



**Utrecht University**

# **Enhancing Educational Opportunities for Disadvantaged Children in Mauritian Primary Schools**

A descriptive research on teacher support and parental involvement

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**Abstract**

This research aimed at enhancing educational opportunities for disadvantaged children in Mauritian primary schools. Teacher supportiveness and parental involvement are identified as factors contributing to the improvement of academic results of disadvantaged children. Therefore, perspectives on- and usage of teacher supportive and parental involvement practices were evaluated. At four selected schools, parent mediators were interviewed (n=3), focus groups were held with teachers (n=27) and with parents (n=15), and questionnaires were completed by grade 4, 5, and 6 students (n=262). Results showed that teachers both valued and used supportive practices as defined by the literature. Furthermore, schools attempted to involve parents in the children's education, but difficulties at home often did not allow parents to be involved in the school. A practical suggestion would be to introduce an after-school program in these primary schools, giving children the opportunity to undertake educational and recreational activities under supervision. Furthermore, a participatory approach is recommended to provide suitable education for the parents, according to their difficulties and needs.

*Keywords:* educational opportunities, disadvantaged children, teacher supportiveness, parental involvement, Mauritian primary schools

**Samenvatting**

Huidig onderzoek focuste zich op het bevorderen van educatieve kansen voor achtergestelde kinderen op Mauritiaanse basisscholen. Leerkracht ondersteuning en ouderbetrokkenheid zijn geïdentificeerd als bijdragende factoren aan de verbetering van de academische resultaten van achtergestelde kinderen in Mauritiaanse basisscholen. Perspectieven op- en gebruik van leerkracht ondersteunende praktijken en ouderbetrokkenheid praktijken zijn daarom onderzocht in deze studie. Op vier geselecteerde scholen zijn ouderbemiddelaars (n=3) geïnterviewd, focusgroepen gehouden met zowel leerkrachten (n=27) als ouders (n=15), en

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vragenlijsten afgenomen bij leerlingen uit groep 4, 5, en 6 (n=262). Uit resultaten bleek dat leerkrachten ondersteunende handelingen, zoals gedefinieerd door de literatuur, belangrijk achtten en ook uitvoerden. Daarnaast trachtten scholen om ouders te betrekken bij de educatie van hun kinderen, maar vanwege moeilijke thuissituaties zijn deze ouders vaak niet in staat om betrokken te zijn bij de school. Een praktische suggestie zou zijn om naschoolse programma's te introduceren op deze basisscholen, waar kinderen zowel educatieve als recreatieve activiteiten kunnen ondernemen onder begeleiding. Daarnaast is een participatieve methode aangeraden om ouders passende educatie aan te bieden, op basis van hun belemmeringen en behoeften.

*Sleutelwoorden:* educatieve kansen, achtergestelde kinderen, leerkracht ondersteuning, ouderbetrokkenheid, Mauritiaanse basisscholen

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The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child acknowledges the right of the child to education, and claims that primary education should be compulsory and free to all (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF, & Bernard van Leer Foundation, 2006). In accordance with this, education is free and universal in Mauritius (Morabito, Carosin, & Vandebroek, 2017), with an inclusive and integrated education system aimed at by the Mauritian government (Ministry of Education and Human Resources, 2018). Inclusive and integrative education can be understood as granting equal access to quality education for all (Van 't Rood, Georgievska, & Haxhijaha, 2016). Thus, the goal formulated by the government means disadvantaged children are also included in the Mauritian education system. 'Disadvantaged' can be described as economic deprivation and a low socioeconomic status (SES) of the family (Becker & Luthar, 2002). SES is defined as someone's overall social position, determined by education, occupational status, and income (Considine & Zappalà, 2002). Another definition of 'disadvantaged' is social inequalities in material well-being, political access, or cultural status compared to other social groups (Gurr, 2000). Becker and Luthar (2002) also link a disadvantaged position with belonging to a minority group. In Mauritius there are several minority groups, with Creoles, also called Afro-Mauritians, being the largest of the island (Miles, 1999). Concluding, everyone, and therefore also disadvantaged children, is included in education in Mauritius.

Despite education being accessible to all, inequalities in school achievements, which are strongly related to SES and ethnic status of the family, exist (Morabito et al., 2017). Most disadvantaged children experience learning difficulties and lag behind on test scores at school (Becker & Luthar, 2002; Santosh Kumar & Gurrib, 2008). Also, they are at highest risk of retention, underachievement, and failing school completion (Arnold, Bartlett, Gowani, & Merali, 2007). Factors of poverty, like poor nutrition, poor health, and a lack of resources and stimulation from home can be seen as contributing to academic underachievement of disadvantaged children (Grantham-McGregor et al., 2007). For example, the lack of some way of transport makes disadvantaged families settle for a school in their area, which is often a disadvantaged area. Therefore, it is more likely that education at these schools is of less quality, for instance because of material poverty and a lack of teaching resources (Lupton, 2004). Because of the higher risk of underachievement, disadvantaged children are more likely to miss out on the opportunity of climbing the social ladder, and cycles of poverty and inequality will transfer from one generation to the next (Arnold et al., 2007; Morabito et al., 2017). Therefore, it is crucial to identify ways to improve these opportunities. Two factors

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identified by research as improving academic achievements of disadvantaged students are teacher supportiveness and parental involvement (Becker & Luthar, 2002; Jeynes, 2005).

### **Teacher Supportiveness**

Teacher supportiveness is shown to be related to increased achievement motivation and academic success (Becker & Luthar, 2002). First, positive teacher attitudes and expectations towards students produce self-fulfilling prophecies that could improve students' achievements to live up to those expectations, and could therefore lead to better academic achievements. For instance, disadvantaged youth are more commonly expected to perform poorly, which can result in lower levels of motivation, and therefore lower engagement, attendance, and test scores (Becker & Luthar, 2002; Klem & Connell, 2004). Second, having a close, positive, and supportive student-teacher relationship, leads to higher academic achievements of the students. Factors that describe a positive student-teacher relationship are feelings of a strong personal connection, talking with each other frequently, the student receiving constructive guidance and praise, and the student trusting the teacher (Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2011). Third, learner-centered practices, like being sensitive to individual differences between students, including students in decision-making, and acknowledging students' developmental, personal, and relational needs, also enhances students' motivation and achievements (Daniels & Perry, 2003). A final aspect of teacher supportiveness is creating positive classroom environments, which contributes not only to enhancing the teacher-student relationship, but also the relationship among students (Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2011).

Compared to middle- or high SES students, low SES students need more positive reinforcement from their teacher. Therefore, teachers of disadvantaged students are expected to be extra committed, and more is demanded from them (Muijs, Harris, Chapman, Stoll, & Russ, 2004). According to Bondy and Ross (2008), these teachers have difficulties with supportive practices, such as establishing a positive classroom environment and keeping students academically engaged by combining warmth with a demand for student effort. The latter can also be identified as *authoritative* teaching (Englehart, 2009). Compared with *Permissive* teaching (student behavior in class is uncontrolled), and *authoritarian*<sup>1</sup> teaching (strict classroom order), authoritative teaching is associated with the best student outcomes, like being confident, engaged, and showing significant progression (Englehart, 2009; Walker,

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<sup>1</sup> It should be highlighted that *authoritative* and *authoritarian* are, in contrast to the assumption often made, not similar to each other (Baumrind, 1971).

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2009). This leads to the expectation that teachers of disadvantaged children will show less supportiveness and authoritative teaching.

### **Parental Involvement**

The second factor that could improve academic results of disadvantaged primary school children is parental involvement (Jeynes, 2005). Parental involvement is described in terms of parents' or caregivers' investment in the education of their children. Schools need active support of the family in order to educate the children (Larocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011). Some researchers even argued that lack of sufficient parental involvement might be the cause for inequity in educational achievement (Colombo, 2006). Involvement in both the home and school context is associated with positive outcomes for the student's motivation. Monitoring homework and rewarding good grades are related to extrinsic motivation, and encouragement and praising to intrinsic motivation. In addition, when parents are more involved in their children's learning, students show more effort, concentration, and attention (Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Doan Holbein, 2005). Other practices related to parental investment are volunteering at school, attending school functions, visiting the child's classroom, and participating in decision-making processes at the school (Larocque et al., 2011).

Parental expectations and parenting styles are also shown to have a strong relationship with scholastic outcomes (Jeynes, 2005). Baumrind's (1971) parenting styles can be categorized within two dimensions, namely expectations for self-control and sensitivity (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). *Authoritative* parenting is characterized by high expectations of self-control and high sensitivity. Low expectations of self-control and high sensitivity is identified as *permissive* parenting, and high expectations of self-control and low sensitivity as *authoritarian* parenting. Lastly, *neglectful* parenting is described as low expectations of self-control and low sensitivity. Authoritative parenting would lead to the most positive child outcomes, like higher academic achievement and self-regulation (Kim, Wang, Orozco-Lapray, Shen, & Murtuza, 2013; Rhee, Lumeng, Appugliese, Kaciroti, & Bradley, 2006). However, since collective societies mostly use authoritarian parenting, it is expected that Mauritian parents also do so. Notwithstanding, in contrast to individualistic societies, in collectivistic societies authoritarian parenting is not necessarily seen as a negative parenting style (Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2009). Finally, according to previous research, parents from lower classes and from ethnic minorities tend to show less parental school involvement. This possibly has a cultural cause, where there is a strict division of child responsibilities at home and at school. Another potential explanation is parents being less or uneducated, and

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therefore education is not considered important. Also, given the occupations of parents, education is often not recognized as a means of social mobility (Denessen, Driessen, Smit, & Slegers, 2001).

### **Research Aims**

As elaborated on above, teacher supportiveness and parental involvement are important factors in improving academic results of disadvantaged children in Mauritian primary schools, and therefore enhancing their educational opportunities. Studying teacher support practices and parental involvement practices would thus be a valuable contribution to efforts to breaking cycles of poverty in Mauritian disadvantaged families. Accordingly, the main research question formulated is: “To what extent are educational opportunities for disadvantaged students being enhanced in Mauritius?”. Two sub-research questions that will contribute to answering this question are: “What are perspectives on teacher support practices and in which ways are they used by teachers of disadvantaged children?”, and “What are perspectives on parental involvement practices and in which ways are they used by parents of disadvantaged children?”. Conclusions will serve as the foundation for recommendations for the Mauritian education system.

### **Methods**

#### **Type of Research and Procedure**

Since this study aimed to describe the perspectives on- and usage of teacher supportiveness practices and parental involvement practices in Mauritian primary schools, it can be called descriptive in nature. Four primary schools were selectively sampled to assess teacher supportiveness and parental involvement. Since Mauritius is divided into four zones, one primary school in each zone is selected to enlarge the representativeness of the sample. Zones d'Éducation Prioritaire (ZEP) schools and Roman Catholic (RC) schools are exclusively used in this study, because they are specifically known for holding many disadvantaged students, and are situated in a disadvantaged area (Santosh Kumar & Gurrub, 2008; Diocèse de Port Louis, n.d.). Background information about the schools can be found in *appendix A*. For privacy reasons, the schools that participated in the research are named A (zone 1), B (zone 2), C (zone 3), and D (zone 4). School A is both a ZEP and an RC school, school B and C are ZEP schools, and school D is an RC school.

In order to study the teacher supportiveness and parental involvement, mixed-methods were used. At each school, an interview with the parent mediator was held. Also, an anonymous questionnaire was completed by grade 4, 5, and 6 students. Beforehand, informed consents for the students' parents were handed out, and collected on the day the

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questionnaires got filled out by the students. Prior to completing the questionnaires, the researcher emphasized that students should not put their names on the questionnaires, and should not share their responses with others. For the focus groups, teachers were gathered by the headmasters of the school. Inviting parents to join the focus group was also done by headmasters or deputy headmasters. These focus groups were often held before or after a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meeting. Therefore, participants were all PTA members. Conducting a focus group at school B was not possible, due to difficulties with the cooperation from the headmistress. Interviews with the parent mediators, and focus groups with teachers and parents were recorded. All schools were visited multiple times, because the amount of data collection in each school was too large to finish in one day.

### **Measuring Instruments and Participants**

**Teacher supportiveness.** To study teacher supportive practices, a focus group with teachers was conducted. Derived from the literature elaborated on above, teacher support was clustered into four themes, namely motivating students to learn, personal relationship with students, classroom atmosphere, and additional supportiveness. Likewise, these themes were used as topics for the discussions of the focus groups, with each discussion consisting of several questions. For an outline of the questions conducted, see *appendix B*. At school A, 8 teachers participated, 4 participated at school B, 7 at school C, and 8 at school D. It is noteworthy that the teachers of school C had to leave early, which means a number of questions were not discussed. Teachers varied from grade 1 to 6, or extracurricular classes, like Asian language, IT, or Creole language. In total, 27 teachers participated in this research.

Another assessment of teacher supportiveness was an anonymous questionnaire, filled out by the students of grade 4, 5, and 6 from each school. A 5-point Likert scale was used to answer 15 questions. The questionnaire was designed according to recommendations from Bell (0207) on how to survey children. Keeping into account the age of the children, the questions were framed simply, and in French, since most of the children do not fully understand English. To answer the questions, one out of five smileys needed to be ticked. The smileys ranged from a mad smiley ('I do not agree at all'), to a happy smiley ('I completely agree'). The first ten questions concerned the supportiveness of the students' teacher. These questions were also based on previous literature, and inspired by existing questionnaires measuring teacher supportiveness. It was decided to assess only grade 4, 5, and 6 students, because it was expected that students from lower grades might not fully understand the questionnaire. According to Bell (2007), surveying children is feasible from around the age of seven on. Besides, this might decrease the chance of differences in outcomes as a



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consequence of third variables, like age and learning style differences. For three out of four schools an informed consent had to be signed by the students' parents. The informed consent was provided in French, considering parents often have difficulties understanding English. A total of 15 classes participated in the research. School A had two classes per grade, and therefore six classes participated at this school. This leaves 145 pupils that filled out the questionnaire at school A, 26 students at school B, 48 at school C, and 43 at school D. In total, 262 students filled out the questionnaire. The informed consent can be found in *appendix C*, and the questionnaire in *appendix D*.

**Parental involvement.** To gain insight in parental involvement practices, a semi-structured interview with parent mediators was conducted. One parent mediator worked for two schools, but two separate interviews were conducted, each targeting only one school. This means, a total of 3 parent mediators participated, and 4 interviews were conducted. These were in-depth interviews, allowing the interviewer to ask for more details or elaboration on certain comments. The outline of the questions for the interview can be found in *appendix E*. These questions were chosen according to literature on parental involvement explained above.

Besides, parental involvement was analyzed by conducting focus groups with parents. Three discussion topics were expected to give an insight in perspectives on- and usage of parental involvement practices. The three topics directed were educational activities at home, involvement at school, and educational expectations. Again, these emerged from existing literature explained in the introduction. The focus groups were held in French, because parents often have difficulties understanding English. *Appendix F* shows the questions addressed during the focus groups. In total, a number of 4 parents joined the focus group at school A, 5 parents at school C, and 6 parents at school D. This leaves a total of 15 parents participating in the focus groups.

Finally, the questionnaire handed out to the students also contained five questions about the involvement of their parents. One of these questions addressed educational expectations of parents. These five questions can also be found in *appendix D*.

### Data Analysis

**Questionnaires.** The questionnaire was divided into two parts; parental involvement and teacher support. To analyze the responses, SPSS was used. For each question, the mean was calculated. Also, an overall mean was calculated for teacher supportiveness and parental involvement. Since the questionnaire is a 5-point Likert-scale, the average of the questions would normally be 3,00. However, when taking into account satisficing, the mean score will

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probably be higher, and therefore an average score of 3,00 was considered low. Satisficing means that a respondent (partially) skips the full cognitive processing of the question-answer procedure, and instead appeals to another procedure of answering, for instance answering every question in the positive (Krosnick, 1991). Especially children are prone to socially desirable responses, or have the tendency to please adults by being extremely positive in their responses (Bell, 2007). Therefore, all mean scores above 4,00 were considered above average, and means below 4,00 as below average.

**Focus groups teachers.** The focus groups with teachers were analyzed with NVIVO. The conversations were coded according to four topics, namely motivating students to learn, personal relationship with students, classroom atmosphere, and additional supportiveness. For each topic, perspectives and practices mentioned by the teachers were summarized.

**Interviews.** Transcripts of the interviews were analyzed by means of content analysis, also using NVIVO. The data was being familiarized with, while patterns were recognized and clustered. These were used as the themes: neighborhood situation, how school involves parents, occasions parents come to school for, educational involvement at home, amount of parents (not) showing up, and possible reasons for parents not being involved. After revision of the themes, the text was coded according to these themes. Conversations of the participants were summarized per theme, and general conclusions were drawn.

**Focus groups parents.** The recorded conversations of the focus groups were written out as complete as possible. For further analysis, NVIVO was used. The focus group was divided into three discussions, namely educational activities at home, parental involvement at school, and expectations. These were also assigned as the clusters, becoming codes in NVIVO. Again, responses of the parents were placed under codes, and summarized as results.

## Results

### Teacher Supportiveness

Results from both the focus groups and the questionnaire show that teachers are showing supportive behavior. According to the students, teacher supportiveness in general is high ( $M= 4.58$ ,  $SD= 0.41$ ). Students were also satisfied with each practice individually. These scores can be found in table 1, followed by a discussion of the results of the focus groups with teachers, divided into four sections.

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Table 1

*Mean scores teacher supportive practices of the student questionnaire*

Questions	n	M	SD
I like going to school	262	4,76	0.600
My teacher is kind and friendly	261	4,51	0.830
If I have a question, I can always ask my teacher	262	4,60	0.692
My teacher wants me to work hard	262	4,79	0.557
My teacher likes having me in class	261	4,55	0.776
My teacher is concerned about me	262	4,56	0.744
My teacher teaches us topics that I like	261	4,56	0.805
It is easy to talk to my teacher	262	4,35	0.913
My teacher knows me well	262	4,42	0.914
I feel safe in class with my teacher	261	4,67	0.729

*Note.* n= number of participants; M= mean; SD= standard deviation.

**Motivation to learn.** Motivating students to learn was considered important by most teachers. It will make the students learn easier, and learning will not become a burden for the students are reasons mentioned. “It is also a way of making students aware of the importance of education”, one teacher said. Motivating students as a way of involving them in the learning process, or a way of preventing students from lagging behind was also mentioned. Besides, students often come from difficult backgrounds, where they do not get motivated by their parents. “Some children don't even have a home, they live in a shelter. The parents are absent. So teachers in this kind of school are the parents of the children, act like the parents for the children”. That is why teachers believed it is their duty to motivate the students. Teachers named several ways to motivate the students, like making classes fun, giving them responsibilities, letting them dream about what they want in the future, classroom participation, simplifying and breaking up classes, and rewarding and praising the children. The latter was deemed important and was done by many teachers. Again, sometimes students are not praised at home, which makes it crucial to work on improving their self-esteem at school. “All students lack self-confidence”, one of the teachers even claimed. According to

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the teachers, it is important to make students feel worthy, value them, and make them feel like they are capable of things.

Making students aware of the importance of what they are learning was also valued by the teachers. Teachers explained that the Mauritian education system is very competitive, and aimed at good academic results. However, students need to be made aware that education is more than that, and they have to learn for themselves. Students can use the material taught in everyday life, like counting money, speaking other languages, but also moral values that will help students in their personal development. Teachers enlarge students' awareness by explaining beforehand what they are going to learn and why.

**Personal relationship with the students.** Teachers described their relationship with the students as close, friendly and positive. Interactions are both formal and informal, depending on the situation. They also stated to value individual attention. This would be important both for improving the personal relationship, but also to monitor academic progression of the students, and recognizing the ones lagging behind. Teachers know the students well, because they question them or other relatives, or sometimes students come to tell things themselves. Another way of getting to know students is by observing actions, like the way they behave, the kind of learning materials they bring to school, the way they dress etcetera. "These practices can make you see what background they come from".

Being liked by the students was considered valuable to improve the learning of the children, as explained by one teacher. From another one's perspective, this is important to reduce absenteeism. Increasing the teachers' likeability is done by giving everyone the same chances, doing things the students like, showing interest in what they do well, and praising and respecting the pupils. Two teachers indicated that being liked is less important than having discipline in the class. These teachers said to be stricter, attempting to avoid pupils not listening to them.

**Classroom atmosphere.** When asked about creating a positive classroom atmosphere, teachers came up with practices like giving students responsibilities, communicating with the pupils, making jokes, playing with them, and introducing time for students to talk freely without judgments. They also tried to enhance the relationship among students, by doing group work, having students mentoring each other, working on communication skills, playing games, and activities like 'bring-and-shares'. Teaching the students morals and values would also contribute to the relationship among students, teachers claimed. When there has been an argument between students, teachers talk with them and make them solve it together.

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Teachers expressed valuing fun and creative time. However, at three out of four schools there is not enough time to exercise this. The ZEP schools were working on introducing holistic teachers who do art classes with the children. In any case, lower grades spend more time on creative activities than upper grades. “Schools are too focused on the academics, because schools in Mauritius are very competitive”, explained by the teachers again.

**Additional supportiveness.** Teachers agreed on the importance of the possibility for students to approach them. They try to motivate students to come to them whenever there is an issue. Accordingly, students often come to teachers when something happens in the classroom, but mostly not for issues outside school. One teacher explained that students come to tell what happened at home, often minor happenings. She concluded: “So, students feel safe with you”. When students violate the rules, teachers claimed to respond firstly in a verbal way. They communicate to the students, make them reflect on their actions, and involve the rest of the class. If it is a bigger case that cannot be solved by the teacher, the child is sent to the headmaster, and depending on the situation, parents will be called. Concerning autonomy, teachers sometimes let students decide what the next activity will be. One teacher explained: “Sometimes when I am short of strategies, I ask them, how would you like to do this? So they just give you ideas”. According to the teachers, it is important to give the students the feeling they are making decisions. However, they also said students should not be given too much freedom, to prevent them from doing anything they want. When asked about rating the amount of strictness and permissiveness in their teaching styles, seven out of 20 teachers said to be 50/50. Three teachers said to be 60% or 65% strict, and nine teachers rated themselves 70% to 80% strict. Only one teacher said to be 100% strict.

### **Parental Involvement**

Outcomes of the student questionnaires were positive concerning parental involvement. Students rated their parents as highly involved in their education ( $M= 4.48$ ,  $SD= 0.57$ ). Looking at individual investment practices, students showed to be the least satisfied with their parents helping them with their homework ( $M=4.25$ ,  $SD= 1.18$ ), and parents asking how their day was after school ( $M=4.18$ ,  $SD= 1.28$ ). Despite this, students are still content about these practices, since mean scores are above average. Table 2 shows the means per question.

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Table 2

*Mean scores parental involvement practices of the student questionnaire*

Questions	n	M	SD
My parents help me with my homework	261	4,25	1.178
My parents know how I am doing in school	261	4,43	1.011
My parents expect me to do well in school	261	4,79	0.459
My parents are proud of me when I got a good grade	261	4,75	0.583
After school, my parents ask me how my day was	261	4,18	1.277

*Note.* n= number of participants; M= mean; SD= standard deviation.

Interviews with parent mediators show different results on parental involvement than both the questionnaire and the focus groups with parents. Results on parental involvement are therefore mixed, but mostly incline to low parental involvement. First, background information of the family situation will be outlined, which is crucial for the comprehension of the parental involvement. After, the way school involves parents, educational involvement at home, educational expectations, and attendance of parents are discussed.

**Background.** The students' background reflects their situation outside school, which, according to the parent mediators, has an influence on academic performance of the children. First, poverty and financial issues are common in these families. "The mother is depending on the pension given by the government [...] to feed the whole family. So, you can understand, they have to pay the bills, telephone, water.", explained the parent mediator of school B. This got confirmed at school D: "Let's say that the background of the pupils are, I can say, poor". She also talked about single-parent families, also often referred to as broken families by other participants. "We have many broken families. [...] Most, I can tell you, 95% of the pupils who do not attend (school), they come from the broken families". Furthermore, drugs and alcohol usage were issues named by all participants. One parent mediator explained the seriousness of the situation: "Parents (are) involved in drug problems. And everything happens in front of the children. [...] Once I invited a resource person to speak about drugs to students. Myself, I was amazed by him telling all the names of drugs. The children, they know better than me, they know better than the headmaster. Even the

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resource person was shocked.” Another issue brought up by all four participants is parents being illiterate: “We have a majority of pupils who has illiterate parents. So, the parents cannot help them at home. They cannot read and write, they cannot understand”.

The major societal issues described by the participants are thus poverty, single-parent families, drugs and alcohol abuse, and illiteracy among parents. Parent mediators explained that these issues come with other difficulties for disadvantaged families. For example, parents leave home early in the morning to work, and return late in the evening. In many cases, one of the parents has left the family, or is in prison, which means the other one must work to provide for the family. Therefore, children are left alone at home, without supervision on for instance if children are going to school, or who enters and leaves the house. Also, older children, of about 8 or 9 years old, must take care of the younger siblings, because there is nobody to take care of them. One of the parent mediators also talked about the occurrence of the mother’s new partner being abusive towards the mother or the child. Sexually transmitted diseases like HIV and AIDS, and unhygienic living conditions are also common in these regions. Furthermore, children often live with their grandparents, who might be in a less condition to take care of the children. A final difficulty mentioned is parents having a negative mindset concerning education. “They just say: hey I am fisherman. My kid will be fisherman. I just do not care if he does well or does not.”, as explained by one of the parent mediators.

**Educational activities at home.** Parents thought it is critical to do educational activities at home with their children, because it will help them in their development. Also, in this way parents can recognize difficulties of the child. Parents said checking homework, revising schoolwork, and letting children reflect on their schoolwork can improve the child’s understanding of the work, and parents can monitor the progression of their child. Besides, children can ask parents questions if needed. Examples of educational activities named by the parents are drawing, reading books, writing, singing songs, and playing educative games like puzzles and dominos. All participating parents indicated to help their children with homework. However, they were having doubts about other parents helping their children as well. Besides, as explained above, parent mediators also expected that parents are often unable to help, due to long workdays or illiterateness. Rules related to education at home were also discussed. All participating parents claimed to have strict rules and discipline set up at home. Examples of rules given by the parents are no television during schooldays and playing is only allowed after finishing their homework. Most of the parents have a time

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schedule, which includes time for homework, watching television, playtime, bedtime etcetera.

**Parental involvement by the school.** In both interviews and focus groups, the way in which the school involves the parents was discussed. Parents explained that school keeps them updated by means of circular letters and phone calls, which was considered sufficient for them. Furthermore, parent mediators named several activities the school organizes to involve parents in the education of their children. First, all schools invite parents to talk to the teacher or the headmaster in special cases, like when a child is performing very good, or poor, or when it misbehaves. Also, all four schools had a PTA, in which representative parents come to meet teachers and the headmaster of the school. Furthermore, schools organize class wise meetings, and an open day once a year. This is an opportunity for parents and teachers to meet, and talk about the progression of the child. Additionally, at the RC school, parents are invited to social activities, like sports day, music day, and such. However, at the ZEP schools these activities are exclusively for pupils. In turn, the ZEP schools have parent clubs and parent support clubs, which the RC school does not have. For the parent support club, all parents are invited to a workshop about a relevant societal issue, organized by the government. One of the ZEP schools even has a community support club, with which they attempted to involve the whole community by including non-governmental organizations and other agencies. These activities and meetings organized by the schools were confirmed during the focus groups with parents.

**Expectations.** Parents claimed to have complete confidence in the school, because their children are the school's responsibility during the day. "In order to send your child there, you will have to trust the school", one parent said. Parents recognized school as something important for the future of their children. It will help them with a job when they are older, makes them socialize with peers, and enhances their personal development. This is contrary to what some parent mediators said about parents not being aware of the importance of education. At last, parents mentioned that their children are learning things that are useful for everyday life, like mathematics, which is needed for counting money.

Concerning educational expectations, some parents hoped their children would complete tertiary education, and others expected their child to finish secondary school. These expectations were based on arguments like: "children are going to need to have more responsibility from secondary school on". Therefore, these parents said they will help to motivate their children to finish school, although they were not sure if other parents would be supportive as well. Some parents find it too hard to prepare their children for school in the



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morning, because they are tired. Another issue mentioned by the parents is that from secondary school on, students' educational materials will not be provided for free anymore. This could make it hard for some parents to finance education for their children.

**Parental attendance.** The average number of parents attending school activities is quite similar in each school. However, whether this amount is considered as high or low parental involvement varied per parent mediator. The parent mediator of school D estimated the number of parents showing up for the social activities around one third, but when it comes to pedagogical activities, like meetings with the teacher, parental involvement was considered low. "Very kind of pulled back ... they do not show any concern for it. Even if the kid does the homework". At school A, around 100 out of 400 parents were said to show up at for example the parent support club, and around half of the parents for class wise meetings with the teacher. In contrast to the parent mediator of school D, the parent mediator of school A considered this as good parental involvement. Before the interview with the parent mediator of school C, a parent club talk had taken place. At this talk, 37 out of 190 parents showed up, about one fifth. For bigger events, more parents show up according to the parent mediator, with an average of around one fourth of the parent participating in activities and meetings. However, he also said: "The most parents that we needed, for the pupils that are not doing well, they do not show up." At school B, not a lot of parent seemed to show up for parent club talks. This parent mediator does not give an estimate of the number of parents being involved, but in general he states to be satisfied with the parental involvement, because it has improved over the years.

Parent mediators came up with possible reasons for parents not being involved in the education of their child. These reasons were related to the social issues described above. One of the biggest difficulties of these parents is long workdays, especially for parents of broken families. These parents cannot attend workshops or meetings, because they have to work every day during the week. Besides, these parents start working early in the morning, and only finish in the evening. This makes parents lack time and energy to give attention to schoolwork of the children, or communicate about school at the end of the day. Also, when children live with their grandparents, the grandparents are often less capable to invest in the children's education. This could be due to health issues, but also because they are uneducated, and therefore unable to understand topics discussed at the school. The same goes for uneducated and illiterate parents. The parents feel incompetent in helping the children with their schoolwork, or understanding the content of meetings and talks. In addition, their

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negative mindset, as discussed above, makes them careless about education for their children.

### **Discussion**

Academic results of disadvantaged children can be improved by teacher supportiveness and parental involvement (Becker & Luthar, 2002; Jeynes, 2005). In turn, the enhancement of educational opportunities could enlarge possibilities to climb the social ladder (Morabito et al., 2017). Accordingly, perspectives on- and usage of teacher supportive and parental involvement practices in Mauritian primary schools are evaluated in this study.

Results of this research show that teachers value and use supportive practices, defined by literature as motivating students to learn, having a positive teacher-student relationship, creating a positive classroom atmosphere, and additional supportive practices (Becker & Luthar, 2002; Klem & Connell, 2004; Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2011). Teachers said to value especially practices like motivating and praising students, because disadvantaged students often miss these ways of empowering self-esteem at home. Therefore, teacher supportiveness can be seen as an addition, or even replacement for the lack of support at home. In addition, teachers felt like it is their duty to make students aware of the importance of education, because the educational system in Mauritius is very competitive and aimed at good academic results, according to multiple teachers. These results do not support Bondy and Ross's (2008) expectation that teachers of disadvantaged students have difficulties being supportive, and are thus less supportive. These outcomes highlight the importance of teacher supportiveness, especially for disadvantaged students.

Multiple remarks made by teachers during the focus groups led to the assumption that their teaching style can be closely associated with authoritative teaching. Teachers namely claimed to have a good, close relationship with their students, and they often praise them. Besides, they indicated to give students some autonomy, but at the same time discipline is valued. It can therefore be said that the teaching style used by Mauritian teachers of disadvantaged students contributes to promoting students' academic outcomes (Walker, 2009).

Concerning parental involvement, results show that schools attempt to include parents in their children's education in multiple ways, but parental involvement appeared to be low. This is in line with Denessen and colleagues (2001) stating that parents with disadvantaged backgrounds are less involved in their children's education. These outcomes are most likely a consequence of difficulties related to the family's background. Three major issues that were conflicting with parental involvement were detected in this research. The first is lack of time

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and energy of parents to spend time on their children's education, both at home and at school. Second, parents being little-or-uneducated makes them believe they cannot help in their child's education. Finally, parents' negative mindset concerning their children's education hinders parental school involvement. This indicates that parental involvement can be considered insufficient to benefit academic outcomes of the children (Jeynes, 2005).

Since interviewees frequently talked about parents often being absent, and being too tired to spend time with their child when coming home in the evening, it could carefully be implied that parenting leans toward neglectful practices (Baumrind, 1971). However, this research cannot exclude Keshavarz and Baharudin's (2009) expectation of these parents being authoritarian either. Regardless, both styles would not be beneficial for the improvement of academic results of the children (Kim et al., 2013; Rhee et al., 2006).

Taken together, this research indicates that teachers are being supportive towards their students, and schools attempt to involve the parents in their children's education. However, parental involvement is considered low, due to difficulties related to the family's background. Therefore, it can be said that schools are contributing to the enhancement of academic opportunities for disadvantaged children, but the home situations of these children hinders this.

A limitation that should be considered when interpreting the results is the sample of the parent focus groups. Parents were not randomly sampled, but gathered by the headmasters, leading to all participants being PTA members. This diminishes the external validity of the focus groups, because these parents are expected to be more involved than other parents, and therefore less representative for all parents. Besides, they expressed their doubts about other parents being as involved as well. Consequently, it is recommended for future research to randomly sample the participants for the focus group. Besides, it is questionable to what extent the questionnaire can be seen as a reliable instrument. Since all mean scores were high, and 45 out of 262 students completed the questionnaire by exclusively ticking the most cheerful smiley, it is expected that social desirability occurred. Plausible reasons for this could be the sensitiveness of the topics, or students not fully understanding or being uninterested in the questionnaire. Another explanation could be the teacher being present and walking around during the completion of the questionnaires, which sometimes happened. This could have been controlled for by including red herring or oppositely phrased questions but it was decided to keep the questions simple to enlarge the understandability. These conditions led to valuing the parent mediator interviews more than parent focus groups and questionnaires for the analysis of parental involvement.

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Another limitation of the study is the language barrier between the researcher and parents during focus groups, which might affect the internal validity. Focus groups were held in French, because the researcher is comfortable in French, but sometimes parents responded in Mauritian Creole. Although a parent mediator was present to give a summary of their responses, it is unsure whether these translations are as complete and reliable. Using two translators who could control each other might have enlarged the validity.

Nevertheless, several strengths of this research weigh up against these limitations. For instance, the use of various methods (interviews, focus groups, questionnaires), and the evaluation of multiple perspectives (students, parents, teachers, parent mediators) allowed the researcher to compare outcomes of the measures with each other, and to get a broad overview of the situation. Besides, using qualitative methods, and thus being able to gather more in-depth information, also contributed to more insight in both the targeted issues, but also issues that are relevant for understanding the issues. Finally, both ZEP and RC schools have been studied. Besides, evaluating one school in each zone of the island enlarges the representativeness of the research.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

Current research detected a gap between the school environment and the home environment. It is namely concluded that schools are contributory to the enhancement of educational opportunities for disadvantaged children, but parents are not. Since parental involvement is low due to the family's background, it is advised to focus on the children's situation outside the school. The three main issues discussed above, lack of time and energy, lack of education, and a negative view on education, need to be addressed.

First, parents' lack of time and energy because of long workdays can be dealt with by introducing after-school programs in primary schools with many disadvantaged students. These programs should offer both academic and recreational oriented activities, supervised and guided by adults. Not only would this stimulate the children's academic and personal development (Gardner, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2009), it would also prevent children from spending time in unstructured outdoor activities (hanging out), which often results from lack of supervision after school. This occurs more frequently in low income and single-parent households, and is also related to lower academic results (Posner & Vandell, 1999). Furthermore, these programs may be more beneficial for academically at-risk youth, thus disadvantaged children, than better performing peers (Gardner et al., 2009). These programs could be a solution for children being home alone after school, and an opportunity for them to develop their personal and academic skills.

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In order to deal with parents' lack of education and awareness of the importance of schooling, education on these issues, plus how to be more supportive and sensitive towards their children, should be offered. However, especially in these cases it is challenging to offer parents appropriate education programs. Therefore, a participatory approach is recommended to evaluate the actual concerns and needs of parents. A participatory approach is especially suitable for a disadvantaged target group, and adults who are not familiar with formal education (Pyett, 2002; Nieuwboer & van 't Rood, 2016). Involving the participants in the entire research process, and equal partnering between the researcher and participants are key in this method (Pyett, 2002).

Aiming to make the parental education program as approachable as possible, it should start with having open discussions in a safe environment which would lead to the recognition of parents' difficulties and needs. A safe climate can be created by grouping participants according to similar characteristics, like gender, culture, and former education. Besides, it is desirable to have an instructor with a similar background, who can serve as a role model (Nieuwboer & van 't Rood, 2016). Several difficulties of the parents were already detected by the current research, which can be used as a starting point for implementing the program.

First, parents' long workdays, and thus limited time schedule should be taken into account when planning the sessions of the program. Planning these sessions in a very flexible way, according to the availability of the parents, could lead to higher attendance of parents. Second, since most parents had little or no education, the sessions need to be understandable for them, using simple language, and dealing with matters that appeal to their everyday life. Moreover, parents could be empowered by making them aware that small efforts like checking if the child is reading or writing, rewarding good grades, or occasionally visiting the school can already be beneficial for the child's education (Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2005; Larocque et al., 2011). The final issue, parents' negative mindset about education, could be tackled by making the program appealing to parents, by making it rewarding. Determining the content of the sessions according to parents' needs and expectations will ensure the issues targeted in the sessions will lead to desirable outcomes for the parents. These will eventually lead to opportunities for parents, which makes the program rewarding for them.

Since this research shows that parents do not practice authoritative parenting, but this is shown to be related to better developmental and academic outcomes for the child (Kim et al., 2013; Rhee et al., 2006), effective parenting should also be included in the program. Playing with your child while following his/her tempo and initiative, rewarding desirable behavior while translating undesirable behavior into the opposite behavior, setting boundaries

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and giving effective assignments, and dealing with undesirable behavior by using methods like ignoring, time-out, and negative consequences are elements dealt with by the 'Triple P' parenting program, which is shown to be evidence-based (Zwicker, 2011). These could therefore be suggested, but parents' needs and desires are leading for the detailing of the program.

Introducing after-school programs in Mauritian primary schools holding a large number of disadvantaged students, and offering parents suitable education targeted at their needs, could contribute to the improvement of academic results of disadvantaged students. Therefore, educational opportunities, and thus opportunities for social mobility and reduction of poverty, can be enlarged.

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**Appendices****Appendix A. *Background information ZEP and RC schools.*****Zones d'Éducation Prioritaire schools**

The first type of schools that hold a large number of disadvantaged students is the Zones d'Éducation Prioritaire (ZEP) school. These are governmental schools that provide education for children from poor areas that experience learning difficulties at school. A school is listed as a ZEP school, when the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) examination pass rate is lower than 40%. A few aims of the ZEP project are encouraging collaboration between the school, parents and the local community, alleviating poverty through innovation in education, and fostering a healthy mind and a healthy body. An example of how they are distinctive from other primary schools, is because they provide free learning material and meals to their students (Santosh Kumar & Gurrib, 2008).

**Roman Catholic schools**

The other type of primary schools that is focused on children from disadvantaged families, is the Roman Catholic (RC) primary schools, owned by the Service Diocésain de l'Éducation Catholique (SDEC). These schools are private, but financially aided by the government. The Roman Catholic schools are 'open for all, with a preferential option for the poor'. They aim to act for the common good, and therefore provide free education to poor children (Diocèse de Port Louis, n.d.).

**Permission**

In order to conduct research in ZEP schools, permission from the Ministry of Education was needed, and for the RC schools from the SDEC. Both institutions needed to be visited, and several documents including the research proposal needed to be provided. The researcher was allowed to choose two ZEP schools, and two RC schools. First, permission for the RC schools was granted by the SDEC office, allowing the researcher to start conducting data at these schools. Later, the Ministry of Education gave access to the two selected ZEP schools.

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### **Appendix B. Teacher focus group**

*Welcome everyone. Thank you for joining me today. My name is Dimphy and I am a Master's student in Holland. I am doing my research over here, in Mauritius. For this research, I am interested in perspectives of teachers on certain teaching matters.*

*First, I will start with some practical information.*

*Participation in this research is voluntary. All information shared during this conversation will be confidential, and everything that is said will be anonymized. Don't hesitate to share anything you wish, and to give your honest opinion at any time. There are no incorrect answers or opinions.*

*If you all agree, I will record the discussion. This will make it easier for me to remember it, because I don't have enough time to make notes.*

*Is it okay for everyone if I record the conversation?*

*Then we will start. We will have a few discussions on different topics. I will start the discussions by asking you questions.*

#### Discussion 1: motivation to learn

- Do you think it is important to motivate your students to learn?
- Why (not)? How do you do that?
- Do you think it is a good thing to compliment or praise your students if they do something good?
- Why (not)? In what way?
- Do you consider fun and creative time as important in school?
- How do you spend fun and creative time?
- Do you think it helps students when you explain why it is important to learn the things they learn?
- Do you think that things you teach your students are valuable for their future?
- Why (not)?

#### Discussion 2: personal relation with students

- How well do you know your students personally? Interests, hobbies, friends...

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- How would you describe your relationship with the students? Positive, distant...
- To what extent do you pay attention to individuals and individual achievements?
  - How do you do this?
- Do you think it is important that students like you?
  - Why (not)?

### Discussion 3: classroom atmosphere

- How important is creating a positive atmosphere/ climate in the classroom to you?
  - How do you try to improve that?
- Do you try to enhance the relationship among your students?
  - How?

### Discussion 4: additional supportiveness

- Can students always come to you when they have questions?
  - Also if they have questions about issues outside school?
- How do you respond to a student that violated the rules?
- Do students also have a say in decision making, or is it only you as the teacher?
  - Why (not)?

How would you describe your teaching style? In a continuum from strict to permissive?

---

*Strict*

*Permissive*

**Appendix B. *Informed consent student questionnaire*****Lettre d'Autorisation  
Questionnaire pour les élèves d'école primaire**

Cette lettre d'autorisation vient informer les parents d'élèves de quatrième, cinquième et sixième année d'école primaire. Ce formulaire servira de permission pour la participation de leurs enfants dans une recherche sur le soutien fourni par des enseignants vis-à-vis de leurs élèves au primaire.

Ci-joint, vous trouverez les informations y relatives, et la lettre d'autorisation.

**POUR INFORMATION****Introduction**

Je m'appelle Dimphy Colman, et je suis étudiante en Master (Youth, Education and Society) aux Pays-Bas. Pour compléter mes études, je fais des recherches à Maurice. Le but du questionnaire est de rechercher dans quelle mesure les enseignants du primaire soutiennent les élèves en classe. Dans cette optique, je vous serai reconnaissant si vous pouvez permettre à vos enfants de remplir le questionnaire en classe. Au total, il y aura 15 questions simples et les enfants répondront en choisissant 1 des 5 smileys, comme indiqués ci-dessous : .

**Importance**

Il est souhaitable que les élèves participent à cette recherche en remplissant le questionnaire afin d'avoir un meilleur aperçu du soutien fourni par les enseignants à l'école primaire. C'est important d'évaluer le niveau de soutien fourni par les enseignants, parce que des recherches ont démontré que les élèves réussissent mieux à l'école quand l'enseignant est soutenant. J'ai besoin d'avoir des avis des élèves car ils connaissent bien le style d'enseigner de leurs enseignants mieux que quiconque.

**Durée**

La durée maximale du questionnaire ne dépassera pas les 15 minutes et vu que cela se fera en classe, nous n'aurons pas besoin de temps additionnel.

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**Confidentialité**

Le questionnaire sera complètement anonyme et nous n'aurons aucun moyen d'identifier les étudiants. La seule information requise par ce questionnaire est leur classe, et toutes autres informations fournies par votre enfant ne seront pas divulguées. Toute information reçue sera analysée en général et seront interprétée sous forme de pourcentage dans le rapport.

**Participation volontaire**

C'est vous qui déciderez si votre enfant participera à cette recherche ou pas. Au cas, où vous donnez la permission à votre enfant d'y participer, mais qu'au milieu du questionnaire il/elle se sent mal à l'aise par rapport à une ou plusieurs question(s), il/elle aura le droit de ne pas compléter le questionnaire.

*Si vous avez des questions ou si vous désirez de plus amples informations sur cette recherche, vous pouvez contacter l'école.*

*Si vous êtes d'accord de la participation de votre enfant à ce recherche, je vous saurai gré de bien vouloir signer le certificat ci-dessous.*

*Je vous remercie d'avance de votre collaboration*

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**Flic-en-Flac**

**d.colman@mdx.ac.mu**

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**LETTRE D'AUTORISATION**

Je confirme avoir pris connaissance de la lettre ci-dessus. J'ai eu l'occasion de poser des questions, et celles-ci ont été répondues. Je donne donc l'autorisation à mon enfant de remplir le questionnaire y relatif en classe.

Nom de l'enfant : \_\_\_\_\_

Nom du parent : \_\_\_\_\_

Signature du parent : \_\_\_\_\_

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


*(jour, mois, année)*





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**Appendix C. Student questionnaire**

Indique si tu es d'accord avec les phrases ci-dessous, s'il te plaît.

 = Je ne suis pas du tout d'accord.



















































 = Je ne suis pas d'accord.

 = Je suis neutre.

 = Je suis d'accord.

 = Je suis entièrement d'accord.

*Je te remercie de ton aide!*

1. J'aime aller à l'école     
2. Mon enseignant(e) est agréable et sympathique     
3. Si j'ai une question, je peux toujours demander à mon enseignant(e)     
4. Mon enseignant(e) veut que je travaille bien à l'école     
5. Mon enseignant(e) aime m'avoir dans sa classe     
6. Mon enseignant(e) est concerné par moi     
7. Mon enseignant(e) nous enseigne les sujets que j'aime     
8. C'est facile de parler avec mon enseignant(e)     
9. Mon enseignant(e) me connaît bien     
10. Je me sens en sécurité en classe avec mon enseignant(e)     

## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

11. Mes parents m'aident avec mes devoirs



12. Mes parents savent si je travaille bien à l'école



13. Mes parents s'attendent à ce que je fasse bien à l'école



14. Mes parents sont fiers de moi quand j'ai obtenu une bonne note



15. Après l'école, mes parents me demandent comment s'est déroulé ma journée



Tu es en quelle classe à l'école? 4, 5, ou 6? .....

## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

**Appendix D. *Parent mediator interview***

1. Could you describe your position in the school?
2. To what extent do you think the situation at home influences academic achievements of the students?
3. Do you think it is important to involve parents in a child's education?
4. What does the school do to include parents in the school?
5. Do parents drop-off and/or pick-up their children from school?
6. Do parents come to the school for reasons other than that?
7. Where should parents go to if they have questions?
8. Do parents come to parent-teacher meetings?
9. Does the school provide parent committees?
10. Are parents motivated to be a member of parent committees or associations?
11. Do parents participate in cultural and social activities (like National Day)?
12. Do parents pay attention to schoolwork at home?
13. To what extent do parents value good grades? Is there a lot of pressure on the children?
14. Do parents know how their children are doing at school?
15. Do parents know who their children hang out with at school?
16. Are parents aware of their child being comfortable or not at school?

## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

**Appendix E. Parent focus group**

*Bonjour tout le monde. Merci de m'accompagner aujourd'hui. Je m'appelle Dimphy et je suis étudiante en Master aux Pays-Bas. Je fais des recherches ici, à Maurice. Pour mes recherches, je suis intéressée par vos opinions sur l'implication des parents à l'école.*

*Mon français n'est pas très bien, mais je vais essayer de parler en français. Si vous ne comprenez pas bien, ou moi je ne comprends pas bien, on peut demander à .....*

*D'abord, je vous donnerai d'information pratique.*

*La participation dans la recherche est volontaire. Toute l'information partagé ici, sera confidentiel et toute ce que vous dites sera anonymisée dans le rapport. N'hésitez pas de dire tout ce que vous voulez, et donnez votre avis honnête à tout moment. Il n'y a pas des remarques ou avis incorrects.*

*Si vous êtes tous d'accord, je vais enregistrer la conversation. Comme ça, ça sera plus facile pour moi de rappeler la conversation, parce que je n'ai pas assez de temps de prendre des notes.*

*Est-ce que vous êtes tous d'accord si j'enregistre la conversation?*

Première discussion: l'importance de faire des activités éducatives à la maison.

- S'il vous plaît, levez la main si vous pensez que faire des activités éducatives à la maison est important.
- Pourquoi? Et pourquoi pas?
- Est-ce que vous pouvez me donner des exemples des activités éducatives que vous faites à la maison?
- Si quelqu'un a dit une, demande qui fait ça aussi.
- Est-ce que vous pensez que aider votre enfant avec ses devoirs est important?
- Pourquoi? Et pourquoi pas?
- Qui de vous aide son enfant avec ses devoirs?

Deuxième discussion: implication à l'école

- Comment est-ce que l'école vous tiens informés des choses qui se passent à l'école?
- Est-ce que ça suffit?

## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

- Pour quelles occasions est-ce que vous visitez l'école?
- Quand vous avez des questions, vous vous sentez confortable parler avec quelqu'un à l'école?  
→ Vous parlez avec qui?
- Est-ce que vous êtes membre d'une association à l'école?

Troisième discussion: espérances

1. Dans quelle mesure est-ce que vous avez confiance à l'école?
2. Dans quelle mesure est-ce que vous pensez que l'école est importante pour la future de vos enfants?
3. Est-ce que vous êtes stricts pour vos enfants concernant l'éducation?
4. Est-ce que vous pensez que votre enfant a des bonnes chances de compléter l'enseignement secondaire ou supérieur?  
→ Primaire, secondaire, supérieur?