

# **BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL, AND EDUCATION IS THE SALVATION?**

*How adolescent girls understand the importance of secondary education and what they expect from it. A case from Uganda.*

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I arise in the morning torn between a desire to improve (or save) the world and a desire to enjoy (or savor) the world. This makes it hard to plan the day. (E.B White in Patai, 1991: 139)

## **Abstract**

This study emphasises gender parity in secondary education and is based on fieldwork conducted in the districts of Kampala and Jinja in Uganda in September/October 2005. I interviewed girls in lower secondary schools in four different focus groups, and I also conducted individual interviews. The girls' responses aided me in answering my problem statements that are 1) How do the girls understand the support (or lack of support) they get from their family, school, and government? 2) what are the girls' expectations about what education can do for them, their families and the society?

The theoretical framework I used to analyse the data with is based on the discourse of education and national development pointed out by authors like Fägerlind and Saha (1989). I draw lines from this discourse and connect it to the discourse of girls' education and development, heavily supported today by the "world community" such as the UN, the World Bank and several NGOs. I compare the girls' expectations to education with the world community's expectations. I found these expectations to be very similar to each other.

Another important finding is what I dramatically have called the dichotomy between "heaven" and "hell". The girls seem to think that education also can make a person good, while not getting an education a person might become a sinner, e.g. do sinful things. This finding demonstrates a new dimension to how the girls understand the importance of education, and it further reinforces the consequences of not getting an education.

The study emphasises the importance of girls' accessing and finishing secondary school, arguing that if girls are to develop their nation they need more schooling than primary education. However, the expansion of secondary education should not be at the expense of the quality of the education, since the quality is the determiner of education being an agent for development.

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# 1 Introduction

In this study my aim is to discover how Ugandan adolescent girls understand the support they get from their families, school and government towards their secondary education. I also want to investigate what kind of expectations they have to secondary school. What do they think are the benefits of attending and finishing secondary school? Connected to their expectation to what education can do for them, their families and the society, I want to compare their view with the world community's view of the benefits of girls' education. The world community will in this study include the UN, the World Bank and different NGO's dealing with girls' education. This idea of comparing came after systematising the data conducted during the field trip to Uganda in the fall 2005. The data is gathered from several focus groups and some individual interviews of young girls in the lower secondary school in Kampala and in the Jinja district.

Before I pronounce the significance of this study, I will first explain the title of the study. The title might be criticised for being too sensationalist. However, the title is representing three important points in this study. First, it is describing what I consider the most important finding. Some of the girls interviewed were describing a dichotomy between good and evil, where education is good, and having the role as being the "saviour". Secondly, it is also symbolising and referring to the romantic belief the world has had, and still has about what education (alone) can do to develop a nation. "Heaven" is symbolising the developed and modern, "hell" is the underdeveloped and traditional. Thirdly, the title is chosen to grab the attention to the reader, trying to make the reader interested, following the suggestions by Kvale (1996: 253-256) and Silverman (2000: 222). I also believe the topics in this study are too essential to let it become a tiresome reading. I will now explain the significance of the study describing the two important aspects in this study, the emphasis on secondary education and gender inequality.

## 1.1 Significance

I find secondary education the most interesting and important level in the educational system, especially when studying education and development in sub-Saharan Africa. First, because it

is at this level most students drop out of in general, and secondly because secondary education is an important step from primary education, and it can work as a stepping-stone for further and higher education, but also to prepare the youth for work. Moreover, secondary education has come back into the spot light, after several years where all the attention has gone to primary education. It is now seen that it is secondary education that can eradicate poverty, more than primary education (Tomasevski, 2003). It is also said that secondary and higher education gives greater autonomy to the lives of girls and women throughout the world (Heward, 1999).

Fighting for greater autonomy for girls and women is still an important battle, although many Norwegians, for example, feel the fight for gender parity is won.<sup>1</sup> In this moment when I am finishing my study, the Amnesty report of 2006 concludes that women are the largest group in the world that have their human rights taken away from them.

From birth to death, in times of peace as well as war, women face discrimination and violence at the hands of the state, the community and the family (Amnesty, 2006: 8).

For example, 25% of all women in the world experience sexual abuse by an intimate partner during their lifetime (Amnesty, 2006). Again, I am reminded of the importance of this battle, and of the relevance of my study. To be able to decrease gender disparity in all parts of the society, more women are needed in higher education, in powerful jobs, and political positions. They can work as role models for other girls and women, and give women more power than they have today. For that to happen, more girls need more education than they have now and primary education seems not to be enough. However, this is easier said than done, and as I will discuss in this study, education alone cannot erase the discrimination of women.

In this study one of the most important points discussed is connected with getting more girls into school. Thus an important question is: What do the girls *themselves* put into the importance of education? Without them believing what education can do for themselves and their families, they may not see any point in investing in education. They will also not invest in education if education is not giving them what they expect. Without the girls believing in education, it will be hard to promote and motivate them. What kind of attitudes adolescent girls have toward education is highly connected to the attitudes and support of their families

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<sup>1</sup> There is gender parity at least within education, however, gender parity has not been reached in all areas of the society (e.g. within the private sector).

and communities. That is why this study is also looking at the girls understanding of the support they get from family, school, and government, and their understanding of what education can do for them. Searching for attitudes is also the reason for picking focus groups as the main methodological technique. Also it is argued that it is still important to emphasise girls' rights and fight for gender equality in the whole world, and this study follows along the same line as many other studies with that aim in mind.

## 1.2 Problem statement

With the above mentioned issues in mind the research questions that are set out in this study are as follows:

- 1) How do the girls understand the support (or lack of support) they get from their family, school, and government?
- 2) What are the girls' expectations about what education can do for them, their families and the society?

## 1.3 Defining secondary education

Secondary education is “a crucial point in the lives of individuals: it is at this stage that young people should be able to decide their own future, in the light of their own tastes and aptitudes, and that they can acquire the abilities that will make for a successful adult life. (...) Secondary education should thus be adapted to take account both of the different processes whereby adolescents attain maturity ... and of economic and social needs” (The Delors report, 1989 in UNESCO, 2001: 9).

Since secondary education is again getting the attention of the international community and it is seen as a crucial educational level, and the educational level of this study, I will try to define what secondary education entails in developing countries. I will also describe in more detail the secondary education system in Uganda in chapter three. Thus my discussion here concerns secondary education more in general.

When trying to define secondary education today, Holsinger and Cowell (2000) argue that it causes some problems because the secondary sector falls between the primary and tertiary

sector, or what UNESCO (2006a) calls the amorphous zone. The reason is that there is no agreement where primary education stops and where tertiary education begins, but secondary education is a step for pupils between the ages of 12 or 13 to 18. At the secondary education level students are expected to broaden their knowledge and experiences and to prepare for higher education or the world of work (UNESCO, 2006a). Most countries, although there are great varieties, divide the secondary level of education as a first or lower segment and a second or higher segment. In relation to finding a definition there is also the concept of 'Basic education' that is now being used worldwide. 'Basic education' is understood as "a minimum schooling standard for everyone in a given society. This is frequently done by adding to the primary grades the first part of the secondary cycle" (Holsinger and Cowell, 2000: 21). The combination of primary plus lower secondary then becomes 'basic education' and is usually administered separately from secondary education.

The definition of secondary education becomes more complex since there is a wide range of types of educational institutions falling under the secondary education heading. UNESCO (2006a) points out that secondary education is suffering from an identity crisis where its different roles in the society, and even its structure, have been questioned. Holsinger and Cowell (2000) try to categorize secondary education although knowing that there are plenty of exceptions. They classify secondary education institutions into three broad groups:

- 1) **General/academic** → this type of education is oriented to give students grounding in the scholastic disciplines and preparing them for future studies.
- 2) **Vocational/technical** → This type of education is aimed at transferring competences and skills for specific occupations.
- 3) **Diversified/comprehensive** → This type of education is multi-purpose education that combine under one roof the objectives of an academic course of study and one more vocational field. It typically allows some crossover (Holsinger and Cowell, 2000: 22-24).

These broad categories of secondary schools are arranged along a continuum of specializations. The academic or general is on one side with hardly any class time spent on vocational subjects, while vocational or technical have almost one 100% of the class time spent on vocational subjects. All types of secondary education include items such as preparing

students for the world of work and making students functioning members of the society (Holsinger and Cowell, 2000).

### **1.3.1 Secondary education in developing countries**

After the World Conferences concerning EFA in Jomtien in 1990 and Dakar in 2000 there has been massive support towards universal primary education. In most countries the enrolment in primary education has increased, but the focus has in many ways overshadowed the secondary sector and this has also affected the financial support to the sector. Lewin (2001a) argues that the progress in increasing secondary participation has been disappointing, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where the countries have two-thirds of the world lowest gross enrolment rates at the secondary level. The burden of financing higher levels of participation in education is a problem and it is frequently greater in developing countries. One reason, especially found in sub-Saharan Africa, is that the school-age population is often higher than the working-age population (Lewin, 2001b). For example, in Uganda, 49% of the population is under the age of 15 (UNDP, 2003), which means that there are fewer of the working-age population that can support the education than the actual numbers of students. As the population grows in the developing countries, the absolute number of people without access to secondary education is growing. Lewin (2001a: 5) claims that:

There are at least 700 million people in the countries with gross enrolment rates at secondary level of less than 40 per cent. A further one billion live where secondary gross enrolment rates (GERs) are between 40 per cent and 70 per cent.

One may argue that 70% gross enrolment is not bad when considering the high cost and the problem of financing the secondary educational sector in most countries. However, Lewin's argument shows that there are very few people that have access, and that most people have no experience whatsoever with the secondary education sector. Thus many countries will require partnership between government and external support if mass access to secondary education will become a reality in developing countries (Lewin, 2001a).

## 1.4 Limitations of the study

This study has several limitations that need to be considered. First of all, this is a master study with space, time and resource limitations.<sup>2</sup> For example, the field trip lasted only for six weeks, which I consider a limited time amount of time to be able to understand the society studied. I am also a Norwegian coming to a country with a totally different culture than my own. Although I made preparations for the trip, reading up on the country's history and culture, there are always small but important details that are impossible to read and just needs to be experienced. For example, how to approach authority people, or how different types of schools are run or how to understand the girls interviewed when they used words that were familiar for them, but foreign for me. I think a researcher never can prepare oneself 100% before going to the field, but I understand now that to do research on societies that you are not a part of yourself is very challenging and may limit the study. However, being an outsider can also be an advantage because the outsider might discover something else than what an insider would do. I do not think, for example, that a Ugandan would have emphasised and interpreted the data it in the same manner as I have done.

Another limitation in this study is that I mostly stayed in urban centres and did not really discover the rural districts that much. Although I travelled to rural schools I did not live in those areas and did not get a feeling how their life is in such areas. If I was to do this study again I think I would have tried to also stay in more rural areas and also tried to visit even "more" rural schools than I did. However, many of the girls I interviewed, both in the rural and urban schools, came from rural areas, some even came from the conflict areas in the North of Uganda. Hopefully, the diverse population might have made up for some of the other limitations.

## 1.5 The organisation of the study

This study is organised into six chapters. Chapter one has tried to give some brief insights into the issues studied and presented the research focus. Chapter two will work as the theoretical framework. Here I will discuss the relationship between education and development. Through centuries especially in the western societies, people have thought that education could change

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<sup>2</sup> However, Save the Children Norway financed my field trip, which I am very thankful for. Without this support this study would not have been possible!

countries and create progress that can make life easier and better for people. I will discuss this idea and see how it has developed through the years, and how this idea is still used in the world community, especially in the field of “aid and development”. In chapter three I will present some background information about Uganda, its educational history, its secondary education today and what Uganda has done to reach the UN’s development goal of gender parity in secondary school. Chapter four is the methodology chapter. Here I will explain the strategy and design of the study, and describe the methodological techniques used, and how I applied them in the field. I will also discuss the trustworthiness of the study and give a short evaluation of the field trip. Chapter five is the findings chapter, here I will explain the process of the analysis of this chapter and present the findings. In chapter six I will continue the analysis where I will develop a model in three steps based on the theory and data. Finally, I will present some last reflections done during the process of making this study.

## 2 Education and Development

This chapter looks at the relationship between education and development and works as a theoretical framework for later discussions about the findings of the study, but it is also a discussion in itself. I will look at the history and the ongoing debate about the role education has in helping countries to develop, the belief in the power of education, and explore what the relationship between education and development is based upon. The reason for choosing this framework came from the girls' answers collected during my fieldwork, their belief of the importance of education and their expectations to what their education could lead to. I thought it could be interesting to compare their views with the views of scholars, researchers and world organisations such as the UN<sup>3</sup>, UNICEF, the World Bank, and different NGOs that deal with girls' education.

The relationship between education and development is very complex. Definitions of concepts and some historical background are therefore necessary. Thus, I will first try to look at the concept of development, what it means and contains. Husén and Postlethwaite (1994a) claim that in the broader definition of development it is also important to define education and its distinction between formal, informal and nonformal education because they are related differently to the process of development. I will not make any distinctions between these different types of education because this study and the discussion about the relationship between education and development are limited to formal schooling. Also, the definition of formal (secondary) schooling has been presented in chapter one.

In the second part of this chapter I will narrow the discussion and look at the relationship between girls' education and development. The second half of this chapter will not be as theoretical as the first, instead I will highlight what the international community says about the relationship between girls' education and development. The first part will thus work as the theoretical background and the platform for the discussion. In the final section I will make some concluding remarks.

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<sup>3</sup> When I say the UN I mean first and foremost the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).



## 2.1 The relationship between education and development

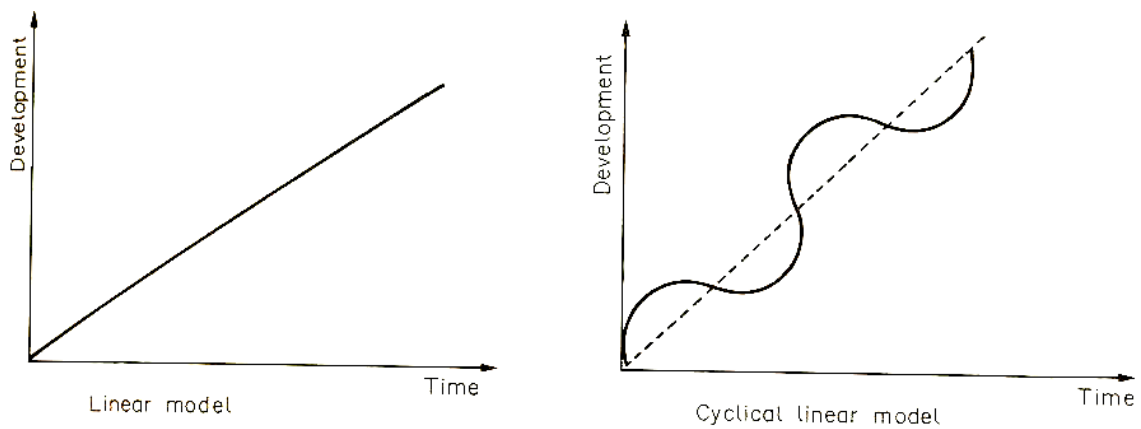
### 2.1.1 The conception of development

Development is, from this moment on, the magic word with which we will solve all the mysteries that surround us or, at least, that which will guide us towards their solution (Haeckel in Esteva, 1992: 10).

The belief of what ‘development’ can do for our societies has been enormous during our contemporary history, but the meaning has often been unclear because ‘development’ can involve so many things. For example, in social science, they talk about economic development, human development, international development, and/or urban development. Esteva (1992: 8) argues that there are few words like ‘development’ that have been “as feeble, as fragile and as incapable of giving substance and meaning to thought and behaviour as this one.” In many ways, both in social and economic thought, ‘development’ and its meaning has been a quite ambiguous term. Fägerlind and Saha (1989) distinguish the term ‘development’ with similar meanings to terms such as ‘growth’, ‘evolution’, ‘progress’, ‘advancement’, and ‘modernization’. ‘Development’ is also close to the term ‘social change’, but ‘social change’ includes the possibilities of a “downward” or negative movement. Development is generally seen as an upward movement, a positive direction of a social system. Metaphorically one can look at the term as something that is growing, like the growth of a seed that becomes or develops up to be a grownup plant (Fägerlind and Saha, 1989). However, development is not always looked upon as a “good”, and the question of whose development should be asked because often it is those in power locally and globally that define what development is. In 2.1.2 I will look at these issues more.

When going back in history, humans have always an idea of what causes progress, change or growth, and they have tried to answer why and how these changes occurred. These ideas have changed during time and are products of the social, cultural and historical events surrounding them. Fägerlind and Saha (1989: 27) try to explain the different ways of looking at social change by using models. Two of their models are influencing most present-day thought of social change. They are called the Linear model and the Cyclical Linear model and in both of these models “the notion of development assumes that societies can change consistently in a direction which is generally regarded as desirable or highly valued” (Fägerlind and Saha, 1989: 28).

Figure 2.1: Illustration of two theories of change and development.



(Fägerlind and Saha, 1989: 27).

The Linear model is an optimistic model that traces back to the Enlightenment period when the faith in mankind's reason became dominant and the belief in God decreased in Europe. The Enlightenment philosophers supposed that the progress made by mankind would be fulfilled within a few generations. For example, Condorcet (1794 cited in Greer and Lewis, 2002: 479) forecasted "that rapid technological advances would lead to a world in which everyone will have less work to do, will produce more and satisfy his wants fully". Actually the "modern project", as Schaanning (2000) calls it, is a process that goes back to the 16th and 17th century when things such as the art of printing, the new natural sciences and the early time of capitalism started to shape a new way of thinking in the Western world. This way of thinking has been called 'modernity', and one of the most important characteristics of modernity is the belief in progress, especially progress through reasoning and knowledge (Schaanning, 2000).

As one can see from the Linear model, all change goes up and forward, and the world continues to improve in a never-ending progressive movement. Mankind and societies will evolve through stages. Fägerlind and Saha (1989) connect theories like Structural-functionalism, Human Capital theory and Modernization theory to this way of thinking of change and development. The Cyclical Linear model is a combination of the Linear Model and another model that Fägerlind and Saha (1989: 28) call the Classic Cyclical model. A conflict is found within this model and consists of never-ending cycles of growth and decay of all material things, also including nations and societies. Over time, civilisations will rise and

fall, and new civilisations will rise again. The Cyclical Linear model, therefore, believes in progress like the Linear model, but it also believes that the world will face several setbacks. Philosophers such as Hegel and Marx can be connected to this way of thinking progress. Theories that are fitting the Cyclical Linear model are Liberation theory and Radical and Neo-Marxists theories.

### **2.1.2 Critique of the development concept**

Sachs (1992) and Esteva (1992) claim that the idea of ‘development’, the way we recognize it today, was made in 1949 by Truman when he declared “the Southern hemisphere as ‘underdeveloped areas’” (Sachs, 1992: 2). The idea has oriented both rich and poor countries through the post-war history, and the industrialised nations were the model that the undeveloped countries were going to follow and had to catch up with, and even become the same (Escobar, 1995). After 40 years of believing in the concept strongly, ‘development’ has lost a lot of its magic. During this time span there has been little or no progress in the lives of millions of people, and actually for many, life has become even worse (Sachs, 1992).

Is it possible in our time that some authors, such as Greer and Lewis (2002) who refer to the “new age” or the “post modern time”, believe in Truman’s development? Has the world really changed to become better? Can we see any progress in people’s lives? Esteva (1992) has been highly critical to the concept of development and he sees it as a reminder to those who make up two thirds of the Earths population of what they are not, that they are not developed. The gap is actually much greater now than in Truman’s time, and the differences are getting bigger and bigger. For example, calculations done recently showed that the 10 richest men in the world had the same amount of wealth and capital as the one billion of the poorest people in the world (Dagsavisen, 2006).

Sachs (1992) claims that development is outdated and describes four founding premises of development that now shows cracks and, therefore, illustrates how the concept of development is crumbling. The first premise is this expectation that developing countries have to catch up with the industrial and developed countries and become alike. He argues that this is not possible. Our Earth does not have the capacity and natural resources to sustain the same level of “modernization” and industrialisations for the whole of the human race that now have grown to be about 6.5 billion people. Trying to let everybody catch up and become

“advanced” will destroy the planet. Lummis (1992) is arguing along a similar line that the poor countries can never catch up because of the promise of global equality in economy. Greer and Lewis (2002) claim that this is the profound challenge humans today are confronted with: Can humans preserve themselves from self-destruction? Will the people of the industrialised world be willing to sacrifice some of their wealth and share it with the rest of world?

The second premise from Sachs (1992) is that development has been the weapon for over 40 years between two political systems, communism and capitalism. The battlefield has been among other places on the African continent, but the cold war is now over, there is no longer competition between the USA and the Soviet Union. The “superpowers” have no longer any “personal interest” to fight for development. The third premise is already mentioned, the fight against poverty has failed and the situation has actually become worse. The richer are getting richer and the poorer are getting poorer. Sachs (1992) argues that the expectations of development have failed and the movement of getting the traditional man to become a modern man has been disastrous, leaving many people in the poor countries in a no-mans-land between tradition and modernity.

The fourth point is a growing suspicion that development was from the start a misconceived project. A completely developed world could have been either boring or frightening because everybody would have to move in the same direction and also become the same. “From the start, development’s hidden agenda was nothing else than the Westernization of the world” (Sachs, 1992: 4-5). However, in the late 1970s experts from UNESCO started to recognize that imposing a single cultural model on the whole world was impossible. With these and similar thoughts shaped, and with the fall of communism, the 1980s became ‘the lost decade for development’ (Esteva, 1992).

Sachs (1992), Esteva (1992) and Escobar’s (1995) somewhat “post-structuralistic” criticism of the concept of development goes jointly with a greater critique of modernity. Philosophers such as Foucault, Habermas and Levi-Strauss with others have all, in different ways, criticized the belief in modernity that views history as a continuous process. The criticism of modernity and the concept of development, lead also to a disapproval of the optimistic progress thinking of the Linear model. However, Schaanning (2000) claims that this does not mean that the critical voices of modernity do not believe in any progress whatsoever. This

might mean that they believe more in the Cyclical Linear model, because they have all still some hope and belief that we can change the world and make it a better place to live for all life on this planet. Authors like Sachs (1992: 4) must have some hope otherwise there would be no point in trying to challenge and change our conceptual foundations when writing their critical work.

### **2.1.3 Education and the dimensions of development**

The Enlightenment philosophers emphasised perfectibility and progress and also reason and education, and since that time education has been a tool for progress and development because through rationality and knowledge, human civilisation could develop (Greer and Lewis, 2002). Education has therefore been connected to progress since that time, however, it was in the period after WWII when the development concept got its new meaning that the special “scientific” relationship between education and development was generated. Fägerlind and Saha (1989: 40) argue that,

[E]ducation was seen as the most important and indeed an essential engine for both the “take off” into industry by less-developed countries, as well as for the transition of the already developed countries to post-industrial stages. (...) [B]y the late 1950s and early 1960s there was a general agreement among politicians, educational and social planners, and scholars that education was the key change agent for moving societies along the development continuum.

The simple cause-and-effect relationship between education and development became accepted and the solution on the “discovery” of poverty in the South was economic growth. However, by reducing ‘development’ to only mean economic growth, it is not characterizing the whole society. Also, research and the criticism of development as a concept has showed that the relationship between education and development is much more complex than one thought in the 1960s. Fägerlind and Saha (1989) claim that ‘development’ both in concept and “reality” should be seen as a multi-dimensional term. They say that development involves the dimensions of economy, society/culture, and politics, and that education is a common element for all three in the process of development. Because education and development is such a complex relationship it is necessary to divide it up into different dimensions. In the next subsections I will basically use Fägerlind and Saha’s (1989) framework and define the three dimensions of development, its theories and the role of education seen from the dimensions.

### *2.1.3.1 Education, economic development and Human Capital theory*

Economic development is the dimension that has been the most common understanding of the relationship between education and development. Human Capital theory has been the underlying link, seeing educated humans as an important investment and resource for the productivity and economic growth in a nation. Fägerlind and Saha (1989) examine the link between education and economic development and it gave them a highly complex picture. They argue that when considering education in its broadest sense, it can contribute to economic growth: an educated population is more productive than an uneducated one. However, the Human Capital theorists failed when they did not emphasise that education also has limits in what it can do for an economy (Fägerlind and Saha, 1989). Although, the link between education and economic development, first and foremost, is seen from a human capital theory perspective, other alternatives are also looking at the relationship, especially after the massive critique of the theory. There is now emerging a consensus that education may also have negative effects on economic growth and the links between education and economic development are still not entirely understood (Husén and Postlethwaite, 1994a). Even though Human Capital theory has been criticised, it is still an important theory in the field of education and development, as a result of that I will now look deeper into the theory.

After the WWII, the whole early optimism of the relationship between education and development was based on the belief in Human Capital theory. It was through the contribution of this theory that the link was created, and it was first when this theory began to be criticised that also the causal link between education and development became questioned. The theory has had considerable influence over policies concerning education and development strategies in many organisations such as the World Bank, the OECD and UNESCO (Fägerlind and Saha, 1989).

It was economists like Theodore Schultz and Gary Becker that shaped Human Capital theory in the early 1960s basing it upon structural functional thinking (Fägerlind and Saha, 1989). Human capital theory “refers to the fact that human beings invest in themselves, by means of education, training, other activities, which raises their future income by increasing their lifetime earning” (Husén and Postlethwaite, 1994b: 2643). The concept of physical capital embodied in tools and machines became extended and included also human capital, which meant that the human workforce, and the improvement of that, would eventually produce incomes (Brock-Utne, 2000). The economic development, both on the individual and on the

societal level, will grow when improvements in the health, skills or motivation of the workforce are invested in (Husén and Postlethwaite, 1994a).

Human Capital theory shares the same thinking about change and development as the Linear model above (figure 2.1), which means that as long as one invests in human capital, countries will make major progress because their national economies will grow. It was almost looked upon as an “unavoidable” consequence, and in that way the underdeveloped countries could catch up with the industrialised and become “modern” in the same way. Fägerlind and Saha (1989) claim that although the theoretical conviction of human capital theory was high, the level of empirical evidence was limited. They call the belief in the benefits of education towards developing nations a period that is “one of the most romantic tales of the century” (Fägerlind and Saha, 1989: 47).

The investment in human capital remains a controversial issue. Fägerlind and Saha (1989) say that the theory assumes that the labour market is a perfect one. There is in fact no causal relationship between better education, more skills, better jobs, more production and economic growth. There are many more factors that are influencing, at many levels, which the theory does not take into account. Critics have also argued that education does not increase productive capacity, but acts rather as a “screening device” (Husén and Postlethwaite, 1994b). Education enables the employer to identify individuals with higher innate ability or personal characteristics. Some of the criticisms have also been that economic growth has been led in individual characteristics, advocating individual change and not structural change (Fägerlind and Saha, 1989). Also on a national level, differences between non-advanced and advanced countries has been characterised within the countries themselves and therefore neglecting the nature of international ties (Fägerlind and Saha, 1989). Still, the theory is widely used today, especially the World Bank has been criticised for having a classic liberal economic thinking. An example from a World Bank paper in 1997 shows their belief in education and economic development: “Education is an investment which lifts individuals out of poverty by increasing their returns in the labour market” (Woodward 1997 in Heward, 1999: 4).

### *2.1.3.2 Education, social development and Modernization theory*

Even though the economic aspect of development has been the influencing dimension, social development was partly seen as a precondition for economic growth because it includes

factors that may block the economic development if these factors are not met (Esteva, 1992). For example, human productivity can be hindered by traditional lifestyle and people's attitudes, norms and values (lack of modernity), and bad physical and social conditions for people (quality of life). The economic growth is therefore, limited by human resources instead of mobilising human resources and work towards social and economic development both individually and nationally (Husén and Postlethwaite, 1994a). The sociologist general view in the 1960s and early 1970s was that there was a direct relationship between education and socio-economic development. Education was both linked to the improvement of human condition and to modernisation of individuals and societies (Fägerlind and Saha, 1989). This belief is still a part of our development thinking, for example, King and Hill (1993) show how social and economic development are still seen as highly connected. Broadly defined, they say, development "encompasses economic progress and improvements in the overall quality of life" (King and Hill, 1993: 12).

Sociologists, such as McClelland (1961 cited in Fägerlind and Saha, 1989: 16) and Inkeles and Smith (1974) formed the Modernization theory at the same time the economists developed Human Capital theory. They believed that a modern society would not occur unless they had a modern population that could use their rational and knowledge in mastery of their environment, and schooling was perhaps the most important agent for this change (Fägerlind and Saha, 1989). Also this theory shares the same way of thinking about change and development as Human Capital theory and the Linear model. It is a positive theory towards progress and growth, however, the theory has met with a lot of criticism.

I have already mentioned the general criticism of the modernity project and especially the criticism of development from Sachs (1992) and Esteva (1992). This criticism is in line with the criticism of Modernisation theory. For example, modernity and development is a western project and by becoming modern, the Modernization theory implies becoming industrialised in a Western sense by getting education based on a Western type of schooling (Brock-Utne, 2000). Also, Fägerlind and Saha (1989) note that one thing is to document causal relationships between education and modernity, another is to understand the process by which modernization occurs. Education can be an agent for "modern" thoughts, it can broaden a person's perspective and horizon and it can develop skills and knowledge that can give him or her the ability to control their own lives. However, how can one measure a causal relationship



between a modern human being and a modern society, which includes rationalism, industrialism, and economic efficiency?

The relationship between education and social development is highly complex because there are so many non-school factors that can contribute. For example, many girls are not allowed by their families to go to school. We may say that this decision by the parents is not modern and rational, however, should we not try, as Fägerlind and Saha (1989) suggest, to understand why the family has this attitude before trying to change it? Their reasons must be understood by their own understanding of the situation, if they, for example, fear what the negative and dangerous school environments can do to their child, their decision must be called rational even though they live in a traditional society and not a modern one. Sachs' (1992) criticism that this "modernity" movement has led many people into a no-mans-land between tradition and modernity should be remembered and mentioned when looking at the weaknesses of Modernization theory. A family might know and feel that they should send their children to school because this will give the children better prospects for the future, but for some reason they cannot or will not send them to school. The family can and/or will not go back to their traditional way of living either, which illustrates that the family is perhaps stuck between modernity and tradition.

### *2.1.3.3 Education and political development*

There is also this belief that education can benefit the society in terms of creating unity, solidarity and national identity among its citizens (Husén and Postlethwaite 1994a). This is called the political dimension of development. Political development can also contain participation such as voting and decisions making. Fägerlind and Saha (1989: 124) argue that "politically integrated individuals, or citizens, are those who enjoy political legitimacy and possess both rights and duties toward other citizens and toward the political state of which they are members." They also claim that education does play an important role in the political socialisation, but there are also other important agents that also contribute, such as the family and the media. Both the education system and the political system are interrelated, they can work for each other and they are always affected by each other. Fägerlind and Saha (1989: 123) say the "formal school is both determined by and a determinant for the political system". The political system can, for example, shape the curriculum and decide what should be emphasised in school. Education can, for example, be an agent for nation building, but it can

also bring about division and conflicts (Husén and Postlethwaite 1994a; Fägerlind and Saha, 1989).

#### *2.1.3.4 Summing up the concept of development*

Education is a major agent for development, but only if it is adapted and used in a manner appropriate to the development needs of a particular country (Husén and Postlethwaite 1994a: 1654).

When looking at the relationship between education and development one ends up with a highly complex picture, and even when the concept of development is ripped apart we might want to abandon the whole relationship. However, we know that education can improve the economic growth of a country, and that it might give better living conditions and political awareness for people. But the outline above has showed that claims like “education is the most important weapon against poverty” or “Education is a precondition for development” should be questioned, there is no easy cause-and-effect relation between education and development. Brock-Utne (2004) does question these kinds of statements and she argues that it all depends on what kind of education that is promoted. It depends upon factors such as the type of education conducted, the language of instruction, the quality of the teachers, the existence of relevant learning material, the availability of food, and the resources in the public sector (Brock-Utne, 2004). We also need to ask ourselves what kind of development is desirable? Whose interests in the development process should be prevailed? What kind of economic growth, and for whom (Husén and Postlethwaite, 1994a)? Answers to these questions will again lead us to what kind of education should be prevailed to meet these needs.

It has been the radical and the neo-Marxists, influenced by the critical ideas of modernity that has challenged the education and development hypothesis, mostly by asking the challenging questions. The neo-Marxists do not deny that education can contribute to economic growth, but they argue that this growth often only benefits advanced capitalist societies and therefore serve interests for those already in power (Brock-Utne, 2000). The neo-Marxists are not asking how does education contribute to social and economic development, but rather what kind of education is appropriate for what kind of development, and in whose interests? They regard it as impossible to access the role of education and development hypothesis without an international perspective (Fägerlind and Saha, 1989). The theory belongs to the Cyclical

Linear model and is not so optimistic, however it still believes there is hope as long as we ask the right questions, and then try to answer them.

## 2.2 Girls' education and development

The gender disparities in societies affect all the dimensions of development and are, therefore, looked upon as a huge development challenge, especially in education. Girls' education is also seen as a key agent towards greater development. Consequently, I will first look at how the relationship between girls' education and development has evolved. Secondly, I will discuss some of the reasons why so many girls' do not go to school in the world and what the international community is trying to do to decrease this trend. Finally, I will discuss different organisations' expectations to the effect of girls' education on the quality of life that is, social development.

Heward (1999) argues that the gender, education and development discourse are of recent origin, and that women were invisible in the post-war understanding of development. She claims the discourse was not fully established before 1995 when a World Bank statement said that their highest priority was basic education, especially that of girls. Nevertheless, the 1990s was opened by the Education for all (EFA) conference in Jomtien in 1990 and access for girls in education was strongly supported. Although the establishment of girls' education and development discourse came in the 1990s, the roots of the emphasis on girls' education, however, came in the 1970s with a new discourse emphasising women as active contributors to the economic development (Heward, 1999). Illiteracy among women and girls was seen as the major aspect that hindered social and economic development and the amount of women and girls that lagged behind men was immense in virtually all developing countries. Husén and Postlethwaite (1994a) asserts that literacy has always been associated with levels of development, and in the 1970s and 1980s literacy campaigns were prioritised for development consideration, but it could also have an ideological agenda by the governments.

In the 1990s the focus on women and girls' education became one of the most favoured areas in developing policies. Both Heward (1999) and Tomasevski (2003) are critical to the arguments that started in the 1990s for educating the girl child, not because it is necessarily

wrong, but because girls' education became a pragmatic tool to fight poverty, instead of being a human right. Tomasevski (2003: 101) argues:

The 1990s will be remembered for having converted education from a human right into a development objective, at a time when the key goal is to halve the number of people living in absolute poverty.

Nevertheless, from the 1990s to present time major efforts have been made towards decreasing gender disparity and getting more girls into school, especially in primary education. From the last 30 years, the girls' representation in primary education in low-income countries has increased from 32% (compared to 62% boys) to 45% (compared to 55% boys) (World Bank, 2006a). In addition, from 1998 to 2002 the gross enrolment ratio in primary education in countries in sub-Saharan Africa increased from 73.1% to 84.3% (UNESCO, 2005). Although many countries have made significant progress towards gender parity, large gaps remain:

Girls accounted for 57% of the out-of-school children of primary school age worldwide in 2001(...) Girls' participation remains substantially lower than boys' and (a gender parity<sup>4</sup> index below 0.97) in seventy-one out of 175 countries at primary level. Gender disparities become more extreme at secondary level and in higher education. Of eighty-three developing countries with data, half have achieved gender parity at primary level, fewer than one-fifth at secondary and only four at tertiary (UNESCO, 2004: 1).

This shows that the higher the level of education, the harder it is for girls and young women to get access and also stay in school. The GCE (2005)<sup>5</sup> maintains that the gap between boys and girls in secondary education has barely changed since 1998. They claim that there are only 20% of girls in sub-Saharan Africa that are enrolled in secondary school and this shows that nothing has really changed in this respect since 1990 and in some cases, since independence.

### **2.2.1 Why many girls' do not go to school**

The GCE (2003) has looked at a common set of constraints that have to be tackled in order to eliminate gender inequalities and they argue that there are a variety of factors from home,

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<sup>4</sup> UNESCO (2006b) defines gender parity as "an equal number of girls and boys to be enrolled in (...) school".

<sup>5</sup> GCE or the Global Campaign for Education is a coalition of NGOs and trade unions working in over 100 countries for the right to free, good quality education for all. GCE is a member of the UN Girls' Education Initiative, the Global Call to Action Against Poverty and the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS (GCE, 2005)

school, and community that determine educational outcomes. In short, the factors have all something to do with poverty, security, quality and culture. One may argue that the main problem for girls' access to education is poverty in all levels of the society. School is too expensive for many parents, and for many families the children are needed at home and/or the children need to earn money. Also, in many poor countries the family is the only social security system and it is vital that one of the family members secures a job so that the extended family is safe. Often it is the educated boys that have best chances of getting a well-paid job and the unfair choice has to be taken, the boys become favoured after a commonsense decision, and not necessarily because of traditional culture (CAMFED, 2006). Even in some countries where basic education has become universal and school tuition fees have been abolished, the parents are still required to pay charges of various kinds, which can include books, exam fees, uniforms and travel costs. In secondary education it is still normal to have tuition fees (Torres, 2001).

A closely related aspect is that secondary education is rarely compulsory and although primary education is compulsory it is not always enforced. Compulsory education means that the education is obligatory, both the parents and the governments have the duty to send the children to school and this imposes significant obligations on governments to provide a functioning countrywide education system. Here we can talk about poverty on a government level, but also their ability to create a stable political condition and their willingness to invest in the people. Compulsory education is also important in tackling child labour, and the GCE (2003) argues that if a government provides free education and extra assistance to poor families so that they can send their children to school, it can also enforce compulsory education in order to combat cultural and social discrimination against girls and other marginalized groups. Although I have argued above that poverty is the main problem towards getting more girls' to school, Save the Children (2005) claims that poverty alone is not an excuse for a nation failing to educate its girls. The right political decisions, priorities and will are also important if one wants to succeed. Some countries, for example Kenya, are doing a great deal more towards getting more girls into school than, for example Saudi Arabia, even though Kenya has a much lower gross domestic product (GDP) than Saudi Arabia (Save the Children, 2005).

Cultural and social beliefs, attitudes and practices in a society are also reflected in the educational arena and they can, therefore, prevent girls from benefiting from education to the same extent as boys. There can be deep-rooted religious and cultural beliefs that hinder the girls, such as to express their opinions and making their own decisions. The low value attached to girls' education in patriarchal societies can reinforce early marriage and vice-versa. Many parents are also withdrawing their daughters from school because local and national authorities are failing to protect girls from sexual abuse, creating a real fear of becoming pregnant or contracting HIV (GCE, 2003; Save the Children, 2005). As we have seen, there are several reasons why fewer girls go to school and sometimes it can even be a combination of several factors, which makes gender disparity a complex problem with no fixed solution that can work as a "universal recipe". The most important and common factors of gender disparity are:

- Endemic poverty
- The cost of schooling
- The burden of household labour
- Shortage of school facilities and poor sanitary facilities in existing schools
- Too few government schools, and they are often too far from home, especially in rural areas
- Negative and even dangerous school environments
- Cultural and social practices that discriminate against girls such as early marriage and restrictions on female mobility
- Limited employment opportunities for women
- Schools fail to motivate or encourage girls
- In the higher grades of secondary school, a significant proportion of females' drop out of school due to pregnancy, especially in Eastern and Southern Africa (GCE, 2003: 19-28).

### **2.2.2 Girls' education and UN's Millennium Development Goals**

In September 2000, 189 United Nation Member States pledged that they would meet eight goals called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that would set a powerful agenda for a global partnership to fight poverty. They offered a shared vision of a better world by the year 2015. The eight goals are (UN, 2006):

- Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5: Improve maternal health
- Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

## Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

The United Nations argues that these goals should be seen as a whole, the world cannot reach one goal without reaching the others. The MDGs are also representing a partnership between the developed countries and the developing countries “to create an environment –at the national and global levels alike – which is conducive to development and the elimination of poverty” (UN, 2000: 4). Connected to the eight goals there are a total of eleven targets. These targets will be measured in 32 different ways and it is these quantitative indicators that are going to tell us if the goals are being reached or not. Goal number three, to “Promote gender equality and empower women” has also a target, target number four, which is to “Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education no later than 2015” (UNESCO, 2004: 7). The indicators that the UN is using towards measuring this target is a) Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education, b) ratio of literate women to men, 15-24 years old, c) share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, and d) proportion of seats held by women in national parliament.

Goal number three in itself reflects all of the dimensions of development when looking at its indicators. Indicator a) may be the most important indicator because the other indicators are dependant upon it and it, therefore, contains all the dimensions of development. Without girls in school the chances are small that they will learn how to read and write, that they will be employed somewhere, and that they can sit at the national parliament. Indicator b) shows that literacy is still an important pointer towards development, both in terms of gender equality, social and economic development. The share of women in wage employment improves the economic growth of both the individual, her family and the society because she also can contribute with tax money among other things. The last indicator shows really a measurement of political development that point to political participation, political stability, and the creation of democracy.

Since the goal points out so many aspects of development, the expectations to what the goal can do to fight poverty are obviously massive. In addition to seek insurance that girls have equal chance to go to school, like boys, and that the goal challenges the discrimination of women, the MDGs are also recognising that gender equality is more than access to school, and that gender inequality includes a significant dimension of quality in school (Unterhalter,

2005). For example, a school class with gender equality might have a greater learning potential because both genders are represented and can learn to respect and know each other. The traditional gender roles can be challenged when both sexes get equal chances to learn and develop a critical mind. From one point of view, this means modernisation of the society; to go away from a traditional society to a modern society created upon rational and modern citizens.

However, maybe the most important aspect of the goal of gender equality is that it is not only limited to this single goal, but that it applies to all the goals. Without progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women, it is said that none of the MDGs will be achieved (MDGenderNet, 2005). The United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said in March 2005; “Without achieving gender equality for girls in education, the world has no chance of achieving many of the ambitious health, social and development targets it has set itself” (GCE, 2005: 1). The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) argues in similar terms when they claim that:

Over the next decade, unless the worlds leaders take drastic action now, unacceptably slow progress on girls’ education will account for over 10 million unnecessary child and maternal deaths, will cost poor countries as much as 3 percentage points in lost economic growth, and lead to at least 3.5 million avoidable cases of HIV/AIDS (GCE, 2005: abstract).

Although the high hope for what the goal can accomplish, all the goals of 2015 will be hard to reach. Already the target of getting an equal amount of boys and girls into school by 2005 has been missed, 94 countries have not made it out of 149 countries with data (UNESCO, 2005). Furthermore, 86 countries are at the risk of not achieving gender parity by 2015 and 115 countries have still gender disparities in secondary school (UNESCO, 2005). “At these rates of ‘progress’, it will take more than 100 years before all girls in Africa go to primary school and hundreds more before they get a chance at secondary education” (GCE, 2005: 2)

### **2.2.3 Girls’ education and quality of life**

As one could see from the quote above, girls’ education is seen as a measure to prevent child and maternal deaths, give protection from HIV/Aids, and produce economic growth. It is not only the GCE that argues in this way, many organisations are highlighting the relationship and the importance of educating girls from a “quality of life” perspective (social development).



For example, Save the Children (2005: 4) claims that whether or not a girl goes to school can be a matter of life and death:

...an unschooled girl is more likely to be poor, marry early, die in childbirth, lose a child to sickness or disease, have many births closely spaced, and have children who are chronically ill or malnourished.

The World Bank, the world's largest provider for external funding for education, claims that investing in girls' education gives the highest returns of all development investments (World Bank, 2006b). The World Bank argues from an economic (human capital) perspective, but also from a modernization theory perspective: Without a modern and healthy population the economic growth is hindered. For example, Schultz (1992) in a World Bank book argues that educated women give also a nonmarket return (or home output) as well as market returns. It seems from his explanation that a nonmarket return can be placed together with the "quality of life" perspective. He argues that, the home output increases the more education the woman has the more productive she will be also at home, even though she spends less time in the home than if she were uneducated. Educated women's "productivity" is not only affecting the fertility rate but it is also benefiting the children's health, survival and schooling (Schultz, 1992).

Breidlid (2006) claims that although the World Bank has been highly criticised for its development ideology, also in education, it is not fundamentally different from other countries' arguments, both in the Western and non-western countries. Their educational profile is not very different from others either. In the World Bank's succession of arguments for investing in girls' education they claim that girls' education can:

- Reduce women's fertility rates
- Lower infant and child mortality rates
- Lower maternal mortality rates
- Protect against HIV/Aids infection
- Increase women's labour force participation rates and earnings
- Create intergenerational educational benefits (World Bank, 2006c)

Let us look at the first argument that girls' education can reduce women's fertility rates. In one way the argument can sound rational. For example, the fewer children the easier it will be for the family and the society in raising and giving the child what it needs. The need for school buildings and teachers will become less and the money can go, for example, to more

“quality investments” like new schoolbooks for every child. However, Heward (1999) claims that girls’ education is looked upon too narrowly and simple. How can girls’ education be reduced to a way of reducing the population? Girls’ education becomes an economic investment to reduce fertility rates and is, therefore, just an advanced contraception method. Brock-Utne (2000) goes far to say that this argument coming from Western donors is racist.

Who are we, who are using so much of the world resources, to say that those who use much less should not have more children? (...) The most heavily populated area in the world is Central Europe. We also know that it is not large population growth that leads to poverty, but the other way around: poverty leads to big families (Brock-Utne, 2000: 13).

The relationship between girls’ education and fertility is also more complex than argued because it is related to the social, cultural, and political context (Heward, 1999; Brock-Utne, 2000). Jeffery and Basu (1996 cited in Heward, 1999: 6-7) claim that the causal link between female schooling and fertility change has had both a weak theoretical and empirical basis, although a high profile in policy-making. Empirical research has showed that education has no statistically visible effect on fertility levels in Africa unless the education is longer than seven years (Tomasevski, 2003). In other studies that have showed a relationship, the country has had an egalitarian gender regime and a “higher level of development” compared to those countries where girls’ education has been invested as a way of reducing the fertility rate (Heward, 1999). In other words, other major factors are also affecting the fertility rate, not just girls’ education.

Another example is women’s autonomy. Women’s autonomy is crucial when looking at how women have control over their own body and they can decide themselves when and how many babies they would like. Of course, educated women have more autonomy than uneducated women, but in highly patriarchal communities women’s autonomy only increases when they have secondary and/or higher education (Heward, 1999). This is also the case when trying to prevent early marriages and early pregnancies, when the children are finished with their primary education at the age of maybe 11 years it will not bring them to the minimum age for employment, they will sit at home instead or maybe become married.

When it comes to the expectations of girls’ education and poverty reduction, Tomasevski (2003) says it is necessary to ask whether the link between basic education and poverty reduction will work as assumed because evidence is pointing to secondary education as the

key to poverty eradication. It is secondary, rather than primary education that makes a difference in woman's ability to exercise their rights: "The expectations placed upon girls' education in global and national education strategies are often immense. A few years of schooling are expected to make all the difference, and that on its own" (Tomasevski, 2003: 163). Also, Save the Children (2005: 6) recommends:

The world's governments should expand girls' opportunities to secondary school because research shows that every additional year will strengthen the girls' abilities, prospects and self-esteem, and the countries will reap the full benefits of female education for national development.

As pointed out earlier from authors like Fägerlind and Saha (1989), the relationship between education and development is complex, so is the relationship between girls' education and quality of life. The justification for sending girls to school should have to do with fairness and equality instead of decreasing the number of babies for every woman or preventing early marriages.

## 2.3 Concluding remarks

### 2.3.1 Education as a human right

The last point above, that education should be argued from reasons like fairness and equality, is important to consider when discussing the benefits of girls' education. As we have seen in most cases in this chapter is that education, and especially girls' education, has been justified through a development view such as an economic perspective, quality of life perspective, and/or a modernization perspective, but what about justifying it through fairness and equality? What about the human rights? UNICEF (2003) has recognized the biased justification of education when they state that the core of UNICEF's commitment to girls' education is: Education is everybody's human right. They also point out:

Although the international community has committed itself to girls' education as a human right issue and the benefits of investing in girls' education are clear, it has yet to become a priority for development investments. The reasons for this are complex and bring into question not just education policy but the historically dominant approaches to development that prioritize economic considerations and ignore human rights (UNICEF, 2003: 20).

Like UNICEF, Tomasevski (2003) claims that education should be justified through human rights. She claims that the right to education operates as a multiplier where it guarantees all other human rights when it is enhanced and it forecloses most of the rights when it is denied (Tomasevski, 2003). But what does education as a human right entail? Educational experts (in a UNESCO expert meeting about education) argued that a basic human right “entails both an obligation on the part of society to ensure appropriate provision for educational opportunities, and a right on the part of individuals and communities to access such provision without undue barriers and obstacles” (UNESCO, 2001: 22). Tomasevski (2003) says the human rights focus on a vertical relationship between the people and the government through a series of entitlements and prohibitions where the government acts like a Janus face: The government is the principal protector but also the principal violator of the human rights.

When there is a large gap between what is declared as a right and the capacity to achieve education for all, Lauglo (2004) says it can encourage unrealistic projects or even worse, to become reduced to a ritual for those who define or influence the educational policies and be far from reality. He claims it is important to specify what is meant with education as a human right. What level of mastery of knowledge and skills should be required so the girls’ are equipped with the basic tools they need to succeed in life? Lauglo (2004: 380) argues: “I do not see how one can define a meaningful entitlement without regard to present provision and without considering the resource context.” He argues that extending the provision of education must normally be a gradual process, compulsory education can only be compulsory when the majority of the children are already attending it. He makes the same point with including lower secondary education into ‘basic education’. The majority of the children have to first make it through primary education (Lauglo, 2004). The government’s inability to afford the cost of schooling to all children is the most frequently cited reasons for violating education for all as a human right. However, it is often inconsistent policies towards children that hamper progress more than the lack of money (Tomasevski, 2003).

Lauglo (2004) has however a good point when he states: what kind of education is a human right? In the EFA conference in Dakar, education was acknowledged as a right, but the delegates did not specify what kind or what level. They stated however that primary education should be free, compulsory and with good quality (Torres, 2001). The upper limit from Dakar was primary education, which may be interpreted to be the level that also involves the human

rights. 'Basic education' meant at the Jomtien conference education for all: children, young people and adults. In Dakar ten years later it became reduced in to what Torres (2001: 45) calls "Education for [the poorest] Girls."

As we have seen earlier in this chapter, education can influence political development and decisions, but politics is even more influencing to the education system. The education system is dependant and predisposed by national, but also international political decisions both in what should be the content and maybe more importantly the money that is granted for it. The politicians are rather justifying education through a "common sense" perspective such as the economical benefits of education than from justice and human rights, because they want to see some kind of return or even better, they want to see social change. Although it is not so easy to prove the benefits of education, the world community *believes* there are benefits that can improve and develop societies both socially and economically, and this belief makes education first and foremost a means for the development concept and not a human right. One might want to argue that this is sad and very tragic, that social and economic priorities seem to be more important than placing education with other basic needs justified through human rights. That politicians and the World Bank are arguing like this is maybe not so strange, more interesting it is that NGO's that are set up to protect human rights and help children also argue so strongly in the same manner.

### **2.3.2 Gender equality: what about the boys?**

Nevertheless, education is also seen as a human right, and human rights are based upon the belief that all humans are born equal. This means that the same rights that are given to girls/women should be given to boys/men and vice versa. However, girls' education is getting all the attention and priorities in the international educational politics now, is that fair when looking from a human rights perspective? Can there be justice and equality when only emphasising one sex? To be able to answer those questions I will explore the equality concept from Lummis' (1992) point of view. He claims that the equality concept is vague because it is possible to distinguish to families of meaning surrounding the term, although they may overlap each other. First, equality can indicate a kind of justice or fair treatment. It is concerned with how people ought to be treated and it refers to relations between people. Secondly, equality can indicate sameness or homogeneity between people and it postulates common characteristics in people. Lummis (1992: 38) says "to treat people justly may require

treating them differently; on the other hand, to treat them as if they were the same is not necessarily to treat them justly.”

So, to put more attention to girls’ education than boys’ education may be looked upon as fair or just because it is a fact that there are fewer girls than boys enrolled in school. To make the girls’ be able to “catch up” and have the same rights as the boys they need extra attention, and therefore treat them differently. The support to girls’ education may also be seen as a step towards making males and females more equal in the society, both when it comes to the right to own property, to be able to participate politically and so on. Girls’ education is part of a greater agenda. However, Kelly (1992: 281) claims

Schooling alone can only provide women with knowledge, skills, and credentials, but the extent to which these translate into equality between men and women in society depends on whether the structures that keep women subservient to men are themselves changed. (...) Achieving equality in access to education is quite possible: it can be and has been done. Achieving gender-based equality in the workforce and in society, however, takes more than opening schools to women.

As seen from this quote, equality in society demands more than just equality in school, and the girls’ will need support from the family, the school, the community, and the national government to be able to make their way up. As we have seen earlier, giving girls’ education can be a way and a stepping-stone for more equal status in the society, but it also depend on other important factors.

Treating girls and boys differently can be looked upon as justice, but I will argue only from a human rights perspective. When girls’ education is justified because it gives greater economic returns it is not based on fairness. From that perspective boys and girls education should be looked upon as the same. To be able to develop a nation you need both genders, both with the same knowledge and skills. Poor countries with a low percentage of girls in school have also often a lower enrolment rate for both genders (UNESCO, 2005). Consequently, the low investment or priority in education is also striking the boys hard.

It is thought provoking for me when organisations claim there are higher returns if one invests in girls’ education than boys. What does that entail? That the boys/men do not care about family planning, or if his kids are sick, or if he has contracted HIV and might have infected his wife? Are all the men in poor countries some kind of sexual beasts that attack poor

innocent girls on their way to school? I am of course exaggerating now to make a point. My point is that if the boys develop into a problem for the society and to the girl's health or security, the boys are the ones that really need and should have "quality of life" education that can help them become better and active fathers, husbands and citizens. Also, the girls need to be supported by the boys. I believe both genders have to be involved in education if one wants to see good benefits from education to the development of good and healthy families and societies. Both sexes are also needed when developing more equal status in the family, the community and the society in general. In the end the question will be: what kind of education is given, and to whom? To prioritise girls' education can be necessary in some cases, if there is a large gender gap, but it should only be a short-term goal. The real goal should be gender equality in education based upon sameness.

### **2.3.3 Summary: the expectations of education's effect on development**

When summing up this chapter one may conclude that the expectations to what education can do in terms of improving the world is enormous. The belief is that education improves our lives and our countries, and education develops. Although this confidence that education is a never-ending progressive movement like the Linear model towards progress, our 40 years of development history has showed us many set-backs. Some will even argue that there are only setbacks because the wealth is in the hands of fewer people and the poor people are getting poorer. The developing concept has also been criticised for being Western and therefore a tool for the West to continue controlling "the others" (Said, 1979).

Although the concept of development has been criticised and even torn apart, it is still used and still believed in, one reason for still believing might be the lack of other choices or options. The concepts are often divided into three dimensions; the economic development where Human Capital theory has been influential; the social development where Modernization theory has been a supporter of Human Capital theory, and the political development that is seen as a determinant, but also a determiner of the other dimensions.

In the last decade it has been especially girls' education that has been seen as the key agent to the alleviation of poverty and towards progress. Girls' education has been looked upon as a pragmatic means to development such as reducing the fertility rate, child mortality, protection from HIV/Aids, and increasing of economic growth. The international community and

organisations such as the World Bank, the UN and NGO's have all been cheering girls' education from a developing perspective. However, UNICEF is emphasising girls' education, first and foremost, as a human right and that education should be justified in that way.

As shown from all the parts of this chapter: the relationship between (girls') education and development is extremely complex. It is not a causal relationship, nevertheless, research has showed some of the benefits of education. The crucial question is what kind of education is given, to who and by whom? What kind of curriculum, how is the quality of the teachers and the schools? What level of education are we talking about? Will primary education give the returns that are assumed? Maybe secondary education is necessary if one wants social change, but how to balance this need with the resources that are available? The expectations both from the international community, but also from the grassroots' are massive, what will happen if the expectations do not come true? Will the educational sector finally collapse? Also, what will happen to the girl when she has been told you should go to school, but she cannot? There are many outside factors that need to be put in place before we get the benefits we want from education. I would like to conclude here with the thoughts of Tomasevski (2003: 158):

What girls can do with their education determines the attractiveness of schooling. If women cannot be employed or self-employed, own land, open a bank account, get a bank loan, if they are denied freedom to marry or not to marry, if they are deprived of political representation, education alone will have little effect on their plight. (...) [I]t is the recognition of all other rights – or the lack thereof – that affects education.



### 3 Uganda

After introducing the relationship between (girls') education and development, I would now like to present some background information about Uganda, the country where I conducted my research. First, I will pronounce briefly some general facts about the country, such as the political situation. Secondly, I will describe the educational history with emphasis on secondary education, and thirdly I describe the secondary education system in Uganda today, its structure and enrolment. Last, I will discuss how Uganda is doing in trying to reach the MDGs, especially goal number three, promote gender equality and empower women.

The fruitful and friendly Republic of Uganda is located along the equator on the East African plateau, neighbouring Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan. The total area of the country is over 241, 139 sq km including areas covered by inland water. The population census (conducted in 2002) shows 24,748,977 inhabitants and it is predominately rural, about 13.7% of the population resided in urban centres (Langlands, 2004). Of the population 49% is below 15 years old and the fertility rate is about 7 children per woman. The country has the most rapidly growing population in the world with a population growth rate at 3.4% (UNDP, 2003).

The country is divided into 4 regions, Central, Eastern, Northern, and Western, and within these areas there are over 56 districts. Agriculture is the dominant economic activity of Uganda. In 2004/05 this sector accounted for 42% of GDP, and it employs 80% of the working population (MoES, 2005b). The area that now forms the modern Uganda consisted of 30 different ethnic groups with their own language, culture and social organisation before the arrival of the British in the 1860s. Today the people of Uganda still consist of many groups with different languages (Hodd and Roche, 2002).<sup>6</sup>

Uganda became independent from the British in 1963 and although Uganda was one of the richest economies in sub-Saharan Africa at that time, it faced turbulent times and political instability (Ofcansky, 1996). Civilians suffered, and many died during attacks between guerrilla groups and the government army. Uganda endured, for example, severely under the dictatorship of Idi Amin that lasted from 1971 to 1979 and during that time the country's

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<sup>6</sup> The largest group are the Baganda (Bantu) with 16 % of the total population. Other main groups are the Soga (Bantu) with 8%; the Nkole (Bantu) with 8%; the Teso (Nilotic) 8%; the Kiga (Bantu) with 7%; the Lango (Nilotic) with 6%; the Gisu (Bantu) with 5%; the Acholi (Nilotic) with 4% and the Alur (Nilotic) with 4% (Hodd and Roche, 2002).

infrastructure deteriorated and no coherent economic development existed (Rake, 2004). The current president of Uganda, Yoweri K. Museveni, took power in 1986 and more recently he was re-elected in February 2006 after changing the Constitution. It was said in the Constitution that a president could only rule for two terms where one term is five years. When Museveni and the Ugandan Parliament changed it, he had already been the president for over ten years. The change of the Constitution was highly debated and criticized in Uganda and abroad. The critical voices claimed that this was the beginning of a new dictatorship in the country, while others claimed that the last election in Uganda was for the first time free and fair. Museveni got almost 60% of the voters and will be the president for another five years (BBC, 2006).

Museveni and the government army are fighting guerrilla groups inside the country, especially the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) with its leader Joseph Kony. In the north of the country, the conflict has lasted for 19 years. Up to 100,000 people have been killed and more than 20,000 children have been kidnapped and forced to fight, slaughter other children, carry supplies or serve as sex slaves; 80% of the LRA's fighting front are children (Sunday Vision, 2005). This conflict affects the school education in the area. UNICEF has estimated that 25% of children of primary school age are out of school in the area. The conflict is a humanitarian crisis that marks rampant violation of human rights (IRIN, 2005). The situation in the northern area of Uganda is terrible and different from the rest of the country. The area therefore affects statistics and tables negatively in terms of, for example, school enrolment.<sup>7</sup>

Poverty is still high in the whole of Uganda even though the economy and the general situation for most Ugandans has become better after president Museveni came to power. In 2000 the share of the population living below poverty line was 44%, a decline from 1992 when 56% of the population was living in poverty. There are many challenges that lie ahead for the citizens of Uganda, the country is on the basis of gross national income per head among the 15 poorest country in the world (van Buren, 2004; MoES, 2005b).

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<sup>7</sup> Therefore, I use statistics from the districts studied where that is accessible, when using countrywide statistics, the conflict in the northern part must be kept in mind. The areas where I visited were peaceful and the students there were in another situation than people in the northern area.

## 3.1 The educational history of Uganda<sup>8</sup>

### 3.1.1 African indigenous education

Although the missionaries, when they came to Uganda, thought that the Ugandan tribes had no educational system, research shows that the tribes were educating their people. The purpose of the education was to enable each member of that society to be helpful to oneself, ones family and to the rest of the members of the society. The education emphasised “learning by doing” and the creation of community and fellowship (Ofcansky, 1996; Ssekamwa, 1997). The education was non-literate and the teachers were the parents and responsible citizens in the tribe. The classroom was arranged in homesteads, around the fireplace at night or anywhere people carried out their different activities. Other researchers, such as Brock-Utne (2000), have presented similar accounts of indigenous education in other parts of Africa. Ssekamwa (1997) calls the indigenous education ‘production learning’, the students learnt at the same time as they produced. The Ugandan indigenous education taught every child the culture, history, customs, geography, good behaviour, ethics and the language of the society.

### 3.1.2 Colonial time from 1888 to 1962

In the early phase of the colonial period, the British government left the educational responsibility to the missionaries. Ssekamwa and Lugumba (2001) claim that instead of educating Ugandans the missionaries educated Roman Catholics or Protestants. After 1925, however, it was recommended by the American Phelps-Stokes Commission that the government should be responsible for the education of the children of the country. The education system ended up being a partnership between the British government and the missionaries. The colonial education system was a European project where the intention was to promote the colonial power and their interests, not to develop the Ugandan identity and needs (Zezeza and Eyoh, 2003). The students were, for example, taught history and geography of Britain and the United States of America. They did not receive any knowledge about Uganda or Africa in general (Ssekamwa, 1997).

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<sup>8</sup> Most of the references from this section are taken from Professor Ssekamwa’s publications. There are two reasons for that, first, the literature on this topic is scarce and hard to obtain. Second, Ssekamwa is the expert on the educational history of Uganda and he is working at Makerere University in Kampala.

All the (...) teaching during the colonial days was intended to make the Ugandans feel that it were [sic] things from the White man's world that had the value and which were worthwhile learning. The end result of this was to create lack of confidence in the feelings of Ugandans and to underestimate the value of African things (Ssekamwa, 1997: 169).

Although the government took some responsibility of the education system, many schools were owned and controlled by religious groups like the Protestants, the Roman Catholic or the Muslims. The religious organisations had a great say in deciding which pupils and students should attend school and they could deny entry into school if the students did not belong to the school's religion (Ssekamwa, 1997). Secondary schools, however, were usually boarding schools and headed by a European, and the boys' schools acted often as a preparatory to colleges while the girls' schools prepared them to become housewives. By 1950 many parents had realised that if their children would get any jobs they had to go to secondary school. The government and missionaries secondary schools were too few to satisfy the demand of the parents and private schools popped up like mushrooms, becoming a lucrative business. The number of private schools had grown so much that the government was forced to recognise them and try to put some control on them. Students from the rest of East African states were even coming to study because secondary education was still limited in those parts (Ssekamwa and Lugumba, 2001).

During the period of 1900 to 1960 there was a great gender disparity at all educational levels, and there were several causes. For example, the parents prioritised the boys when it came to funding, girls had more domestic work they had to carry out at home, and the girls also married earlier. The length of the school career was for most girls very short. There were also few female role models in the educational system and a lack of access and opportunities for girls. For example, the church argued that girls had another role in the society and therefore should be taught separately. The morale of the school was also better if boys and girls were taught separately. From the 1960s, after attempts from the government to attract girls to school and due to change in parent's attitude, the girls education stepped up and the enrolment in primary school in 1960 was 161,721 girls, while the boys was 354,027. However, in secondary the increase was more slow, in 1960 girls enrolled in secondary was 485 and the number of boys was 3360 (Ssekamwa and Lugumba, 2001: 76).

### **3.1.3 After independence to the regime of Idi Amin**

After independence in 1962 the government became more actively involved in the education of its citizens and the country had already the most advanced educational system in East Africa (Ofcansky, 1996). The government passed the 1963 Education Act that put all of schools financially aided by the government under the control of the government. They abolished the racial and religious systems so that a child could gain admission to any school irrespective of these factors (the child's race or religion) (Ssekamwa and Lugumba, 2001). One reason for taking control of education was that the different religious and private groups could interfere with the government's plans of dealing with the many challenges the country faced. The government expected the education system to help solve those challenges. First, Uganda needed qualified people in government departments and private companies. Secondly, they needed to increase production and develop economic activities (economic development), and thirdly, they needed to create unity among the Ugandans and give confidence, self-esteem and pride back to the population (political development). They wanted to create an "African identity and personality." These challenges required also a tremendous increase in school enrolment, especially at the secondary level and the Ugandan government had to borrow money from the World Bank, as well as the British and the American governments to finance its expansion (Ssekamwa, 1997).

The government restructured the education system and at the secondary level they abolished the Junior Secondary section and several vocational schools turning them into academic secondary schools. They created instead a senior secondary level called Ordinary level (O-level) that lasted for 4 years and Advanced level (A-level) that lasted for another 2 years. After finishing O-level, students could also join technical or agricultural colleges. In some secondary schools they introduced practical subjects like agriculture and woodwork as part of the "Africanisation" of the curriculum. The new curriculum was designed to create greater confidence in the Ugandan people (Ssekamwa, 1997). The shortage of qualified people was solved by 1970, but the government had hoped that the graduates from the secondary level and universities would also be job creators and not only job seekers. They had wished that the people could create jobs themselves and thereby help the country to boost its economic development. Instead many school leavers were looking for jobs that were not available (Ssekamwa, 1997).

In 1971 Idi Amin took power in Uganda and it became a very difficult period for the Ugandan people. Amin's dictatorship lasted from 1971 to 1979, and it became a devastating period. External aid was turned off because donor countries did not agree with the policies of Amin and his government, and since finance from abroad stopped, many educational projects stopped. The whole educational field suffered and deteriorated. Few secondary schools were built and it became a bottleneck in the educational system because there was still some increase of pupils in the primary level. The whole country had also a shortage of textbooks and other scholastic materials and it affected the education adversely (Ssekamwa, 1997).

#### **3.1.4 The 1980s and 1990s**

With the fall of Amin, the new government with Obote as the president wanted to show their support to education with the view of getting re-elected. The religious groups together with the government and private actors tried to answer the need for more secondary schools and the building of secondary schools increased. Despite efforts to rehabilitate the educational system in the early 1980s, the economic problems continued to reduce the quality of education at all levels, such as the shortage of books and other equipment (Ofcansky, 1996; Ssekamwa and Lugumba, 2001).

When Museveni gained power in 1986, he promised among other things to improve and expand the country's educational infrastructure and eliminate illiteracy. The Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC) from 1989 recommended a new structure and curriculum of the educational system (Ssekamwa, 1997). The report stressed more equitable access to the education system, improving the quality of instruction and greater emphasis on learning practical skills in school (Ofcansky, 1996) However, from 1963 to 1995 the education system of Uganda was running according to the recommendations of the 1963 commission, which means that the educational system did not change over a period of 32 years (Ssekamwa and Lugumba, 2001). Yet, Museveni and his government created a government white paper (1992) that outlined a strategy to implement the findings and recommendations that came from the EPRC. After long periods of destruction and insecurity from the time of Amin and Obote, many Ugandans feared to send their children to school and this had led the educational sector to fall into decay. To re-address the situation, Museveni and his government introduced in 1997 Universal Primary Education (UPE). Four children, two girls and two boys, from each Ugandan family were given free primary education. This huge take off in education led to an

enormous increase in the enrolment in the primary level, from 2.7 million in 1996 to 6.9 million in 2001 (van Buren, 2004). On the other hand, it has also meant that secondary education has become again a bottleneck of the educational system of Uganda.

### 3.2 Secondary education in Uganda today

The statistics and tables that are being used in this section are mostly taken from the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sport's (MoES) annual publication 'Annual education census exercise of 2004' (MoES, 2005a).<sup>9</sup> The data gathered and represented does not reflect the total school's population. For example, data from secondary schools is taken from 2,899 schools with a response rate of 68% (MoES, 2005a). However, the data can enable us to get a picture of some tendencies of the primary and secondary sectors in Uganda.

Secondary schools in Uganda are very diverse, even the general secondary schools. This is important to consider when drawing assumptions from the data. Different kinds of schools give different kinds of data, which may give a different conclusion. Therefore, I will give a short outline of all the types of secondary schools one can find in Uganda. First of all, some schools are day schools (56%), while other are partly boarding (34%) or full boarding (11%). Some schools are only for girls (5%) and others are only for boys (2%), however, most of the schools are mixed, both boys and girls (93%). Over half of all the secondary schools are defined rural (54%), 29% are peri-urban, while 17 % are urban (MoES, 2005a).<sup>10</sup> When it comes to the ownership of the schools, 59% of the schools are private, that is around 1898 schools and 39% are government owned, that is approximately 1651 schools. Communities own 2% of the schools (MoES, 2005a).

The amount of private schools in Uganda is quite large, but as mentioned above when describing the educational history of Uganda, the increase of private secondary schools already started in 1925, and by the 1950s there were so many compared to the rest of East Africa that even students from abroad came to Uganda to study (Ssekamwa and Lugumba, 2001). Today, the demand of increasing the number of secondary schools has also made the

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<sup>9</sup> In chapter four I will discuss the use of official statistics as a methodological technique and how I will further use the information in this study.

<sup>10</sup> See definition of rural, urban and peri-urban schools in the Methodology chapter, 4.2.1

government invite private investors to come and invest in the educational sector. Uganda doubled the enrolment size in secondary level from 9.8% in 1998 to 19.7% in 2002 (UNESCO, 2005). Secondary education in Uganda is not free, the parents have to pay school fees, uniforms and school materials.

During Museveni's election campaign he announced free secondary education for all, already starting in 2006 (New Vision, 2005). If this promise goes through, and become more than an election speech, it will make Uganda the first country in Africa to implement universal and free secondary education. Also, if this promise goes through, will we expect the same enrolment explosion like with the introduction of UPE? And has the country enough resources for pulling this through? As mentioned earlier, 49% of the Ugandan population is under the age of 15 which means that there are fewer of the working-age population that can support the education than the actual numbers of students, and as the population grows the actual number of students in both primary and secondary education will grow.

### **3.2.1 The structure of the secondary education level**

Although the committee of 1989 suggested changes in the education system that was also going to affect the secondary education level, the structure from 1963 is still used. General secondary education in Uganda includes a total of six years, and it comprises two levels. The lower segment is called O-Level and it lasts for four years (from S1 to S4). The final exams in S4 lead to the Uganda Certificate in Education (UCE), which qualifies the students to the next level. The higher segment is called A-level and it lasts for two years (S5 and S6). The exams in S6 lead to the Uganda Advanced Certificate in Education (UACE), and this certificate qualifies students to enter universities (White Paper, 1992; MoES, 2005b).

Parallel to secondary schools are technical schools that teach various skills and crafts. Instead of O-level, the student can attend the technical schools that lasts for three years and ends with a Uganda Junior Technicians' Certificate. From here they can continue with upper technical schools or be employed. Those that finished O-level with the UCE certificate can also attend technical schools and teacher training colleges (MoES, 2005b). The opportunities to join vocational education, however, are limited especially because vocational education is very costly. This is due to the demand for different equipment, such as expensive tools and lab materials, well-educated and competent teachers, and it might also demand lecturing smaller



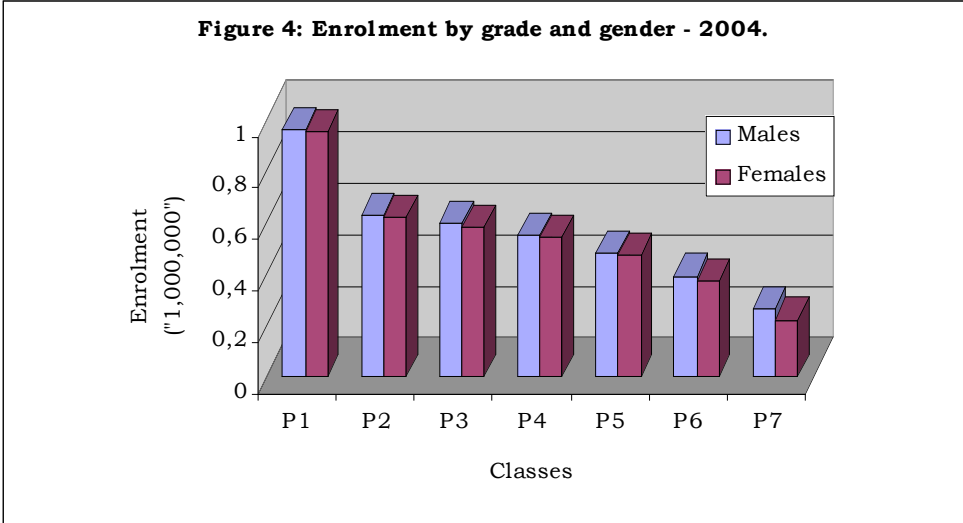
classes.<sup>11</sup> Uganda is also highly dependent on private investors and they will rather invest in academic schools that are less expensive to establish and run. Ssekamwa and Lugumba (2001) claim that it has also to do with the lack of balance between teaching academic knowledge and teaching practical skills in the curriculum. The balance has yet not been established and Uganda’s education is mainly academically oriented.

Perhaps the cost of more comprehensive secondary schools is the reason why the suggestion from the EPRC committee of 1989 has still not been implemented, although it was even developed and included in the government White Paper of 1992. In the White Paper (1992) it was suggested that lower secondary education should be three years and with two tracks, one comprehensive secondary and one vocational secondary. Higher secondary was still to contain two years, but with four different tracks, one technical, one general, one teacher college and one private business college.

**3.2.2 The enrolment in secondary school**

To get some ideas about the enrolment at the secondary level it can be interesting to have some knowledge about the enrolment in primary education first. Table 3.1 is produced by the MoES (2005a) and gives us an idea about the enrolment rate by gender and grade in primary education.

*Table 3.1: Primary enrolment rates by grade and gender, 2004*



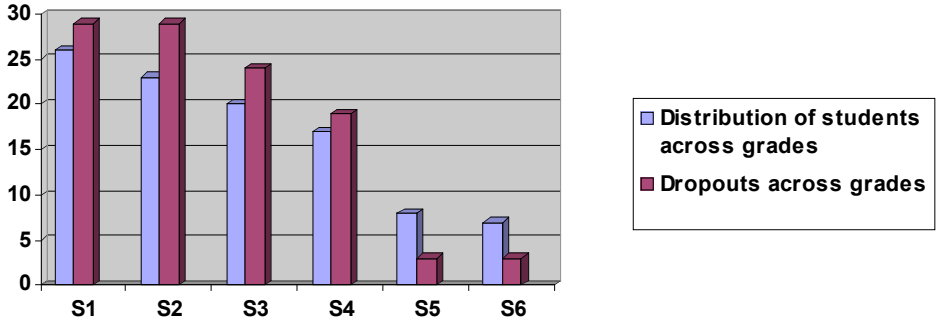
(MoES, 2005a)

<sup>11</sup> Extensive research has showed that curricular programmes that contain industrial or agricultural courses can be up to 50% more expensive per pupil than courses with a general secondary curricula (Holsinger and Cowell, 2000).

Although the enrolment in primary education has increased drastically after the introduction of UPE, the table shows that there are severe declines in enrolment between P1 & P2 and P6 & P7. After a sharp drop from P1 to P2 there is a gradually falling off in enrolment. There is a significant number that drop out from primary without being qualified to enter secondary school, and even worse, are not able to read, write and calculate properly. However, there are no significant difference between the girls and the boys that abandon school. The main reasons reported for abandoning primary school is lack of interest (46%) and family responsibilities (15%) (MoES, 2005a).<sup>12</sup>

From a school age population of almost 3.5 million adolescents, the total enrolment in secondary school in Uganda was 697,507 in 2004 (UNESCO, 2005), and like the primary sector, the students are more concentrated in the lower grades (see table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Distribution and dropouts (percent) across the secondary grades



In S1 the percentage of distribution of students was 26% while in S6 the distribution was 7%, this means that the differences in the enrolment between O-level and A-level is significant. The main reason for dropping out was problems getting schools fees (62%), while 11% report that the dropout was caused by pregnancies and marriages (UNESCO, 2004; MoES, 2005a). The total net enrolment for both boys and girls in secondary education is 14.5% (MoES, 2005a), and this shows that there are also a great number of boys and girls who are dropping out and leaving school without receiving the UCE certificate and even fewer with the UACE certificate. This illustrates that secondary education is a rare luxury that is reserved a minority of the youth in Uganda.

<sup>12</sup> It is not clear from the documents from MoES (2005a) what “lack of interest” really means. That 46% drop out from primary school because of “lack of interest” is a huge number. Why do so many pupils leave because they are not interested? I will not speculate reasons, however, the findings are interesting and should be looked into.

### 3.3 Will Uganda reach gender parity in education by 2015?

Uganda's leaders pledged together with 188 other countries in 2000 to commit themselves towards the UN's MDGs. By doing so they agreed with the international community to achieve these goals by 2015. So, how is Uganda doing in terms of reaching goal number three, promotion of gender equality and empowering women? First of all, Uganda started already in the nineties, together with donors and local NGO's, to work towards a strategy that could promote the girl-child in education. World conferences like the EFA in 1990, the fourth world conference on women in Beijing in 1995, and the African conference on the empowerment of women and education of the girl child in Kampala in 1996, all stimulated towards this promotion. In addition, the government saw equal access to education as a human right and as a necessary factor in the development of the nation (MoES, n.d.). In the nineties when the Ugandan government introduced the UPE, two of the four children from each family that entered primary education had to be a girl. They also introduced extra 1.5 points to girls when entering universities (MoES, n.d.). Both of these achievements have increased girls' enrolment in education. Their overarching goal from their national strategy for girls' education in Uganda was as follows:

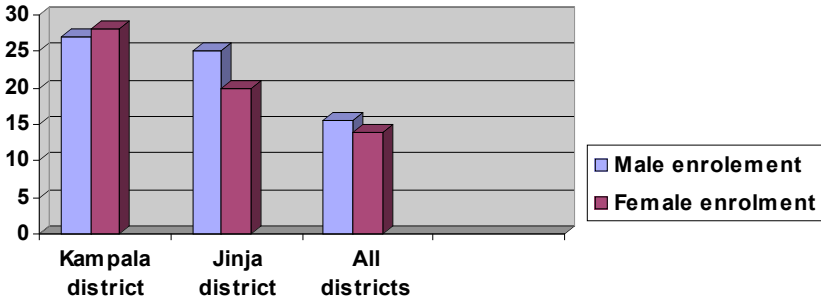
All girls in Uganda (including the destitute and girls with disabilities) will have full access to education opportunities and will be supported by their families, schools, communities, government and the private sector to participate fully in gender-balanced education programmes in order to attain their maximum potential as equal and efficient citizens (MoES, n.d.: 22).

Therefore, a lot has been done in Uganda towards gender equality and women's empowerment, the government has ensured relevant policies and that programmes are in place, but the country is still challenged. Attitudinal change, for example, is more difficult. Women are still lacking control over resources and it is still the men who are deciding how the family's income should be spent. The UNDP MDGs progress report for Uganda (2003) argues that the unequal sharing of roles and responsibilities in Uganda results in women being overburdened and it causes them to be less productive. The inequality between males and females in the society in Uganda might therefore be a hindrance to full gender parity in education by 2015.

When finding out if Uganda will meet the target of eliminating gender disparities in education by 2015, we might use the MDGs indicators. The first measurement is the ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education. In primary education in Uganda the UNDP report (2003) said the target of eliminating gender disparity will ‘probably’ be reached by 2015.<sup>13</sup> From the collection done by the MoES (2005a) of girls and boys enrolled in primary schools in all districts in 2004, the girls were 49.3% of all the students. If these figures are correct, Uganda has already reached the goal in primary education.

In secondary education, however, UNDP (2003) say that Uganda has only a ‘potential’ to reach it. This could mean that it will be during the transition to secondary education and throughout the secondary education that the problem of gender disparities will arise more and be noticeable. The total net enrolment in secondary education today in the whole country is 15.5% males and 14% females, but the gender disparity varies greatly in the different district and at different types of schools (MoES, 2005a). For example, the gender disparity is greater in the government schools compared with the private schools. Actually, in both of the study’s districts, Kampala and Jinja, there are more girls enrolled in private schools than boys. In percent the net enrolment of all schools in Kampala is 27% males and 28% females, while in Jinja it is 25% males and 20% female (see table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Gender net enrolment ratio in percent in all grades (S1 to S6)



Kampala and Jinja districts have in general a very good enrolment of both boys and girls compared with the rest of the country. One explanation might be that there are more private secondary schools in those districts compared to the rest of the country, especially in the capital Kampala. Families’ living in more urban areas have in general more resources and higher education than families living in rural areas. However, one must have in mind that the

<sup>13</sup> The UNDP report (2003) “grade” the likelihood of reaching the goals from ‘probably’ to ‘potentially’, ‘unlikely’ and ‘no data’.

actual number of girls finishing secondary education with a UACE certificate is much lower than the enrolment rate. I have not been able to find completion rates for secondary education in Uganda, but by looking at the enrolment in S6 one can get an idea. The female enrolment rate in S6 in government school in all districts was 36% in 2004. The rate in all schools, public, private and community driven, was 40.8% (MoES, 2005a).

The other indicators from the MDG number three from Uganda might also give a picture about how the country is doing in terms of reaching goal number three. Indicator b) the ratio of literate women to men in the age of 15-24 years old was in Uganda in 1990 0.76, while in 2004 it had increased to 0.86. Indicator d) the proportion of seats held by women in national parliament increased in Uganda from 12% in 1990, to 25% in 2004 (Globalis, 2006). A report from the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development (MoGLSD, 2006) claims women share 28% of the wage employment in the non-agricultural sector in Uganda, that is indicator c). Overall, Uganda has still a job to do when trying to reach the MDG of gender parity in secondary school by 2015 and in general promoting gender equality and empowering the women.

## 4 Methodology

In this chapter I will look at all the aspects of methodology connected to this study, including the strategy, the design, and the research methods. When I conducted my fieldwork, focus groups method was the main method of data collection. I will describe the focus group technique and how I used it in the field and also reflect around what I thought was problematic and difficult with using this method. I will also describe the other techniques used which are individual interviews and the use of secondary sources. The next section, after research methods, I will reflect upon my role as a researcher and other ethical concerns that I met during the fieldwork. Since the themes are interrelated I have chosen to treat all these aspects under one section. In the end of the chapter I will look at the trustworthiness of the study.

### 4.1 Research Strategy – a Qualitative Approach

All research starts with a research strategy that is naturally connected to the research purpose and what the researchers actually wants to find out. The researchers have to ask themselves what strategy suits their project best. Bryman (2004:19) defines a research strategy as a “general orientation to the conduct of social research” and qualitative and quantitative research are often the two main strategies that many writers identify, as they are two very different ways of conducting research. It is helpful to distinguish these two strategies and they are in many ways fundamentally different from each other. They are said to be different in their ontological and epistemological orientation and also how the role of theory is in relation to research. The methods of collecting data will also necessarily be diverse because of these differences. Although this organization of strategies is useful it does not mean that we should make the differences between them too hard and fast. Silverman (2000) argues that we can question the whole ‘qualitative/quantitative’ dichotomy and that this way of looking at research strategies is risky. Many researchers today combine methods from both strategies and show that research methods are freer than it seems when making this dichotomy.

The choice of strategy as mentioned above depends upon what the researcher wants to find out. Qualitative research strategy suited this study best because of the nature of the study and the study’s research questions. Qualitative research is concerned with mainly words rather

than numbers and qualitative research stresses the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of the words of its participants. In this study it was natural and important to talk to the people that are the focus of this study, thus the girls' point of view and that would allow me the opportunity to better understand their world.

Brockington and Sullivan (2003) argue that qualitative research is essential if we want to understand what makes our world meaningful for people. For example, the use of numbers taken from a questionnaire would have made this process much harder to interpret. Also, Bryman (2004) argues that social properties are outcomes of the interactions between individuals rather than phenomena "out there". Since the study is looking at how the girls at different secondary schools in Uganda understand their "world" and the importance of education, it was important to try to allow them the opportunity to interact with me, but also with each other.

## 4.2 Research Design

The research design is indeed connected to the strategy. Durrheim (2004: 29) defines the research design as a "strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research." The design is helping the researcher with the collection and analysis of data, and it reflects decisions about the priority being given to a range of dimensions of the research process (Bryman, 2004). The design in qualitative research is open, fluid and changeable compared to a quantitative study and changes in the process can occur. The design works like a flexible guide for the researcher (Durrheim, 2004).

When I developed the research design my goal was that the study should be a holistic and exploratory study, although the area of investigation was not entirely unknown. The study, as other studies with this kind of aim, is understood as a complex system that focuses on interdependencies and it tries to "employ an open, flexible and inductive approach to research as they attempt to look for new insights onto a phenomena" (Durrheim, 2004: 39). In this study the design has indeed been flexible and changes have been made continually, both in the field and after the fieldwork. For example, in my research proposal I mentioned that I might conduct some individual interviews if the focus groups alone would not answer the research question. While I was in the field I conducted seven individual interviews. After the fieldwork I realised that I could not answer one of the research questions that I had made

before the trip so I adjusted and expanded the original question based on the material collected (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Durrheim, 2004).

Still, I doubted that the data would not be enough and also if the material would be what was needed to answer the reformulated questions. I was as well not sure if my material could give a wider resonance, but rather just produce explanations to the limited empirical data that I gathered. Silverman (2000) suggests that you can combine qualitative research with quantitative measures of population. To compare with a larger sample may allow me to establish some sense of representatives of my single cases. While I visited the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) they offered me the newest educational statistics they had, MoES (2005a) and I will use this information for this purpose. I have already presented some of this information in chapter three when describing the enrolment situation in secondary education in Uganda. I will use statistics as a secondary source to compare and/or support my own findings in chapters five and six.

#### **4.2.1 Selecting Sites**

When selecting sites in Uganda I had to keep in mind that I had to visit both rural and urban schools. I made use of the MoES's definition, and they define an urban school where:

The school is located in a highly built-up area where the population is highly concentrated. This area is generally characterized by the availability of services like electricity, piped water, tarmac roads and telephones (MoES, 2003: 7).

Naturally I selected the Kampala district to be the area where I located my urban schools. It was in this district I lived in during my fieldwork and had all my contacts and even some friends. It was with help from the Norwegian Embassy that I picked the first school (U1) from the Kampala district.<sup>14</sup> Before I arrived, they sent a letter on my behalf asking the school if it would be possible that I came to their school. The second school (U2) in Kampala district was picked more after advice from a friend that knew the secondary school system well. It was important that the urban schools were as similar as possible such as student population. U2 was also a mixed day school, like U1, and located near U1 but at the same time closer to an informal settlement where some of the students lived. This might have made the student population less similar to that of U1. Another factor was that U1 had higher school fees than

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<sup>14</sup> The urban schools will be called U1 and U2 and the rural schools R1 and R2



U2. These factors could have made them a bit different from each other, for example, my gatekeeper at U1 said that the dropout was not a problem at their school while at U2 they said that they targeted dropouts as a problem. U1 had almost a fifty-fifty ratio of girls and boys attending the school while the second school had about 2/3 that were boys and 1/3 girls.

The selection of my second district was more as a result of contacts made in the field. One of my contacts and assistant during my fieldwork came from the Jinja district and suggested this area for me. It was an area that provided easy access and offered connections that could lead me to new schools. Jinja district is an urban district and is the former industrial city of Uganda which supplies electricity to all of Uganda. However, the district also has rural areas and although one of the rural schools might fit under the MoES's peri-urban definition of schools, I define both schools in this district as rural schools. A rural school lacks most of the facilities found in the urban areas while the MoES defines peri-urban schools as a:

... School ... located in an area [that] somewhat mirrors the characteristics of an urban area but to a lesser extent. In this area, only some of the facilities found in urban areas exist; the population is also moderate (MoES, 2003: 7).

First of all I define them both as rural to make the comparisons between the districts easier in the analysis. The second reason is that many of the students in the schools in Jinja live in far more rural areas than where the school is located and they had to travel long distances to get there.

## 4.3 Research Methods

### 4.3.1 Focus Group Interviews

The foremost reason for picking focus group interviews as the main technique was the nature of the method. The focus group is a form of a group interview where several people are discussing a specific topic or an issue. The emphasis is upon the interaction within the group and the joint construction of meaning. Traditionally, the technique was used by market researchers, gaining a high profile as a method for guiding political campaign advertising and governments' image-management mainly in the USA and the UK. In academia, the method

has attracted increased attention over the last decade and focus groups as a method has been adopted and developed in a wide range of social sciences (Barbour and Kitzinger, 1998).

When collecting data by using focus groups, I was interested in the ways in which individuals discussed a certain issue as a member of a group rather than simply as individuals. I wanted the girls to discuss together questions like how they see their future and why they continued on into secondary school. They could also discuss the financial aspect of attending secondary education and if they have had any problems dealing with education because they are girls. If the girls were together discussing it might be easier for them to reflect how they think that the different institutions (like the school, family and government) are supporting them since they could help each other to find an answer to the questions. I also thought that the focus group could be more fruitful than if I asked these questions under individual interviews as I was an outsider and thus individuals might have been shy to speak to me on a one-to-one basis. The focus group is also ideal for exploring people's experiences, opinions, wishes and concerns. The researcher can explore how points of views are constructed and expressed and it can also gain access to how knowledge, ideas, story telling, self-presentation and linguistic exchange which operates within a given cultural context (Bryman, 2004). In focus groups, individuals can also argue with each other and challenge each other's views. They are forced to think and possibly revise their views. Barbour and Kitzinger (1998: 5) sum up the appropriateness of focus groups as follows:

[G]roup work explores how accounts are articulated, censured, opposed and changed through social interactions and how this relates to peer communication and group norms.

#### *4.3.1.1 The focus group as a feminist method*

Since the study is looking at gender issues it was also natural to argue in favour for the method in the same way many feminists argue. Focus groups as a method can in many ways work as a feminist method, and many feminists are starting to use it in their research.

Wilkinson (1998) says that focus groups offer two key features that are often suggested as essential in feminist research. First of all, the focus groups are a contextual method; it avoids focusing on the individual devoid of social context or separate from interaction with others. Meanings are also in natural settings, constantly negotiated and renegotiated to make 'collective sense' of different individual experiences.

The second feature is that focus groups are relatively a non-hierarchical method. The balance of power shifts away from the researcher towards the research participants. The participants are able to take on much of the direction of the session from the researcher and the participants views are much more likely to be revealed than in traditional interviews (Wilkinson, 1998). Many feminist researchers, for example, Madriz (2000) argues that focus groups can be an important element in the progress of social justice for women. The method can serve to expose and validate women's everyday experiences of suppression. It can help to strengthen individual and collective survival and resistance strategies. Madriz (2000) also sees the method as productive especially for women in a lower socio-economic status because, as she claims, historically women have used conversation with other women as a way to deal with their oppression.

#### *4.3.1.2 How did the focus groups work in the field?*

Different researchers say different things about how many groups and how big the size of each group should be when conducting focus groups. Focus groups studies range from just three or four groups to over fifty, so the variations in the number of groups are immense (Bryman, 2004). Because of the study's limitations I planned to visit two schools where I could conduct one focus group with each school. In my design both schools were to be government mixed day schools and I wanted to compare one rural with one urban school. The motive for picking government schools was that statistics from the MoES showed the gender disparity was greater in government funded schools than in the private schools. The second reason is that government mixed day schools make up the majority of schools in Uganda (MoES, 2005a).

After visiting the two schools (U1 and R1) I felt the need for conducting more focus groups in other schools. First of all, my role as a researcher and moderator in focus groups was a new situation, I felt the need for trying the technique out even more. Secondly, I suspected that U1 might not be very "representative" of students in urban areas. I felt that the school had either "prepared" the students for the focus group or that the group consisted of only "bright" students from resourceful families. That was at least my first impression. At the rural school (R1) the story was a bit different. When I came to carry out the focus group they had not yet made a group for me. I could then see that they picked the girls more by chance (they even

gave me some boys that I had to reject even though I had told them I only needed to speak to girls) and the “pressure” of me waiting created a group that was more or less made by chance than careful preparations. Even though R1 was maybe more “natural” in the sense of giving a more “true” picture of girls in lower secondary schools in rural areas I had problems getting them to debate or argue about the issue at hand. Their teacher had told them that I was a teacher so they started every sentence with “Madame”. The wish of being as non-hierarchical as possible decreased and became smaller than in U1 where the girls appeared to speak more freely. R1 consisted also of six students while U1 had eight, which could also have been one reason why U1 seemed more active as the focus group involved more participants.

As this picture shows, I was for a majority of the time highly dependent on gatekeepers that would allow me to do my study and also choose the students for me. Gatekeepers can be defined as “those individuals in an organisation that have the power to withhold access to people or situations for the purposes of research” (Scheyvens and Story, 2003: 153). Focus groups involve increased dependency on gatekeepers and there are two main problems involved with this, the access and recruitment (Barbour and Kitzinger, 1998). In this study it was the deputy headmasters or headmistresses that worked as gatekeepers. There can be of course a possibility that the gatekeepers might have screened potential participants without me knowing, but that risk was something I just had to accept because of time and resource limits related to this study. However, despite these shortcomings I believe that I was able to obtain relevant and useful information on the topic at hand.

Barbour and Kitzinger (1998) mention that it could be that gatekeepers in studies can look at group interviews as far more threatening than individual interviews. I do not know if this was also the case in this study, but from my point of view it seemed like the gatekeepers wanted to help me and were positive to the study. Though I had little control over the selection of participants I tried when I had the chance to guide the gatekeepers to choose girls that were around sixteen years old and attended O level classes. Since I did not know how active the participants were going to be I asked the gatekeepers to give me 6-8 students. Except for the second group that had six, I had eight students in the other groups. I told them also that I wished all kinds of girls not only the “bright” ones. I interviewed the gatekeepers individually, because I wanted to get some idea of how they were thinking when they picked the students for me. From their answers it seemed that they often wanted to give me students they knew would be active and verbal.

In the selection of students I had only control over what kind of school I entered, that the school was a government founded mixed day school, but I realized at a later stage that even if the school was a day school it did not mean that all the students lived with their parents at home. Some of the students in the group were orphans and some, because of other reasons, had to stay in classrooms made up as temporary hostels or they lived with relatives or guardians. This aspect shows that I was not able to bring together participants with a similar family background into the group. Groups with same experiences give the group a higher chance to get a productive group with fruitful discussions (Barbour and Kitzinger, 1998), but I came in the situation of just taking what I have been given. However, Barbour and Kitzinger (1998) argue that a researcher seldom can control all the characteristics of the participants that is relevant for the group and the precise arrangement of the groups will often be a product of circumstances rather than planning. Still I think all the participants had a lot in common; they were all young girls, almost all in the same age group, attending lower secondary school in districts close to one another. Counting all the girls together from all four groups gave me a total of 30 girls. The table shows the distribution of their age and grade.

*Table 4.1: The distribution of age and grades of all the focus groups participants*

Secondary school level	14 years	15 years	16 years	17 years	Sum each grade
Grade 1		3			3
Grade 2		1	3	1	5
Grade 3	1	3	9	1	14
Grade 4		1	6	1	8
Sum Age		8	18	3	

When you conduct focus groups the setting is also important for the results you get from the group. It is important that the setting is a place where it is quiet and that you don't risk interruption from others. Green and Hart (1998) describe how the context can influence the data produced. Different kinds of stories are told in different contexts, they argue, therefore, that it is useful to examine explicitly the impact of context on the kinds of data produced. Here I was in a situation where I just had to take what I got, in the U2 school we did the focus group interview in a classroom, the rest of the groups were outdoors either on the grass or we had some chairs that they had provided for us. The intention was that we could be alone without any disturbances, but sometimes the school clock could ring, other students had a

break and even some curious students could come looking at what we were doing. If they came too close and disturbed us, we asked them kindly to leave. A teacher also came once wondering if we had much time left. When the groups were disturbed we stopped the session and tried to start where we had left off.

Time pressure was of course something that affected all the groups. Since I was taking time from lectures and they were all going to have exams in the near future I could not ask for more than an hour. That hour included the information about the session and filling out a form, so the actual time to conduct the discussion could last 50 minutes or less.<sup>15</sup> Casey and Kreuger (2000) advises actually to limit the time when you are conducting focus groups with young people, and states that you should not make it longer than an hour, still I felt that they also needed some time to get loosened up and when they finally started to speak more freely I had to move to the next question or stop the session, because time had run out. What I could have wished for when looking back is one hour of real focus group discussion and another 15-20 minutes for information and filling out forms.

#### *4.3.1.3 Obstacles faced with focus groups*

The focus groups method has also limitations and disadvantages when collecting the data. I met several of them that I now will describe, it concerns the researcher's lack of control, being an inexperienced moderator, the group effects, exclusion of opinions, language problems, and the problem of observing interaction.

I had, as mentioned before, little control over the selection of the participants of the groups since it was the gatekeepers that controlled that. This was a big disadvantage, but at the same time I had no other options. A second issue, when it comes to control, is that the researcher also has less control over proceedings than with individual interviews. This is not only negative, Bryman (2004) says this can both be seen as an advantage and as a disadvantage, but how far can the group take over the running of the proceedings? I felt that it was very hard to know, when you are in "action", when to try on the one hand to get conversation as smooth as possible and at the same time tighten it in so that they do not end up talking about something else that will not benefit the research question. I discovered that sometimes it was

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<sup>15</sup> The form was given out so that I could get some demographic background on the participants. I used this information later to pick out students to conduct an interview with. See section 4.3.2.

not before I transcribed the information that I actually could hear that they had gone off track and started to talk about something else and I, as the moderator, had done nothing to bring them back on track. I think this issue is perhaps especially important when you are interviewing young people because they might be easier to distract. Still, I remember that they were often very involved, that the group came close to a “focus group interaction” when I just let them speak about things that I might not have asked for. I sometimes did not want to stop them because it went so smoothly and I hoped they could come back on track themselves while they were discussing. Sometimes they did and other times they did not.

Another issue is the possible problems of group effects, and especially in this case since the group consisted of young girls that are highly concerned with what the peer group thinks, which may make it harder for them to dare to speak out and stand against the “group” opinion. Some of the group members were more dominant than others and I noticed that they often said “we” and “us” instead of “me” and in that way excluded other opinions. I tried to make them aware of it when I could, but this way of expression was hard to eliminate.

Also, connected to this is that they often made vast generalisations instead of talking about their own experiences. Bryman (2004) says that participants might be more prone to expressing culturally expected views than in individual interviews. This point is something I really experienced over and over again, even in individual interviews. Without really knowing why I felt that they often came with “correct” opinions that really was something that they had learned or heard somewhere and did not necessarily reflect themselves. I will come back to this issue in chapter five and six.

Another problem I found was our English skills, both the girls and my own. None of us had English as our mother tongue. The girls have English as the language of instruction in school, but they had still problems sometimes in understanding my questions. These communication problems were especially felt in the rural schools where I often had to repeat questions over again although I had tried to spell them out very slowly and clearly. The problem was not so immense in the Kampala district.

The last obstacle with focus group I will mention here is the problem of observing interaction while conducting the focus group. This dimension of the method is maybe one of the most important elements that make the focus group technique unique and different from other types

of interview techniques. Kitzinger (1994 in Bryman, 2004: 357) has observed that research seldom takes interaction within the group into account when doing focus groups. For this study this was not possible either although it could have provided valuable data. To be able to collect that kind of material you have to be more than one researcher that is carrying out the focus groups. One researcher to observe and take field notes while the other is needed to concentrate on being the moderator. The focus group technique is a demanding technique that requires a highly trained moderator and a team around so that both the interaction and the actual dialog is part of the data. One may argue that my attempt to conduct focus groups in many ways failed and that I rather was conducting group interviews. However, this does not mean that I did not gather useful and relevant data, which have allowed me to throw some light on the issues and draw some conclusions and interpretations.

### **4.3.2 Individual Interviews**

In qualitative interviewing there is a great interest in the interviewee's point of view. The interview tends to be flexible and the researcher is responding to the direction in which interviewees take the interview. The researchers approaches may also vary. The two main types of qualitative interviewing are the unstructured interview and the semi-structured interview (Bryman, 2004). In this study I used semi-structured interviews, this means I had interview guides with lists of questions to ask. I did not always follow the interview guide completely and sometimes I could ask questions that were not on the list while others were skipped. I conducted three sets of interviews in this study. The first group consisted of individual interviews with girls selected from the four focus groups. The second group consisted of interviews with gatekeepers and the third group of interviews were with one member from the MoES and the other from Ministry of Gender, Labour and Development (MoGLD), thus interviews with ministry officials. However, I have not used the interviews from the ministry officials directly in the analysis because after rephrasing the research questions they were not relevant. Nevertheless, the interviews were useful as a guidance when deciding what categories and themes I should follow in the analysis.

#### ***4.3.2.1 The selection of participants from the focus groups***

Michell (1998) explores the use of focus groups combined with interviews. She urges researchers to consider the voices that were silenced in the particular focus group, especially



when examining youths. She experienced that although the focus group method is a productive way of gaining access to well rehearsed ‘public knowledge’; it also can exclude some aspects of young people’s experiences. This aspect was also something I experienced so I decided to select some of the girls from the groups to conduct individual interviews with.

As already mentioned, I let the focus group members fill in forms providing basic socio-demographic information about themselves (see appendix B). On the basis of these forms and the focus group themselves I was able to find a way of choosing two students from each group to do an individual interview. The technique was a kind of an “elimination method” where the most active participants, the girls that had said the most in the group were taken out. To choose from the students that was left I looked at their mothers level of education and how many siblings the girls had. I also considered girls that had said something interesting or if there was something that I wanted them to explain to me. The interviews lasted around 30 minutes so I will not go so far as calling them in-depth interviews but I tried to discover their own experiences from the little time I had. I selected eight girls but I met only seven, the reason was that one of the girls selected, from one of the rural schools, was not there at school when I came the second time. The gatekeeper’s explanation was that her parents had not paid school fees so the school had sent her home. Certainly this point alone adds to the data collection as girls may find themselves in such a situation more often than boys.

### **4.3.3 Secondary sources: Official Statistics**

In chapter three I used official statistics from the MoES, and I will later use this information to support and understand my own primary data. However, the use of official statistics has been a controversial area in social science and there are many reasons for that. One problem is that the official statistics can sometimes be disproportionate with the definitions employed by social researchers. It can therefore be very misleading, because they record only those who are processed by the agencies. Statistical data can be inaccurate because it is not always able to show where all information comes from, what is excluded or included from it (Bryman, 2004). One example is a table I was looking at from the UN’s Statistical Division (UNSTAT, 2005). These statistics showed, for example, that the enrolment rate for girls in secondary education was 43 percent in Uganda in 2001/2002. However, this rate includes O-level and A-level, that is both lower and higher secondary education as one group. The percent might be correct, but if the table had divided the secondary level into O-level and A-level, the statistics

would most likely have shown that the girls' share in the A-level is much lower. Therefore, there are many traps a researcher can fall into when using official statistics, but "to reject official statistics because they contain errors is misleading if in fact all measurement in social research contains of errors" (Bryman, 2004: 214). Thus, using such statistics may have a downside, but being aware of the limitations helps to make up for some of the weaknesses. Also these statistics are used to complement my own data and as such not the main source of information.

#### 4.4 Reflections from the Field

I assume that we are doing something other than merely pursuing our own careers and adding knowledge to the world, and that we must raise questions about the ethics of our behaviour in relation to those on and with whom we do our research (Patai, 1991: 138).

When I came to Uganda to conduct my research I remembered the terms 'academic tourist' and 'research traveller' from Scheyvans & Story (2003), and it stuck with me: Why am I here? Can I as a foreigner manage to conduct research that I can justify and also be proud of? I was suffering from 'fieldwork blues' I doubted my research focus and my ability to carry out the study. This was somehow also reinforced at the first school I visited. The gatekeeper thought there was too much focus on girls and that I also should consider the promotion of boys in school. But the fieldwork was not just negative and 'blue', I became, after some time, familiar with the food, the customs, the culture, and how to get around, which enabled me, I believe, to be more sensitive as a researcher towards my topic and the local context.

One of the reasons for me having worries was "the fact that doing research across race, class, and cultures is a messy business" (Patai, 1991: 150). I had to consider my role as a researcher. Me, the outsider from Norway, that has (compared to most of my participants) access to money, education, and resources I had to recognise that the "data" I gathered might be influenced by this fact. I had to think through the power imbalance that is always there between the researcher and the research participants. To ignore this and think that I could avoid this would have been a big mistake. But what can you do? I tried to not reinforce any negative feelings about the participants might have had themselves or make them feel insecure, but rather give them positive responses and assurances that there were "no wrong

answers.” I tried to go after Scheyvens et al. (2003:139) remark that; “Doing ethical research in a foreign setting (...) is about building mutually beneficial relationships with people you meet in the field and about acting in a sensitive and respectful manner.”

Still I think there were situations in my research that I can question. First of all, since my gatekeepers had the control over the selection of participants I can never be sure if the girls participated 100 percent voluntarily. What if they didn't want to attend? Once I called one of my gatekeepers and inquired if he could please ask the two students that I had chosen from the group if they wanted to meet me to do an individual interview. I said that if they did not want to it was fine. He answered “Oh, but they will!” Sometimes I also suspected that I had all the “clever” students; what if my research had become a reward for students that had behaved well? Despite these questions, my main feeling is that the girls enjoyed the time. They were allowed to have a break from the exam pressures, actually, they often did not want to go back to class, they delayed it and wanted to talk to me instead. I think, or I hope, they also felt that someone actually was interested to hear their point of view and finding their meanings valuable. One girl uttered actually that she was learning something new while we had the group, which means she must have had at least a good experience.

When I was interviewing the gatekeepers and people at the ministries, I felt that the power imbalance was not so great. I was, for example, younger than all of them, they were educated, and I asked for their “expertise”. Still I came into some strange situations when they asked for old computers or if I could fix them a Norwegian scholarship. Should I explain to them that I was a student (they already knew that) and, therefore, had no contacts that could help them, or should I say that I was going to check it out for them, and therefore give them “hope”? The first time I told the “truth” and the response was very negative, I thought I might not get help by the gatekeeper again. The second time when a similar request came I told the gatekeeper that I was going to look into it. Patai (1991: 145) says that “...ethics is not a matter of abstractly correct behaviour, but of relations between people.” Although I was not able to look into it in the way the gatekeeper wanted me to, I felt it was necessary to give that kind of reply. Without the help from the gatekeepers I would have not been able to access the students.

Looking back at the fieldwork now, it makes me think that maybe I was too concerned with being “sensitive” and that this anxiety hindered me into getting better data. I often, because I

did not want to offend my participants, did not probe the way I should have. In that respect I imagine that a Ugandan would have done this research better than me or differently, maybe he or she would instinctively have known when to push for more without being rude. Also, when researching in a foreign country you try to prepare yourself, to get to know all aspects of the area of study, but there will always be something that you have missed that a local researcher would have known intuitively. Yet, this may perhaps be that I am a new researcher and that it takes time to learn and develop the craft, that is, to become an “expert”. At the same time I think I had some advantages that I was an outsider and white. Maybe they did not see me as a threat, but were more surprised that a foreigner actually could be interested in their situation. I think that to be able to conduct research in another country than one’s own, like me doing research in Uganda, will always be a great experience. I also see the value, like Heggenhougen (2000 in Scheyvens and Storey, 2003: 6), “of being touched by a different reality.”

## **4.5 Trustworthiness**

In qualitative research there has been a discussion concerning the use of validity as a criteria when establishing the quality of the research. For example, validity is by many researchers defined as the “truth” and “interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers” (Hammersley 1990 in Silverman, 2000:175). Since qualitative researchers are denying an objective reality and an absolute truth, validity is looked more upon as a discussion of defensible knowledge claims. I will therefore connect validity to the alternative criteria for evaluating qualitative research that was originally introduced by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Instead of validity they propose trustworthiness as the criteria for assessing a qualitative study. Trustworthiness is made up of four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Bryman, 2004).

### **4.5.1 Credibility**

The relationship between how the researcher has understood the social world and the constructed realities that exists in the minds of the respondents is often termed as credibility. Has the researcher understood the respondents’ world so that the researcher is able to explain

the world, and therefore, tell the respondents' "truth"? "Credibility needs to be established with the individuals and groups who have supplied data for the inquiry" (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen, 1993:30). Because of time and resource limits connected to this study I have not been able to go back to the field with my interpretation of my respondent's statements, but since focus groups is the main method I would claim that it is easier to interpret more accurately from the group discussion than from individual interviews. As already shown, focus groups give often a joint construction of meaning and through the discussions the respondents construct realities that can become more clear and easier for me to interpret than if I was basing my interpretations on individual interviews only. On the other hand, since I am an "outsider" I might have overlooked aspects of the conversations that might weaken the credibility of the study.

One way of achieving credibility is triangulation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Triangulation is to collect information about different events and relationships from different points of view. This includes using more than one method or source of data. For example, statements from interviews can be checked against observations and documents (Bryman, 2004; Erlandson et al., 1993). In this study I have triangulated the focus groups with the individual interviews, and Ugandan official statistics. By triangulating these different data I attempt to improve the credibility of the study.

#### **4.5.2 Transferability**

Can the study be transferred to another context? Is it possible to apply the findings to other respondents? These questions are important when looking at transferability that is the parallel to external validity. To establish transferability, however, is very different from establishing external validity from, for example, a quantitative study. The qualitative investigator can only set out working hypothesis and make a thick description of the time and context they experienced in the field. If this holds in other contexts or the same context in different time is an empirical question (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This means that this study, but also other inquiries, cannot specify the external validity or transferability of the study. Transferability can only be possible at a later stage, based on the database that different studies have gathered (Bryman, 2004). Therefore, the aim would be that this study becomes included in a database and can contribute to the field of study.

### **4.5.3 Dependability**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose dependability as the parallel to reliability, and like the relationship between validity and reliability there is no credibility without dependability. They suggest many techniques for establishing dependability that is more or less impossible for this study to do. For example, to show a high level of dependability one must ensure that if it were replicated with the same respondents in the same context, its findings would be repeated. To be able to replicate, the researcher must ensure that complete records are kept of all phases of the research process (Bryman, 2004). What I did in the study to strengthen the dependability was to include two more focus groups than planned, because I felt a need for a bigger sample. I asked the same questions in almost the same environments, although there were different schools and respondents. I conducted the individual interviews with the same aim in mind. I tried also to keep a record of all the phases in the fieldwork and in the process of data analysis. Thus, it could be possible for other researchers to use the detailed information found in this thesis as a guide to replicate this study and although not the exact same students might be available students of similar background could be found.

### **4.5.4 Confirmability**

“Confirmability is concerned with ensuring that, while recognizing that complete objectivity is impossible in social research, the researcher can be shown to have acted in good faith” (Bryman, 2004: 276). This means that data has to be tracked back to their sources and that the logic used to interpret is showed both explicit and implicit (Erlanson et. al., 1993). However, is it possible to trace back the sources and at the same time offer full confidentiality to the respondents? And how can the researcher show that the result is mainly based on the data found and not based on a biased researcher? I think it is not possible both to keep the confidentiality of the respondents and allow other researchers the opportunity to trace back completely my sources of information. I would rather suggest that the criteria of dependability are used in a way that it can also justify the confirmability. If other researchers go back to the two districts in Uganda, collect data from rural and urban government day schools, and then try to repeat the study by using the same techniques, this might, if they come up with the same findings, show that I have acted in good faith.

## 5 Findings

Krueger (1988) argues that when analysing focus groups results, the analytic role of the researcher can be to look at this role as a continuum of analysis. The continuum ranges from the raw data, the descriptive statements of the data, and to the interpretation of the data. I will therefore present each of these sides of the continuum; first, I will explain how I came up with the themes that I created from categorising the data from the focus groups interviews.

Secondly, I will describe the main themes I created, followed by illustrative examples from the raw data in the form of quotes. Thirdly, when presenting each theme, I will also try to find the meaning of the data with the final aim of providing some understanding. However the main interpretation and discussion is found in chapter six.

Bloor, Frankland, Thomas and Robson (2001) claim the analysis of focus groups should be drawn on established methods. The interpretation is therefore also based on one of the most commonly used methods for analysing focus groups, namely the analytic induction (Bloor et al., 2001). However, because of the limitation and weaknesses found in the data mainly caused by the fact that I have few cases, the technique of analytic induction will be incomplete. Therefore, I will not utilize the hypothesis that I made in the process, rather just present the final interpretation with “deviant cases” where that came up. The analysis is also founded upon my research questions, though, the discussion and trying to answer these questions will be the aim in chapter six, it can be useful to repeat them before describing and understanding the findings in this chapter.

1. How do the girls understand the support (or lack of support) they get from their family, school, and government?
2. What are the girls’ expectations about what education can do for them, their families and the society?

### 5.1 The process of data analysis

In order to give the reader a greater understanding of how I was able to analyse my data, and therefore provide greater dependability of the study, I will now briefly describe the process of

the data analysis. As a first step of analysing the raw data I read through the focus group transcripts several times in order to become familiar with them. After the second time of reading I wrote down immediate responses to all the answers from each of the groups. I also wrote down key words in the transcripts that later provided me with information in which to categorise the answers. Then, I used a method of cutting and pasting quotes on different types of colourful posters starting with finding patterns from each focus group questions (Casey and Krueger, 2000). After grouping the answers together I tried to see if there were themes that also cut across the focus group questions. I tried to develop the categories from being very concrete to becoming more abstract and analytical (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).

I therefore, had to re-categorise the data, now basing it on new themes instead of the focus group questions. I also tried to incorporate my main research questions to see how they would fit, and what themes would be able to answer the questions. After the re-categorisation the focus group data, I came up with two main themes based on the extensiveness of the theme (Casey and Krueger, 2000) and answers that fascinated me (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). The two main themes are called 1) support, and 2) a good future. The themes are very broad, and I have actually made three sub-categories in each one of them. I could have made more themes instead of making sub-categories, but I chose to have two very broad themes with sub-themes, because the sub-themes are interrelated to each other and should be seen together. I also think it is easier to relate the data closer to its context by treating them under one theme.

The two themes might be seen as covering too much when it comes to the variety of the subject matter, I could have written a whole chapter about just one of them, however I chose to present both because it enables me to answer both of my research questions and because it is screening the richness found in the data collected. After the final indexing stage, I tried what Frankland and Bloor (1998: 146) claim is the next objective:

[T]he objective should be to simply pose a number of possible interpretations, deliberately postponing a final interpretation until the text item can be compared systematically with the entire universe of text items carrying the same index-code.

In the next section I will present the themes and its sub-themes with illustrative examples from the raw data. Then, I will propose possible interpretations based on the technique of



analytic induction that is one of the most common ways of interpreting focus groups data (Bloor et al., 2001). Bryman (2004: 400) argues that the analytic induction is

[A]n approach to the analysis of the data in which the researcher seeks universal explanations of phenomena by pursuing the collection of data until no cases that are inconsistent with a hypothetical explanation (deviant cases) of a phenomenon are found.

Since this study has few cases (only four focus groups) it has been difficult to use this method as strictly as it should. The main problem is finding deviant cases that force me to redefine the hypothetical explanations, because of the few cases that I have. Still, I have tried to use the individual interviews from the students and the teachers with the aim of checking their stories up against the focus groups interviews. I have therefore, treated them also as single cases supporting the findings in the focus groups. Although the weaknesses and limitations of the study that I have found, especially in the process of categorising and analysing, the analytic induction technique is used but maybe not so rigid as it should be. The advantage of using this technique is that it ensures a systematic analysis of the data, and it guards against a selective approach (Frankland and Bloor, 2001). Where I found it hard to use the analytic induction procedure I have mainly used my own personal intuitive interpretation (Kvale, 1996).

### **5.1.1 The use of quotation**

The common mode of presenting the findings of interview inquires is through selected quotes. The interview quotes give the reader an impression of the interaction of the interview conversation and exemplify the material used for the researcher's analysis (Kvale, 1996: 265).

The analysis is built upon extensive use of quotations. The quotations are taken from the transcribed tape recordings of mainly the focus groups, however I have also quoted some of the transcribed interviews from the individual students interviews. Data from focus groups may, for example, include instances where people talk at once, where sentences remain unfinished, where people verbally spar with each other, and where people's arguments develop as the discussion with others continues (Bloor et al., 2001). However, it is important that the quotes are understandable, short and rendered in a written style so that it is easier to comprehend for the reader (Kvale, 1996: 266-267). I have, therefore, come up with a simple signature system that will enable the reader to follow the extent of editing of the quotes.

First, I have taken out names and places that would have violated the confidentiality, instead I have in the end of each quote written the code of each school, (U1, U2, R1 and R2) and the number the quoted girl in the group in terms of how she was sitting during the interview. A quote from a focus group is therefore coded like this: (R1, Nr 6), which means the first rural school, girl number six. If I have not been able to identify the girl during the transcribing process, I have used a question mark, like this: (R2, Nr?). Also, in some quotes where there have been noise or comments that were unclear, it is coded: (...). I am also using (--) between quotes to show that they are not directly connected to each other even though they came from the same group. When one or two girls have said something in unison I have coded it like this: (two unison). If I, the interviewer, have said anything it is coded like this (I:) with the actual sentence, while the rest of the quote is still in italics. When I have felt the need to explain what they actually meant because they have themselves skipped some words, I have written the word(s) inside [these signs]. When the quote came from the individual interviews, I have coded it with the school, their age and school level.

It is my hope that I have been able, by using the quotations from the interviews, to let the girls speak for themselves. It is also my aim that the analysis is as systematic and rigorous as possible, and that I have been able to reflect the views of all cases (Bloor et al., 2001).

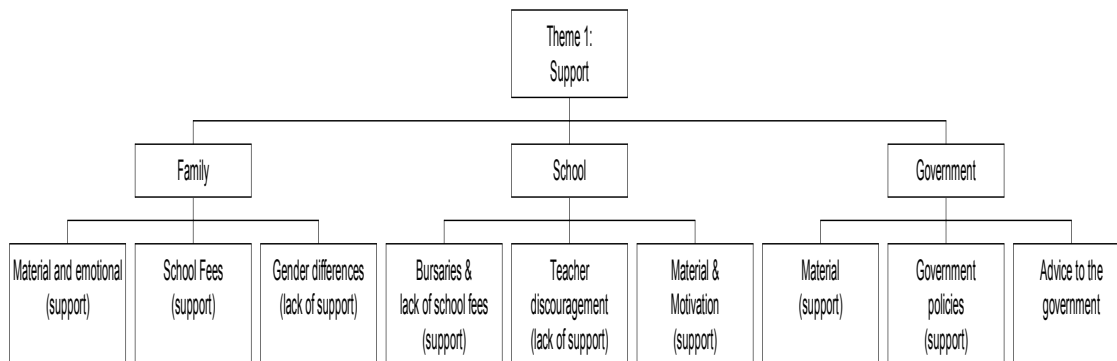
## 5.2 Theme 1: Support

*They [the parents] tell us, "for us we did not get the chance, and we know how life is without education, so you must go and have some education" (Girl, 16 years old in S4, U1).*

This theme called "support" is based upon how the girls responded when I asked them directly how they viewed the support they got from their family, school and government. I used the term "support" also during the interview, which may show how they understood the word "support". The theme is also based upon how I understood the term and aspects that I identify with support or lack thereof. I define support as mainly an act or instance of helping others both financially and emotionally, especially in times of difficulties (Merriam-Webster OnLine, 2006a). I therefore searched for the theme in other parts of the focus group interviews, in the individual interviews of the students and of the teachers, to be able to be aware of the variety. Because the theme is based on the girls' understanding and my own understanding of support, the data is often showing inconsistencies, depending on how the

questions in the interviews have been asked and answered. However, I will try to make the distinction clear for the reader when the girls answered directly on a “support” question and when I interpreted the answers to hold “support features”. From the answers of the mix of direct and indirect support questions, I created this chart that explains the aspects around the theme.

Figure 5.1: Theme 1: Support and its sub-sections and topics



### 5.2.1 Family

*My parents suffer for my education. I really appreciate what they have done for me (U2, Nr?).*

As mentioned before, the questions that were asked in the focus groups shaped how the girls’ responded in terms of looking at the support from their families. When I asked directly if their family supported their education, the answers were mainly positive, except from one group, R2, that I will come back to later. When answering positively to the families support, the girls mentioned, initially by commenting how their parents paid for their school fees and other school requirements. They also said the parents encouraged them to read their books and concentrate on school. The girls almost constantly referred back to their parents and not their family. Here are some typical quotes from all the groups:

*Our parents help us a lot in our education, first of all they provide us with school fees to (...) get to school, secondly they buy for us school materials, we need pens, we need books, we need uniforms, we need everything and thirdly they also give us food, you can’t be in school when you are so hungry. In the morning they have to provide you with something, they give us some transport to take you to school and some money to eat at school, so they help us in very many ways. Back home they encourage us to read our books, they give us reading rooms, so our families do a lot (U1, Nr 2).*

*They give help in fact in every thing you ask cause they are your parents, if its school, if its school fees they pay for it in time, then if its homework or they need a lesson they also pay for you. If you do badly they encourage you and say you can still do better, they give encouragement (U2, Nr 3).*

*My family is supporting my education by providing me with school fees, helping me with school requirements, buying them. That is how they are helping me (R1, Nr 1).*

*They support my education, raising my school fees and they even provide me with all the scholar materials, which I need at school (R2, Nr 7).*

*They can also wake you up in the morning (U1, Nr 8).*

### **5.2.1.1 School fees**

School fees appear to be a key word in terms of how the girls understand the support from their family (but also from the school and government, as we will see in the next sections). My impression is that the girls in the rural schools were struggling more to get school fees than the girls in the urban schools, yet some of the girls from the urban schools explained that their parents could not pay the school fees, therefore the girls were sent to guardians that were now paying. The guardians are often uncles, aunts or family friends, which often have their own children that they also had to pay school fees for. Getting enough money could, therefore, also be a struggle for the girls in the urban schools. Even though the parents could not pay school fees, the answers were positive. Some girls claimed that their parents were supporting them even though they could not pay school fees:

*My family has not been able to stand with me through my education but somehow somewhere I stayed through to secondary level till they handed me over to some guardians who have really helped. So, some how they did help me because if they didn't get me into this level, (...), I don't think the guardian would have [helped] (U2, Nr 7).*

(--)

*My family they brought me up actually from childhood up to the extent that they could not then they handed me over to a guardian which is helping me but at least they provide things like books and the guardian is just paying school fees (U2, Nr?).*

In R2, some girls also reported that their parents were not supporting their education because they could not give them money for school fees. The girls were not sure if they were able to take the exam that semester or if they would be chased home because their parents had not yet

paid fees for the semester. However, some of the other girls in the group argued against their claim. Here is an extract from their discussion:

*On my side parents are not supporting my [education]. My parents are not able to support my education because sometimes the teachers chase me away from the school then look for fees, yet even my parents are not able to raise them, the fees at that time, so they try but at the end I come to school when others already have learned more (R2, Nr?).*

*I have the same problem, am a senior four but we are paying a lot of money (...) but my parents have not yet brought my school fees this term so I say they are not supporting my education (R2, Nr 8).*

*They are supporting, but they are not able (R2, Nr?).*

*They are short of money, its money! (R2, Nr?).*

As we could see from all the quotes above, the girls understand their families' support as giving them money for school fees and other remissions. However, when they are not able to provide money, most of the students still understand that the family is supportive yet lack the money necessary from the family. However, the case from R2 might work as a "deviant case" in that matter since some of them said their parents were not supportive because of lack of school fees. Unfortunately, my data cannot show if the "negative" answers changed during the focus groups section or if it occurred after the other girls disagreed with them. However, I can pose the following question: Do they still consider their parents as being unsupportive?

#### **5.2.1.2 Gender differences (lack of support)**

When asking a more general question, for example "if it is harder for girls than boys to continue their education", the answers became more general, more negatively towards support given by the family, and impersonal. For example, they referred back to the "rural areas", "in Uganda" and even "in Africa" instead of referring back to their own or local experiences. Krueger (1988: 116) argue that a researcher should pay attention to the specificity of the responses. The responses that are specific and based on experiences should be given more weight than responses that are vague and impersonal.

I have tried to follow this advice, but the data has many general answers. These answers might weaken the interpretation, for example, how can I know if the negative and impersonal replies about parents treating their children differently are their understanding of lack of

support? On the other hand, I think also inclusive data might give some knowledge about how the girls understand the support from family, school and government because focus groups are first and foremost useful when studying norms, conformity, and consensus in a group (Frankland and Bloor, 1998). I believe the more “impersonal” answers can also uncover elements related to group norms and attitudes, and that there is a number of “truths” in their observations. A reason for answering more impersonal might be that the girls I interviewed were actually in school, and their parents since they are paying school fees and other necessities, they value sending their girls to school in the first place. Already, as shown in the above section, the data illustrates mainly a positive understanding of the parental support. Maybe the girls had not themselves felt that their parents prioritised the boys any differently in their own family, or if they had, they might have preferred to talk more generally because of loyalty to their own family.

*(...) Let me base on the rural areas, for girls to be in school, it's something like, it's.. the biggest percentage of children who goes to school are boys, just because when a girl grows up, the parents they think of getting that child a man to marry, so if the child finishes primary seven they get for her a husband, so sometimes she just don't continue with school just because of the parents love for money, love for prestige and even the boys in the villages whom some girls she's looking so nice, they stop playing around with her, and in case of any problem, the girls gets pregnant, the boy can leave her there, the girl suffers. Girls suffer much mental torture (U1, Nr 2).*

*It is harder because, according to our country here in Uganda, some of our parents consider boys to study [more] than the girls. You may find that they can tell a girl to sit while the boys go to school (two unison) and continue to study. For them they think that if they educate the boy, the boy can generate more in their family than the girl (R2, Nr 5).*

When interviewing the urban groups they often referred back to the rural areas, without me knowing if they had any experiences or knew any girls personally that had problems going to school, because of different decisions made by the parents. However, when I interviewed the rural groups I asked them if they had friends in those situations they were telling me about. Often I got a very clear and unison “yes”. From their reaction, I interpreted that the rural answers might be more based upon people they knew of actual cases rather than just stories they have heard. All the “lack of support from the family” answers are mainly about how poverty in families which forces parents to think about the best “rate of return” for their money, and therefore providing education to the sons before the daughters. They also expressed the status of the genders in general.

*I think it is harder for us girls to continue in education because some parents minimize girls, they say that this one after studies she will marry and go to another family and we shall remain, and we shall not get anything from her, but a boy will come and (...) in his mother's family (R1, Nr 6).*

(--)

*Madame, we sit because we girls, some we are forced by our parents to get married in a very young stage (...) (R1, Nr 4).*

(--)

*Madame, parents have that aim of saying you marry when mostly the family is poor, they don't have the most (...) they just say you're a girl, why can't you marry, you are old enough, why can't you marry, they are after bride [price] (R1, Nr 5).*

The comments above show that the “rate of return thinking” in poor families might be a common way of using the family’s money, which was discussed in chapter two. Other comments made in the rural groups might also support this assumption. Some of the girls, instead of explaining how their parents supported their education, they explained *why*:

*My parents are supporting my education cause they know that after studies I will be able to help them to get the needs (R1, Nr 4).*

*My family is supporting my education because it is trying to give me school fees so that I go (...) and by so doing so I can also help them. If they can reach a certain time to stop paying my school fees and also when I studied I can help them, that's why I say they support me by paying my school fees (R2, Nr?).*

All the groups explained traditional views about the role of the genders connected to giving boys more education than girls. The urban groups sometimes referred to the discrimination of the females in “history” and that things had changed, they were now “*out of the egg*” as one girl phrased it. The rural groups often laughed at each other’s comments when this topic was brought up and I was not sure why. I asked why they laughed after a girl had told how parents preferred sending the boys to school, leaving the girls home to “sit”. I asked the group if she was joking and if her comment was true or not since they all laughed. They answered “yes”, the comment was true, they laughed because it was “*silly*” to discriminate against girls because a girl is also a “*human being and of the parents' own blood*”.

*Some parents think that boys are wiser than we girls so they can not be encouraged to (two unison) pay for us school fees, they think that we are stupid just, how can I say, we are not wise like boys, (...) boys are wiser than us so we say that, ah, let me*

*pay for this boy and continue (...) these girls are doing nothing, you are just growing (R1, Nr 1).*

*Madame, it is harder for girls in our, ok, in our society [girls] are considered to be a weaker sex compared to what? - To the boys. (R2, Nr?)*

*We don't have that capacity to make it, while a boy, a boy from infancy knows "I can make this vehicle in this way and send it, I can make this drum, I can go and get some mangos and sell", while a girl have to go a peel matooke<sup>16</sup>, go and fetch some firewood, go for water come back home and sit, look after my sisters, that's all. While a boy is not allowed to sit home, he will go and look for something to do (U1, Nr 7)*

*Madame, also its from the past, yeah, that men are suppose to be stronger than what? -Women, cause for us we are created in the ribs of the men ... (They all laugh at her comment) (R1, Nr 4)*

As presented above, most of the girls thought gender discrimination was unfair, in the form of parents prioritising boys before girls. They also understood this as an old tradition. However I came across another understanding concerning the same issue. Some girls in the urban groups were demonstrating a more "traditional thinking", they argued why boys *should* be prioritised before girls in education. Traditionally in the Ugandan society a man's role has been to support and finance his family, and it has been his responsibility entirely. What I found interesting with these "deviant cases" was the way they argued, they sympathised with the heavy burden men have in supporting his extended family:

*[L]ike there is a policy; a man is the head of the family, a man has to provide most things for the family, how is that man going to provide, as in like finances when he doesn't have a job? He never went to school... (U1, Nr 2).*

In both of the urban groups when these girls had described their views a quite heated discussion started, showing both a "modern" and a "traditional" view. In U2, the girl who had a similar view as the girl in U1 above did not change her opinion even after quite strong disagreement in the group to her view. When I interviewed her later she called the girls in the group bigheaded and explain her view again:

*To me boys should get more education than girls because boys, if they are not educated, they find life difficult for them because the boys are the main thing (...) For instance like I myself me a girl even though I don't study I'll find someone better who can look after me, but for a boy he will find it very hard for him if he*

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<sup>16</sup> Matooke is the "green banana", an important component in the traditional food in the areas I visited in Uganda.



*doesn't study because money is everything. He is the one, the provider they do what? - Everything. So it's better [for the boys] to be more educated than girls because we girls have higher chances of getting job without study. (...) Like boys when not educated they find life is harder, some are just there in the villages digging because education has failed, so I advice guys should be more educated than girls (Girl 17 years old in S2, U2).*

The interesting aspect concerning the family support theme is that “modern” thinking where girls should be integrated together with boys, and the more traditional thinking where the boys are prioritised, seems to be in force together at the same time. The second interesting aspect is that when asking more personal or direct questions, the girls argue that they are encouraged by their parents support, however when asking in more general terms, lack of gender equality and even lack of support from parents becomes apparent.

A key here might be a rate-of-return thinking, and when basing it on my own data and several points in chapter two it appears that when a family is unable to afford the school fees for all their children they have to make common sense decisions, basing them on how the whole family will get the most out of the money that they have. These decisions might mean the girls take the hit more than the boys, because of the traditional role and obligation the men have to support their family. It can also affect the younger siblings as well, because the parents want the children that are already enrolled in school to finish so that they can contribute to their siblings' education later. In an individual interview from one of the rural schools, a girl explained how her parents had to prioritise which of the children would get the school fees first. The girl had five brothers and seven sisters and her parents gave first school fees to the children that were taking exams that term and those that were almost finishing. The other children had to stay home or “sit”, till the other children are finished.

*In my family my parents are poor, they support my education but they face a problem of school fees because their income is very low and since we are very many children at our home we get few necessitates to use in our family for example clothing's. [We] even face a problem of diseases. (...) Our first-born is a brother, he is now in S5, I am the third child, I am in senior four. We are two in senior four and we are facing the same problem of school fees since we are in the same class (...) My sisters are present in primary level sometimes they sit because of school fees, they are paying for us because we are soon finishing. (...) Sometimes they pay for three or four children when you are candidates because they know you are going to sit for exams. They try their level of best to see that you sit for exams but other children who are not candidates they sit. Then after paying for other candidates then they begin paying for the other one who are not candidates (Girl 15 years old in S4, R2)*

This description shows how complicated this issue of school fees can be for a family and the affects school fees can have on children's ability to access and stay in school.

### 5.2.2 School

When the focus groups were asked about how they perceived the degree of support from the school, the answers presented no real surprises. In general, they were all very positive, and most of them thought the school helped them with the material things such as classrooms, libraries, books, and chalk. Yet, they also said that the teachers tried to encourage them to read their book and that the school also arranged for other activities such as school debates. Here are some quotes that represent all the groups.

*I think they also are supporting because some of us cannot afford to buy books, textbooks, so the school provides the textbooks and puts them in the library, so we just go to the library and then borrow it and then revise. I think they are supportive (U2, Nr?).*

*They [the school] also help us, they provide for us rooms from where to read, from where to study from, they also give us some free time in the evening so that we can read our books, they provide us with space where we can sit (U1, Nr?).*

*Our school is supporting our education by providing us with us with textbooks (R1, Nr 4).*

*The school is supporting our education because some of it the things we use here are being provided by the school, for example, books for reading and even chalk. It is not our parents in most cases that buy those things and even things like computers<sup>17</sup>, so for me I think that the school is also supporting our education (R2, Nr?)*

I also came across one example of direct support from one of the schools. In R2, a 15-year-old girl enrolled in S4 worked in the school garden, planting flowers and cleaning the yard. From this job she got half of the school fees paid from the school, the guardians had to pay the rest. Even with this support, she was not sure if she could take the exam because her guardians had not paid the other half yet and the exam was starting in two weeks. Again poverty and school fees affect the ability of girls to remain in school.

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<sup>17</sup> The school had one computer and it was placed at the secretary's office, however the secretary did not use it because it was too expensive to use the printer. Instead she used the old type machine. Thus it is difficult to understand why this student might have mentioned a computer.

*I came here also to study (...) I looked around to different schools, to different schools around us and then I take this one because (...) they suggested that if I can manage, if they, my guardians, if they can manage to give me 47 000<sup>18</sup> it will be ok. Then I came here I began school to study yet there are some problems I faced, yes because sometimes they chase me for fees and I sit at home for a whole week without coming here. I was very bright, but only that problem led me to decline. Am still competing but...*

( I: Have you been home now because of school fees? How is it now, can you do your exams?) (She almost starts to cry)

*They are still looking for fees. But I will not (...) sometimes I come here and I look after those flowers and I mean the school supports me, give me half of the fees. I clean the compound here at school and then the school supports me. (...) I saw it very difficult to sit at home, yet, here there is some work to do so I going to the headmistress and I talked to her that “please Madame, if you have any work here at school (...) such that I can do and stay here at school” (...) Then all of them agreed and said “ok, if you can pay half of [the school fees] (...) let me pay for you half of the fees until you get somebody to support you” then I said “thank you Madame”. Then I began to look after those flowers and I planted all of those you are seeing and even there at the main gate I planted there some flowers with the name..., our school name. The Madame [the headmistress] also appreciated that, “That is good, if you cannot fear to work (...) and after God will help you in the future and everyone will be ok”. Then I said “Thank you”.*

### 5.2.2.1 Bursaries

*The school is supporting our education because if you work well in class you can pay half of the school fees and the half is paid by the what? -the school, the administration (R2, Nr?).*

The quote above exemplifies one characteristic that is connected to the girls' real concern with school fees. It seemed that most of the schools had ways of trying to get the students to work harder by offering the best student an exemption or reduced school fee. The girls saw this as support from the school. However, I found that striking in a way because this support is only going to help the brightest students. The students who are struggling to get school fees and missing many lectures may never have a chance to get this kind of support. How can they claim that a bursary for the brightest students supports their education? One explanation can be that I often got very bright students in my focus groups, some of the students might have received the scholarship one or more times. Another explanation is that they answered the questions in the way they thought I would like to hear, and bursaries from the school might have been a positive remark they thought I found pleasing. They might also see bursaries as

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<sup>18</sup> 50.000 Ugandan schilling is about 350 NOK

support in general for all students. From my data it is not apparent if one of the explanations is more accurate than the other, and this I can only speculate.

#### 5.2.2.2 *Teacher discouragement*

Even though all the groups said in the beginning that the school and the teachers encouraged them, more negative aspects or lack of support came up when asked if they had any problems attending school.<sup>19</sup> In the urban school they complained about teachers who did not consider the students feelings or show sympathy towards them.

*I think even me like at school they judge you wrongly, they judge you by the way you appear they don't consider the heart. Somebody may, ok, like for instance some people, like here they say you should put on a long skirt, and you, you want a short skirt. Because you cut the skirt they start to reading you badly, they don't consider your choice, so at times they judge you badly they judge you by the outlook but not the in [inside](U2, Nr 4).*

In the rural groups they complained that the teachers ignored them when they told them that they did not understand the lecture, and that the teachers could be harsh and mean:

*And even if you lack a calculator or if you lack a map or a math table, the teacher just canes you and the teacher just send you out of the class even if you are lacking a book. (...) They cane you and tell you [should] never to come back to [school]. And if he sees you then he says, "why don't you come?" And as soon as you go back to study then he start caning, "you, you village children" (R2, Nr 7).*

*We even face the problem [that] some teachers are cruel [to] someone when he's teaching, [because] you cannot understand what he's teaching... (R1, Nr 1).*

*We have teachers here that cannot sit and listen to your our excuses, if you may say I beg your pardon I have not understood, they just continue ("all" unison) (R2, Nr?).*

That students do not understand what the teacher tries to teach them may have serious pedagogical implications. I suspect a possible reason for the lack of communication the students I interviewed had with their teachers was the lack of English competence. English is the language of instruction, however, it is not the preferred local language used outside school. There is research conducted in Africa, which shows that language competence certainly does play a role in the ability of students to comprehend what teachers are trying to

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<sup>19</sup> This question was not asked in the first group, U1

teach (Holmarsdottir, 2005). It could also be that there are too many students in the classroom so that the teachers have problems controlling the group and therefore feel the need to be harsh and disciplined. However, this certainly should not be an excuse for physical punishment.

### 5.2.2.3 *Understanding the school support*

In some parts of the interviews the girls say the teachers and the schools are supportive, in other parts they say the teachers are not helping them and that the teachers are being abusive. This variation might show that the girls' answers have been dependent on how I have phrased the questions, and maybe also influenced upon what they thought I wanted to hear. Another explanation might be that they both feel the school in some areas supports them, while in others they do not, thus an ambivalent understanding. Finding hypothetical explanations that could be compared to the cases was not feasible when following the steps of analytic induction.

Nevertheless, what I find to be the most interesting aspect concerning this topic is that the students are not blaming the schools in any way when it comes to being chased home. One would think that this practise would be very embarrassing and humiliating, and during my time in the schools, talking to students and teachers, it seemed that sending students home was very common, except for in U1. For example, upon my return to R1 to conduct some individual interviews, one of the girls that I was going to interview was sent home because her parents could not pay her school fees. My data is limited when it comes to the girls' feelings around being chased home. Whereas some of the girls' mention how being chased home "to sit" affects their performance when they come back to school, others have learnt more, and that catching up and performing well on the exams was hard. One teacher also mentioned that many students "*passed out of their age limits before getting what they want*" which I interpreted to mean that many students use several extra years to finish their education because they often have "*to wait for the school fees to come*".

### 5.2.3 **Government**

*Most of the government schools are cheap because at least it ranges between 100 and 150 [000] but most private school are 500.000 and you know if you really have*

*a general problem of school fees how can we afford that money? But the government has [been] working with us to see that they lower the price of the fees to make our parents, you know, be able to get that amount of money. They provide a lot of things that even some private schools do not have (U2, Nr 7).<sup>20</sup>*

*The government is supporting our education by constructing for us buildings cause it's now government-aided school. So they help construct buildings where we are studying form (R1, Nr 4).*

*The government is supporting our education, it is sending in schools more qualified teachers... And also [paying] most of the salaries for the teachers (R2, Nr 7).*

The girls in the focus groups understood the support from the government in similar ways to the support from the school. The girls also saw the support from the government as mainly material support like making school buildings and supplying books, but also that the government provided and paid qualified teachers. This made the public school cheaper than private schools. The government also reward the brightest students with scholarships to tertiary education if the result from secondary school was good. Only the girls in U2 were also negative to what the government did to support them. They criticised the government for being corrupt, and mentioned that the government was only interested in science subjects, ignoring and hindering those that had interest in art subjects.

*Ok, me I say that sometimes the government is supporting but at times they doesn't because as in this business which has come in Uganda.. (...) Now me a person that are forced to study sciences, which I can't, what? -I can't manage. So when I can't manage those science subjects the government (...) says that only people who can manage physics [are sponsored] now [for] lawyers there are no more jobs (...) Like in order for the country to develop there must be scientists, but me I say that the government would have seen that, ok, all groups are balanced equal, [that] they sponsor both art and sciences. (...) Like now we are doing seven subjects all seven are sciences subjects. (Nr ?: no) Ok, we are doing seven compulsory subjects, but most of them are sciences so if you can't manage you are just forced to study and in the end you fail and you don't know calculation (...) You say that in order to get a sponsorship I have to make sure that I study sciences, so you find out that these other subjects you just brought them you just determine yourself towards sciences. Am really tired of them (...) (U2, Nr 4).*

Another interesting perspective was that in all the groups the girls mentioned two government policies: the UPE (Universal Primary Education) and the extra free points for girls when joining the university. In contrast, none of the policies helps the girls in any way while they are enrolled in the secondary level. I tried to challenge one of the groups by saying that “you

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<sup>20</sup> 100.000 Ugandan schilling is about 700 NOK

are not in primary now, the education is no longer free, so how can you say UPE is supporting your education?" They agreed, yet, they told me; they were all "UPE productions", they had come this far because of free education provided by the government, that was how the government had supported them. Thus for them government support provided the opportunity to reach this educational level and that without it they might not have come this far.

*[The Government] support our education by providing free education, for example, universal education, which you just go there and study freely (unison: "primary") (R2, Nr?)*

*Yes, I think its supporting because they can now allow girls to go to school even their grading is much lower than the boys, you add times to pass. (I: What do you mean with lower grading?) Ok, they can add for you some points for going to university that for boys they don't, so that is how they are supporting us (U2, Nr?)*

*The government is also supporting our education by adding girls one point five points such that they can join Makerere University. The girls. (R2, Nr?).*

All the groups were aware of the extra points girls get in terms of accessing universities, and I found that noteworthy because there are so many hindrances keeping them from the advantages created by this support. First, they have to finish and pass secondary school, and then they need even more school money to be able to attend a university. The situation for many of the girls in the focus groups was that they already had problems in being able to continue their education. How can some extra points when accessing universities be of any support to their education? On the other hand, the policy might support them morally, in the way that they understand that the government wants more girls at the university level. Also, they might connect these extra points to scholarships given out by the government to the best students. The scholarships are based on their performances in the secondary exams (UACE certificate).

### **5.2.3.1 Advice to the government**

In the focus groups interviews, I also asked what advice the girls would give to the government when trying to get more girls into secondary education. Every group said they wanted the government to offer free secondary education, but also that the government should provide school supplies like more textbooks. Again, it seems that money is a serious hindrance for them.

*The advice I would give to the government is that they can help, there are some girls who don't have fees they are not able to come to school because of fees so that, I think that they can help the students with the fee schools like the UPE like for the primary, they have free education, so that they can help us also to get free education in secondary (R1, Nr 1).*

All the groups also mentioned helping pregnant girls. They thought the family, the school, and the government could do more to support them. They wished that pregnant girls could have a chance to finish their education instead of having to quit school. As we saw from chapter three, 11% of the entire dropout rate in secondary education is caused by pregnancies and early marriages (MoES, 2005a). Some of the girls expressed a real fear of getting pregnant, or as one girl said: “*the danger of getting pregnant*”.

*I would advised the government to give free education for the girl child, then another thing I would advised them to be talking to their parents (two unison) to encourage them and if a girl gets pregnant, don't harass that girl, leave her to first give birth after that send her to school, she will study. I would give that advice (R2, Nr 3).*

### 5.3 Theme 2: A good future

*Because I know that when I read and pass those subjects I can be - I can be able to join any institution, but if I fail that will be my the end of my life (Girl 15 years old in S3, R2).*

As you can see from the quote above, education, passing the exams, and finishing school with a certificate is vital for many of the girls I interviewed. They believe education is the ticket to make their future life better, a life where they can get a job, be independent, gain respect, and help their families. If they fail they become “nobody”. The theme “a good future” was created from the first two questions in the focus group interviews during which I tried to search for the importance of education and especially the importance for girls to attend secondary schools. The theme is also connected my research question:

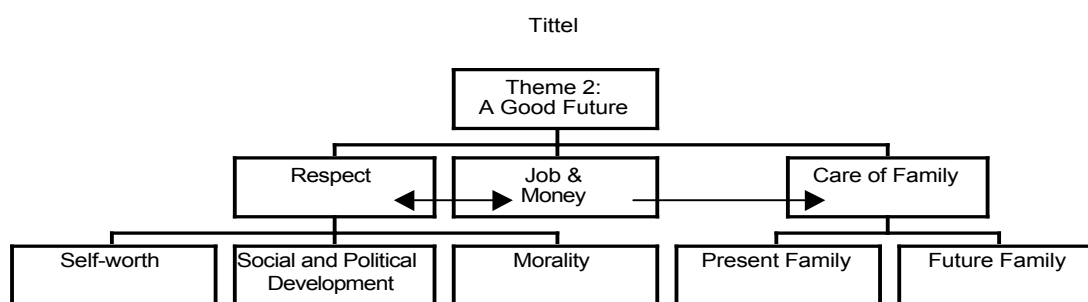
What are the girls' expectations to what education can do for them, their families and the society?

Later, the theme was further operationalised after several re-categorisations. The ideas in “a good future” show diverse aspects, but what they all have in common is the aim of having a



good life in the future. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the theme has three sub-themes, namely “job and money”, “respect”, and “caring for their families”. After the development of the themes I searched for elements in other parts of the focus group interviews and in the individual student and teacher interviews. The chart shows the sub-themes are related and should be viewed together. “Respect” and “Job and money” are interrelated, both influencing each other. “Job and money” is also influencing “care of family”. Thus, how the girls will be able to take care of their family.

Figure 5.2: Theme 2: A Good Future and its sub-sections and topics.



### 5.3.1 Job and money

*[T]o get a job, that's all. There is nothing that I came to school to understand or do something. I came to get my education and go and work (Girl 16 year old in S4, U1).*

The above quote is taken from an individual interview of a girl from U1 where she expressed and explained her motivation for going to school. To get a good job is maybe the main aim for most people when getting an education. Therefore, there was no surprise that the students', but also the teachers' answers were connected to attaining a job when asked why education is important to them. With education you get a job, and with a job you get money and with money your get a good future. This belief was something all the groups and individual interviews had in common, and it demonstrates the strong relationship between a good future, job, and money.

*Education is [important] for me because all my plans I want I get them after education. (...) Let say I want to become a doctor or I want to get money like that education. (I: So with education you get money?) Yeah, I get. Like after studies I get a job; I get money (U2, Nr 4).*

*As for me, since I see all the people who succeed most [of them are] first going to school and study. So my objective is to get a good job, and to get a good job I have to first study, so that's it (U1, Nr?).*

The girls were also aware that the relationship between education and the job market was not straightforward. Some girls expressed worry that it would be difficult to get a job and that the competition was hard and possibly discriminatory. They told me that some employers might want to hire people from the same tribe with the same language and therefore, excluding qualified people from other tribes. However, they said, the more education you had the higher the chances of getting a job. Consequently, the girls understood that to be in possession of educational papers was very important.

*I value education in that the world ahead [of] us is so competitive as in getting jobs so, even if you get like one degree it's still not enough to get a job. So, to study further you can easily get a job (U1, Nr?).*

*Me (...) education is important because when you don't go to school you're not able to get jobs. The present situation, hm! Want to get a job [you] must be with education papers so if you don't have one you will not be able to get jobs (R1, Nr 1).*

*Education is important to me because after education you can be encouraged to do something which you wish to do like being a doctor rather than being a peasant farmer (R1, Nr 5).*

This issue was also pointed out by several teachers who said that without education today, you would not be able to get a job and that the “future is based on education”. One teacher expressed that everyone “feels that education is the only thing that can help them”. A headmistress said that poor and even the illiterate families came to her with their children because they all knew the importance of education. The impression I got by most of the people I interviewed is that they saw primary education as not enough to become qualified enough to get a job. Thus, a certificate from secondary education was necessary to be able to enter the world of work, some even claimed that secondary was not enough, and that you at least needed a diploma from the tertiary educational level. In R2 they were concerned of what to do because many of them thought they would only be supported up to S4, especially those that were dependent on guardians. After S4 they had to sit home or become married. Here is an extract from their conversation:

*Madame, (...) some of them say that after all I also got my students to pay school fees, so I'm leaving you here since you gone to the secondary and then you have seen (...) its fine enough for you, you can sit (R2, Nr?)*

*(...) and also that person has, they say that even me I have my [own] children (R2, Nr?).*

*They say that after all you have grown you end up to senior 4 and you go and marry (R2, Nr 8)*

*But at least you know some English so that you can go out (R1, Nr 7)*

*And yet nowadays they say that senior 5 is like P7. Now [how] can you go and end in senior 4? (...) Nowhere to go, you just stay at home (R2, Nr?).*

Thus, for these girls even secondary education (O-level) may not be enough to secure a “good future”.

### **5.3.2 Care of the family**

In this section I will point out how the girls view their role as supporters for their families when they have acquired a good job and money. However, the girls talk about two families: their present family and their future family. I came across this theme when asking them how their families are supporting them, some girls saw it was their time to pay back to their present family when they had finished the education. I also came across the aspect when asking why it was important for girls to get education.

#### **5.3.2.1 Present family**

*Madame, education acts as a source of income on the side of the parents because mostly it is the girls who help their parents (R1, Nr 5).*

When caring for the present family, the girls stated that they will help their parents just like described above. I got the impression that it was mainly about helping them financially and giving school fees and school material to their siblings. Helping the rest of the family to become educated seemed important for them.

*If I completed my studies and I would get a job I can also educate them because they want, they want education. To fight illiteracy because my family is very poor, we are backward in fact, Madame (Girl 15 years old in S3, R2).*

*Madame, it [education] is important because if you finish your studies you can enjoy the future when you gained after studying. It helps you make a good future, pay up*

*for your parents, and even to help the younger brothers and sisters (Girl 16 years old in S2, R1).*

An interesting distinction, however, is that the rural groups seem more focused on helping their present family than the urban group. The urban group again were more concerned with the future family. Nevertheless, in all the groups caring for both present and future families was mentioned. One might assume that the girls in the rural groups feel more obligated to pay back the fees to their parents because their families are suffering and struggling to a greater degree to provide them with the school funds, and therefore need more financial help, than in the urban groups. Many of the girls in the urban groups were also staying with guardians which is not close in the same way as their immediate family (their parents), this might also be one reason why they were more focused upon helping their future family than their present family.

### *5.3.2.2 Future family*

An interesting aspect concerning the future family is getting the future husband. Actually several girls both in the urban groups, stated that it was necessary to be educated if one wanted to get an educated husband. The future husbands want women that have a job and who can help out financially. Below is an extract of the conversation from the focus group in U1 that illustrate this sentiment:

*I mean if you are not educated now a day, men don't want people [read: wives] that are not educated, they don't want it (U1, Nr 7).*

*They don't want people that are not employed (U1, Nr 6). (I: So you need education to get married?)*

*They need people who are working (U1, Nr?).*

*They need people that can help them (U1, Nr?).*

*Yeah, people that can help them, people that are not a burden to them (U1,Nr?).*

I find it interesting that this issue came up in both of the urban groups, but not in the rural groups. It might be a coincidence, however it might also not be. As mentioned in chapter three about Uganda, there are actually more girls (28%) versus boys (27%) enrolled in secondary school in Kampala (MoES, 2005a). The fact that the male youth population in Kampala want

an educated wife does not seem out of the ordinary, perhaps they even have working mothers. They might also want, or might be used to having a higher standard of living, which demands dual income families. However, if this trend is also showing a change in the traditional gender roles in the family is another question. The UNDP MDGs progress report for Uganda (2003) argued that women are often overburdened because of unequal sharing of roles and responsibilities.

The second aspect concerning the future family was the role of being a mother. The girls expressed that being an educated mother you would be able to take better care of your children. They claimed that an educated girl would send their children to medical care if necessary, they would know how to cook nutritious food, be hygienic and be economically responsible. An educated mother would also see the value of educating their children, helping them with their homework and provide them with knowledge:

*[L]et me base on the family issue, when you are in a family, a lady tries to teach her children what to do, the lady teaches the children that this and this thing you have to be reading, and this and this thing you can do this, this and this thing you can do that, so the children grow up knowing what to do. I have to do this, mummy told me, I should do this. And they [the women] carry out a lot of responsibilities, to see that their children grow up well, and if you don't educate them how will they know that a child has to read books? (U1, Nr 2).*

*You know which type of food to give the child in order to avoid, what? (...) – [To avoid] diseases (R1, Nr?).*

*And even you can buy all the basic necessities like (...) if you are educated, you can maybe share food and clothing to your children (R2, Nr?).*

### **5.3.3 Respect**

When categorising all the data that included the theme “respect”, I noted that there were some aspects that were related to respect and self-worth, but it did not entirely match. However, they were all focusing on the worth, or perceived worth of a person, and thus they “matter” to themselves, their family and to their community. For that reason I divided the theme “respect” up into two sub-themes, “self-worth” and “social and political development”, inspired by my theoretical framework.

### 5.3.3.1 Self-worth

*Education also help[s] someone to become famous. (I: Explain) If you are just there in the village when you have not yet attended school you can't be known any further, but if you study very well and pass and go from the primary level to the secondary level, the advanced level and then to the university you can achieve more friends and even get popular (R2, Nr 7).*

The theme emerged when asking the girls why education is important, especially for girls, and they often expressed the wish of “being someone”, either to be known, famous, and/or important. They believed that with education you could become a special person of importance. They also often used the word “respect”, combined with “education” and a “powerful job” you could gain respect in the family and the society.

*To be respected. (...) When a girl is educated, now the husband can respect her, the society, the community, all of them can respect you, but when you are not educated everybody will call you rubbish, they will not respect you (U1, Nr?).*

*In Africa, when you are a girl and not educated, people [will] always undermine you, but once you are educated, people will respect you (U2, Nr?).*

*Respect. For example if she gets a powerful job people in the society will start respecting her (R2, Nr?).*

When trying to understand what “respect” and “famous” involves I would first like to describe briefly how they thought the woman’s relationship to her husband would be if the wife had education. An explanation might fit both aspects of self-worth and respect. The girls in the focus groups expressed that education followed by a good job could make them equal, but also independent of the husband.

*Like if you are not educated you don't have income, you are going to depend on someone's income, probably your husband, but once you're educated you earn your own which means you can live your own lifestyle, you can do what you like (U2, Nr 4).*

*Education helps girls when you are married. When you don't have a job, the husband can mistreat you cause you don't have anything to do, but if you are educated, you have your own money you can get up yourself (R1, Nr 2).*

I interpreted these statements to mean that education can give them another role in the family. With money you can decide yourself how the money should be used and you will have more options in terms of how you want to live your life. You can also be able to be on your own. The girls also said you could be able to defend yourself and that you could be aware of your

own rights. Thus, without education they would be trapped in the “traditional” roles but with it they could become a “modern” woman.

*They [girls] can stand up and speak in public. (I: can you explain?) Like, am a educated girl, let me give an example (...) If she is really educated she can stand in a school with like thousands of students and she can really stand in front of them and talk to them about anything, but a girl that is not educated, I don't think [they] can talk to even ten people who are educated (I: Why do you think its like that?) Because they are not able to, like maybe communication is not [good](...) (U2, Nr 7).*

*[To] educate a girl child is important because illiteracy can be overcome, fertility can also be overcome. [It] enables her to obtain a job, makes her to be equal with who? - The men. And [it] even helps her to be self-reliant and so acquiring respect (R2, Nr?).*

Independence, respect and a more equal role with the husband in the family demonstrated the thinking that money is equal to power and that the opposite of independence is dependence. To have control over money seems to be a key to having control of ones life - individual autonomy. I was first unsure how to understand what they meant by becoming for example “famous”. However, in the present situation, all the interviewed girls are dependent upon their parents, extended family or friends who pay their school fees and school materials. Some girls in the rural groups even expressed that they were pressured to perform well, because if their performances decreased the support might stop. Thus, they know money can both open and close opportunities in life and having your own source of income means having a certain amount of autonomy.

To be on the other “side of the table”, being the one with the money, deciding where it should be used, while others are the one begging to receive from you, you would not only show autonomy and independence, you might also gain respect and be *the* important person. Others might be dependent upon you. Yet, this explanation is only my interpretation, I have no data that supports or opposes this claim. However I think it is interesting because of their choice of words, such as calling it “becoming famous”, and because of the way they express the wish for a shift of roles. A shift from a traditional woman who has limited or no respect to a more “modern” woman who has a high degree of respect both within the family and community, and maybe even within the nation. To get that one needs a job, money, and autonomy. The quote below summarises the issues surrounding respect.

*When a girl child is educated and she can get a better paying job, she can famous herself with the money, with money to buy her own clothes, she can help her parents as well to buy for them anything they need, and she can help her sisters and brother in anything, as money can be some big issue, instead of, instead of not educating a girl and she is going to be on the streets and become a problem for the society (U1, Nr 2)*

### 5.3.3.2 Social and political development

*Education is also good because if you are educated you can develop your society (R1, Nr 2).*

This topic is concerned with what education can contribute to the development of the society, both from a “quality of life” perspective and from a political development perspective. Nevertheless, it is still a part of the “respect” theme because the benefits go through the individuals. The girls explain their education is not only contributing to their family and community but also to the nation (macro).

*So when a girl goes to school, she can also get to know the responsibilities in [the] society, that a person has to do this, have to care for my parents, have to do this for my brothers, have to do this for my sisters, which never used to be there during those days, so you become [a] responsible [person] in the society. And they can also participate in politics, which never used to be there. (I: And become a good citizen?) Yeah, and the country can benefit from them (U1, Nr 2).*

(--)

*When you educate a girl, you are educating a nation because it is better that women have more responsibilities and know how to carry on their responsibility, either in the family or in the community. So, without giving education to the girl, then the nation will become [underdeveloped], but if you educate a girl or a woman then the nation has to come up because that's why you see women who are in their businesses are better than men because they run up the business faster (...) while men they don't hurry to think what is this and what is this (U1, Nr 7).*

The girls saw that education can provide the same rights and obligations to women as to men and, therefore, leads them to become equal and responsible citizens in the society. The girls mentioned that women could develop businesses and join the Parliament, and some even mentioned the possibility of becoming the president.

*Madame, education helps us girls or women to be involved in the Parliament activities (R1, Nr 5).*



*Even gender balance. People who are not educated and you are a girl in the society you are not considered a respective person, but if you are educated you can be elected to any post (R2, Nr?).*

*Education for girls is important because girls can be able to become the president because they say that only the boy are the one who's suppose to be the president, but even the girls can be president if you are educated (R1, Nr?).*

In the focus group interviews, the girls also talked about the dimension of helping other people, and that educated people had the resources of also making positive changes in the lives of those that did not have education. They also said educated people have the knowledge to “fight illiteracy and ignorance in the society”.

*Education can help us girls to know how to preserve our environment, in that some people look for firewood to go and cook. Some can cut even trees which can destroy our environment so we can be able and say no this one is bad, if I cut down trees it will destroy the environment so you can think of another way to cook food (R1, Nr1).*

(--)

*Girls are more important when they finish their education because they can help the needed people, old people who can't manage to care for themselves (R1, Nr 4).*

(--)

*Education is good because after schooling you can be able to help those ones in the society which don't know how to read and write (R1, Nr?).*

It was mainly the rural groups that were concerned with directly helping and developing the society. One explanation might be that the rural groups are closer to poverty and in more need, compared to girls living in Kampala, and therefore have a greater call for wanting to help and care for others.

### 5.3.3.3 *Morality*

*My parents are supporting me to have education so that I don't involve in bad acts like stealing, and so on (R1, Nr 4).*

The last theme that I have chosen to call “Morality” emerged from the whole of the focus groups' interviews and the answers fascinated and surprised me. I define moral as to contain conformity with a high standard of morality or virtue, like the kind of moral behaviour that is expected of everyone in the parish's youth organization. I also want to connect moral to being

*good*. A *good* person does seldom any wrong, and by having a *good* behaviour the person will earn respect of others (Merriam-Webster OnLine, 2006b). Thus, morality is part of respect, which is also obtained through education.

To be able to understand the findings and how I came to develop the theme, some information about the way I experienced it is necessary. For me, coming from Norway, I experienced the areas of Uganda that I visited as very religious. For example, people were praying in the streets, cars had stickers with “I love God”, and your name can often reveal your religious belonging. One of the teachers I met prayed for me, wishing me good luck on my thesis and that I would come closer to God, and many of the girls when they were presenting themselves told the group they were “born again Christians”. It was especially in U2 and R1 that I felt the strongest religious influence in the groups.

*Education stops us from doing evil things like prostitution (U2, Nr 2).*

The quote above is an example of what I found that surprised me. I sensed there was this dichotomy of “heaven and hell” when talking about the importance of education. With education you could become good, without it you could become a prostitute (bad). The girls expressed that with education you did not have time for thinking about getting boyfriends or becoming married to early. Education also stopped “*bad acts like stealing*” and early pregnancy, which one girl called a “*bad habit*”. That was why education was considered *good*.

*I think it [education] stops bad habits like pregnancies on girls (I: Is that a bad habit?) yes, cause when you are not at school you meet boys, but when you are at school you don't get that attention to go to boys (U2, Nr?).*

*Education prohibits bad acts in girls like prostitution. It makes a better future for most girls (...) [for example] to be forced to early marriage. (R1, Nr 5).*

*I think education is good for my sake because being at home is another bad thing you can get, you can just be bored at home and then you start to do bad things when you are not educated but when you are educated you forget all about stealing, (...), or look for men, you concentrate on your books. I think education is good. (U2, Nr?).*

The second thing that surprised me was that the girls often talked about “girls” from a third person perspective and therefore kept a distance from it themselves while they discussed girls and the innate characteristics. For example, girls are weak, they do not think as fast as boys,

and “*they are easily attracted to evil things*”. In the extract below from R1 two girls explain why it is harder for girls to continue with education compared to boys:

*It's harder for girls because girls they are always attracted by many things, someone may come with a gift and give you, so you may, you can be attracted by that gift, he will tell you I love you what, what, and you will be attracted by that. (...) And leave school, but boys also they can be attracted, but they are not so attracted like us girls (R1, Nr?).*

I: Oh yeah?

*Madame, we girls are emotional feelings are very high. (I: Ok, explain what you mean.) Our emotional feelings are very high in that you when, let me say when you are in a adolescent stage and you just look at a boy bypassing you feel like going to him (They all laugh) (R1, Nr 5).*

In the next quotes some girls from the urban group explains why girls should go to school. Also here they are talking about girls in third person and that education prevents “girls’ bad nature”:

*They [the girls] are not given room or space of thinking about, you know, bad things and if I can explain.. Its like a girl is not educated she doesn't have homework to do, she doesn't even think about education. The only thing she thinks about is “oh when am I going to get married, I have to go and meet my boyfriend”. She thinks about a lot of things which are really not constructive (U2, Nr?).*

(...)

*Its important for girls to get education cause its hard in school, it makes them busy so they can forget all about the stuff of getting boyfriends (U2, Nr?).*

The theme is also connected to the wish of being “someone” as described in earlier. Education makes you become something good and important, such as helping your family and developing the society by combating illiteracy or HIV/Aids, for example. The idea of morality is important because it adds another dimension to how the girls understand the importance of education and further reinforces the consequences of not getting an education. To be left out of education might therefore be experienced as a catastrophe, all the elements connected to “a good life” like a job, money, helping family might not be possible if you do not get an educational paper, but on top of that you might also become “bad” or obtain bad behaviour like stealing. From a religious point of view you might become a sinner.

Even though I did not ask them if they, themselves, had these characteristics they described, I assume they would have said “no” because in their wording they talk about “they, the girls”, not themselves. Why are they any different than other girls? Is it because they are enrolled in school? Do they look upon themselves as different because they are Born-again Christians? Or maybe the strong and moralistic word choice they are using are caused by a limited vocabulary? If I could have communicated with them in their local language, how would they have expressed themselves then? It struck me again and again, during the interviews, that some of the sentences and words they used was something they had taken from somewhere, it was not something that they had created themselves. Where have they heard and learned this? It is their parents, the school, the media or the church?

Unfortunately my data disallows further explorations of this theme, it can only point out some tendencies that would be very interesting to develop further. The moral aspects show that education has an extra dimension that views education as something like salvation, a rescue from the life they are now living. With education you are connected to “heaven”, the good life that gives you job, money, autonomy, and respect. Without you will end up ignorant, poor, and in disrepute, or maybe even a sinner.

## 5.4 Summary

In this chapter I have presented my findings from my fieldwork in Uganda. The analysis is seen as a continuum ranging from raw data, descriptive statements and interpretations that will continue in next chapter. The descriptive statements have been built upon extensive use of quotations, and in the interpretation process I have attempted to use the analytic induction technique. Where I have found the technique hard to employ, the understanding is instead based on a personal intuitive interpretation. It has been especially challenging to achieve balance between being aware of the interviews’ context and presenting the data in an appropriate and expedient way. Although, there are weaknesses with the raw data and the interpretation process, it has been my aim to tell the story I found in the field, letting the girls interviewed speak for themselves.

Theme number one containing the girls’ understanding of the degree of support they receive from family, school, and government was developed in order to be able to answer the research

question: How do the girls understand the support (or lack of support) they get from their family, school, and government? What I found that was similar in all the dimensions (family, school and government), that is the girls' understanding of "support" was mainly material support, such as money, books, uniforms and school buildings. Often, it was not before I probed that they also suggested encouragement and motivation. When I asked them a direct "support-question", they were mainly positive, saying they receive support from family, school and government. However, when I asked different kinds of questions I interpreted topics that also included "lack of support answers". Based on the extensiveness of their answers, I also discovered that the girls found it easier to talk about the family support, conversely the more unfamiliar the dimension was, the harder it was for them to answer.

School fees were the main concern in all the groups and cited in terms of family, school and government support. The family supported them with funds for school, but if the families could not pay, most of the girls seemed to think their parents supported them anyway. This encouragement was another less materialistic form of support. The school could give a free term or reduce the school fees for bright students, and this was looked upon as support from the school. However, it is unclear to me the level of difficulty that might be incurred to get these bursaries. The girls also advised the government to reduce the school fees or make secondary education free, like primary education.

Lack of support from the family was uncovered when asked if it was harder for girls than boys to continue their education. The girls displayed a "rate of return thinking", where poor families prioritised the boys before girls. The girls seemed to think this practice was unfair, however, some girls also supported this view, basing it on the traditional gender roles where men are the head of the family with all the financial responsibilities. Lack of support from the school was also expressed. The girls talked about teachers being harsh or mean and ignoring the students when they did not understand the lecture.

What I found surprising is that none of the groups found the policy of chasing students home to look for school money as a lack of support from the school. Another surprising discovery was that the government policies that do not have anything to do with secondary education, the UPE and the free extra point to access universities, were understood as support from the government. However, one might speculate that although it is not a direct support at this educational level, the government allows more girls to access education in the first place at

the primary level and then for a selected few that reach the tertiary level the government provides another type of support.

Theme number two contains four sub-themes that are all connected to the belief that education will give them a good future. The theme was developed from the questions asked in the focus group interviews, and it also attempts to answer the other research question: What are the girls' expectations about what education can do for them, their families and the society? The sub-themes are demonstrating different dimensions surrounding the wish for a better life in the future, and they are interrelated.

Getting a job seems to be the main motivation in getting an education and it shows a fairly pragmatic relationship to school. The girls believe that the more education you have the higher is the chances of getting a better-paid job. They also understand education as “the only thing” that can help them to get a job and a good future.

The theme “respect” was divided up into “self-worth”, “social and political development”, and “Morality”. The girls were concerned with how education could make them gain respect and self-worth. It seems like the girls understand this aspect of having their own job and money as being the key for their own independency. With job and money they gain respect, become equal with their husband in terms of being a provider, they also have more say in how to live their life, without being dependent on their family. The girls' expected that with education they would “be someone” that could be respected by the family and community. All these aspects mentioned would make them feel empowered. Without education you became “no one”.

Giving girls education could also improve the society, having the same rights and obligations like the men. The girls understood that with an education, women could get powerful jobs, join the Parliament. However, the girls seemed mostly focused about helping their present and future family. They see that educated mothers give education to their children and will be able to provide for the children's needs.

The last theme connected to “Respect” called “Morality” shows a new dimension of the girls understanding of the importance of education. This finding surprised me and is my contribution to the field of girl's education. It is showing a dichotomy between good and bad,

being someone and being no one, and being educated and not educated. It seems that there is an understanding that education prevents bad behaviour, bad acts and the bad “nature of the girl child”. Without education the girl might start to steal or become a prostitute. This belief strengthens the consequences of not getting an education, as they believe without education a girl might even become a sinner and thus will not be respected. Ultimately education for these girls then means they earn a level of respect within the family (micro), the community (meso) and the nation (macro).

## 6 Discussion and conclusion

Theory without data is empty; data without theory say nothing (Silverman, 2000: 253).

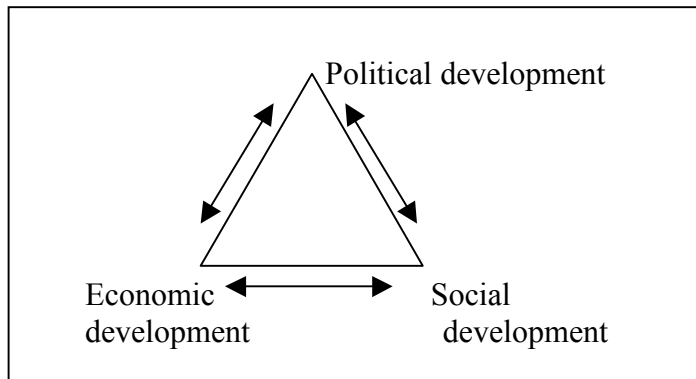
In chapter five I presented my findings from the fieldwork in Uganda in September/October 2005. The presentation identified several findings, which I have categorised into two main themes: “Support” and “A good future”. I will from these themes develop a discussion and a comparison with the theoretical framework, which enable me to answer the research questions. I will also use the background chapter about Uganda for the same purpose, but first I will revive briefly the theoretical framework from chapter two and develop a model that illustrates the relationship. After the analysis and discussion, I will continue with some personal reflections done during the process of making this study. I will consider the significance of the “Morality” theme and make suggestions for further research to develop the issues surrounding the morality theme. Secondly, I will briefly discuss the position of secondary school in Uganda.

### 6.1 Models created from theory

Before continuing the analysis and discussion, I will briefly revisit the concept of development found in chapter two and its relation to education. The concept of development is understood as an upward movement and a positive direction of a social system. It has been a part of the “modern project” thinking from the Western world, which began in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is believed that through reasoning and knowledge (through formal education) the society will discover progress and all people will live a better life (Fägerlind and Saha, 1989; Greer and Lewis, 2002). In the contemporary sense of the concept, development has also been looked at as a way for poor countries to “catch up” with the rich and industrialised and become like them, and education has been seen as a key agent for that change. Fägerlind and Saha (1989) describe three different dimensions of development and how they relate to each other. From their explanation I have developed a model that illustrates the interrelationship.



*Figure 6.1: The dimensions of development and its interrelationship*



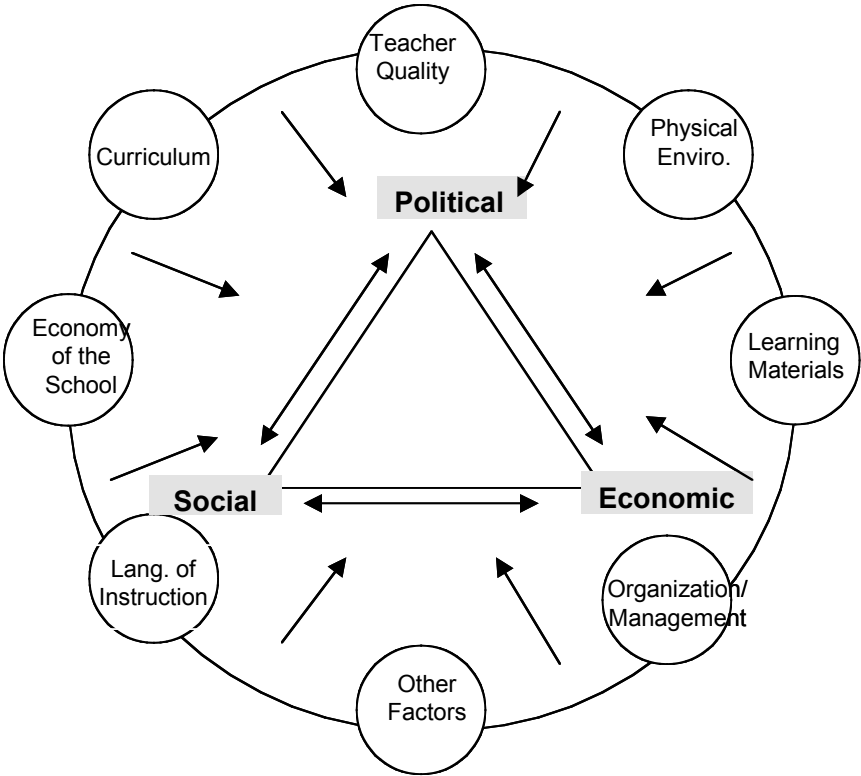
Education and political development is concerned with the idea that education can create unity, solidarity, and national identity and develop democracy in a nation. However, the educational system and the political system are interrelated and are always affected by each other. A stable democracy without displeasure, conflicts and wars is seen as a precondition for economic and social development. Education and economic development has been the most common understanding of the relationship between education and development, and Human Capital theory has been the dominant theory. Education is seen as an investment in the individual and in the nation, and the return is increased productivity, economic growth, and social and political development for the country. Education and social development has been seen as a precondition for economic development and it is divided into two themes, “modernity” and “quality of life”. The population need to become “modern” in terms of having knowledge, skills, attitudes, cultural norms and values that is not a hindrance on the productivity (the economic growth). The population must also be healthy and live under conditions that are good (quality of life) so that the productivity increases. The Modernization theory has been the dominant theory in the social development dimension.

This brief explanation illustrates that all the dimensions are interrelated, they need each other to be able to develop, as described in figure 6.1 by the arrows going from each of the dimensions affecting each other. If one dimension fails the other dimensions are also affected, and the nation as a whole as well. For example, if a country suffers from political instability, there will be no economic growth (lack of economic development) and the people will also suffer, maybe lacking food and shelter (lack of social development). However, as described in chapter two, the relationship between education and the development of a nation is a complex matter. Education can be a major agent but only when adapted in a manner appropriate to the needs of the country (Husén and Postlethwaite, 1994a). It depends on what kind of education

is promoted including factors such as the language of instruction, the quality of the teachers, relevant and plentiful learning materials, resources in the public sector, and curriculum appropriate for the students and the country (Brock-Utne, 2004).

From the discussion about the relationship between education and development, I have developed the model from figure 6.1 further to illustrate the dimensions of development and the educational factors that influence the concept of development. The educational factors circulate around the dimensions of development, influencing them, and the arrows pointing towards the triangle demonstrate it. However, the picture is more complicated than the model shows, because the “triangle of development”, that is the nation, influences also the educational factors. The arrows should also have gone from the triangle to the factors. I have not showed this point in the model because the debate only focuses on how education promotes and is an agent for development, not the other way around. However, the issue is important and should be included more in the discussion. The second weakness of the model is that it does not include non-educational factors such as family or culture, both of which influence the educational factors and the development dimensions. This fact illustrates again that education alone cannot develop a nation, education can only be one agent out of many.

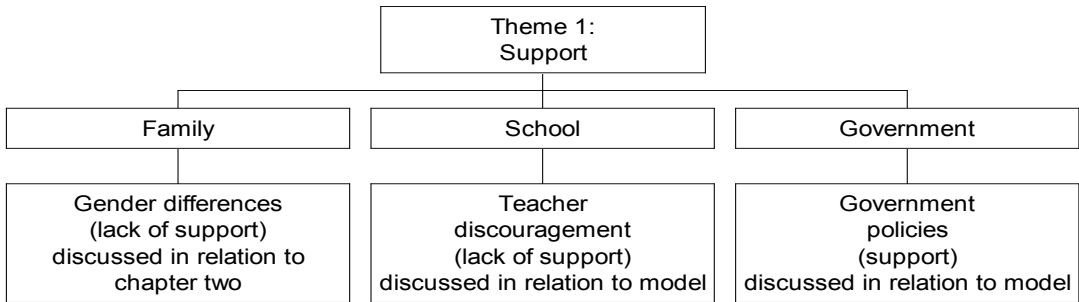
Figure 6.2: The relationship between education and development



## 6.2 How do the girls understand educational support?

In this section I will discuss my “support-findings” trying to answer the first research question. The research question is quite concrete, the girls have answered these questions directly, and thus how they answered is close to how I interpret it. However, the model presented above (figure 6.2) will work as an analytic tool in the analysis. When examining briefly “government” and “school”, I will emphasise “government policies” and “teacher discouragement” and it will be discussed in relation to the model. When examining the “family support” that will be discussed more extensively, the theme of “gender differences” will be emphasised, however, I will not use the model here, instead I will use aspects discussed in chapter two about why many girls do not go to school. The emphasis of themes mentioned is illustrated in figure 6.3 below.

Figure 6.3: The sub-themes that are emphasised in theme 1: Support



### 6.2.1 The support from the government

As presented from the findings, the girls understood the government support as partly financing their secondary education because the government paid salaries to the teachers, sent school materials like textbooks, and were constructing school buildings. The girls understood that the government support made their school cheaper to attend. *“The government has [been] working with us to see that they lower the price of the fees to make our parents, you know, be able to get that amount of money” (U2, Nr 7). “The government is supporting our education, it is sending in schools more qualified teachers... And also [paying] most of the salaries for the teachers” (R2, Nr 7).* Comparing these answers with the model in figure 6.2, the girls mentioned four of the educational factors listed; teacher quality, physical environment,

learning materials and the economy of the school. Factors that all influence the quality of education, and thus the development of the nation.

The answers that surprised me when asking about the government support were the girls' awareness of two government policies, the UPE and the extra points for girls when entering tertiary education institutions. They understood this as support from the government even though these policies do not directly support secondary education students. However, the policies might work as a moral support and a motivator since this act symbolized that the government wants more girls in the educational system by offering extra points and scholarships for attending universities. *"The government is also supporting our education by adding girls one point five[1.5] points such that they can join Makerere University. The girls."* (R2, Nr?).

Motivation, encouragement and policies from the government are illustrating the influence the nation state has on the educational system as was mentioned when discussing political development in chapter two. The "formal school is both determined by, and a determinant for the political system" (Fägerlind and Saha, 1989: 123). Again it exemplifies the weakness of the model in figure 6.2, because it is not showing the strong influence the government/nation has on its educational system. The policies made by the Ugandan government show that they understand the educational system as an agent for gender equality in the society, wanting the girls to "attain their maximum potential as equal and efficient citizens" (MoES, n.d.: 22. See 3.3). The model should therefore also include "educational policies" as an educational factor influencing the development of a nation.

The Ugandan government must believe that the "gender friendly" policies can work as an agent that can make progress and greater productivity in the families and in the nation. However, it might also be an act of justice, seeing that the girls need to be treated differently in order to treat the genders justly (Lummis, 1992). The government might both argue for girls' education from a human rights perspective, or a social and economical development perspective, however they are going through the political development dimension, and their tool is the "gender friendly" policies. Also in history the government in Uganda believed the educational system could help solve challenges in the society. As described in chapter three, they believed for example after independence in 1963 that education could help increase the

production (economic development) and create unity among the Ugandans (political development) (Ssekamwa, 1997).

When the girls were dissatisfied with the support from the government, they claimed the government was only emphasising scientific subjects. This can be linked to the “curriculum factor” in the model, seeing the interest of the state and the students is not the same. “[The government say] like in order for the country to develop there must be scientists, but me I say that the government would have seen that, ok, all groups are balanced equal, [that] they sponsor both art and sciences” (U2, Nr 4). They also criticised the government for having a problem of favouritism of tribes and that they were corrupt. Corruption can indeed affect the economy of the school/educational system negatively. In fact, all these factors mentioned by the girls might affect the quality of education negatively.

The girls’ responses to the governments support are showing an ambivalent view. The girls understand the government support as giving some support that also might raise the quality of education, such as “gender friendly” policies and giving out textbooks, however they are also doing things that affect the quality of education badly, such as being corrupt. When the girls gave advice to the government, the girls wanted free secondary education (connected to the “economy of the school” factor), more textbooks (“learning materials”), but also another factor that is not included in the circle of educational factors. They wanted the government to support pregnant girls, letting them continue even though they are pregnant. “*If a girl gets pregnant, don’t harass that girl, leave her to first give birth after that send her to school, she will study. I would give that advice*” (R2, Nr 3). I would like to include their advice as a new factor in the model. Calling it “anti-discriminating environment”, the factor might strengthen the quality of education.

### **6.2.2 The support from the school**

The girls understood the schools support to their education very similar to the support from the government and the factors in the education and development model. The school provided material things, such as classrooms and textbooks, but the girls were also very much concerned with bursaries given from the school to the best student(s) (also showing the factor of the economy in the school). Their concern with bursaries is supporting my belief that a real problem is the families’ difficulty in providing school fees and school materials. The girls also

expressed the school offered encouragement to study and they organised different activities such as sports activities or school debates that the students liked. The last aspect here might be connected to a factor that is not in the model, however it is very important for the learning, namely the learning environment.

When lack of support was discussed, teacher discouragement was expressed, affecting the learning environment negatively. Some thought the teachers judged them falsely and they were not concerned with treating the girls with respect. The girls expressed a typically subject-object relationship between the teacher and the students. They also mentioned corporal punishment. *"And even if you lack a calculator or if you lack a map or a math table, the teacher just canes you and the teacher just send you out of the class (...) And as soon as you go back to study then he start caning, "you, you village children" (R2, Nr 7).*

What I found also striking was that the students expressed that they often did not understand the lecture and if they tried to say this to the teacher, the teacher ignored them and continued the lecture. For example, *"some teachers are cruel [to] someone when he's teaching, [because] you cannot understand what he's teaching" (R1, Nr 1).* *"We have teachers here that cannot sit and listen to your our excuses, if you may say I beg your pardon I have not understood, they just continue" (R2, Nr?).* If the teachers cannot communicate and teach the students the skills and knowledge they need, it has great pedagogical implications. In fact, if to follow the education and development model created it has direct implications on the social development, learning the skills that make them rational and knowledgable and ready for work and family life.

As brought up in the findings, the language of instruction might be one of the causes to this communication problem the girls experienced at school. Brock-Utne (2000) and Holmarsdottir (2005) claim one of the biggest pedagogical problem in many African countries is the language of instruction where a foreign language hinders the communication and learning in schools. If the teacher cannot communicate to students for a variety of reasons, I would claim the education is in danger of becoming inferior, which is a waste of human and economic recourses. It will not be an institution that can shape the progress of the country, and therefore it is in danger of not developing communities and countries the way the national and world community believe the educational institution can do.

### 6.2.3 The support from the family

From chapter two I argued that gender disparities in education and in the society in general are a complex problem. The list presented (see section 2.2.1) of common factors of gender disparity is also found in the findings in this study when searching for lack of support from the family. The factors expressed by the girls in this study are poverty, the cost of schooling, shortage of school facilities, cultural and social practices that discriminate against girls, early pregnancies, and early marriages.

The GCE (2003) explains that patriarchal societies often reinforce early marriages, and that early marriages often reinforce patriarchal societies. They explain how many parents instead of sending the girl to school the parents rather want the girl to get married. This view was found in the focus group interviews. *“The parents they think of getting that child a man to marry”* (U1, Nr 2). *“We are forced by our parents to get married in a very young stage”* (R1, Nr 4). In the findings these quotes of marriages are referred back to the “rate of return” thinking by the parents. In Uganda, as in many other poor countries, the family is the only social security system. Since it is the men that are traditionally suppose to finance and support his family he is the one that is often prioritised when it comes to education, especially if the family has little money and has to make a decision about how the money should be spent with greatest rate of return (CAMFED, 2006). Like one girl explains: *“For them they think that [the] boy can generate more in their family than the girl”* (R2, Nr 5). That is why the family choose the boy, they believe they will get more out of their money. I found it therefore interesting that some of the rural girls argued in a “rate of return” way, saying that their parents supported them because they are going to pay back and help the parents when they finished schooling. They even argued that girls care more about their parents than boys. By using this argumentation, the girls might try to justify the money that is spent on their own education by “promising” that the parents will get the money back.

The girls were also claiming that parents also saw the girls as weaker and less valuable and this may also be connected to the cultural belief and the different gender roles play. The girls said for example, *“some parents minimize girls”* (R1, Nr 6) and *“Some parents think that boys are wiser than we girls”* (R1, Nr 1). Again, the girls express a tendency towards the discrimination of girls in the family. It might also indicate different upbringings. The U1 group is pointing out this in one statement:

*We don't have that capacity to make it, while a boy, a boy from infancy knows "I can make this vehicle in this way and send it, I can make this drum, I can go and get some mangos and sell", while a girl have to go and peel matooke, go and fetch some firewood, go for water come back home and sit, look after my sisters, that's all. While a boy is not allowed to sit home, he will go and look for something to do (U1, Nr 7)*

In the findings I argue that both “modern” and “traditional” thinking are enforced at the same time, and that the girls are torn between them. From one point of view they were expressing a “modern” thinking, they thought discriminating against girls was unfair and even “silly”.

They were laughing about it and even saying it is from the past, an old tradition: *It's from the past, (...) men are supposed to be stronger than what? -Women, cause for us we are created in the ribs of the men (R1, Nr 4)*. They also expressed that this is still how the society is: *In our society [girls] are considered to be a weaker sex compared to what? - To the boys (R2 Nr?)*. From these statements the girls express an understanding of lack of support from the parents and family, but also the society in general. The GCE (2003) argue that in countries with a low female enrolment in school, cultural and social beliefs and attitudes can hinder girls from attending education.

From another point of view it seems that their statements are predetermined by what they have learned and been told by the family and in the society in general. I often felt that their answers were very much “fixed” answers, what they are taught to say when someone asks these questions. Some girls even articulate the “traditional” thinking arguing why boys should be prioritised: *the boys are the main thing. "(...) He is the one, the provider they do what? – Everything (...) so I advice guys should be more educated than girls" (U2)*.

When Sachs (1992) criticised the concept of development he claims the “modernisation movement” connected to the development process has tried to get the traditional man to become modern, but that this has failed. Instead it has left many people in poor countries in a no-mans-land between tradition and modernity. From one point the girls have been introduced to modernity, they might have learned it in school to become rational, gain skills and trust their own abilities, which might make them autonomous and productive, if following the ideas of Human Capital theory and Modernization theory. But at the same time the family and society still teach them that they are of less worth than the boys and that their role in the society is to be good wives and mothers. They are drawn between two different ways of thinking how their roles in the family and society should be.



Seeing these gender differences in the society from a human capital perspective, it is hindering talented girls of becoming productive citizens that can take part of the economic development of the country. It is also hindering the modernisation of the people and thus also social development. However, one might argue that this “modernity” is an arrogant agent for westernisation of the country, inconsiderate of traditional customs and rational choices made by the family or the community (Sachs, 1992). It is important to understand these attitudes before trying to change them (Fägerlind and Saha, 1989), however the Ugandan authorities have signed the UN’s human rights declaration and the MDGs. Although it maybe argued that the discrimination of girls is forced through because of rational choices based on poverty, there is no excuse for the government to allow a violation of human rights (Tomasevski, 2001). The government signals they want the same rights for the girls as for boys because they want to see progress in the nation, however it is impossible to argue from a human rights perspective since secondary education is not a human right in Uganda.

However, from a social development perspective, the promotion of secondary education for girls is necessary. The girls can provide for and help their family, and they can be apart of the development of the nation, just like the girls interviewed argued when they explained the importance of own education in section 5.3.2. If the girls can help financing their families, their families will become stronger and life will become more secure for all members. This was already seen in the urban groups, the girls said it was necessary for them to become educated because the men wanted educated wives that could help with the burden of cost in the family.

Although the girls referred to modern thinking and traditional attitudes of undermining females, they were mainly expressing that their parents were helping them in their education. *"Our parents help us a lot in our education" (U1, Nr 2). "They give help in fact in every thing you ask cause they are your parents" (U2, Nr 3).* What came out as a real concern during all the focus groups was school fees. Some parents could afford it, others had sent their children to guardians who paid, and some parents could sometimes pay school fees and other times not, which meant that many of the girls were chased home from school. This observation is supported by the fact that 62% of the dropouts in secondary school is caused by lack of school fees (MoES, 2005a, See 3.3.2.). Generating funds seemed like a big problem for most of the girls interviewed, who also feared that they could be chased home. This constant burden

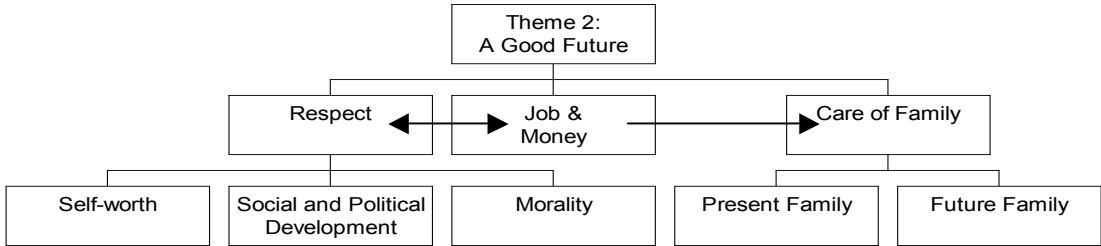
might affect the learning ability. However, the girls considered the parents supportive even when the parents could not pay school fees.

The overall impression, after talking to the girls both in groups and individually and talking to teachers and people in the MoES, that it is important for the girls, their families and community that they go to school. Education is believed to give the children a better future. How frustrating must it not be for the girls when they are not able to go to school, maybe standing in a no-mans-land between modernity and tradition (Sachs, 1992). They know they should have education, that education benefits them, their families and their society, however they are not able to, mostly because of lack of money. Some of the girls might instead sit at home where the next step is to get married.

### 6.3 The girls expectations of the benefits of education

In this section I will answer the research question “what are the girls’ expectations about what education can do for them, their families and the society?” The question is about benefits of education for them directly and what they expect their education can do for their family and society. I will therefore divide the question into three parts, 1) their expectation of personal benefits, 2) the benefits for the family, and 3) the benefits for the society. I will continue to use the themes showed in the chart below when answering the questions and compare it to the theoretical framework.

Figure 6.4: Theme 2: A Good Future and its sub-sections and topics.



#### 6.3.1 Benefits of education for the individual

When discussing the relationship between education and development, the belief is that the progress or the social change in the society involves strengthening the capacity of individuals,

developing individuals to become more logical and productive. The model (see figure 6.2) does not show this connection. The model shows only educational factors that influence the development of the nation (the triangle). However, the educational factors are in fact influencing individuals, and through the individuals the Modernization theory and the Human Capital theory assumes that their family and their nation will automatically be strengthened. The educational benefits for the individual are the guarantor for the development, and the expectations for the individual is therefore limitless. I will now compare these ideas and expectations to the expectations the girls showed to their own education.

As described from the findings, the girls' main motivation for continuing their education was the belief that education would increase their chances of getting a good paying job. *"My objective is to get a good job, and to get a good job I have to first study"* (U1, Nr?). The girls demonstrated knowledge of a relationship between education and job, and money was an important factor. *"Like after studies I get a job; I get money"* (U2, Nr 4). The relationship between education and economic growth was discussed in chapter two, and from the early 1960s the simple cause-and-effect relationship between education, development and economic growth was acknowledged (Fägerlind and Saha, 1989). It is interesting that a similar belief from a micro perspective is clearly expressed by the girls. Seen from the perspective of Human Capital theory, people invest knowledge and skills in themselves, because it will make them more productive and their income will increase (Husén and Postlethwaite, 1994a). In the focus groups the girls explained how parents invested money in their children's education, because they thought it would raise the future income of both the parents and their children (Husén and Postlethwaite, 1994a). *"Education acts as a source of income on the side of the parents because mostly it is the girls who help their parents"* (R1, Nr 5).

One of the critical arguments against the belief of the causal relationship between education and economic growth in the 1970s was that the Human Capital theory assumed the labour market as being perfect (Fägerlind and Saha, 1989). However, even with education and educational papers it does not guarantee the labour market will provide people with jobs. It is therefore interesting that the girls, although thinking they would get a job after education said, getting a job was hard, even with education. They seemed to believe that the more education you had the higher the chances of getting a job. This rational is showing a strong relationship between secondary and higher education and jobs. *"Like one degree it's still not enough to get*

*a job. So, to study further you can easily get a job” (U1, Nr?). Thus the belief that if you invest more in the human capital this will lead to greater economic development for the individual and even for the larger community around them.*

Also today, the world community believes education is necessary for the individual to get a job, and the more education a person has, the better because the society is seen as becoming a knowledge society (UNESCO, 2001). With rapid social changes in the society, economy and workplaces a country needs more skilled and trained workers that need to be flexible and critical, and the individuals need to be able to acquire knowledge continually through out life (UNESCO, 2001). Thus, the *“future is based on education”, “want to get a job [you] must be with education papers, so if you don’t have one you will not be able to get jobs” (R1, Nr 1).*

As seen from the figure 6.4 above, a job and money is linked to respect, self-worth and morality. A reason for wanting a job and money, expressed by the girls was the ability to become self-dependent and gain respect from others. The girls expressed a strong belief of the relationship between a job, money, and respect. *“For example if she gets a powerful job people in the society will start respecting her” (R2, Nr?). “[T]he husband can respect her, the society, the community, all of them can respect you, but when you are not educated everybody will call you rubbish, they will not respect you” (U1, Nr?).* When the world community argues for girls’ education they are mostly concerned with education as a pragmatic tool to fight poverty and being a “human resource” for the nation (Heward, 1999; Tomasevski, 2003). They are not so concerned with what education can do for the individual. That educated girls might gain greater respect in their families, communities, and even at the national level is less emphasised, if it is mentioned at all.

That one of the girls’ educational expectations is increased respect, demonstrates a greater perspective of development than only focusing on human capital. It illustrates that education impacts their lives *directly*, as well as through the effects of making them better resources for further production (Sen, 1998 in Tomasevski, 2003: 33-34). The girls also state this through the theme I called “Morality”. Education can make you a good Christian person, however without education you might become a prostitute, marry early or become pregnant. Putting forth the consequences of not getting an education they illustrate that education first and foremost influences their lives directly. Education becomes their “salvation”, because education gives a person so many demands that make a person to busy to sin. Although the

girls seemed concerned with the consequences for the individual if they were not getting an education, they also uttered that an uneducated person might become a problem for the society. Indirectly, it also means that lack of morale affects modernity and the quality of life.

The girls also believed that secondary education or tertiary can give them the opportunity of gaining respect while primary education is not enough. They say the reason is that they will not get a job with only a primary education. Even an O-level education is not enough. “[How] can you go and end in senior 4? Nowhere to go, you just stay at home” (R2, Nr?). They see a strong relationship between secondary/tertiary education, a job, money and respect. Research supports the girls’ expectations in terms of gaining respect and autonomy through secondary education. It shows that girls and women’s autonomy increases in patriarchal societies only if they have a secondary education or more (Heward, 1999). Also, Save the Children (2005) recommends secondary education to girls because it will strengthen their abilities, prospects and *self-esteem*. Tomasevski (2003) argues for secondary education because if a child stops their education in primary, or the first years of secondary, they are not old enough and do not have the skills to start working. They will, as the girls said, just sit home or become married. It is therefore ironic and paradoxical that the higher the level of education, the harder it is for girls and women to stay and finish (UNESCO, 2004). In 2004, the total enrolment in secondary education in Uganda was less than 20% of the total adolescent population (UNESCO, 2005). Only 7% were enrolled in S6 (last year of A-level), and of those 7%, 36% were girls (MoES, 2005a)

Although little emphasis has been put on the individual aspect of increased autonomy and respect in the family and the community with education, it is connected to social development. As discussed in the last section about gender differences, the girls were drawn between “modernity” and “tradition”. Becoming educated and respected is also about becoming a “modern” woman, deciding how her own money should be spent, for example. Modernisation theory is emphasising a rational, knowledgeable, independent, and modern population. From a social developed and modern population the production will increase and economic growth and progress will happen. Thus social development is a precondition to economic development.

Connected to being a “modern” woman that is self-financed and respected is getting the future husband. The girls expect education as being a must for getting an educated husband, without

education there are fewer choices of marrying the “best” man. The girls expected that this man would also respect you because you are educated and can help him to finance the family. Without education, chances are higher of getting a man that looks at you as a burden. *“When you don’t have a job, the husband can mistreat you cause you don’t have anything to do, but if you are educated, you have your own money you can get up yourself” (R1, Nr 2).*

However, the questions that must be raised are, how “modern” will they become when they are also torn between “modern” and “traditional” thinking? And, how modern will the population be when less than 20% of the population has secondary education or more? Kelly (1992) claimed education could only give girls knowledge, skills and credentials. Without changing the structures that keep women subservient to men, gender equality in the society will not happen.

### **6.3.2 Benefits of education for their family**

Through the investment of individuals’ skills and knowledge it is expected that the family and local environment benefits from them and become strengthened. This relationship was indeed pointed out by the girls during the interviews. The girls were very concerned about how they could help their families when they were educated and had a job. *“[Education] (...) helps you make a good future, pay up for your parents, and even to help the younger brothers and sisters” (Girl 16 years old in S2, R1).* Again, a job and money is necessary if one wants to help and care for one’s own family. This relationship is illustrated in figure 6.4 above with an arrow going from “job and money” to “care of family”.

Helping their own family to gain knowledge and skills like knowing how to read and write is connected to the “quality of life” perspective and social development. Illiteracy, for example, has been seen as a major aspect that hinders social and economic development. It has been especially women and girls that have lagged behind the men (Husén and Postlethwaite, 1994a) and, still, literacy is seen as an important indicator for development. For example, one of the indicators in the MDGs measured the ratio of literate women to men. In Uganda today, literate women to men have increased from 0.70 in 1985 to 0.86 in 2004 (Globalis, 2006), and the adult female literacy rate is 59% (Save the Children, 2005). Even though Museveni started literacy campaigns in the country in the 1980s (Ssekamwa and Lugumba, 2001), illiteracy among women is still a development problem in the country.

Nevertheless, both the girls and the world community believe girls' education can be an agent for decreasing development deficiencies. *"If I completed my studies and I would get a job I can also educate them because they want, they want education. To fight illiteracy, because my family is very poor"* (Girl 15 years old in S3, R2). One of the arguments for investing in girls' education by the World Bank (2006c) is the creation of intergenerational benefits. The World Bank might understand "intergenerational benefits" as educated mothers will lead to educated children. The girls show that they would also help siblings and maybe even parents to get some education, this should also be included as a intergenerational benefit.

The girls understanding of being a good mother fits perfectly with the arguments put forth by the world community. The World Bank's (2006c) view that educated mothers will educate their children is precisely what the girls also expect from education. *"A lady tries to teach her children what to do. [The women] carry out a lot of responsibilities, to see that their children grow up well, and if you don't educate them how will they know that a child has to read books?"* (U1, Nr 2). The girls also thought educated mothers would care about the child's health by taking them for medical care if the child was sick, give the child nutritious food and be observant towards hygiene. *"You know which type of food to give the child in order to avoid, what? – [To avoid] diseases"* (R1, Nr?). Like the girls, the Save the Children (2005) and the GCE (2005), for example, see a strong relationship between education, being a good mother, and protection against infant and child mortality. When studying the list of arguments from the World Bank (2006c) for reasons to invest in girls' education, it is interesting that the elements that came last on their list were the elements the girls mentioned first and found most important.

Figure 6.5: The benefits of girls' education: A comparison between the World Bank list and the girls interviewed (Bold text indicates mutual expectations)

The World Banks list (2006c)	The girls argumentation
1) Reduce women's fertility rates	<b>1) Increase women's labour force participation rates and earnings</b>
2) Lower infant and child mortality rates	<b>2) Create intergenerational educational benefits</b>
3) Lower maternal mortality rates	3) Healthy children – protection from diseases
4) Protect against HIV/Aids infection	4) Respect and self-worth
<b>5) Increase women's labour force participation rates and earnings</b>	
<b>6) Create intergenerational educational benefits</b>	

The girls, when arguing why it was important that girls received an education, they did not mention protection from HIV/Aids, reducing maternal mortality and child mortality rates. However, we might not expect them to have the knowledge of all the possible outcomes. The girls point out what concerns them, they want to be able to take care of their family, both present and future, and being “productive” mothers that are working and having healthy children in school seems most important for the girls interviewed.

**6.3.3 Benefits of education for the society**

“When you educate a girl, you are educating a nation” (U1, Nr 7). This expression I heard several times while I was in Uganda, however it was only the group in U1 that expressed this during the focus groups. It is interesting that this expression, maybe coming from NGOs and the world community has also reached the grassroots and become a slogan also here. The belief that girls' education can make a difference is great in the areas I visited in Uganda. The girls, also from the other focus groups interviewed believed that girls' education could develop the country, both politically and socially, often in a very similar manner as argued by the world community.

However, it is important to emphasise the strong connection between individual respect and social and political development of the nation, the way the girls' looked at it. For example, it is through their respective positions, such as being a politician, a judge or a businesswoman



that they can be powerful and take part in social change. *“People who are not educated and you are a girl in the society you are not considered a respective person, but if you are educated you can be elected to any post”* (R2, Nr?) Thus, education can promote respect also beyond the family and community, but also to the national level.

The girls knew women could be involved in politics if they were educated, some girls even mentioned the possibilities of becoming the president, though no women has ever been president in Uganda. *They say that only the boy are the one who’s suppose to be the president, but even the girls can be president if you are educated* (R1, Nr?). However, the awareness that even women can have powerful positions in the nation might indicate that the increased share of women in the Ugandan Parliament to 25% in 2004 has been noticed by the population (Globalis, 2006). This progress might even strengthen the political development dimension in the country. Political participation like voting and making decisions is strengthening the political power to women and their interests and it is believed this will help to develop the country because also the “other half” of the population are heard and are part of the decision making process. The girls’ expectations towards education and political development are precisely the same as the world community.

*When a girl goes to school, she can also get to know the responsibilities in [the] society, (...) and they can also participate in politics, which never used to be there. (...) The country can benefit from them* (U1, Nr 2).

To compare the world community’s expectations to girls’ education and social development to that of the girls’, also shows strong similarities. As already discussed in the benefits of education to family, both the world community and the girls expected that educated girls would become better mothers. However, the girls interviewed also mentioned things such as protecting the environment, fighting illiteracy and poverty. *“Girls are more important when they finish their education because they can help the needed people, old people who can’t manage to care for themselves”* (R1, Nr 4). The UN and the MDGs greatest goal is to eradicate poverty, they believe girls’ education and gender equality are important conditions in terms of reaching that goal, but also reaching all of the other MDGs.

## 6.4 Conclusion

The girls understand the support and lack of support of the government and school quite similarly. They focus on material support, the problem of school fees, but also motivational factors. When pointing out what the school and government do for them it is often educational factors that affect the educational quality as illustrated in figure 6.2, factors such as teacher quality, physical environment, learning materials and the economy of school. However, the girls bring up other factors that they feel also affects the quality of the school, which should be added into the model. I call these new factors “(anti-discriminating) learning environment” and “educational policies”.

When understanding the support from their own family, the girls are very positive. They feel their family supported them with money for school fees and other necessities and that their parents give them encouragement. It is clear that the resources of the parents and the extended family are an important determiner of school attendance. However, when asking a less direct question about family support the girls revealed issues related to gender differences and discrimination of females based on a rate of return thinking, but also a traditional patriarchal thinking that men are superior to women. When the girls discussed gender differences and lack of support from the family, heated debates started in the focus groups, showing the conflict between modern and traditional thinking. The girls seemed to be standing between the modern and the traditional, arguing at times for both views.

When analysing the girls’ expectations of own individual education, comparisons were made to the world community’s expectations described in chapter two. In most cases it seems like the girls shared the same view as the world community. The reason for this is unknown, but it seems like the grassroots has accepted the belief in progress and development through education that was developed in Europe centuries ago. The girls are expecting greater job opportunities, increased income, greater responsibilities towards family and a better and easier life in the future. Although they are very positive towards education, expecting it to benefit them, they have not the same expectation as the Linear model described in chapter two. The girls’ expectations are much more nuanced, also seeing there might be problems like for example getting a job.

When discussing the benefits for the family the girls were concerned with both their present and future family, while the World Bank and Save the Children, for example, are only concerned with the future family in terms of becoming more capable and productive mothers. The comparison also demonstrated the same expectations towards political and social development. The girls recognize the link between education and a job, money, care of the family, and development of the society. The girls understood it is secondary or higher education that can give them a better future. Scholars such as Heward (1999) and Tomasevski (2003) support their belief, arguing that women's autonomy, fertility rate, and eradication of poverty can only be improved if girls get secondary education or more. However, there are also many other non-educational factors that need to be changed if gender equality in the society is to become a reality (Kelly, 1992).

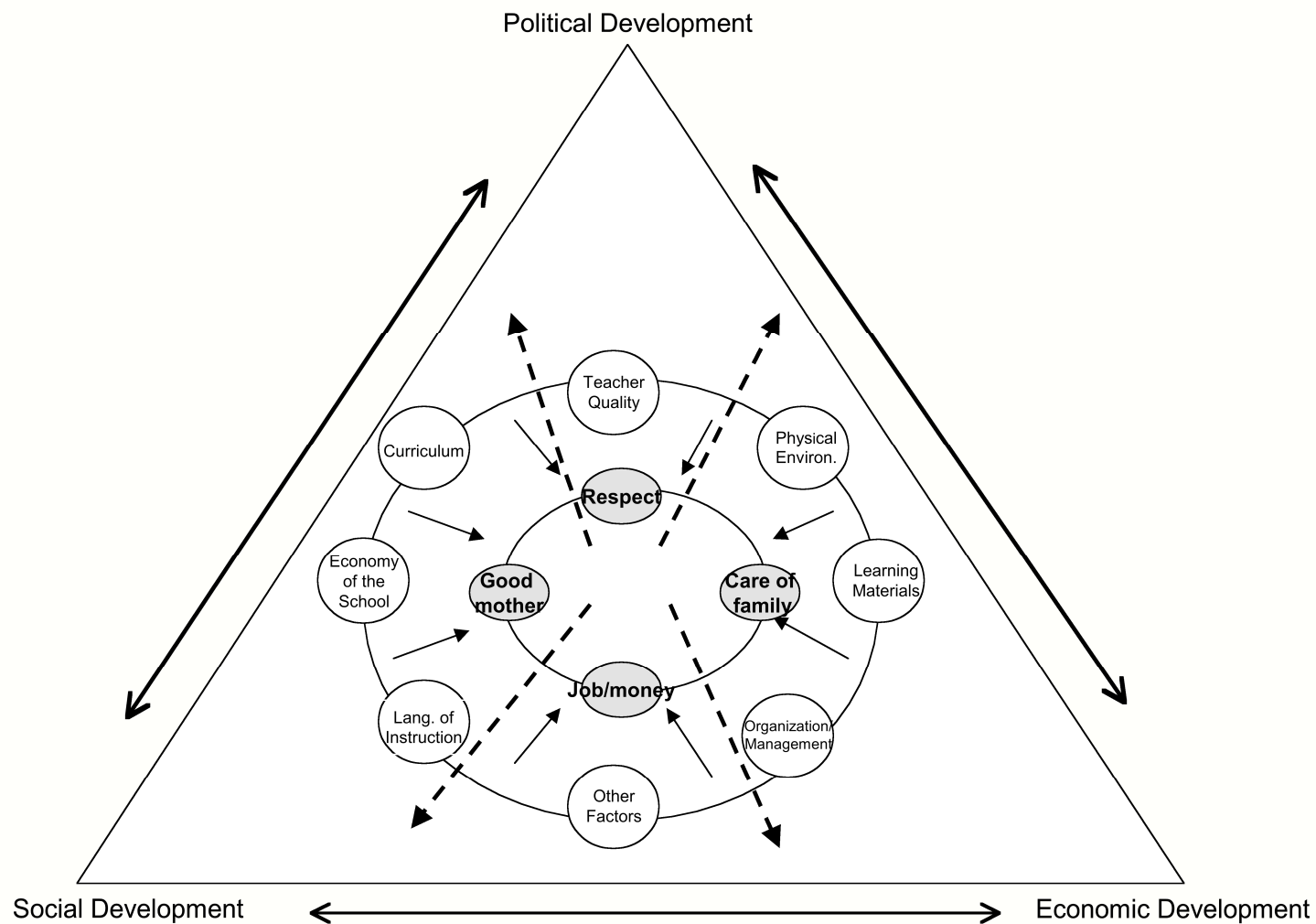
An interesting point is that the girls expected respect from their family, community and even at the national level when they obtain an education. Respect achieved from secondary education and a job was seen as necessary if they are to improve their family and even the nation. The girls even presented a new dimension, a dichotomy view that I have called "heaven"(educated) and "hell"(uneducated). They expected education would benefit the moral of the girl child. If a girl child gets education she will become a good and respected person (heaven), if not she is uneducated she might become a sinner (hell). The world community as it is described in chapter two, does not consider the element of respect, however similar concepts are mentioned like self-esteem and autonomy. However, as a concluding remark, both the world community and the girls interviewed seem to agree that the "value" of a person increases with education, and it is the aspect of a job and their own money that seemed to be the key to all the other benefits.

Fägerlind and Saha (1989) have already concluded that education and development is a complex matter. Nobody today will claim that there is a *causal* relationship between them. Still, as showed during this study, people believe there is a relationship, especially between girls' education and national development. My findings show that this belief is expressed from a grassroots level and up to an international level. However to keep in mind the criticism of the development concept made by Sachs (1992), Esteva (1992) and Escobar (1995) can be useful. Sachs (1992) claimed there has not been any "development" since the southern hemisphere was declared an underdeveloped area. Thus it has been argued that the concept of "development" is not working and it is a reminder that great structural changes need to be

made if the world is to become more fair and equal between the genders and between countries in the years to come (Sachs, 1992; Esteva, 1992; Escobar, 1995). On the other hand, we should not lose all hope, there are still reasons to believe that education can improve the lives of individuals. However, we should be careful not to expect that education alone can improve the national level, especially when the net enrolment in secondary education is lower than 20% in Uganda.

As a last conclusion, based on the theoretical framework and the answers the girls gave I have revised figure 6.2, showing the educational system inside the nation, dependant on the contribution and support of the state. A strong and resourceful government is necessary to be able to develop quality education based on the factors described earlier. The educational system (with new quality factors based on the girls answers) is “developing” the individuals, which is showed by arrows going from the educational factors to the smallest ring. The belief is that it is the individuals that will develop the nation, illustrated with arrows going out from the smallest circle. Certainly, this study has shown that this is easier said than done and that other non-educational factors might intervene in this process. For the educational system to become one of many agents for development, the nation has to create it, and it needs to be appropriate to the development needs of the country.

Figure 6.6: A revised version of the relationship between education and national development



## 6.5 Personal reflections and additional discussion

### 6.5.1 Further research: discovering the background of the morality theme

The findings described within the theme Morality are an interesting discovery because it shows a new dimension of the views and attitudes from the grassroots on the importance of education. New investigations are therefore necessary in trying to develop the theme further so that we can perhaps understand the underlying aspects of the dichotomy of “heaven and hell”.

Using African indigenous knowledge as the theoretical framework, for example, could give us other explanations of the morality theme. African indigenous knowledge has a holistic nature with an interrelationship between nature, human beings and the supernatural: “African indigenous knowledge systems must be understood in relation to a world-view which is realised in religious ceremonies, rituals and other practices” (Breidlid, 2004:5). Understanding the comments from the girls’ in relation to education and being a good Christian from this perspective, for example, could give interesting findings since a spiritual connection is part of their culture. It could also be tempting to understand the findings from a psychological perspective, investigating if lack of access to secondary education gives apathy, lower self-esteem or lack of future hopes based on the belief that the chances of getting a good life and future (heaven) girls are unable to finish their secondary education let alone access higher education.

It would also be interesting to search for the topic in new groups. Will the same way of expression be discovered? It could, for example, be exciting to gather groups with regard to religion: do several religious groups share this idea, or is it only found in one? Differences in the “nature” of the genders would have also been interesting to compare: is this moral only concerning the “nature of girls” or is it also concerning boys? If it is only connected to the nature of girls can it be linked to the to a patriarchal way of thinking? Also, are the views found from girls attending secondary school different from girls those who only have attended primary education?

Perhaps focus groups would still be an appropriate technique to use for further research, because the technique's advantages are to discover attitudes and norms in a society or group. However, the focus group technique will demand a small research team with the resources available to be able to handle all the aspects of data gathering and analysis. After the focus groups, individual interviews could be used to develop the theme further. In a study by Michell (1998) focus group were used to search for "how it is" and individual interviews to search for "how it feels". How is it when girls are left to sit at home without education? And; how does it feel to be left without education when believing it can cause immoral behaviour?

### **6.5.2 Secondary education –what direction should it take?**

Both during the fieldwork and in the process of writing this study, the situation of secondary education in Uganda has been one of the areas that I have been preoccupied with. I believe the low enrolment rate in secondary education is a problem, it affects for example girls' enrolment to a great extent, however to solve the problem is a difficult matter.

From one side, as we have seen also from this study, both at the grassroots level and the government level there is a wish to expand secondary education, making it more open to more people. Today secondary education is mainly for students in urban centres and upper class families. During the election in February 2006, Museveni even promised free secondary education (Universal secondary education), similar to what he did with primary education in 1997. Also on an international level experts (in a UNESCO meeting, 2001) have argued that secondary education should be given a high priority both in developed and developing countries. It is said that secondary education best can develop a country and eradicate poverty. Scholars presented in this study have also argued for an expansion and improvement of secondary education (Heward, 1999; Holsinger and Cowell, 2000; Brock-Utne, 2000, Tomasevski, 2003).

But on the other side, however, universal secondary education will be a huge expense for the country, and Uganda depends upon financial support from donor countries. When Uganda introduced universal primary education, the country had an explosion in the enrolment. Would we expect that to happen also with secondary school if this level also becomes universal? And will a rapid enrolment then go on the expense of the quality of education? As

seen from the main discussion earlier, poor quality education will not contribute to national development or give the individuals the skills and knowledge needed to be able to change their own lives. Lauglo (2004) claims large gaps between, for example, universal education and the capacity to achieve education for all, only encourage unrealistic projects. He argues that extending education must be a gradually process. Only when the majority of the children are enrolled should the educational level become compulsory. Uganda today is far from having the majority of its population in secondary education. If following the advice of Lauglo, Uganda should be careful to make the whole secondary education level universal overnight. Instead they could try to work gradually step-by-step with the expansion of enrolments and then over some years try to make the O-level a part of 'basic education'.

The emphasis should also be on *finishing* secondary school with a certificate. How can Uganda manage to keep those students that are already enrolled stay and finish? The girls interviewed and the MoES's statistics show school fees, early pregnancies and marriage are the main causes for dropouts in secondary education. Trying to lower the school fees and encouraging parents to keep their children in school until they are finished with a certificate seems to be a wise priority for the government. The O-level should maybe become more flexible where crossover should be possible from both academic and vocational areas, thus becoming more comprehensive and diversified (Holsinger and Cowell, 2000). The education today seems to be based heavily on academic skills with the goal of being qualified to the next level. How useful are purely academic subjects for a student that might finish his or her education at O-level?

Lastly, I will come back to the strong relationship that the girls points out when arguing for the benefits of education. They were all concerned with what will happen *after* education, a brighter future is their main motivation. Have they for example attained the skills needed for the world of work? Will they be able to get a job? Today only 28% of women work in the wage-sector in Uganda (MoGLSD, 2006). If their chances of getting a job turn out to be impossible, what kind of signal is then sent out to the girls and their relatives? In the introduction I claimed that one of the most important factors when trying to get more girls into school is the expectations the girls and their relatives have about what education can do for them. If it turns out that the expectations are not honoured the way they expected, investment in girls' education might become in danger of becoming weakened. As seen from



this study, the girls interviewed are mainly positive. They see education as vital in their life, and education has a strong position in the communities I visited.

My reason for continuing my studies? Of course I want to become an important person in the future and I always admire my friends that are there at the university. Will I reach there? And I really like it. Those that are in A-level I really admire them and I just get encouraged to read my books and even me am reading hard so that I can be able to reach there (Girl, 16 years old in S2, R1).

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## Appendix A: The interview guide to the Focus Group Interviews –

First, some information to the group:

- Tell a bit about what focus group is about
- What is expected of them: respect each others opinion, let other finish speaking and so on
- Tell them about the recorder and what I will do with the information, explain why I need to record
- Tell them that it is possible to turn it off and say something off the record
- If you think some of the questions are unpleasant to answer, then just do not answer and if you like you can tell me later when the group discussion is over.

OPENING QUESTIONS, less than 5 min

1. Can you tell me who you are, the subject you like the best at school and what you most enjoy when you are not at school?

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS, less than 10 min

2. How important is education for you?

TRANSITION QUESTIONS, 20 min app. 10 each

3. Now I will give out some paper, and on this paper I want you to list the 5 most important factors for *girls* when continuing education?"

KEY QUESTIONS, 30 min

4. Is your family supporting your education? If so, how?
5. Is your school supporting your education? If so, how?
6. Is the government supporting your education? If so, how?
7. Do you think it is harder for girls than boys to continue schooling? If so, how? (Use time on this one)

ENDING QUESTIONS, less than 10 min

8. If you had the chance to give advice to the government in Uganda about trying to get more girls into secondary and higher education, what advice would you give?

9. I wanted you to help me to answer the question how girls in secondary education in Uganda view secondary education and their reasons for continuing their education. Is there anything that I have missed? Is there anything that you came wanting to say that you didn't get the chance to say?

## **Appendix B: The questioner given out to the focus groups participants**

1) Name:

2) Age:

3) What grade are you in?:

4) What level of education have your father?:

5) What occupation have your father?:

6) What level of education have your mother?:

7) What occupation have your mother?:

8) Do you have any siblings? If so:

- How many brothers?:
- How many sisters?:
- What grade are they in? If they are not at school, what are they doing?

8) What are your plans after secondary school?

9) What kind of occupation would you like to have when you finish school?