an external change. His topic that day was monogamy, and his family was in attendance with him. He told the people that he loves and respects his wife and that he will remain the husband of one wife. He also said that he has two daughters and that he will not circumcise them and he will guide them to choose godly husbands. According to the interviews and research this would have been different teaching than what the congregation is accustomed to, but the admonitions seemed well received.

I was able to have several in-depth discussions with Isaac Kimeli. Isaac is a man of deep faith and has wisdom and compassion beyond his years. He emphasized over and over that the culture of the Maasai will not change until they align themselves exclusively with the Lord. He firmly believes that until the Maasai practice scriptural authority over the powers of darkness the culture will not change. He has confidence that many of the people he works with and tries to help are Christians but their besetting sin is that of believing that witchcraft must be at work anytime something negative happens. He says this is because of a failure in African churches to systematically teach scriptural truths

regarding the power and presence of God. He does believe that things are gradually changing as educated pastors and missionaries are permeating the area. Several of the teachers interviewed agreed with Isaac's comments and added that Christianity is a choice of the heart, whereas the belief in witchcraft is a choice because of culture and tradition. It is interesting to note that several of those interviewed who do not go to church and do not profess to be Christians stated that Christianity appears to be helping to bring about positive changes in the Maasai culture.

Isaac believes that God was preparing him for his current position with the rescue center and girl-child issues for many years. He showed me a 2003 newspaper article where he was vocal about the negative impact of some cultures on females. He says that God placed this passion in his heart. He is thankful that he plays such an active role in rescuing girls, leading them to Christ or helping to grow their faith in Christ, and having a positive impact on some of their families.

Another educated man who was interviewed is a Maasai retired military colonel in his 60s. He said that some people refer to him as 'Bishop'. Bishop believes that both education and Christianity are changing things but that Christianity is the key and education is secondary. He agrees with Isaac in that things are gradually changing, and as the older generations of Maasai, many of whom are not turning to Christianity, pass away so will many of the oppressive cultural issues. Bishop was raised by an educated father who was a teacher, preacher, and missionary in Tanzania. When his father died he returned to Kenya and joined the military after graduating from form four. After his military career, which included two separate training stints in the U.S., he joined an organization called the Soul Winners Ministry. Through this interdenominational



organization he was able to mentor young Kenyan men and women. He was proud to report that all of those he mentored are still doing well today. He is thankful that his daughter chose a Christian man to be her husband and that they will raise his grandchildren in the ways of the Lord.

CCM facilitates different types of meetings and seminars for the girls where speakers talk about various topics ranging from abuse to public speaking. I was able to sit in on one such occasion with a speaker who was using scripture to help the girls' process different forms of abuse. The speaker took the girls step-by-step through scripture showing them that true healing and forgiveness can only be found in God's word. It was a powerful time as the girls attempted to process the information by asking questions related to their specific stories.

Most of the rescued girls profess to be Christians and to have attended church for several years prior to coming to the rescue center. Pastors on the oversight committee or who work with CCM in the district have had the opportunity to bring girls to the CCM offices. Girls such as Ivy, Zinnia, Camellia, and Iris were all rescued by their pastors. Calla was raised by a Christian woman after the death of her parents, and she says she loves the Lord and loves to share her testimony with other students at her school. Although Amantha grew up in a slum, she was able to attend church where she says she dedicated her life to the Lord and prayed for a way out of the slum. She feels that God heard her prayers in bringing her to the rescue center. Parish priests confirmed Ilima and Rose's dire need and assisted them in getting in contact with CCM. Dahlia says that her father became a Christian through CCM's outreach mission in her area and treated her much better afterwards. As she grew older, the pressure from the culture as well as

poverty became too great, and he still made the decision to sell her. The sisters were able to say “No” to their father’s advances because of what their pastor taught them at church. Several other girls such as Calla, Flora, and Nydia say that Christian teachers took them in or helped them escape marriage by notifying the local administration. It is obvious on Sundays which girls who have attended church in the past as they are ones joining the choir and are uninhibited in worship. The Maasai people love to sing, and one often hears singing in different areas of the center. It is especially encouraging to hear the girls singing songs of rescue and deliverance.

**Hope.** In traveling about the district interviewing many people from diverse walks of life, I wondered what they thought of the new center that was built specifically to rescue Maasai girls out of forced marriage and FGM. I posed the question to numerous people, both Maasai and non-Maasai. Every responder was positive about the center. People thanked CCM and the Hoopers profusely for their efforts in rescuing girls. Other responses included that it was a place of rescue, not just for one community, but for the entire district and beyond. Some expressed how good it is for the girls who have been oppressed to have a place where they can live a good life and be protected. Still others mentioned that it is a blessing and a place of hope where the girls can begin to dream about their futures.

I also wondered if the older people had concerns about removing the girls from their natural environment and culture. When pressed about this, a few expressed concern over the girls possibly losing the pure Maasai way of dressing and carrying oneself with dignity. Others mentioned that they hoped the girls would not lose the oral tradition of storytelling or respect for elders and care for each other. All thought the benefits of

living at the center far outweighed the possible loss of traditions, as some of the girls would not have survived long in the situations from which they were rescued.

Since the center is called a place of hope, when I conducted the focus groups with the girls, (one for the primary girls and one for the secondary girls), I asked a few simple questions that were tied to the word hope. When I asked the girls what they hope for now, they spoke of hoping that their grades would improve now that there aren't other distractions. Others hope to be able to have a good job and choose their own husband someday. Still others said that they hope to raise their own children in peace and safety. Most hope for a college education so that they can become doctors, lawyers, journalists, teachers, accountants, and even pilots. Others mentioned the hope that they can help to change the lives of their sisters and other girls in the same situation.

Because the girls all seemed to express wanting to help other girls in their families and communities, I also asked a few stakeholders how the girls would be received back into their families and communities after living at the center and receiving an education. Most thought that if the girls stay in school and receive a good education, as well as learn a trade or job skill which would help them to become employed, they would be welcomed back with open arms. A few thought that the older Maasai might be suspicious of them since they would certainly dress and speak differently. One woman said that she was fearful that part of the reason the girls would be welcomed back is because if they are employed they would be seen as having money.

Isaac said that he has seen educated women go back into their communities and have a voice to bring about positive change for others. Many stakeholders thought that if the girls were able to become professionals in their occupations and then went back into

their communities to work, real, cultural change would take place. They said that currently girls are not given a chance to develop into productive citizens in their communities. Chief Saitoti said that he is especially thankful for the center because previously when girls ran to him for protection, he would take them to a boarding school with which he wasn't especially impressed. He says that the MTH Center of Hope is a wonderful option, and it is saving the LIVES [speaker's emphasis] of the girls who are placed there.

Since the unemployment rate among the Maasai is around 80% the oversight committee knows that they must go a step beyond simply educating the girls if the hope for their future is to be sustained. That is why they have explored several microbusiness opportunities for the girls and are in the process of developing some of them. The girls use their beading skills to create pieces of jewelry and other art for the American teams to bring back to the U.S. to sell for them. This isn't seen as a lucrative option in Kenya, though, as the beading market among the Maasai is saturated. Raising goats for meat, cheese, and milk appears to be an excellent way not only to provide nutrients for the girls, but also to sell and begin to move the center toward becoming self-sufficient. The Hoopers have become friends with a British couple who have a small goat operation, and this couple has provided invaluable insight on the plans for and the handling of the business. Already pens and sheds have been built and goats purchased.

Another microbusiness that should begin over the next year is called Zebra Pads. One problem countrywide is that girls stay at home from school when they have their cycles. Most simply cannot afford sanitary pads. While many organizations provide them to schools, oftentimes the supply cannot keep up with the demand. If girls take the

pads home from school, their sisters and mothers use them as well. The idea of reusable cloth pads is not new, but a young woman from the U.S. named Rachel has developed a kit that she calls Zebra Kits. She uses the name zebra because of the location of the rescue center. She has even used zebra striped fabric on many of them. The kits include 5 washable, leak-proof pads, a container for soaking and washing, as well as a kit that contains all of the supplies. She and her mother hope to have a small shop built on the property of the center and are willing to purchase several sewing machines so that the girls, along with volunteers, can make the kits to sell in local markets and schools. Rachel has done market, cost, and sales analyses of the area and believes that this could prove to be a considerable business opportunity for the girls and the center.

I spent two weeks observing and interacting with the girls during my final trip to Kenya. At this point the primary girls had been residents at the center for seven months, and the secondary girls had been back for month-long breaks twice as well as other shorter breaks. All of their belongings were now at the center, and the girls appeared to be settling in to a routine. In referring back to Maslow (1968), the basic or physiological needs of the girls were met immediately upon arriving at the center.

Tim and Mary, along with CCM and all of the stakeholders for the center do not want to simply create a Western center run by Westerners where girls can come temporarily for a handout. They want to see the girls take ownership of their lives, the center, and their futures. They want to develop the center as a place where Kenyans take care of Kenyans and work together to break the chains of cultural oppression. As Paulo Freire (2009) said,

The oppressors, who oppress, exploit, and rape by virtue of their power, cannot

find in this power the strength to liberate either the oppressed or themselves.

Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both. (p.44)

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

### Summary of the Findings

This research study sought to understand how the life dreams of the girls at the MTH Center of Hope are being altered as a result in a change of cultural experience. As previously stated in Chapter Three, the term 'Life Dreams', to this particular group of girls, includes having choices in their future with regard to marriage, education, food, medical care, protection, and freedom of worship. The denigrating treatment of women and girls in patriarchal societies and tribes such as the Maasai is oppressive, causes alienation, and often leads to brutality. Most of the girls in this study, had they remained in their villages, would have been married by at least Grade 8, would have been forced to undergo circumcision, and would not have been able to attend secondary school. If their husbands or family members had practiced witchcraft, they would have been forced to do the same. They would have lived in poverty and been forced to meet the sexual demands of not only their husbands, but also any man in his age-set.

After coming to the MTH Center of Hope, these girls began to process how different life could be for them; they began to dream and hope of a future far different from their mothers and grandmothers. Out of their interviews and the interviews of stakeholders as well as focus groups, observations, and the relevant literature, emerged five recurrent themes affecting those life dreams: A) poverty, B) education, C) culture, D) religion, and E) hope. While the girls have only just begun this new journey, and the findings are in a continuous moving stream, they do already have a glimpse of this unique

life trajectory. They are excited and thankful for the opportunities of education, the possibility of choosing their own husband, the freedom to worship, learning skills for gainful employment, and the ability to choose which parts of their culture to embrace or reject.

### **Discussion and Implications**

**Poverty.** The term poverty is complex. It had many faces and manifestations in the lives of the rescued girls. For some, poverty mirrored Maslow's (1970) first tier of his hierarchy, simply the inaccessibility to adequate food, water, shelter and sleep. Aven watched as her 11-year-old sister was married to a 43-year-old man and subsequently left alone to starve like many of her other married friends. Camellia's chief confirmed that the poverty in her area, and specifically for her family, was so severe that their hope for selling her into early marriage was that they would have a brief reprieve from their destitution. Kaeya said that she and her mother could not raise even one cent for school fees or clothing and that when she arrived at the school building her clothing was in such tatters that she had to hide until school personnel could find suitable clothing for her. Some of the girls had become modern day slaves just to obtain food; two of them actually prostituted themselves in order to have money to purchase food. Some also begged from neighbors. One slept on the kitchen floor in her teacher's house – her only option for shelter for some time. Many lived only on the noon day meals provided through relief organizations to their schools. Trying to perform well academically while sleep and nutritionally deprived has been a tremendous challenge for many of the girls.

Poverty also includes inaccessibility to education, medical care, and employment. Samuel Kunhiyop (2008) commends NGO's who have "provided sustainable water



supplies, encouraged sustainable agricultural practices, improved community health care and sanitation, and focused on the economic empowerment of women and young people” (p.161). The girls brought to the MTH Center of Hope are now assured of three meals each day, a warm and safe shelter, and access to medical care whenever needed. They smile as they show visitors their dorm rooms with beautiful beds and curtains. Delphine and Jasmine, as well as other girls, dream of being able to have a home where there are beautiful blankets on the beds, as well as curtains that they have made at the windows. While these elements are life changing, in order for the girls to continue into adulthood having their needs met as referred to in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, they must also have skills for gainful employment when they leave the center. Chief Saitoti as well as Isaac Kimeli believes that the unemployment rate among the Maasai in their district is now approaching 80%. The droughts in the arid and semi-arid regions of Southern Kenya over the last three to five years have caused a devastating loss of livestock as well as a needless loss of human life.

While some of the rescued girls have tried different types of employment that included working in the homes of people from other cultures, this most often led to exposure to further forms of abuse. It is crucial that the MTH Center of Hope provide microbusiness opportunities for the girls and equip them with job skills which will translate into sustainable income in their futures. The newly established goat operation will provide milk and cheese for the girls as well as enough to sell. The sewing opportunities appear to be other avenues for income that will help the center to become self-sustaining. Tim and Mary Hooper have brought in successful business women and men to research the area in hopes of finding microbusiness ventures that will work in this

region. It is hoped that as the girls participate in these opportunities, they will never have to go back to a life of poverty and that they can help other girls to avoid the manifestations of abject poverty that many of them experienced.

**Culture.** The Maasai Tribe is a proud, patriarchal one. The tribe has survived hundreds of years of changes all around it without succumbing to the pressure to change itself. The governments of both Kenya and Tanzania, where the Maasai Tribe is now located, have enacted laws that are for the benefit of all humanity. Many in the tribe continue to ignore those laws, forcing the girls to undergo cultural practices that are now outlawed. Female Genital Mutilation was outlawed by Kenyan President Moi in 1982, but the families of the majority of girls in this study ignored the law and circumcised the girls anyway. Since the girls were adolescents or teenagers when this occurred, it was a traumatic experience engrained on their minds and emotions. According to the 2007 Kenya Marriage Bill “No person shall marry while under the age of eighteen years” (p.10). Another statement in the same bill, which is ignored in the bush is, “No marriage shall be contracted except of the free will of each of the parties” (p.11). Because government officials and police don’t travel into the more remote areas where the Maasai most often reside, there is no one to enforce these decrees except the chiefs. Chief Saitoti, whose home is visible from the center, is an honest man who believes in the rights and respect for all humanity. He enforces the laws and is prepared to prosecute anyone who would attempt to come to the rescue center to kidnap one of the girls. One of the most powerful ideas conveyed to the rescued girls by the chief is that he is training his own daughters in what to look for in a future husband. He provides guidance but will

not choose their husbands for them. This has given the rescued girls such hope for their future as they dream about marrying someone for love.

Chief Saitoti as well as the oversight committee has also promised the girls protection, which is in line with Maslow's second tier safety needs: freedom from fear, security, protection, law, order, limits, etc. Most of the girls come from temporary houses made from cow dung and sticks. The permanence of the dorms and other buildings at the site provide the security of knowing where their home will be for years to come. The rescue center has definite boundaries with guards on duty day and night. Knowing that part of protection is also establishing guidelines for the girls themselves, the oversight committee has placed a matron at the center who gives the girls duties to perform each day. The girls must follow rules, perform to the best of their ability in school, and treat each other with respect in order to remain a resident.

In speaking with educated Maasai men and women, especially those men who have only one wife and do not circumcise their daughters, it appears that change to the culture will most likely come in several ways. Men educating other men on the superstitions and dangers surrounding FGM and early marriage are slowly helping, although changing the older generation is a difficult task in any society. More than likely what will help the most is the training the children receive as they stay in school longer and gain an understanding of laws and rights. All but one of the girls at the center have been spared early marriage, but it is too late for many of them in regards to FGM. The majority of the girls, however, spoke of wanting to spare their sisters or other younger girls from having to endure that practice. They are determined to stay in school, learn how to earn a decent income, and understand their rights so that they can return to their

communities and help to facilitate positive, legal changes within the culture. All of this will transpire as they continue to receive counseling for past traumas and gain an awareness of themselves, stirred by hope for the future that Freire (2009) talked about.

**Religion.** Kunhiyop (2008) said that, “despite its high Christian population, Kenya is one of the most corrupt countries in Africa” (p.169). Some of the stakeholders interviewed said that the moral fiber of society in Kenya has been destroyed because of the corruption that begins at the highest levels. They are convinced that the conscience of the people has been deadened, and, as demonstrated in the slums and other areas, respect for life and property is, at times, nonexistent. Witchcraft, rampant evil, and oppression, they believe, are results of the lack of morality in the choices of people searching to fill a void in their lives that only Christ can fill.

Maslow’s views, when taken to the extreme, could encourage people to become little gods by somehow ‘becoming one with the universe’ or by being ‘true to themselves’ or ‘masters of their fate’. This is obviously not what is meant by the oversight committee for the center since their belief is that God has created humanity with a void only He can fill. The highest goal is not self-fulfillment but a relationship with Jesus Christ. They believe and stress to the girls that He created each person uniquely with a specific plan and purpose for their lives. CCM and the oversight committee for the center believe that God has given all of His people a direct command: “Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy” (Leviticus 19:2, NIV). They maintain that the only way that the Maasai girls or anyone else can make a positive, lasting change in their culture is by pursuing an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ and living a life aligned with scripture.

While it first appeared that education was the key that caused the girls at the center the most hope and joy, I came to the realization during my last trip to the center that the girls' faith and the expression thereof was what sustained them. Isaac Kimeli verified this. Most of the girls have thoroughly enjoyed being able to stay in school and obtain something no other women in their families had as an opportunity, but freedom and passion have been witnessed elsewhere. The more the girls were given opportunities to attend church, participate in praise and worship at the center as well as personal and corporate Bible study, the more the girls expressed thankfulness to God for being the One who truly rescued them. Calla expressed the realization that she would not be able to have food and other provisions as well as an education unless God had provided it. Those who had been allowed to attend church before coming to the center talked of not being able to put into practice many aspects of Christianity in their daily lives because of family members' beliefs in witchcraft. Asphodel and Iris visibly shuddered as they spoke of traumatic memories tied to witchcraft. They repeatedly expressed thankfulness at being able to freely live the Christian life that has now been afforded them. They dream of being able to have families who love the Lord, attend church together, and even study God's Word in their homes. CCM, the committee, and all of those involved with the MTH Center of Hope trust that each girl who comes through the gate will know that they have potential to become culture-changers, that they can grow personally, and that the same God who created them also loves them unconditionally and seeks an intimate relationship with them. In this way, their faith in Christ is the fulfillment of the hierarchy of needs.

**Education.** It is well documented that the more education a person has, the better his or her health, hygiene and overall quality of life (see Duflo, Dupas & Kremer, 2010, Lesorogol, 2008, & Chirwa, 2008). They also have additional employment opportunities, and their children will tend to be better educated. In a qualitative research project conducted by Ernestina Coast (2006) and focusing primarily on the Maasai man, findings included that more educated men tend to send all of their children to school, not just one or two. Coast also found that educated men had a lower propensity to engage in polygamy. Along with education came the ability to be less influenced by tradition and culture, including pastoralism. Chief Saitoti says that it is because of the fear of losing their own tribal customs and traditions that many Maasai do not want their children to receive what they believe to be a Western education that has nothing to do with their heritage.

Maslow's fourth tier in his hierarchy is called "esteem need.s" While there is nothing wrong with understanding and expressing potential academically, athletically, artistically, or through any other gift, CCM's desire is that the girls acknowledge the Creator and seek to understand His calling on and plan for their lives. Education has and will continue to open doors of opportunity for the rescued girls but in and of itself cannot change the culture.

The oversight committee says that many of the girls were simply so poor that they could not afford a uniform or the fees to attend school. Some could afford the fees one year but then not again for two or three years. Some moved at random times during their elementary years, so even if they were in school at each of the new places of residence, their education was fragmented. The girls are keenly aware that if they are to obtain a

quality education they must assume responsibility for studying outside of the classroom more diligently than peers who have been in school synchronously would have to. They are quick to tutor each other and are thrilled to use the new library at the center.

The girls have sponsors from the U.S. who are committed to seeing that they achieve at least a secondary degree. Most of the girls verbalized wanting to go on to tertiary schools to become doctors, lawyers, pilots, and teachers. These dreams and goals were never before considered to be attainable. The on-going study will continue to follow the girls into the future to see what opportunities will be afforded them. As some of the stakeholders stated, it is exciting to think about what the future would be like if there were a generation of educated Maasai women.

**Hope.** When asked what they now hope for, the girls at the MTH Center of Hope are endless smiles as they share dreams that they have begun to dream, not only for their own future, but for the future of their families and the next generation as well. Their hope is multi-faceted, and they are united in it. This theme parallels Maslow's third tier of belongingness and love. Together they are striving for the same goals and cheering each other to success. They have the hope that they will succeed because of the love and care of many people. The girls now experience freedom from poverty, freedom of religion, and perceived endless opportunities with regard to education. They even dream of having a voice in who their husband will be and marrying him for love as well as being treated with respect. As witnessed each month when I receive pictures of the girls, their bodies are healthier and their faces more relaxed and joyful.

While they dream they are simultaneously working to overcome the emotional and physical abuse suffered in the past. The inner turmoil of angry emotions still holds

some in bondage. Isaac Kimeli has been proactive in seeking Christ-centered counseling for all of the girls. Even the ones who can now display joy and hope for the future still have deep-seated wounds that they do not yet have the emotional maturity to process on their own. Matthew 6:14 has become very dear to them: “For if you forgive others when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (NIV). Another beloved verse is Matthew 5:7: “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy”. These girls, even in their youth, have demonstrated a level of forgiveness, redemption, and mercy I’ve never witnessed before. Those from the U.S. who have the opportunity to go to Kenya and work with the girls at the MTH Center of Hope agree with Vincent Donovan (1970) in one of his earlier works who may have said it best:

This is what I, and others like me, are trying to do *out there*. Not to bring salvation and goodness and holiness and grace and God, which were there before we got there. But to bring these people the only thing they did not have before we came--hope--a hope imbedded in the meaning of the life and death and resurrection of Christ. It is a cleansing and humbling thought to see your whole life and work reduced to being simply a channel of hope, and yourself merely a herald of hope, for those who do not have it. (p.143)

Education for the rescued girls will quite obviously be a launching pad for dreams and opportunities. Since Isaac Kimeli was raised in the district where the rescue center is located, he has a keen awareness of the quality of each school. He has been able to place the girls in schools where he knows that not only the quality of education is good but that the girls will be well cared for. He also frequents each school that hosts girls from the center so that he is apprised of each girl’s academic performance, conduct, and overall



health and well-being. While a few of the girls have shown improvements in grades since coming to live at the center, it is expected that many more will be able to demonstrate grade improvements over the months to come.

Business opportunities go hand-in-hand with education. In the study by E. Brown (2008), she said that, “Microbusiness ventures help marginalized women and girls in Africa turn their artisan talents into a livable wage to support themselves, their families, and their communities”. Chirwa (2008) said that “profitability is statistically significantly higher for entrepreneurs with higher education (7.9 per cent above those without education)” (p.354). According to the adult stakeholders interviewed, if the girls stay in school at least through form four and find paid employment opportunities, they will have a voice in their communities and transformation is possible within the culture.

Daniel Sifuna (2006) who works in the Department of Educational Foundations at Kenyatta University in Nairobi said,

At the individual level, education is perceived to be the ultimate liberator, which empowers a person to make personal and social choices, while at the national level, educated citizens are believed to be the foundation of well functioning democratic institutions and achieving social cohesion. (p.102)

If Mr. Sifuna’s prediction is correct, the Maasai girls have the potential of not only becoming culture changers just within their tribe, but the effects could be felt throughout the nation. Carolyn Lesorogol (2008) reminded us that “in a society in which formal education for girls is only a few decades old and remains relatively limited, its effects on gender relations and social opportunities are just beginning to be felt” (p.552).

As this research continues it will be interesting to see what doors of opportunity education helps to open for these rescued girls.

### **Limitations and Recommendations**

**Limitations.** Since the purpose of the study was to understand how the life dreams of the girls at the MTH Center of Hope are being altered as a result in a change of cultural experience, multiple sources of data would yield this richness. A possible limitation may be the lack of accessibility to the bush and slum homes of some of the girls which would have produced rich field notes. Another limitation was the lack of accessibility to each of the boarding schools where I had wanted to observe the girls in their classrooms with both male and female teachers. Yet another limitation concerned the collectivist culture in which these girls are from and the effect that could have had on individual interviews which may have caused some anxiety or confusion. Additionally, since the data was obtained on rescued girls who specifically were to be married at a young age or undergo FGM, the same conclusions from the data may not apply to girls from other tribes who are rescued for other reasons.

**Delimitations.** The delimitations with regard to this particular study include the decision made to select only girls and only from a few tribes, as well as at only one particular girls' center. Additionally, the focus was narrowed to understanding how the life dreams were being altered. Another defining boundary of the study was that it took place in one district of Kenya.

**Recommendations for future research.** This is an ongoing study for me. Through the accounts of the girls in the study one can learn many things. Further research that explores who talks to the girls combined with what they say and

culminating in what the girls actually hear is recommended. It is vitally important to the oversight committee to monitor these girls who have come out of such dire circumstances to be certain that they are hearing and understanding truth from a Biblical perspective regarding their lifeworld. Another noteworthy study would be to explore how the girls feel about themselves, from the first day they enter the rescue center until they graduate from secondary school and move on to other opportunities.

Understanding the nature of communication between the families of the girls and the staff of the rescue center could prove interesting. I plan to continue following the girls until they graduate from secondary school to see how the choices that are afforded them at that point compare with their counterparts who were not rescued. I would also like to find out how many Maasai students are enrolled in colleges in Kenya and what the male/female ratio is. Finally, additional studies into the impact of the rescued girls on the lives of their siblings would be valuable.

## **Conclusion**

The truth about the experiences of Maasai girls and the circumstances from which they were rescued became painfully clear through this phenomenological study. While I stepped into their lifeworld for brief periods of time and attempted to develop relationships with them, the truth remains that I could never experience the pain and suffering to the degree in which the girls have lived it. Will things change for the Maasai girl-child? There is always hope, as examined in this study, for a better tomorrow. The admonition, as understood from CCM and the oversight committee is that this will only take place as the Maasai, young and old alike, develop personal relationships with Christ and allow Him to transform their culture for the good of all. It will cost them something -

death to long-held traditions that have only held appeal for a few. Radical decisions on the part of Maasai men now could mean abundant life for so many in the years to come.

A few months before his death, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1959) said:

It all depends on whether or not the fragment of our life reveals the plan and material of the whole. There are fragments which are only good to be thrown away, and others which are important for centuries to come because their fulfillment can only be a divine work. They are fragments of necessity. If our life, however remotely, reflects such a fragment...we shall not have to bewail our fragmentary life, but, on the contrary, rejoice in it. (p.33)

CCM believes that as the Maasai allow a divine work to take place in their lives, important decisions will be made that would affect the lives of everyone, especially the female members of the tribe, for centuries to come.

Along with cultural and spiritual changes, these girls must be afforded a decent education at least through secondary school. Most grew up never envisioning that education and choices for their futures would be afforded them. This constitutes one of the most dramatic alterations in life dreams that has been studied. In order to make this happen, the girls will take advantage of microbusiness opportunities and develop skills that they can take with them when they leave the center, knowing that they can lead an independent life which never again has to include poverty and hopelessness.

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## **APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL**

Dear Kelly,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. Attached you'll find the forms for those cases.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and we wish you well with your research project. We will be glad to send you a written memo from the Liberty IRB, as needed, upon request.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.  
IRB Chair, Liberty University  
Center for Counseling and Family Studies Liberty University  
1971 University Boulevard  
Lynchburg, VA 24502-2269  
(434) 592-4054  
Fax: (434) 522-0477

## **APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM FOR MINORS**

### **CONSENT FORM**

Education in a Tribal Culture

Phenomenological Examination of the Impact of Education on Females Living Within the Maasai Culture

Kelly S. Bingham  
Liberty University  
Department of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of the effects of education on Maasai girls. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a Maasai girl living at the MTH Center of Hope. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Kelly S. Bingham, a doctoral student in the department of Education at Liberty University.

#### **Background Information**

The purpose of this study is the following: To see how living at the MTH Center of Hope and being able to stay in school is helping you in your life.

#### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things during the months of April and September of 2010:

- Be willing to be observed using photography, video or audio recording, while at school and while at the center. You will be given the opportunity to review the tape or pictures and have the opportunity to withdraw my use of them.
- Share thoughts and experiences of life at school and living conditions at center and your hopes for the future.
- Possibly be part of a focus group sharing life experiences and discussing with other girls the educational experiences now available to you.

#### **Risks and Benefits of being in the Study**

The risks are no more than the participant would encounter in everyday life.

The benefits to participation are: To document the things that you enjoy about staying in school and living at the center. To see if other girls would like to have the experiences you are having.

**Confidentiality:**

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records.

The data collected will be stored on the hard drive of my computer which is password protected. Any audio/video data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home. I don't plan to destroy the data since I want to continue studying the center over the next several years and want to be able document progress.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**Contacts and Questions:**

The researcher conducting this study is: Kelly S. Bingham. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at Liberty University, 434-592-4272, [ksbingham@liberty.edu](mailto:ksbingham@liberty.edu). You may also contact her advisor, Dr. Randall Dunn, 434-592-3796, [rdunn@liberty.edu](mailto:rdunn@liberty.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 2400, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at [fgarzon@liberty.edu](mailto:fgarzon@liberty.edu).

*You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.*

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent or guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*(If minors are involved)*

Signature of Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM FOR STAKEHOLDERS**

### **CONSENT FORM** Education in a Tribal Culture

Phenomenological Examination of the Impact of Education on Females Living Within the Maasai Culture

Kelly S. Bingham  
Liberty University  
Department of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of the effects of education on Maasai girls. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a stakeholder in MTH Center of Hope. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Kelly S. Bingham, a doctoral student in the department of Education at Liberty University.

#### **Background Information**

The purpose of this study is the following: To observe Maasai girls at their schools and in their daily activities while at the MTH Center of Hope to determine long-term benefits to them as compared to what their life would have been like had they stayed in their communities.

#### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

Be willing to be interviewed and possibly photographed using video or audio recording devices during the month of April and/or September, 2010. You will be given the opportunity to review the tape or pictures and have the opportunity to withdraw the use of them from the research if you so choose.

#### **Risks and Benefits of being in the Study**

The risks are no more than the participant would encounter in everyday life.

The benefits to participation are the following: To document the experiences of the Maasai girls in order to determine the benefits of the intervention of the MTH Center of Hope within the realm of their cultural and educational experiences.

#### **Confidentiality:**

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records.

The data collected will be stored on the hard drive of my computer which is password protected. Any audio/video data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home. I don't plan to destroy the data since I want to continue studying the MTH Center of Hope over the next several years and want to be able document progress

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time with out affecting those relationships.

**Contacts and Questions:**

The researcher conducting this study is Kelly S. Bingham. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at Liberty University, 434-592-4272, [ksbingham@liberty.edu](mailto:ksbingham@liberty.edu). You may also contact her advisor, Dr. Randall Dunn, 434-592-3796, [rdunn@liberty.edu](mailto:rdunn@liberty.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 2400, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at [fgarzon@liberty.edu](mailto:fgarzon@liberty.edu).

*You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.*

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

### Interview Questions for School-aged Girls

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Please read the following questions and circle the letter beside the answer(s) that best describes you:

1. How long would you like to stay in school?
  - a. Through primary school
  - b. Attend some secondary school
  - c. Graduate from secondary school
  - d. Attend some college
  - e. Graduate from college
  
2. Why do you want more education? (Circle all that apply)
  - a. To be able to get a good job
  - b. To have a voice in my community
  - c. To be able to teach others
  - d. To provide for my family
  - e. To become more knowledgeable about many areas of life
  
3. Who in your immediate family has attended school? (Circle all that apply)
  - a. Brother(s)
  - b. Sister(s)
  - c. Parents
  - d. Grandparents
  - e. No one in my immediate family has attended school

4. What is the highest number of years someone in your immediate family has attended school?
  - a. 1-4 years
  - b. 5-8 years
  - c. 9-12 years
  - d. Some university courses
  - e. University graduate
  
5. Five years from now I would like to (circle all that apply):
  - a. Still be in school
  - b. Be married
  - c. Be married with children
  - d. Be back in my own community
  - e. Have a job
  
6. Ten years from now I would like to (circle all that apply):
  - a. Still be in school
  - b. Be married
  - c. Be married with children
  - d. Be back in my own community
  - e. Have a job
  
7. I want my children someday to:
  - a. Go to primary school
  - b. Go to secondary school
  - c. Go to a university
  
8. How do you think the female teachers at your school feel about girls getting more education?
  - a. They feel the same about girls getting an education as they do boys
  - b. They encourage girls to get as much education as possible
  - c. They think girls should not get as much education as boys
  
9. How do you think the male teachers at your school feel about girls getting more education?
  - a. They feel the same about girls getting an education as they do boys
  - b. They encourage girls to get as much education as possible
  - c. They think girls should not get as much education as boys
  
10. How do you think boys at your school feel about girls getting more education?

- a. They feel the same about girls being in school as they do other boys
- b. They think girls should get as much education as possible
- c. They think girls should not get as much education as boys



## APPENDIX E: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STAKEHOLDERS

### Interview Questions for Stakeholders

Name \_\_\_\_\_

What is your connection to the Oloolotikosh Girls Rescue Center (OGRC)?

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Please read the following questions and circle the letter next to the answer you feel is most appropriate:

1. The main reason the girls have come to the OGRC is:
  - a. Safety and Protection
  - b. To receive an education
  - c. To learn a trade
  - d. To better their lives
  - e. To avoid an early marriage and/or FGM
  
2. Because the girls have the opportunity to live at the OGRC how much education do you think they will now pursue?
  - a. Finish primary school
  - b. Attend some secondary school
  - c. Complete secondary school
  - d. Attend some university courses
  - e. Graduate from a university
  
3. How well do you think the girls would be received back into their communities if they only stay at the OGRC for a year or less? (Check all that apply)
  - a. They would be welcomed back with open arms
  - b. They would be punished or treated poorly

- c. The community members would be suspicious of them
  - d. Their father would think they could bring a higher bride-price
  - e. Their father would think they would bring a lower bride-price
4. How well do you think these girls would be received back into their communities if they graduate from secondary school?
- a. They would be welcomed back with open arms
  - b. They would be treated indifferently
  - c. They would be treated poorly
  - d. They would be treated as more valuable
  - e. The members of their community would be suspicious of them
5. How well do you think these girls would be received back into their communities if they\ graduate from a university?
- a. They would be welcomed back with open arms
  - b. They would be treated indifferently
  - c. They would be treated poorly
  - d. They would be treated with respect
  - e. The members of their community would be suspicious of them
6. How do you think Maasai parents feel about sending their girls to school? (circle all that apply)
- a. That it is a waste of time and money
  - b. That the money is better spent sending a son to school
  - c. That it is an investment in their economic future as a society
  - d. That it is an investment in their political future as a society
  - e. That it will raise the status of the family in their community
7. Who do you think are most in support of Maasai girls receiving an education?
- a. Fathers
  - b. Mothers
  - c. Teachers/School Administrators
  - d. Government
  - e. People outside of the Maasai community
8. The Ministry of Education in Kenya says that the five following concepts are among some of the aims and objectives for primary education. Which one do you consider the most important for the Maasai girl?

- a. Acquire literacy, numeracy, and manipulative skills
  - b. Grow toward maturity and self-fulfillment as useful and well-adjusted members of the society
  - c. Grow into a strong and healthy person
  - d. Develop an ability for clear logical thought and critical judgment
  - e. Develop the self in terms of expression and discipline, and be self-reliant, fully utilizing [her] senses
9. Which subject do you think is most important for the Maasai girl?
- a. Business and creative arts: arts and crafts, music, and physical education
  - b. Home science/domestic science
  - c. Health science
  - d. Mathematics
  - e. Religion: Christian and Islam
10. Who do you think should be responsible for the costs associated with the education of Maasai girls?
- a. Parents
  - b. National Government
  - c. Local governing bodies
  - d. Private donors/benefactors
  - e. NGOs (Non Government Organizations)