Exclusion from Education a Matter Beyond School
A study of girls’ experiences of exclusion from education in Uganda

Sara Lång
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My master thesis is based on a minor field study, which was carried out in Kampala during a two months period at the end of 2009. The study was conducted in cooperation with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). I would like to take the chance to express my thanks to the people who have supported me throughout the project.

First of all I would like to say thank you to my supervisor Clas Lindberg who has encouraged me in my creativity with an open mind and a great deal of trust. Clas has also made me feel calm, in situations when most needed.

The study would not have been made possible if it was not for Hans-Åke Öström who supported my initial idea to do a field study, and provided me with useful contacts at the Swedish Embassy of Sweden in Kampala. The Ambassador Anderson Johnson introduced me to one of my contacts in the field, Anna Wrange, Counsellor of Political and Cultural Affairs.

My other contact person in Kampala was Rober Kiwanuka, counsellor at the Kisenye Youth Centre. I would like to thank him for the warm welcoming at the youth centre each morning and his time-consuming work, arranging school visits and interviews.

One of the first persons I got in contact with in Kampala was Cato N. Lund, and I could not have chosen a better person to introduce me to the field. It makes me happy to know that there exist people like Cato in the world.

I would also like to thank two people who have inspired the work, namely Maja Janmyr and Lina Währner. I much appreciated the exchange of ideas and the evening discussions at the dinner table in Kampala.

I would also like to say thank you to Danielle van der Burgt for her important comments on the thesis.

Another important person who has been there throughout the process is Katarina Korén. Thank you for your late evening readings and for your tremendous ability to listen. Two other amazing people who have challenged and supported the work are Jenny Parliden and Sebastian Sirén. I cannot communicate in words the amount of appreciation I feel towards your tireless contributions. Thanks to the both of you.

I would like dedicate my last, and biggest, gratitude to all the people in Kampala who have taken part in my study. Thank you for sharing your ‘everyday stories’.

Uppsala 22nd of March, 2010
Sara Lång
# TABLE OF CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION 4
   1.1 Study purpose 6
   1.2 Disposition 7

2. GROUNDED THEORY 8

3. A CHILD AND YOUTH CENTRED APPROACH 14
   3.1 Observations, classroom workshops and interviews 17
   3.2 Group interviews 18
   3.3 One-on-one interviews 19

4. RESULTS 20
   4.1 Poverty 23
   4.2 Parental care 25
   4.3 Gender roles 26
   4.4 The lack of teachers 30
   4.5 The school environment 33
   4.6 The lack of motivation 34
   4.7 The rural context 34

5. LITERATURE REVIEW 36
   5.1 The body 37
   5.2 The individual 38
   5.3 The family 40
   5.4 The local Community 42
   5.5 The nation 43
   5.6 A global perspective 45
   5.7 School facilities 45

6. MODEL 49

7. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION 51

8. REFERENCES 54
1. INTRODUCTION

It is five o’clock in the morning and ‘Judith’, 14, just woke up. She has to sweep the floors in the family house before getting herself ready to walk the four kilometres to school. She often arrives late. Her favourite subject is English literature and she dreams of becoming a teacher. By getting an education she increases the possibility to support a family in the future. She does not think her teacher knows about her plans, since there are 80 students in the class and no time for counselling. ‘Judith’ is not one of the students who actively participates in classroom discussions and therefore she often chooses to sit in the back. She thinks math is the most difficult subject. When the school day is finished she hurries back home, because she wants to reach the house before dark. Back home she helps her mother to prepare the evening supper. Before she goes to sleep she prays to God that her mother will be able to raise enough money to pay the school fees so she can complete secondary school. While she is still in school she will not have to think about marriage - a thought that scares her.1

‘Judith’ s’ situation and thoughts exemplifies the daily routine for thousands of girls living in Uganda. The example is collected from my field study in Kampala, and reflects the constant struggle girls are experiencing when it comes to balance the school work with the responsibilities at home. It is also an indication that the school environment can be perceived as unfriendly and the route to school as dangerous and exhausting. However, ‘Judith’ considers her education as a blessing. She knows that not everyone is able to attend school and that the dropout rates are high. The reasons for girls not being able to benefit from education are multifaceted and this study aims at covering the issue from a range of perspectives.

Educating a girl can be seen as consumption, whilst the boy’s education is a valued investment. This view is affected by family traditions such as early marriages and payment of bride price, which are causing girls to drop out of school. Not attending school can lead to exclusion from the community and from individual life chances. The school is a representation and a symbol highly valid for the community. It is also a place for self-identification closely connected to future capabilities.

Worldwide, 75 million children of primary school age are not enrolled in the educational system; the majority of these are girls. Seven out of ten live in sub-Saharan Africa or in South and West Asia. The two major documented causes of exclusion are poverty and marginalization. The disadvantages mainly affect children in rural or remote communities and children in urban slums.2

In Uganda there is a big difference between rural and urban schools concerning the quality of education and the education facilities. The explanation for this can partly be traced back to the 19th century. The north and north-eastern parts of the country are more deprived than the south-eastern and eastern parts. The infrastructure was developed in connection with the natural assets and it was to these areas the first missionaries arrived and started to

---

1 Interview with ‘Judith’.
2 OECD (2007). No more failures: ten steps to Equity in Education. Paris: OECD.
implement a Western educational system. These are all factors which have contributed to the uneven economical distribution the country is experiencing today. Political instability is another factor that cannot be overlooked in Uganda in terms of providing children with education. The central and western parts are relatively calm but the children living in the refugee camps do not get the education they are entitled to.

Map 1.1, Table 1.1 Uganda

![Map of Uganda showing the city Kampala, which is where the study has been conducted. On the above right is a table with information on demography and literacy rates. Source: World Atlas (www.worldatlas.com), EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008, UNESCO publication.]

This study has been conducted in the Kampala area, which is Uganda’s wealthiest region, and which also is characterized by a relatively liberal attitude towards tradition. However, the issue of girls’ exclusion from education is present. I have chosen not to present yearly statistics, considering boys’ and girls’ enrollment and drop-out rates, this because the report system between the schools and the national authority is inadequate and I do not wish to put too much emphasis on numbers which are not representative. Many children do not have a permanent settlement and are therefore not included in the statistics. Instead, I will base my assumption of girls’ exclusion from education on earlier studies and my interviews carried out in field.

Even though Uganda is experiencing problems with high dropout rates, there is a positive trend where more children each year are starting primary one. The enrollment rates have increased from 3 million students to 7.6 million since the implementation of the ‘Universal Primary Education’ (UPE) began in 1997. Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Nepal,

---

2 Interview with Ms. Maria Gorveth Nakiphende, Kampala Counselling and Diagnostic Centre.
3 Interview with Gender Desk officer Mrs. Rita Kyenye.
Yemen and Niger are other examples of counties where more girls are entering school. Afghanistan, Cayman Islands, Chad, Pakistan and Central African Republic are struggling with significant gender disparities, with the intake rate for girls less than 80% of that for boys.\textsuperscript{6}

While progress is being made in Uganda towards the Education for All goals and the Millennium Development Goals, by increasing enrolment rates, there is still a big problem with children dropping-out of school. The UPE program has been criticized for looking mostly at the quantity of enrolled students, whilst the quality of the education has gone down.\textsuperscript{7} This is noticeable especially in Luganda and English, and girls keep lagging behind in science and math.\textsuperscript{8}

However, numeracy and literacy skills are not the only way to measure knowledge and the societal impact of education. ‘Learning achievements’ needs to be conceived in relation to values, attitudes, knowledge and skills, which can meet the challenges of tomorrow. Education should be concerned with the individual’s effective participation in society. To accomplish a more accurate assessment the measurement also needs to include an emotional growth of learners or their development in terms of values and attitudes as well as the quality of learning processes and the environment.\textsuperscript{9}

The study will move forward to discuss how the experience of education is interlinked with different aspects and levels of society. ‘Education for all’ cannot only be viewed from a ‘school-perspective’; it is a broader societal problem which needs to be considered holistically. This particular study is based on the participating girls’ experiences concerning education. This view is essential in order to grasp the meaning of education in relation to children’s everyday life and as a creator of societal conditions. ‘Judith’, together with the other girls who have participated in the study, has contributed to a widening of the concept of inclusive and exclusive education in relation to their specific context.

### 1.1 Study purpose

Gender disparities may have been reduced, but studies show that there still remains a gender gap within education.\textsuperscript{10} The physical and social environment is making it difficult for girls to perform to their fullest capability. On the positive side, the access to education is increasing. In Uganda the UPE program has resulted in more girls entering school and the country has become a model for neighbouring countries. However, the success cannot only be measured in the number of students starting primary one. The aim of this study is therefore to investigate and make structures visible, which are excluding girls from the formal education system. This will be done by problematize what education means to the girls within the local context and to

---


\textsuperscript{7} Interview with Josephine Abalo, at Mulve Trust.

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{9} UNESCO (2009), \textit{Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education}. Paris: UNESCO.

\textsuperscript{10} UNESCO (2008), pp. 85-86.
discuss the possibilities and obstacles Uganda is facing when it comes to providing young women with a good quality education.

The study will focus on girls who are still in school as well as those who have dropped out of school. Not attending school is a palpable form of physical and social exclusion and by looking at why girls drop out of school I hope to capture the interlinked processes shaping the conception of education in relation to the individual and the society as a whole. The purpose has been divided into the two following questions:

- How are the girls ascribing meaning to education and the school in relation to their own life and to the wider community?
- Which different excluding factors are affecting the girls’ experiences from education?

1.2 Disposition
After this short introduction a description of Grounded Theory will follow, which has been used to guide the work. Chapter two describes the overall strategy of data gathering and the generating of an explanatory framework. On page ten a model is presented, which visualises the different steps reflecting the course of the study, as well as the disposition of the thesis. Thereafter, in chapter three, the specific methods used in this study are discussed in relation to the ‘new’ child and youth centred approach.

In chapter four the results from the fieldwork are presented and categorised according to Grounded Theory. These categories are the foundation of the literature review which you will find in chapter five. Here the perception is changed and the categories are analysed vertically, starting with the body and ending up at a global level. However, it is still the girls’ experiences that form the basis for the analysis. The literature is gathered from various disciplines, which reflect the cross-cutting dimensions of the research area.

In chapter six the theory, or more accurate ‘the explanatory model’, is presented. The model is an abstraction of the categories in chapter four supported by the literature review in chapter five. The final chapter contains a concluding discussion, which will focus on the results in relation to the overall purpose. The final chapter also discusses the prospects and hinders of using Grounded Theory.
2. GROUNDED THEORY

During the 1970s, researchers within Human Geography began to question the positivism of spatial science and the strong belief in quantitative methods. The evolvement of a more humanistic geography started with front figures such as David Lowenthal, Leonard Guelke and Yi-Fu Tuan. The new movement focused more on finding the unique rather than making wide generalizations. By denying the existence of an objective world and an objective researcher, Humanistic Geography challenged prevailing assumptions and brought the subjective experience into the centre of attention. Qualitative methods such as observations, interviews, group interviews and art analyses were used instead of extensive data. Since Humanistic Geography puts much faith in the meaning of fine arts and subjective experiences, the line between knowledge and science can be difficult to define.

There has been a growing demand within Human Geography to further discuss and evaluate the use of qualitative methods. Cathy Bailey et al contributed to this debate by criticising the division between ‘science’ and ‘creativity’, which they believe is unfounded. The polarisation of rhetorical and scientific thinking has been questioned by feminist theories. The division is created by traditional masculinity, which stresses the importance of rationality, reason and objectivity. Feminist theory do not simply refer to the separation of quantitative methods as masculine and qualitative methods as feminine, but is sceptical of the tendency to view certain modes of sciences as incompatible opposites. Bailey sees Grounded Theory as an approach used in order to balance the two sides by combining qualitative methods with a structured strategy.

Grounded theory is not an example of how to gather information, but rather a way of summarising the collected data and formulate a theory. Eva Sandstedt refers to Grounded Theory as an extensive strategy, where the gathering of information and the generation of the theory take place simultaneously. Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss developed the theory to provide us with relevant predictions, applications, interpretations and explanations.

The main emphasis of this study will be on interpretations and explanations.

Glaser and Strauss separate substantive and formal theory. In this case, the study of girls’ exclusion from education belongs to the substantive theory. The questions asked are generated from a socio-geographical perspective on education, rather than a conceptual exploration. Substantive theory cannot, as Glaser and Strauss put it, be formulated directly from an established formal theory. It is important that the data is not pushed into preconceived theory.

12 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
Instead, the formal theory can complement the analysis further along the way to develop the substantive theory.\(^{17}\)

The dialectic relationship is also the base of the ‘next-question technique’, where the researcher gathers data in different steps. After each step, the results are analysed. The term is borrowed from Melville Dalton and is a process of filling the knowledge gaps.\(^{18}\) This is done through the work of coding, where as many categories as possible are identified. As the survey continues, these categories are put in a wider context and a more nuanced image is created. The different terms are examined and a theory of how they are connected is developed.\(^{19}\)

Glaser’s and Strauss’ theory can therefore be dismantled into categories, characteristics of the categories and hypothesis. The terms should not be seen as a reflection of reality, but as a ‘theoretical construction’ of prevailing conditions. The result is supposed to show deeper relations valid not only for the empiric selection, but standing on its own and shedding light on a wider phenomenon.\(^{20}\) Therefore, the categories and properties can be derived from the data, both with a degree of conceptual abstraction.

In short, conceptual categories and properties have a life apart from the evidence that gave praise to them.\(^{21}\)

Inspired by Glaser and Strauss, Orlando Mella and Kathy Charmaz, I have designed a model of how Grounded Theory has been used in this study. In reality, the process is not as linear as the model indicates since the data is collected through a continuous dialogue between the empirical data and the theory.

---

\(^{21}\) Ibid.
Model 2.1 Grounded Theory

The model visualises the working process and the different steps leading up to the final analysis. 
The initial stage of the theoretical sampling is the process of collecting data. The study is focusing on the comprehensive problem of why Ugandan girls are being excluded from school. The need to further highlight girls right to high quality education was introduced in the first chapter of this study. At the end of the 1960s and throughout the 1970s it became important to focus the research within Human Geography on inequalities in society. The political waves during this time brought a critical thinking into the discipline, which can be connected both to Humanistic Geography and to Grounded Theory by the word reflexivity. This implies an awareness of how the researcher as a subject effects and contributes to the study. In the next chapter, I will address the difficulties I faced while working with children and adolescents in a, for me, new context. I will also discuss the different methods used in this particular study.

Qualitative methods have been questioned concerning validity, but the problem lies more within the narrow definition. Within qualitative research it is the ‘validity of the analysis’ that creates the foundation for a validity rather than representativeness of events. Grounded Theory cannot escape the overall problem with empiric studies within social science where the theoretical and operational level needs to find a common ground. It cannot be assured that this is done satisfactorily, because of the question of interpretation. The dialectic relationship between the empirical and the theoretical parts can be assured by accurate documentation, openness and argumentation.

Blaise has published a framework suited for the use of Grounded Theory in Human Geography. In the table below I have gathered her principles for applying Grounded Theory in Human Geography and described how I, inspired by Glaser and Strauss, Charmaz, and Mella, have intended to use her principles.

---

25 Ibid.
**Table 2.1 Application of Grounded Theory**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The need for theoretical sensitivity</strong></td>
<td>Make it visible in which context the question of girls’ exclusion from education is raised. Make sure my personal experiences are being used and critically discussed throughout the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflexive management that strengthens qualitative validity</strong></td>
<td>The process of collecting data should be reflexive. The gathered material is constantly compared and results in new questions. The evolving thoughts are being kept in a diary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constant comparison by continued questioning</strong></td>
<td>The study is not pre-planned accept from the first step. Using the “next-question technique” the following studies will evolve from the data rather than being pre-planned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Through documentation of procedures to leave a “paper trail” audit that strengthens qualitative validity</strong></td>
<td>Throughout the sampling of data this is done manually in a diary. To visualise the coding and linkages I will use the program Atlas.ti.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clear and open reporting of procedures</strong></td>
<td>The study will be described in detail from beginning to end to make the reader aware of the preconditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clear discussion of how theory ‘fits’ the reality of the respondents’ lives, with rationale offered for ‘negative cases’</strong></td>
<td>When interviewing the girls the questions should be tied to their own lives. The results that do not fit the frame will be declared and alternative explanations put forward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generation of criteria for evaluation of particular research</strong></td>
<td>Motivate the choice of categories and how the created terms develop from the empirical material and finally can be seen as standing on its own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recognition of the researcher’s influence on the research findings (interpretation is always partial)</strong></td>
<td>The paper should be characterised by an ongoing discussion of my own role as a researcher, student and individual in the gathering and analysing of the material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of archives for data and documentation relating to research procedures</strong></td>
<td>The archive material can be found mainly in Kampala, which makes it difficult to access for most readers. I will therefore compensate this by not only referring to, but also mediate the content of the documents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Blaise principles will be of use to create transparency in the study process and to have an ongoing discussion about reflexivity.*

These principles will also be the foundation of the analysis in chapter 7, where I will discuss how Grounded Theory can be applied as an alternative method in Human Geography, and critically discuss Grounded Theory in relation to the study of girls’ education in Uganda.

The respondents are chosen using a ‘theoretical selection’, which does not strive to be representative of a whole population, but rather to acknowledge the existence of different views. The responses are then analysed, irrespectively of how many of the respondents who happened to express similar views. The most important thing is to recognize that a phenomenon exists, rather than indentifying the spreading of a phenomenon. Therefore, the respondents are drawn from the researcher’s presumption of who would be best suited to answer the question, instead of a random selection.

Using this method resulted in me interviewing girls aged 11 to 25, where some of these girls still attended school, whilst others had dropped-out. The method was combined with the ‘snow-ball effect’ to get in contact with the girls in the right ages and from different backgrounds. The number of girls to be interviewed was not decided in advance, but continually adjusted throughout the process.

The depth of the theory refers to the amount of data collected from each group or individual. The work should be guided by the main categories developed in the early stages of the research. In this study I will use the computer program Atlas.ti to demonstrate how the different categories were born. The interviews were transcribed and by closely studying the text, different phenomena were identified and resulted in the hierarchy of codes. At the beginning the codes are similar to the wordings of the respondents, but in the end a more abstract model is developed.

The substantive theory might be of importance to other related areas (outside education for girls in the local context), although this study do not have the implications to lead up to a broader grounded formal theory. This does not mean that the study is not valid in a broader context, rather that I will use Grounded Theory as a way of collecting and analysing the material. In the end, I will present a model in order to further clarify the different interlinked processes causing girls’ exclusion from school. This model will be based on the empiric material collected in Kampala, Uganda, but it will surely touch upon problems which can be translated to other places and therefore lay ground for a broader discussion about girls’ exclusion from education in Sub-Sahara.

---

3. A CHILD AND YOUTH CENTRED APPROACH

There has been a change in the research involving children, where the child is starting to be recognised as an individual and a subject, rather than a research object. Children are acknowledged as social actors who actively shape social, political, cultural and economic structures. However, it is important to bear in mind that the concept of childhood is socially constructed and that each child is experiencing their roles in society differently. Geography has contributed to this discussion by focusing on the spatial variations in childhood and emphasising the importance of local and global structures. There has been quite an amount of research focusing on children in Western society, and their marginalization from adult society. However, so far less interest has been shown concerning the ‘special position of exclusion’ of children in developing countries. Children are ‘meaning-producing beings’ and by studying girls who have dropped out of school, and those who are still in school, the question about multiple childhoods is accentuated. This study will focus on spatial and social exclusion and the creation of identity in relation to education and educational space. Geography has become more concerned with how those everyday spaces, such as the home, the school and the street, are producing and reproducing identities. Geography also has an important role to play in the new social studies of childhood, since space never can be reduced to mere location.

There have been other studies conducted by geographers in Kampala on children’s perception of space. Lorraine Young and Hazel Barrett have emphasised the importance of a child centred approach. In their study on street children’s interaction with the socio-spatial environment in Kampala, they choose to work with mental-maps and photo diaries as a way of making the children active participants in the research process. Methods thought of as child-friendly are focus group discussions, observation, drawings, spider diagrams, resource mapping; and seasonal calendars. A positive aspect of these approaches, and the ones used in Young and Barret’s study, is the minimized involvement of the researcher in the collection of data. The researcher does not become fully integrated with the research subject. Therefore, methods like photo diaries can be a way of getting closer to an ‘insider perspective’.

---

38 Young- Barrett (2000), pp. 141-152.
However, the existence of child-friendly approaches or imperative methods working with children is being questioned by for example Pia Christensen and Allison James in the book *Research with Children Perspectives and Practices*. They do not want to give prominence to a certain working method. Children are capable of participating in structured and unstructured interviews as well as fill-in-questionnaires.\textsuperscript{39} Jaqueline Scott shares this position, and sees much use in quantitative data when it comes to locating ‘childhood’ within a life-course perspective.\textsuperscript{40}

A characteristic for the new methodologies in childhood research is the increasing demand for *reflexivity*. The term refers to ‘the self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as researcher’.\textsuperscript{41} The concept has been developed by feminist researchers and others from various disciplines. When working with children, reflexivity also recognises that the children are aware of the researcher and are actively interpreting and shaping the research process. Going into the fieldwork, the researcher will think of the situation as a study context, whereas the child will see the researcher as an outsider intruding their everyday life.\textsuperscript{42}

Therefore, it is necessary to consider the power relations between the researcher and the child taking part in the study. Berry Mayall is critical of researchers’ attempts to diminish and foresee the gap between the child and the researcher, which he thinks is impossible. Instead we should acknowledge that children are in a subordinate and marginal position and reflect how this affects the work.\textsuperscript{43} This view is partly shared by Linda McDowell who labels the distance between the scholars and their subjects as *barriers*. McDowell does not think there is a way of reducing these barriers completely and therefore it is important to have an ongoing discussion on how I, in this case, as a white middle class Western woman in my twenties is affecting the outcome of the study. Since I am a woman interviewing other women, the barriers are to some extent reduced.\textsuperscript{44} The girls identified themselves in relation to me as another woman and often started their sentences with “Well you know when (...)”, and they were curious to find out more about my thoughts on various issues such as virginity, sexuality, harassment, love and business management. Sometimes the barriers were not the issue, but rather the lack of barriers leading to friendship and expectations which can be difficult to live up to.

Apart from the shared experience of being a woman, the children and adults I met through the study considered me as an outsider. Some girls put up a defence, wanting to

\textsuperscript{39} Christensen-James (2000), p. 4.
\textsuperscript{42} Christensen-James (2000), p. 5.
\textsuperscript{43} Christensen-James (2000), pp. 120-135.
express the positive aspects of their education, in comparison to rural areas and
neighbourhood countries. Others brought out the negative sides, emphasising on the lack of
access to school facilities and unmotivated teachers. These one-sided descriptions are not said
to be false, but they bear witness of an awareness amongst children and young adults of what
picture they want to present. The power relation is therefore complex and depending on which
aspects you consider. The children and young adults were the ‘insiders’ and my source of
knowledge, they could laugh at my ignorance and choose what information to give or not to
give me. The power relations are, so to say, two folded and no neutrality exists. The strength
can sometimes be embedded in what is being left out of the study, and the researcher needs to
be aware of this to be in command of what he or she is doing.45

The field work took place in Kampala (map 1.1) at the end of November until the end of
December 2009. The informants were chosen by a theoretical sample, described in the
previous chapter as a part of Grounded Theory. Glaser and Strauss do not go further into
different methods of gathering data, however, the main guidance should be ‘filling the
knowledge gaps’. Therefore, I did not have a complete strategy planned out when I went into
the field. Since the gathering of material demanded flexibility, the method turned out to be
essential. Aside from filling the knowledge gaps, prevailing circumstances lead the way to
new information. One issue was the students Christmas break, which made it necessary to
visit the schools the first three weeks of my stay. I visited three schools situated a two hour’s
drive from Kampala, namely Kabalagala, Kiralamba and Walukuyo. The other two schools,
Nakasero High School and Old Kampala Primary School, were situated within Kampala. At
the two last mentioned schools, there was a lengthy and complex process to get the permission
to visit.46 In total I visited five schools where I conducted observations and classroom
workshops. The rest of the study was sited elsewhere. I was fortunate to get in contact with
Robert Kiwanuka, counsellor at the Kisenye youth centre. He became one of my key
informants and he introduced me and my study to girls whose experiences proved to be of
value for the study. The group interviews and the in-depth interviews were located at the
Kisenye youth centre.

Where the study takes place is important and Human Geographers should reflect on their
spaces of research.47 The school is a significant space for the children and for this study; it is
also a space where the children are not in control. To facilitate the discipline the school is a
place with a strict time and space division.48 The school environment is therefore not ideal for
conducting a dialogue with the children, since the barriers are built in to the environment.
However, the observations and classroom-workshops did provide me with valuable
information and was an important introduction to the Ugandan educational system. At the
Kisenye youth centre, my meeting with the girls took place in a waiting room. The

45 Rose, P. (1985), Writing on women: Essays in a renaissance. Middletown, CT:
Wesleyan University Press, p. 77.
47 Ibid.
atmosphere was less formal, but the privacy was limited, which can have had a restraining influence on the girls’ will to share private experiences.

Above I have described children’s geographies as an increasingly important sub-discipline within human geography and child centred approaches. The discussion will now continue with a description of the three steps of collecting material used in my study. Each step is integrated in the overall strategy, as can be seen in model 1.1 in the previous chapter.

3.1 Observations, classroom workshops and interviews

The first step involved five school visits where I got to meet the school principals and talk to the students in the classrooms. Observations are often used as an introduction to the field and the researcher will afterwards go further by exploring the question of interest using complementing methods. However, observations can be used for various reasons and in this case it was in order to achieve an understanding of the school environment, which can be seen as self-evident by the students themselves. The researcher’s own perception of the school environment can be a way to ameliorate the researcher’s understanding of the student’s experiences. The visits were filled with a warm welcoming with singing and dancing, which in one way confirmed my position as an ‘outsider’.

The observations were not guided by a strict observation scheme, but five themes were crystallised along the way. I focused on school location, classroom set-up, sanitation, access to playground, school kitchen and teacher accommodation. It would have been interesting to observe the students social interaction, but that would have implied a different kind of approach which did not suit the schools’ pressed schedule. It can also be difficult to know whether behaviour is spontaneous or not, and considering the earlier discussion of the school as a place with built in barriers this would have been even more difficult. The main interest was therefore reduced to the physical environment and the organisation of the students and gave me an idea of how the school was built and equipped.

In two of the schools I got the opportunity to conduct a workshop with a class of students. The classes were big and composed by both boys and girls. In Old Kampala Primary School there were 86 students in the class and at Nakasero Secondary School there were 72 students. I raised the following questions: Why do boys and girls drop out-of school? Do boys and girls drop-out of school for the same reasons? What can be done to prevent people from dropping-out of school? The students raised their hands when they wanted to contribute to the discussion and two of the students assisted me by writing keywords on the blackboard, very much like a ‘brainstorming’. The students were eager to answer the questions and the workshops were characterised by high activity (see model 4.1).

---

To finalise the first step I also interviewed four girls that recently had finished or were about to finish secondary school, this because I wanted to make sure that I had understood the practical aspects of the schools’ system. It was also a chance to begin to confirm the information gathered from the observations and classroom workshops and a chance for me to start formulating more intricate questions.

### 3.2 Group interviews

Talking to the respondents in school provided me with some general information about why students drop out of school, but too much focus was put on me as a visitor.\(^{55}\) To create an opportunity for dialogue and to focus on girls experiences of education I needed to find a more suitable space. Group interviews, or focus groups, offers a combination of the advantages from observation and one-on-one interviews, since the researcher has the opportunity to focus both on the content of what is being said and the social interaction.\(^{56}\) To some extent the girls started to have a dialogue with each other which diminished my influence on the topics being discussed. According to Lorraine Young and Hazel Barrett this is a favourable situation.\(^ {57}\)

The researcher should, however, remain the leader of the conversation and make sure the discussion is focusing on the right theme. These are the first two principles of structured group interviews. The third and last one is to make sure the group is suited for the specific question, in this case girls’ exclusion from education.\(^ {58}\) At the youth centre I was able to get in contact with girls who had dropped out of school and others who were still going to school. Two of the groups consisted of girls who had dropped out of school at primary or secondary level. The groups were put together with a composition of 4-5 girls in each, all in the ages 10 to 24. The questions put forward were designed for discussion about education and did not ask specifically for personal experiences. However, the girls often chose to express their thoughts by drawing from their own experiences. In two of the four interviews there was a problem with an uneven dynamic. There is no easy way of solving the problem that some girls are more talkative and straight forward than others, and instead I have to bear in mind that the ‘strong voices’ might have influenced the discussion more than others.\(^ {59}\) The fact that some of the girls did not speak English and that their comments had to be translated became problematic since I sometimes felt that important information was lost in the translation. I did not have an interpreter, so the girls helped each other to communicate their thoughts and to understand the questions.

---


\(^{57}\) Young-Barrett (2001), pp.141-152.


3.3 One-on-one interviews

After having gathered material from the observations, classroom workshops, interviews and group interviews I made a two week break from the collection of data and began to structure the information I had gathered so far. The reasons mentioned for girls’ exclusion were of various characters and appealed to different layers of society. I saw the necessity of complementing the study with one-on-one interviews to further explore the meaning behind terms frequently mentioned such as cultural-tradition, local community, male preference and shame. This, together with a will to further explore the cross dimensional relations were the base for the semi-structured interviews.\(^{60}\)

The group interviews and the one-on-one interviews all began by me explaining the aim of the study to the girls in order for them to know what they were getting themselves into, and have the possibility to say no.\(^{61}\) However, the children’s and young adults’ choice to participate or not is still effected by power relations and barriers. In the study the girls will remain anonymous and only be referred to by their real age.

During my final two weeks in Kampala I did nine one-on-one interviews at the Kisenye Youth Centre. They each lasted between 40 minutes up to one and a half hour. Four of the girls had dropped out of school while the other five still were enrolled in education. They were all between the ages 11 to 23. The reason I did not interview girls who were younger depended both on the difficulties of getting in contact with the girls as well as the language barriers. The interview environment at the youth centre was not ideal and it happened that I got to interview girls while they were waiting for the HIV-test results and the focus was somewhat diverted from the current discussion.

I also did two interviews with two women I met outside the youth centre. They were in their mid-twenties and early thirties. They had heard about my study and wanted to contribute by sharing their experiences.

The focal point of the study is on girls’ experience of education. To get a broader understanding I interviewed different stakeholders who have been working with these questions for many years and who are familiar with the local context. I had the opportunity to talk to Mrs. Josephine Abalo at Mulve Trust, Gender Desk Officer Mrs. Rita Kyeyune at the Education Ministry, Josephine Pedun at Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Maria Goveth Nakipende at Kampala Counselling and Diagnostic Centre and Fred Sempala at the Kisenye Youth Centre. The information gathered from these interviews will not be integrated in the analysis of the girls’ experiences. Instead their thoughts and opinions will be used to emphasise or contradict different aspects of the analysis.


4. RESULTS

Initially the study took on a broad perspective on how students, boys and girls, are being excluded from education. The analysis and coding are based on fragments of data – lines, words, segments from the classroom workshops, group interviews and the first four interviews. The keywords the students wrote on the blackboards summarises the different reasons for retention very well.

Image 4.1 Blackboard exercise

| Bad Teacher relations          | Early marriages                   |
| Drug abuse                    | Teenage pregnancy                |
| Big guys giving small girls gifts, ‘sugar-dads’ | Careless parents                 |
| Lack of counselling           | Peer-pressure                     |
| Lack of parents               | Attitudes                         |
| Harsh teachers                | Tradition                         |
| Civil wars                    | Culture                           |
| Hormones                      | Lack of clean and safe sanitation facilities |
| Prioritizing the brothers     | Distance                          |
| Gambling                      | Hunger                            |
| Domestic violence             | Poverty                           |
| Popular culture; Discos, films, music | Frequent mobility of families |
| Corruption                    | Poor management of sexual maturation |
| Housework                     | Adolescence                       |
| Parents do not spend time with their children | Death of parents               |
| Rape                          | Abused by teacher                 |
| Lack of interest in the school subjects | Tribal wars               |
| The school environment        | HIV/Aids                          |
|                               | Nomads                            |

Workshop: ‘Why do students drop out of school?’

The most striking conclusion from this ‘brain storming’ was the students’ ability to see the problem of school dropouts in a broad perspective. The reasons are not mainly seen within the school facility, but in relation to different societal problems, such as poverty. The students also saw the high dropout rates in relation to history, and talked about tradition and culture. Attitudes and socially constructed phenomenon and gender roles were also discussed. I saw the need to further explore how these factors worked together as excluding mechanisms. In order to do this I formulated questions for the group interviews to see how the girls own experiences and attitudes toward education relates to the words written on the blackboard. All of the above features will not be included since the respondents’ experiences did not cover this wide range of topics. For example the nomads’ frequent mobility and the lack of administrative records make it difficult to follow their educational biography.

---

The outcome of the workshop resulted in an interesting compilation of keywords, which answers to the question of why students drop out of school. The transcription of the interviews together with the workshop was analysed. The analysis resulted in an intricate network of codes, which reflects frequently mentioned issues. In the model below the arrows represent relations between the codes and the colours highlight the factors, which the students emphasised as important. This time the focus is mainly on girls’ experiences but is still closely related to the wordings of the respondents. At this stage the network mainly fulfils a purpose by showing the complex dimensions and relations and by highlighting a few categories of importance. One category that stands out from the other is ‘poverty’. Other important categories are ‘gender inequality’, ‘no parents’, ‘cultural traditions’, ‘rural setting’ and ‘group pressure’.

**Model 4.1 Initial coding**

The model visualises the complexity of girls’ exclusion from education.

*Source: Interviews, observations and classroom workshops, 2009.*

---

63 Mella (2007), p. 27.

21
The network needed to be scaled down in order to contribute to the study. This was done through identifying core categories. By making a more simplistic overview of the initial network key relations can be displayed. The categories which stood out as important in the first network have been kept. The multifaceted network is reduced and the relations are simplified. The model below is one way of structuring the material. The core circle consists of key categories and the exterior circle represents connections to everyday life as well as underlying causes of exclusion. The key categories are sometimes formulated differently than in the first network, this is to better capture the essence of the content. These categories were then used to formulate questions for the one-on-one interviews to deepen the understanding of the girls’ experiences. The categories will have been transformed to different themes where the girls’ experiences are being discussed.

Model 4.4 Main categories

This model is a version which have been scaled down from the first network. Key categories have been identified and can be found in the core circle of the model.

Source: Interviews, observations and classroom workshops, 2009.65

---

4.1 Poverty

The Ugandan government has implemented the program ‘Ugandan Primary Education’ (UPE), which was described in the first chapter. Despite the UPE, and the increasing number of students who are enrolled in primary one, there are still children who do not go to school. Although the education is said to be free of charge, the caretakers still have to provide a school uniform, shoes, a schoolbag, food, soap, scholastic material and transport. Going to school is a long-term investment and may not be an alternative for families who are struggling to make ends meet each day. In the study, poverty was expressed as the main reason for the high drop-out rates.

The decision to drop out of school does not necessarily happen from one day to another. Sometimes the families are depending on the children to contribute to the family by working a few days a week. It will then be difficult to keep up with the other students and in the end it can lead to the children dropping out of school all together.66

‘Kamaria’ is 23 and has two children, five and three years old. She grew up with 11 siblings and money was always a problem. Three of her sisters and two of her brothers dropped out of school at early ages. She herself managed to finish senior one with help from her aunt, but was forced to drop out of senior two when her aunt stopped paying the school fees. She then started to work in a small dairy shop. She liked school and wanted to go back. She never heard anything from her teacher or the principal of her school after she dropped out, but has stayed in contact with a few classmates. Others have disappeared from her life and are now doctors and lawyers. They do not say hello when they pass her on the street. She says:

If I had continued with school I would have been happy. Life has not been easy. I can’t take care of the needs I want. Like renting or looking after my children.67

In ‘Kamaria’s’ case, she sees the lack of money as a reason for her not finishing secondary school. Not being able to finish her education means she will continue to live in poverty. It is a vicious circle where she is not only being excluded from education, but also from the wider community. She does not feel in power of her own life. Whether education would have been the key to happiness or not is not the issue, it is what education represents which is of interest. In this case it has meant being excluded from possible life chances.

Poverty creates exclusion between those who benefit from getting an education and those who do not. However, poverty also creates a feeling of exclusion in school. There are expenses that are not mandatory, but of importance if you want to feel included. ‘Imani’ experienced a situation in school where she felt “stupid” because she did not have a proper school bag. Her parents did not have the money to buy her a bag so she used a plastic bag for her books and pens. Every time she needed something from the bag it made a lot of noise. Her

---

66 Interview Maria Goveth Nakiphende, Concellor, Kampala Counselling and Diagnostic Centre.
67 Interview with ‘Kamaria’.
teacher got tired of hearing the noise and she was told in front of the entire class that she needed to come back to school with a proper bag. She felt ashamed.  

A few other girls had also experienced a division of students in school between the poor and the wealthier. Some of the girls also noted segregation between children from different ethnic groups. Poverty can therefore also be a reason for a socio-spatial division in school.

In school the poor hang out with the poor. The rich tell us to go to our own class. They don’t want to be with us. If they have a ball or something we can’t play with it. We just sit around.

Another reason for dropping out of school is hunger, which is closely connected to poverty. The schools are not obligated to serve free meals, and the children who cannot pay will stay in school for an entire day without eating. Most of the girls I talked to had experienced being hungry in school, which they said affected their temper and their ability to concentrate. If you have not eaten you will have more difficulties benefitting from the education. Instead, there is a risk that you start lagging behind and in the long term you will not see the point of continuing since you are failing classes. Some students can bring leftovers from home, but since the family resources already are tight it may be difficult to spare anything for lunch.

Some private schools offer lunch where the cost is embarked in the school fees. One school that I visited had a cook who made a big portion of porridge for the children every day. Others buy something small, like casawa or matoke, from women who sell these near school. If the students live at a distance from school the hunger will be even more severe.

The route to school can be dangerous and it is often on the way to school or back that girls get defiled. The girls also help out at home and leave late for school with the risk of often being late. One of the girls in the group interviews thought it was important to live close to school so you do not “find men troubling you on the way”. She also said “it is also good because I had to work when I got home”.

The children who live in the villages often have to walk long distances to get to school. If they have to walk four kilometres to school there is a greater risk of being raped or attacked by wild animals. Malaika, who is now 23, remember being scared when she walked home from school. Sometimes she had to walk in the dark and through a small forest. She had heard stories about people sacrificing children and was afraid of being kidnapped.

Sometimes the girls live so far from home that they need the use public transportation. In Uganda the most common way of getting around is on a boda-boda, a motorcycle taxi. The parents often make a deal with a driver to go and pick up the children when they finish school. One of the headmasters in Kiralamba gave an example of a situation that had happened a

---

68 Interview with ‘Imani’.
69 Interview with ‘Lungile’.
70 Group interview 1.
71 Interview with Josephine Pedun, Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE).
72 Group interview 4.
73 Interview with Josephine Abalo, Mulve Trust.
74 Interview with ‘Malakia’.
week earlier, when a student did not get picked up after school. Her parents must have forgotten to arrange the transportation or neglected the girl’s need of getting home. The headmaster had to provide the girl with transportation, because she could not be left at school all night. The headmaster described the situation as extremely embarrassing for the girl and that these sorts of situations could lead to the girl not coming back at all.

Poverty was considered the main reason for the high drop-out rates according to the girls, and money was considered the solution. The girls themselves saw the responsibility at the individual level. They wanted to find ways for themselves and their families to pay for education. They did not emphasis the government’s responsibility. More important was the financial support from the parents. Having biological parents caring for you was a main condition for a good quality education.

4.2. Parental care
In one of the group interviews the girls discussed the importance of parents and they said:

It is impossible to go to school if you don’t have someone who takes care of you.

This is a significant phrase which illustrates the importance of the following discussion about the parents’ role in education.

The girls mainly focused on the financial support the parents could provide them with in order to improve their education. When I asked them if the parents could support them in other ways most of the girls said no. Two of the girls said yes, but could not describe how. Fred Sempala, who works as a councillor at the youth centre described a growing division between home and school. The parents leave the responsibility of education to the teachers and the teachers consider their job done when the school day is finished. There is a risk that the children’s need for guidance gets lost somewhere in between school and home. The strict division might also be an explanation for why the girls did not understand my question about the parents’ involvement in their education.

One way of showing interest in the child’s education is by attending parental meetings at school. Amongst the girls I interviewed there was a strong connection between girls who did well in school and those whose parents were engaged in the school activities. Most of the girls who had dropped out did not have caretakers who went to the school meetings while they were enrolled. However, all the girls were all positive to caretakers being involved in school activities.

Considering the family, there is one relationship which seems more complicated than the others, that between stepmother and daughter. Stepmothers do not always see it as their

---

75 Interview with the headmaster at Kiralamba.
76 Group interview 2.
77 Interview with Fred Sempala, Kisenye Youth Centre.
78 Interview with ‘Femi’.
responsibility to raise their husband’s children and there is often a jealousy between the stepmother and the child from the first marriage, which can lead to maltreatment.

‘Kamaria’, 23, was one of the girls who felt unsafe at home. Her stepmother did not treat her well and she had to work hard digging and cleaning. The stepmother did not care if Kamaria was late for school, which she often was. Instead she made sure her own children were there on time. Kamaria said “the way you are treated when you are not with your mother is bad”. The stepmother did not think Kamaria’s education was important and never attended parental meetings at school.

The reasons why parents do not want to send their girls to school are multifaceted. As a parent you have to think about what is best for the family as a whole. If you invest in a girl’s education the investment will not stay in your family. The girls will get married and belong to another family. When a daughter gets married the family can sometimes receive a gift, for example a number of cows, depending on the social and economic status of the family. A woman is therefore better off staying at home and looking out for the rest of the family by doing household chores.

The parents might think of the boys as their future. They will succeed. The parents first pay school fees for the boys.

The girls in the higher age ranges seemed to have reflected more on gender roles in the family than the girls who still were enrolled in primary school. ‘Femi’ dropped out when she was still in primary school to support her brothers. The family did not have enough money to send all their nine children to school, therefore they prioritized the boys. Her other sisters got married early and she herself was forced into marriage after being raped. ‘Femi’ would have liked to go back to school but she is now considering herself to be too old. Now she will make an effort to make sure her children will get the education she was denied.

4.3 Gender roles

There has been a continuing change in how the Ugandan society looks at women’s capacity. Since the country has been tormented by war for many years, women had to become sole bread winners for their families. Dr. Sarah Ssali sees this as a big difference between the liberation of Ugandan women in comparison with women from the Arabic world. They have proved themselves as independent.

Most of the girls did not feel that they were being treated unequally in school or at home, but during the interviews they touched upon different gender roles. Men and women were described to have different responsibilities and qualities.

The question “Do you think you will get married one day?” was repeatedly met with suspicion. For me the question was relevant, especially in order to understand the girls’ expectations of themselves and their future. For the respondents the question was almost an

---

79 Interview with ‘Kamaria’.
80 Interview with Josephine Abalo, Mulve Trust.
81 Interview with ‘Kamaria’.
82 Interview with Dr. Sarah Ssali, Gender Department, Makerere University.
insult, of course they were going to get married! Marriage is as a natural part of life, as expressed by one of the respondents:

> It is a culture. When you are married you belong to someone. When you have a ring on your finger men will not disturb you. You will get more respect if you are married. It is a part of life. \(^\text{83}\)

In the interviews I asked the girls about happiness. I could identify three categories which they thought were of most importance. First of all it was being able to care for the family and the people around them. Secondly, they looked into the future and wished to get married to a good husband and to have children; the children should be nourished and educated. Thirdly they talked about their personal goals of getting an education and becoming a teacher, doctor or counsellor. All of the girls wanted to work for a living and be self-dependent.

The girls I interviewed belonged to different religious communities. They were Muslims, Catholics, Protestants and born-again Christians. They all shared rather fundamental values which seemed to be present throughout society; they were for example very clear about the importance of sexual absence before marriage. It would be a disgrace towards your parents and the local society if you were sexually active before marriage. The same values also included the boys, but it is the girls who get “ruined”. \(^\text{84}\) Being a virgin when you get married is a way of honouring your mother and father because it shows that they have managed to protect you. Otherwise you will bring shame to the family and your husband will undermine you throughout the marriage. \(^\text{85}\) It is not only the purity and the pregnancies that are of concern; the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted deceases (STD’s) are other main reasons. However, it happens frequently that girls get pregnant in secondary school, and even in primary school. There is still a big taboo concerning teenage pregnancies, which leads to girls being physically and socially excluded.

Another issue discussed in relation to early sex was the girls’ motives for wanting to be in a relationship. Dr. Sarah Ssali points out that when girls are lacking basic things such as a belt, a skirt or a towel they can easily be taken advantage of by men who can offer them these sorts of things. \(^\text{86}\) This is confirmed by Josephine Ablo at Mvule Trust, who sees a change in girls’ perception of themselves between the day they start primary one and when they reach primary four. Something happens during this time and the dropout rates increases. The need for basic things in combination with the girls being hungry make them look for ‘sugar-dads’. They will then presumably get pregnant and are at risk of being infected by HIV.

Josephine Abalo painted a picture of what difference educating a girl means on the individual level, but also for society as a whole. Although there are exceptions, most of the girls without education will start having children at an early age and perhaps give birth to about ten children all together. She will not be able to give the children the healthcare they

\(^{83}\) Interview with ‘Dayo’.

\(^{84}\) Group interview 2.

\(^{85}\) Interview with ‘Marjani’.

\(^{86}\) Interview Dr. Sara Ssloi, Gender Department, Makerere University.
need, because she has not been educated. There is also a big risk that the uneducated mother will contribute to the creation of another generation of out-of-school children.\textsuperscript{87}

The girls all gave diverse answers to the question: What possibilities do you have if you drop out of school? They all did relate to someone close to them who found themselves in this situation. Two of the girls gave examples of how one can start a business. If you have the opportunity to borrow 3000 shillings from a friend you can buy peas and divide them in small plastic bags. Buy selling them you can make 10 000 shillings. As the business expands you can start offering a more diverse assortment. If you are hard working you can make it.\textsuperscript{88} Although the money will be just enough to get by this view puts a lot of faith in the individual’s capacity to manage to survive by entrepreneurship. The girls did present examples of family members, relatives and friends from the community who has succeeded in setting up a small business.

They did give other examples as well, some which were not as optimistic. In one of the group interviews the four girls talked a lot about the risk of ending up in prostitution. They had seen it in their local community and they have heard themselves that if they drop out of school they will become a prostitute.\textsuperscript{89} These kinds of statements are difficult to interpret, but contain attitudes and realities which should not be overlooked. It may not say much about the actual risk of ending up in prostitution if you drop out of school, however, it does say something about what the girls think could happen to them. Prostitution is seen as something dirty and shameful, and making a clear connection between girls who drop out of school and prostitution can lead to further exclusion. Taking a stand against girls who drop out of school was in the group interview a way of taking a stand against prostitution.

A girl who is educated will postpone marriage and are more likely to be aware of family planning and have two to four children. Those children will benefit from the mothers’ education and they will become educated about health issues.\textsuperscript{90}

Educating a girl-child is a challenge because the girls are born to be wives and mothers. They need a lot of encouragement so they do not make radical decisions in their adolescence, like getting a sugar-dad.\textsuperscript{91}

A few of the girls I talked to had dropped-out of school because they became pregnant. They had not found the possibility to go back and they described their situation as very difficult. One of the mothers kept referring to her baby as “it”, blaming the child for everything that went wrong in her life. She had nowhere to leave the baby during the schooldays and she did not have enough money to pay for school fees. When I asked her how she earned money for food, rent and other necessities she avoided the question.\textsuperscript{92} Her life story is important for the

\textsuperscript{87} Interview with Josephine Abalo, Mulve Trust.
\textsuperscript{88} Interview with 'Ebelbe'.
\textsuperscript{89} Group interview 1.
\textsuperscript{90} Interview with Josephine Abalo, Mulve Trust.
\textsuperscript{91} Interview with Josephine Abalo, Mulve Trust.
\textsuperscript{92} Interview with 'Kirabo'.
understanding of the difficulty of being a single mother and a teenager in Uganda. You are caught in a dead end both financially and socially.

School fees, poverty, lack of role models, the girls having a heavier work load than men, sexual harassment, early marriages, these all seems to be factors leading young girls to early pregnancies. Becoming pregnant is a clear cut-off point at which the girls are forced to drop out of school. If the school finds out a girl is pregnant she will be forced to leave school. The girls thought this was reasonable because she will present a bad example for the other students if she stays. The girl is often expelled before the other students notice that she is pregnant.\textsuperscript{93} This should not only be seen as a way of protecting the girl, the school administration also wants to keep a good reputation.

To prevent girls from dropping out of school, the girls themselves thought more rules and regulations from the parents and church would help. They also asked for more guidance from people who did not represent the school nor was a family member. Instead they would like to talk to a professional counsellor. The girls who had given birth saw the solution to their problem being them beginning to earn money. Their minds where occupied with how to be able to make enough money to feed themselves and their children, just to get through another day or week.

There is no rule preventing girls to come back to school after they have given birth, but since the baby has to be cared for it is difficult. The teenage girls are afraid their classmates will talk behind their backs.\textsuperscript{94} Although the father of the child also is becoming a parent “it is the girl that gets pregnant, the boy can still continue going to school.”\textsuperscript{95}

Abortion is illegal in Uganda, but there are doctors who will accept bribes. There are also people who are not educated in medicine who perform abortions, risking the young girls’ lives. Since there is a big shame in early pregnancies, girls are afraid to tell their parents and bringing shame not only to the family but also to the local community. People will start thinking of the girl differently and she will have to drop out of school and therefore abortion is sometimes seen as the only solution.\textsuperscript{96} However, having children is also considered to be a natural part of life. One of the girls expressed her view on parenthood like this:

Women are supposed to give birth while men go out and look for food. It is a part of the bible.\textsuperscript{97}

As a follow up question I asked the girl named Dayo whether she would continue to be employed when she is married and have children. Her answer was a contrast to her first very traditional statement, namely “a man will not stop me from working.”
This can be connected to the initial statement of Dr. Sara Ssli about Ugandan women’s tradition of being sole bread winners of the family. This duality between traditional values and the new generations will to change and empower women was characteristic for a majority of the interviews. This means the girls are about to take on many roles as mothers, wives and careerists, all which include a lot of responsibilities in the household as well as in society. However, with a solid income it is possible to hire help to take care of the household chores and the children.

When I asked if men and women can become whatever profession they want almost everyone said “yes”. If I instead asked if a woman could be a mechanic or a carpenter they said “no”. The different answers show how difficult it is to conduct interviews. However, both answers hold importance in the analysis. It is possible for women to become members of the parliament, teachers and doctors (all professions the girls dreamt of). Uganda has started a process where women are bearers of important posts. However, there are still well established gender norms connected to the biological differences between men and women, dictating the labor market. There are certain domains that are still more accessible for men.

The girls thought men and women have different qualities, which are being displayed in school. Women were described as ‘lazy’ and as ‘slow thinkers’. In the group interviews there were always girls contradicting these statements and saw them as a result of socially inherited presumptions. The teachers’ way of addressing the children in the classroom will have an effect on re-establishing or contradicting these conceptions.

Most of the girls I interviewed had no difficulties expressing themselves and were very talkative. They did not find it difficult to speak in front of the class. In general though, they thought girls were quieter in class and that they themselves were an exception of the rule. Girls have a tendency to feel “out of place” and since they are not comfortable they will not share their opinions with the others. A few of the girls made a connection between the girls silence and the unfriendly environment, and others saw it as a result of what the girls are going through within themselves. A distinction was also made between the boys and girls different ways of expressing themselves. In two of the group interviews the girls thought the boys were leading the discussions in class. They did not speak more in the classroom, but the girls saw their ideas and opinions as more valuable. In the other two group interviews they did not evaluate boys and girls contributions in the classroom differently.

4.4 The lack of teachers

When the girls explained the importance of education they had a broad definition of the school’s mission. In school you are supposed to increase your knowledge in standard subjects such as Math, English and Science. The school is also recognized as a socializing process where you learn to interact with people from different backgrounds. It is also a place where you define yourself and learn to stand up in front of a crowd and express your opinions and

---

98 Group interview 2,3, 4.
thoughts. The teacher and the head master should discipline and guide the students and to improve the education, it should be more practical and adapted to the job market.\textsuperscript{99}

The teacher is an important role model in the child’s life. In the interviews the girls made clear distinctions between what qualities they liked and disliked about their own teachers. They based their judgment on personal experiences and encounters. Most of the girls felt the teachers treated the students equally in class. However, there were exceptions were the girls thought the female students were discriminated.

In school boys and girls are not treated as equals. Some of the teachers looked at us like we were nothing. If a boy and a girl complain about the same thing they could just ignore the girl. I don’t know why.\textsuperscript{100}

In the classroom, girls are in general quieter than boys. When I asked the girls why they thought they had a more difficult time to express their thoughts in the classroom the answers were diverse. ‘Kamaria’ thought it had to do with the way boys and girls are raised. Another reason was mentioned by ‘Dayo’ and ‘Chipo’ who called attention to the changes the female body is going through. The girls who reach puberty can sometimes feel uncomfortable and out of place because of their “new body”. They are afraid people will notice they are “not the same”, so they shy away.\textsuperscript{101}

When talking about the teachers’ role in the classroom there was a consensus on the importance of engagement. A good teacher is also described as “approachable” and as someone who is never too busy to answer questions. When the class is big it can be difficult for the teacher to be there for everyone. In one of the group interviews they were united on the fact that 50 students in each class would be a suitable number.\textsuperscript{102} As it was now the girls I interviewed had classes with about 80 students in each class. It can therefore be difficult for the teacher to notice if there is someone in the class who have difficulties keeping even steps with the others.\textsuperscript{103} The most important thing for the girls was to have motivated teachers who took their time to listen to the students. The teacher was seen as a determining factor for a good education.

If the teacher is devoted you can become whatever you want to become.\textsuperscript{104}

There is also a problem of distance between the teachers’ home and the school. Since teachers do not make a lot of money, and the salary often comes in late, they have to work multiple jobs to support their families. They might begin the day by digging, and then transport

\textsuperscript{100} Interview with ‘Kamaria’.
\textsuperscript{101} Interview with ‘Dayo’ and ‘Chipo’.
\textsuperscript{102} Group interview 4.
\textsuperscript{103} Interview with ‘Malaki’.
\textsuperscript{104} Interview with ‘Chipo’.
themselves to the school. They are often late and tired. Therefore it would be good if the teacher were able to live within the school area.  

The unpaid maternity leave is another problem facing the teachers and their students. In one of the schools I visited, the female teacher had brought her small children to class; one of them had not yet turned one. When the teachers live on the school property and bring the children to class it shows the thin line between the private life and the workplace. This is a result of the unpaid maternity leave, which can lead to difficulties for the teacher to concentrate on the students. It is most likely the female teachers who will find this difficult to balance.

Dealing with issues like maternity leave is important in order to increase the number of female teachers. The girls saw a big comfort in being able to confine in the female teachers, since there are issues which are more difficult to talk about with the male teachers. However, Chipo was one of the girls who had another opinion; she thought it was more difficult to approach female teachers, because of the risk of them saying “do you think you are the first person going through that”. The girls had all heard the media reports about girls getting defiled in school, and they saw it as a big problem. Therefore they preferred male teachers who were married. The term “cornering” was used to describe the male teachers attempt to take advantage of their power position. One of the girls described a scenario where the teacher asked a girl if she could help him bring some books in to his office. In the office he raped her, and in return she passed the class.

It happens that teachers fall in love with a student. But mostly men. So many teachers are reported for defiling the students. They know that it is wrong but they can’t control their feelings because they are naturally ‘greedy’.

In the above statement, men are seen as “naturally greedy”. A few of the girls reflected on why the teacher took advantage of their students. Most of them found the answer in biological differences between men and women. One of the girls questioned the wives who were not able to satisfy their men. The third explanation was a lack of faith in God. There were critical voices raised on the government’s ability to implement laws that protects the girls.

The government is not doing a good job. It is so much corruption and it is easy to but the policeman. There should be more strict laws.

The girls I talked to had not experienced these sorts of maltreatments in school. All girls interviewed, except from one, claimed to feel safe in the teacher-student relationship. The girl

---

105 Interview with ‘Femi’.
106 Observation.
107 Interview with ‘Chipo’.
108 Interview with ‘Chinaza’.
109 Interview with ‘Dayo’.
110 Interview with ‘Ebelbe’.  
32
who did not feel safe lost her mother while she was at school, and since then she has not felt safe. This last example shows yet again that school can represent more than a curriculum for the students.

However, the curriculum should not be forgotten all together. Gender Desk officer Rita Kisenye and Josephine Pedun at the FAWE both brought up the divided curriculum where boys did better in math and science than girls. Traditional gender structures are thought to be the reason. If the girls start lagging behind in math and science there is a risk that they will start skipping classes and in the end drop out all together.

A general perspective provided by people who work with these types of questions is that it is important to shed light upon the curricula. The girls are not aware of the discussion of a ‘gender sensitive curricula’ and foremost base their responses on lived experiences.

4.5 The school environment

Although the girls did not think about the curriculum as unequal, they did see how biological differences made it more difficult for girls to concentrate in school.

Girls are not as good as boys in school because they are menstruating. A few days every month they can’t think. It is impossible because of the pain.¹¹¹

It could be said to be rather typical and boring that a study about girls will focus on menstruation and female maturation. However, when dealing with girls’ exclusion from school, it is a vital discussion, which raises important questions about the geography of the body.

The girls spoke rather freely about the emotional and physical changes they were going through, or had already gone through. They all had different experiences, but most of them described the female maturation as a “confusing time”. The majority of the girls had gotten information about sexual maturation in school and by their caretakers; others were left in the dark.

An existing problem is that the schools do not provide the girls with pads, but the girls are taught how to make ‘local pads’ out of cotton clothing. However, not everyone can afford to buy the material, therefore they are constantly afraid that they will bleed through their skirts and be an object of humiliation to the classmates. This is one of the reasons why girls stay at home during the days they are menstruating.

Another reason for girls’ exclusion, which was put forward by the girls, as well as the engaged stakeholders, was the lack of safe, healthy and well equipped sanitation facilities. A girl should change her pads during the day because of the risk of bleeding through the cloths, and more importantly for health reasons. However, this becomes practically impossible if there are no waste bins or clean water in connection to the sanitation facilities. The number of latrines is often too few in comparison to the number of students. Boys and girls then have to

¹¹¹ Group interview 4.
share toilets, sometimes without the possibility to lock the doors.\textsuperscript{112} This creates unwillingness for the girls to use the latrines. The sanitation is poor and in one of the group interviews they were afraid to use the latrines with the risk of getting an infection.\textsuperscript{113}

Not being able to use the latrines can lead to different outcomes. A few of the girls decided to stay at home the first days of their period. One of the girls described how she use to put different clothings up her “female parts” so she could go to school without changing pads. This had left her with disturbing health problems.\textsuperscript{114} The girls I talked to in Kampala did have functioning sanitation facilities in their schools, which show that the capital is a precursor in this matter.

4.6 The lack of motivation

Poverty, lack of support from the family, lack of teachers and inadequate school facilities have all been discussed as reasons for girls’ exclusion from school. When all these external factors had been discussed in the interviews it often came down to one last thing, namely the students own engagement in their education. It does not matter how much financial and emotional support there is if the individual does not value education. Although, this is the last factor being discussed in this chapter it holds a central role in all the interviews. People are seen as ‘ignorant’ and the reason boys and girls drop out of school are in many cases seen as an active choice, rather than a result of external circumstances.

The individual level cannot be isolated from the factors discussed earlier, since they are all entwined to shape the educational context. However, it is necessary to also take the individual perspective into consideration, since the girls themselves saw it as vital in relation to exclusion from education. Group pressure is influencing the students’ choice to leave school, but the decision to drop out is still left for the individual. However, the girls I interviewed who had dropped out of school did not consider it as if they had a choice. They did, however, know other people who had dropped out which they thought made it out of their own will.

4.7 The rural context

The factors affecting the enrollment rates in Uganda are different for different parts of the country. In the fishing districts, for example, boys are more likely to drop out of school than girls. Because of the need of cheap labor, they do not complete their education. In other parts of the country the financial problems are the more acute, leading girls to drop out of school. There are also regions which have been more affected than others by HIV/aids and war, which have left many children to grow up as orphans.\textsuperscript{115}

Dr. Sarah Ssali argues that the difference between the rural and the urban is a question of wealth, when the parents do not have money to hire domestic help the burden will fall on the girls, which makes it difficult for them to attend school. There is also a correlation between

\textsuperscript{112} Group interview 4.
\textsuperscript{113} Group interview 4.
\textsuperscript{114} Interview with ‘Ife’.
\textsuperscript{115} Interview with Rita Kyeyune, Gender desk officer, Education Ministry.
educated parents and the ability and incentive to send their children to school. In the villages, a lot of the parents did not have the chance to complete their education themselves. Dr. Ssali does not see this as ignorance towards education, but rather it is about people working with their means. The livelihood patterns are different between a child growing up in the city, and a child growing up in a rural village.

There is a marked disparity in quality between rural and urban schools in terms of basic facilities, such as blackboards and number of teachers. The teachers in the rural areas do not have the same salaries as those who work in the city and they also lack scholastic material. This affects the motivation and the quality of the teachers. During the national exam some of the students will see the chemistry and biology equipment for the first time. Some rural schools do not even access the material so they have to improvise. Since the equipment is not the same as in the instructions the results will also be different. This is why Josephine Abalo at Mvule Trust thinks the national exams should be more adapted to the local context.

As discussed earlier, science and math are traditionally male oriented. Girls tend to start lagging behind in primary school and at the university level it is not unusual to have 100 boys in a class compared to 30 girls. If you are performing poorly in a class, the risk is that you will start dropping out of those classes and irregularities in schooling mean you have a greater risk of dropping out all together. In Kampala, where schools have increased the standard of science labs, the girls have started to perform better, and sometimes even better than the boys. However, it is difficult to know what causes this amelioration, which most likely is a result of many combined factors.

The division between the quality of rural and urban school has to do with capital being centered in the urban areas. The parents are wealthier and can contribute to the school. Josephine Abalo would also like to see more strict head teachers who can guide the students. In the rural areas, alcohol is a big problem among teachers and it is not rare that teachers come in late because of their drinking habits.

This is increasing the division between rural and urban schools. In Uganda, almost 85 percent of the population is working with agriculture. In the family businesses the children are valuable workers and when it is time for harvesting the whole family needs to help out so the harvest will not go bad. Sometimes the agricultural scheme does not work well together with the school scheme, and therefore children sometimes miss important exams because they have to care for the family livelihood. Girls tend to have to manage a heavier workload than the boys.

The rural villages are often referred to as “primitive” by the young women in the city areas. This implies another way of living and thinking. The wording and the tone used to describe the difference between the rural areas and the city can be said to show an existing gap between the two.

---

116 Interview with Dr. Sarah Ssali, Gender Department, Makerere University.
117 Interview Josephine Ablao, Mulve Trust.
118 Interview Josephine Ablao, Mulve Trust.
119 Interview Josephine Ablao, Mulve Trust.
120 Interview with Dr. Sarah Ssali, Gender Department, Makerere University.
121 Interview with ‘Chipo’ and ‘Dayo’.
In the villages they are backwards and ignorant. They can’t solve anything.
They can’t do anything economically productive. 122

‘Chinaza’, who stated the above comment, saw a strong connection between the poverty in the villages and their lack of good quality education. She thought the city was undermining the education in the villages. She pointed out the lack of facilities, desks and computers. She was also critical of the promotion of UPE and the fact that the teachers are not paid on time. It should be kept in mind that this is not the experience of a girl growing up in the village. It is a girl living in the city who has opinions about the division between the rural and the urban space. The reason why girls do not go to school does not only have to do with the quality of education and education facilities. ‘Chinaza’ consider the parents to play an important part in withholding girls from school. This discussion leads back to the cultural and traditional aspects discussed under the headline “gender roles”.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the previous chapter education was discussed in a broad context based on the respondents’ own experiences. The cross-cutting dimensions where evident and I will now visualise how the different themes can be related to different levels of society. The structure of the literature review was not planned in advance, but was developed in relation to the empirical material. These are not the only levels of importance for education, but they were the ones mentioned in the interviews. If girls’ education is going to improve, the issue has to be seen in a broader perspective. The school is a physical representation, a symbol, and a bearer of values formulated by societal structures. Henri Lefebvre uses the term ‘representational spaces’, which contains an imaginative sphere created by associations. The girls presented examples from their everyday life, which visualised a division between spaces and places and different levels of society. ‘The spatial practices of society’ are embedded in the dualism of ‘perceived space’ and the ‘urban reality’. In the following text these perspectives on educational spaces will be examined. Lefebvre’s third concept of space, ‘representations of space’, will be handled separately under the headline “School facilities”, focusing on the planning of educational facilities. 123 The themes from the previous chapter will now be discussed vertically.

The discussion will start with our will to see people who do not follow a certain pattern as ‘others’. In this study the female body was not seen as the norm in school and was causing girls to shy away in class. This is resulting in an unfriendly school environment for girls and makes it more difficult for them to perform to their fullest capacity. This is closely interlinked with the concept of an inclusive education system and Martha Nussbaumss ‘capability

122 Interview with ‘Chinaza’.
approach’. Nussbaum sees women’s lack of capabilities in relation to women roles in society. The literature review will try to deepen the discussion about the women’s role in the family and in the community in Uganda, and see how earlier studies have discussed issues like early marriages and a gendered work division.

When it comes to creating a quality education the government is responsible for providing the schools with educated teachers and a well thought through curriculum. This goes back to the initial thought on creating a friendly environment for teaching and learning. The different themes presented are closely interlinked and cross cuts the different levels of society. In this case I want to show how the girls’ exclusion from education can be seen from different levels of society and this should also be kept in mind when it comes to creating an inclusive education system, which will be further discussed in chapter six. The subjects I have touched upon are divided in sections focusing on the body, the individual, the local community, the nation and the global.

5.1 The body
Simone de Beauvoir writes about the young girls’ transition into womanhood. When a girl reaches puberty the future will become a reality and take the body in possession.\textsuperscript{124} In the earlier chapter the girls’ experiences from female maturation were connected with confusion. In the classroom, the girls did not feel comfortable and did not participate to their fullest capability. Instead the boys are the ones leading and defining the character of the conversations in the classroom. Ruth Butler sees “the body as an active and reactive entity, which is not just part of us, but is who we are”.\textsuperscript{125} Therefore, it is interesting to further discuss the distinction between sex and gender. Beauvoir, as well as Judith Butler has questioned the compulsory order of sex and gender.

As a result, gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which “sexed nature” or a “natural sex” is produced and established as ‘prediscursive’, prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts.\textsuperscript{126}

All of the sudden, the body starts changing and the female students start feeling ‘out of place’. The school does not have proper sanitation facilities to meet the girls’ needs and the social environment can be harsh and discriminating. The respondents described the difference between men and women foremost as a biological difference. The discrimination against women is therefore, seen from the girls’ perspective, closely connected to the body. The feeling of exclusion evolves together with the changing body. The German researcher Norbert Elias made a contribution to sociology and geography by his theory of internalized restraints and prohibitions. The incorporation of bodily property,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{124} Beauvoir, Simone (1946), \textit{Det andra könet}, Nordstedts (2006), p. 386.
  \item \textsuperscript{125} Butler, Ruth (1999), \textit{Mind and Body Spaces Geographies of Illness Impairment and Disability}. Routlege, p. 239.
  \item \textsuperscript{126} Butler, Judith (1990), \textit{Gender Trouble}. New York and London: Routledge.
\end{itemize}
manners, discipline and morality has been debated amongst educational researchers. A person’s self is controlled by disgust and aversion, which will position a person in the social hierarchy, for example in school. Those who do not internalize into this way of thinking will be marginalized and positioned as ‘others’. A vital part of the exclusion is a spatial separation.\footnote{127} A few of the girls thought there was a social exclusion between the poor and the wealthier as well as between children from different tribes. During the breaks the wealthier children played football while the others were not welcomed to join.

Elias’ theory of social and spatial division has many similarities with Mary Douglas’ conception of ‘pollution’ and ‘taboo’.\footnote{128} Soap is mentioned in the study as a necessity for being included in school. Douglas would explain our aversion towards dirt as a way of keeping order in society. Our assumptions about separation, purification and punishments connected to misbehavior, aims at creating structure in our otherwise disordered perception.\footnote{129} The school has been described as an institution with an extreme form of time and space division.\footnote{130} I will further develop Douglas’ ideas later on in relation to the local community and ‘womanhood’.

The ideas of ‘the other’ have been put forward foremost by sociologists, but are also an important feature in the geographies of exclusion.\footnote{131} Ervin Gottman addresses people’s will to keep a certain social order. Prostitutes, drug addicts, delinquents, criminals, full time gamblers, bohemians, homosexuals and the urban poor are in denial of the order and are therefore being undermined. Their abnormal behaviour is showing open disrespect of their superiors and they represent failures in the motivational schemes of society.\footnote{132}

Stuart C. Aitken does not think that the body has been given enough attention within the evolving field of research with children. However, it fills an important part by addressing issues like bodily growth, function and representation. The body will, as the study shows, reveal prefigured concerns about sexuality and labor as well as highlighting many other social and cultural issues.\footnote{133} In Aitken’s book, he presents different ways in which the researcher can “place the body”. In relation to the conducted study on girls’ exclusion from education, and in relation to Elias’ theory, the most valuable one is a need to understand how the body is used to create a vision of “the other”.\footnote{134}

\footnote{128} Douglas Mary (1966), Renhet och fara, En analys av begreppen orenande och tabu, Falun: Scanbook AB.
\footnote{129} Douglas (1966), pp. 11-14.
\footnote{130} Foucault (1987).
\footnote{134} Aitken (2001), p. 65.
5.2 The individual

Human beings are not by nature kings, or nobles, or courtiers, or rich. All are born naked and poor. All are subject to the miseries of life, to frustrations, to ills, to needs, to pains of every kind. Finally, all are condemned to death. That is what is really the human being; that is what no mortal can avoid. Begin, then, by studying what is the most inseparable from human nature, that which most constitutes humanness.\(^\text{135}\)

This quotation from Rousseau’s *Emile* is the starting point for Martha Nussbaum’s discussion about female development. It expresses a will to go back to the essentials and focus on the individual as a human, regardless of sex, ethnicity and class. The approach is focusing on what unites the human race, rather than what divides it. This view can be criticized for being gender-bias or to neglect contextual varieties and cultures. However, Nussbaum does think the prospects of the approach will outweigh the disadvantages. In regards to policy making, the ideas about fundamental capabilities are vital.\(^\text{136}\)

In 2009, UNESCO published a document presenting “Policy guidelines on Inclusive Education”. The ultimate goal for inclusive education “is concerned with an individual’s effective participation in society and of reaching his/her full potential”.\(^\text{137}\) The goal can be said to find common ground with Nussbaum’s philosophical theory of the capability approach and “the flourishing of the people”. The theory is inspired by Aristotle and has evolved into an important feature in the development debate. The ideas can be said to represent a liberal standpoint, but the essence of the theory, concerning life quality, could as well be founded in Marxian thoughts. I will not go into the political debate on how to accomplish life quality, where Marxism and Liberalism would have different interpretations. Instead, I will address the need of a new measurement concerning quality of life and address the school’s need to help the girls to realize themselves. The results in the previous chapter showed of challenges for the girls to assimilate education as a capability.

Education is an important part of development and to be able to improve the quality, a new holistic measurement needs to be taken into consideration so the students can ‘reach their fullest potential’ and ‘flourish’. This does not only include a new practical tool for measuring, it is a re-evaluation of the woman’s rights as an individual.

Nussbaum considers that women are being treated as instruments used to serve the needs of others. In the interviews, the girls defined happiness as a result of being able to take care of their family and to nourish their future children.\(^\text{138}\)

Violence against women, including rape, remains common in Uganda. Women are not allowed to inherit property and the wife cannot prevent her husband from marrying another

---


\(^{137}\) UNESCO (2009).

woman, since polygamy is legal under customary and Islamic law. The literacy rate for men is 77 percent and for women 58 percent (2004). The youth rates for ages 15 to 24 are 83 percent for the boys and 71 percent for the girls (2004) (see table 1.1). These kinds of unequal social and political circumstances give women unequal capabilities.

A UN report, published in 1997, states that there is no country in the world who treat women and men as equals. Most acute is the problem in developing counties since there is a strong correlation between poverty and gender inequality. The result of poverty, in combination with gender inequality, is a total failure to meet central human capabilities.

The approach has been used in several studies, especially within economy. The Swedish researcher Robert Eriksson has described the Swedish welfare system in relation to both monetary and non-monetary terms. Within education there has been a focus on academic results and years of enrollment. However, ‘inclusive education’ is a term which challenges these limited measurements and considers the individual’s right to a good quality education.

5.3 The family

There have not been many extensive studies conducted on girls’ education in Uganda. Therefore, the Joy C. Kwesiga’s study on “Women’s Access to Higher Education in Africa, Uganda’s Experience” was an important contribution to this field. Although the study mainly focuses on higher education, the issues of providing girls with quality education are still the same. Kwesiga’s study has been an important source of information for me, especially when it comes to understanding family and community structures in Uganda.

A major cause of girls’ poor enrollment rates is the preference of male children, an issue which also was discussed in the group discussions and in the interviews. In 1971, a study addressing parents’ fear of sending their daughters to school was conducted by I.M Gately. The results showed that first of all, the parents were scared to lose the girls’ contribution to the household, which was much valued. The mothers were as critical as the fathers of sending their daughters to school, since they were the ones losing the helping hand. Secondly, the parents were scared of sending their daughters to school because of various food taboos. Thinner girls attracted less bride wealth and the parents were afraid the school diet would not contain enough milk and slow down the traditional fattening process. Even though the Bugunda district, where Kampala is situated, is seen as more liberal, the parents were afraid to send their girls to school because it would affect the cultural traditions.
In my study no one talked about the food culture as a cause for girls not attending school. However, some of the girls had a heavy workload at home, and came late to classes because the parents thought they were more useful in the house. Even though traditions are changing and becoming more heterogenic, the study conducted by Gately forty years ago is important for the understanding of parents’ unwillingness to educate girls.

The home plays an important role in the children’s everyday lives. The girls are more bound to the home than the boys, and take on a heavier workload. In the previous chapter, gender roles were discussed as an issue of the high drop-out rates in primary and secondary education. Kwesiga’s study supports this conclusion, that female roles are more likely to hinder their full participation in comparison with males. The division of labor is an important factor in determining women’s access to education. The interviews do disclose a gender division in the girls’ choice of careers and the girl’s valued education, because they wanted to have a profession where they could help others and support their families. Since my study was foremost carried out in Kampala, the attitudes might be different in comparison to the rural areas.

In Uganda it is taken for granted that a girl will get married and have children, she will then no longer belong to the family where she grew up. In another study, conducted in the end of 1980’s, the parents viewed girls’ education as consumption whilst the boys’ education was seen as an investment. To some extent these attitudes are still present and are highly affected by socio-economical conditions. There is for example a link between large/polygamous families and poverty and the high level of household population (six to eight members) decreases the possibilities of providing the children with education.

The socio-economic status of the family has a stronger influence on girls’ access to education than boys’. Unless the family is able to educate both boys and girls, the latter are less likely to reach the top of the educational ladder.

In a family where the parents are educated, the children are more likely to obtain formal education. However, there are many children in Uganda who do not live with their parents. Approximately 2.1 million children in Uganda are orphans and of these, 80 percent come from poor families. The child-headed households are becoming more common in Uganda and

151 Kwesiga (2002), pp.165-175.
79.9 percent of the child-headed households are in rural areas, of which 49.6 percent are male-headed and 30.3 percent are female-headed.\textsuperscript{152}

5.4 The local community

As most girls will eventually become wives and mothers in a largely rural community that would be a futile education that failed to prepare them for the duties of home making.\textsuperscript{153}

Kwesegia refers to different factors, which affect the girls’ access to education. Those are: The influence of universal marriage; early marriages; pregnancies outside marriage (particularly teenage pregnancies) as well as bride price payments.\textsuperscript{154} ‘Malaika’, one of the respondents in my study, thought that “it is important to get married because it gives respect to your parents and yourself and the community at large.”\textsuperscript{155} And ‘Ebelbe’ felt excluded from the community because she had two children and no husband.\textsuperscript{156}

Another issue which was mentioned frequently in the interviews was teenage pregnancies, which were seen as an embarrassment to the family and the community. These results are supported by Kwesiga’s study, where early pregnancies are a major factor leading girls to drop out of school. If the school finds out that the girl is pregnant she will be expelled and the teacher will at most provide the girls with transportation home. A girl is also expelled if the school finds out she has had an abortion.\textsuperscript{157}

Early marriages and teenage pregnancies amount to thousands of girls failing to complete their education. President Yoweri Museveni said in 1999 at the International Women’s day celebrations at Mbarara “this is because we are punishing the girl-child double. Another solution must be found, but expulsion must stop”. However, this statement has not found much political and societal support.\textsuperscript{158} There was only one girl who I interviewed who thought it would be good to let pregnant girls continue to go to school. The others thought it would present a bad example to the other classmates.\textsuperscript{159}

Paying bride wealth is a deeply embedded custom among the various Ugandan communities.\textsuperscript{160} Among most ethnic groups the men have to pay a price of cows or goats in order to take a bride. However the mode of payment is gradually changing from livestock to cash. In 2004 “the International Conference on Bride Price” was held in Kampala. The outcome was a demand to abolish the practice which damages sexual health and contributes to

\textsuperscript{152} UNESCO (2005), p. 12.
\textsuperscript{154} Kwesiga (2002), p. 186.
\textsuperscript{155} Interview with ‘Malaika’.
\textsuperscript{156} Interview with ‘Kamaria’.
\textsuperscript{157} Kwesiga (2002), pp. 190-191.
\textsuperscript{158} Kwesiga (2002),p. 192.
\textsuperscript{159} Group interviews 2 and 4.
\textsuperscript{160} Kwesiga (2002), pp. 192-193.
the spread of HIV and AIDS. When the man has paid a bride price he will be in greater control of the females’ sexual life. The woman has no right to decide how many children she will have and if the man wants to get another wife she cannot object. Polygamous relationships are common and increase the risk of the spread of STD’s.161

One of the respondents had been married off early, as well as her two sisters, to support their brothers’ education. In a questionnaire, 60 percent (1991) of the parents were supportive of the practice. 35.4 were negative and 4.6 did not answer. Bride wealth payment is seen as an appreciation of parental care, which is widely supported by all groups. It also implies that parents are thought to be losing a valuable asset and need some sort of compensation.162

Another issue, which was discussed amongst the young respondents, was the importance of virginity. Again, Douglas’ thoughts on purification and taboo can be of value in order to understand societies will to tie men and women to their social roles. Sometimes the sexual institution can represent a strict division. Keeping women physically and socially pure is a way for the community system to keep order of their internal boundaries. The female body is, so to say, used as a shell towards the uncertain.163

5.5 The nation
In Uganda the natural recourses are not evenly distributed throughout the country. The north and north-eastern parts are more deprived than the south-eastern and eastern parts. In the 19th century the infrastructure was developed in connection with the natural assets. It was also to these areas the first missionaries arrived and started to implement a Western educational system.164 These are all factors which have contributed to the uneven economical distribution the country is experiencing today. The families’ possibilities to earn an income are continuing to be closely connected to the availability of natural recourses.165 Political instability is another factor, which cannot be overlooked in Uganda in the case of providing children with education. The central and western parts are relatively calm, but the children living in the camps do not get the education they are entitled to.166

UPE is supposed to be free of charge, but parents still have to provide their children with books, pens, uniforms and lunch. In 1997, a study was carried out by Makerere Institute of Social Research, which illustrated that out of the children starting Primary one in 1997, only 39 percent managed to get to primary 5 in 2001. The authors of the study were very critical of the report-keeping. The communication between the inspectors, head masters and teachers

166 Interview with Maria Gorveth Nakiphende, Kampala Counselling and Diagnostic Centre.
was not working satisfactorily. This is also evident in UNESCO’s Education for All (EFA) report where the information on dropout rates in Uganda is missing.

The reporting systems are altogether bad and sometimes the only way to report maltreatment is through the senior teacher, who himself can be the persecutor. Another issue, which was put forward in the interviews, was the problem with corruption. There are strict laws against defilement of students, but because of corruption the teacher often walks away without punishment.

The government is responsible for two important tasks, namely teacher education and development of the curriculum. Observations of classroom practices show that teaching and learning is largely gender-biased. Many teachers apply gender teaching methodologies that do not give boys and girls equal opportunities to participate. They also use training and learning materials that perpetuate gender stereotypes. Consequently, there is an urgent need to introduce gender responsive pedagogy. The concern is not merely with knowledge, but with the ‘hidden curriculum’ – normative and dispositional elements that maintain present gender structures. It raises the question to what extent education contributes to the dominant social relations of society along sex, caste and class lines in the labor market. Earlier literature and the interviews witness a gendered work division. However, the female labor force participation rate, age 15 and above, is 80 percent in Uganda. This is a high number compared to other sub-Saharan countries.

In the interviews most of the girls thought it was easier to talk to female teachers. It is not certain a female teacher would assure gender equality since sexist practices are being carried out by both male and female teachers. However, the female teacher could act as an important role model to the female students. This is something that has to be recognized and dealt with at the national level.

Organizations such as FAWE are fighting for gender needs to be mainstreamed throughout the policymaking process. When I was talking to Gender desk Officer Mrs. Rita Kyeyune at the Education Ministry, she and her co-workers were about to launch the new gender policy, which will guide the “National Gender Policy” and “Gender in Education Policy”.

168 Interview with Rita Kysenye, Gender Desk Officer, Education Ministry.
169 Interview with Josephine Pedun, FAWE.
174 Interview with Josephine Pedun, FAWE.
175 Interview, Rita Kyeyeune, Gender Desk Officer, Education Ministry.
5.6 A global perspective

The pop culture was seen as a new influence threatening traditional cultures. Music and clothes, which are important features in the young students’ lives, especially in the capital, are influenced by global trends and merchandising. It is an important influence shaping the children’s identity. By the elderly, the modern culture is seen as a danger and a reason for why children and adolescents are dropping out of school. However, children should not be seen as passive victims of global processes. From a young age, the students are making decisions concerning time and space, which are bound up with global processes. How children organize their day might be worked out in local places, but is immediately bound together with global processes.176

The study of different ‘childhoods’ leads to a discussion about global distribution. While some children have to work within or outside the household to make ends meet in the family, others can over-consume. It is therefore difficult to speak about universal conditions concerning all children regardless of place location.177

5.7 School facilities

Few studies have been conducted on the issue of gender equity and educational facilities. However, in the last couple of years there has been a growing interest in the subject from researchers and policymakers, especially in areas concerning safety, sex-segregated schools and the access of adequate sanitation facilities.178 The theories of architecture goes further into the subject by exploring how building design and interior design can be seen as a reproduction of gender relations. It also investigates how different groups perceive bodies in space (for example, morals and sense of shame etc.) and how these attitudes influence the planning and operation of buildings and cities in differing cultures.179 Therefore, as mentioned earlier, the school can be said to fall under Lefebvre’s definition ‘representations of space’.180

Geography has become increasingly significant as a feminist recognition of the differences between men and women. By focusing on interactions between gender relations in society and spatial or temporal-spatial structure it is possible to stress the importance of location in the social construction of knowledge.181 These theories have had implications for city planning, in trying to look at people’s use of time and space and to create solutions that benefit all citizens. Even though this planning focuses on regional or local level the considerations for gender mainstreaming can easily be translated to other areas, especially when it comes to including different approaches and perspectives into the planning process.

181 McDowell, L. (1999), Gender, Identity and Place: understanding feminist geographies, Cambridge.
Educational facilities are often compared with a city, as a micro-society containing scaled-down adult activities.¹⁸²

The theories concerning a gender division have, to the most part, been developed by Western researchers and for the Western society. These theories can therefore sometimes be difficult to apply in different socio-economic contexts, and the theories have therefore been wildly criticised both by Black Feminism and Post-Modern Feminism.¹⁸³ This was also true in this study, where the architecture of the school buildings foremost was there to meet practical needs. The built environment can still, however, be seen as a cultural artefact that is embedded in the process through which individuals build and form their identity. The facilities embody cultural values and imply standards of behaviour.¹⁸⁴ These standards are transmitted by decision-making powers of planners, architects and surveyors onto the design. These professions are traditionally male-dominated and few women can make their voice heard at the design- or policy-level.¹⁸⁵

There are some considerations to take into account before including a gender perspective in the work of educational buildings. One of them is closely related to a larger dilemma in feminist theory, which aims at articulating the voices of women, while at the same time dismantling and deconstructing the concept of gender. The implications for planning and design necessitate the creation of spaces that articulates the different needs of men and women, but at the same time spaces that do not re-establish present inequalities and power relations.¹⁸⁶

There is also a danger in looking at boys and girls as two categories with different needs. It can lead to expectations based on norms that will continue to produce and re-produce gender roles. It can also lead to exclusion of those individuals whom feel they do not fall into either of these two categories.¹⁸⁷ Therefore, it can sometimes be better to use a gender-neutral perspective and look for differences between individuals instead of men and women.¹⁸⁸

However, the individual perspective does not assure that everyone’s needs are treated equally. The “one size fits all”- model does not always satisfy all needs.¹⁸⁹ Teachers, administrators and students might report that there is no gender disparity at their school or university. This because we are so accustomed to the norms that they will not show themselves unless we look for them. It is only when we have seen and acknowledged the

---


¹⁸⁵ Larsson (2006).


disparities that changes can be made. With this in mind, planning of educational buildings should learn how to apply approaches, methods and procedures that take social differentiation into account and try to compensate for disadvantages rather than focusing solely on gender differences.\textsuperscript{190}

By studying how children use the physical environment differently we can disclose how children conceptualise gender inside and outside the classroom and how they use their knowledge of these discourses to constitute themselves as girls and boys. There are however many competing and contradictory discourses on how children struggle to define and redefine who they are as gendered beings.\textsuperscript{191} It is important to find a balance between these different perspectives. Gender researcher Caroline Moser examines how one might look at the different approaches of incorporating a gender perspective into the planning process for educational facilities. Moser applies the terms ‘strategic gender needs’ and ‘practical gender needs’ to describe two different approaches that can lead to gender equity. Strategic gender interests aims at the big changes in society concerning equal rights. For this to happen, people’s attitudes and expectations have to change, which demands for more knowledge exchange and gender discussions throughout all levels of society. These changes cannot take place unless more practical efforts are carried out. These can, for example, be providing educational buildings and tools so women can access education more easily. The practical changes, as a response to present disparities, can therefore lead the way to long-term strategic changes in education. This perspective can be especially useful when looking at educational spaces for developing countries.\textsuperscript{192}

When I arrived at Nakasero high school I was surprised to see the classes being taught outside. The teacher explained that this was only a temporary solution, because of the national exams. I could see the positive aspects of the warm climate open up for flexible solutions, but I also found it hard to make my voice heard to a class of 70 students with all the noises of the city present.\textsuperscript{193} In the rural areas it is not always a temporary solution to teach the children outside. There is a lack of education facilities making it difficult to teach and learn.

Previous studies have shown that countries with higher levels of female enrolment in the past, equate to higher levels of economic productivity, lower infant mortality, lower fertility and longer life expectancies today.\textsuperscript{194} Particularly in the poorest countries, the lack of classroom equipment and school availability can make attendance more difficult for girls. The absence of private sanitary facilities, of desks and chairs, even of nearby running water, all help to dissuade girls from attending. A different set of biases affect girls suffering from disability. They appear to be less recognized than their male counterparts, they are less likely

\textsuperscript{190} Becker, R. (2009), Gender in bachelor + master courses, Retrieved 24-08-09.
\textsuperscript{193} Observation, Nakasero High school.
\textsuperscript{194} King, (1991).
to be provided with medical support and, in many developing countries, their education is largely ignored.\textsuperscript{195}

S. Baudino prepared a background paper for the “Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2008”, where he raised the issue of school and classroom environment in relation to gender equity.\textsuperscript{196} In the interviews, the girls were said to be less talkative than the boys and that they did not contribute to the discussion to the same extent as the boys. The typical classroom arrangements with desks divided up in an array of neat rows facing the teacher is working against the girls. This kind of arrangement has been popularized in most teaching institutions and has certain strengths. However, a big drawback is that it reinforces the traditional socialisation process. Since girls are not brought forward to speak up they are less likely to participate unless the teacher makes a special effort to involve them. A different arrangement, such as breaking the class into smaller groups, may encourage the girls to participate more.\textsuperscript{197}

Another issue is the question of safety and the need to improve the access to schools. When schools are located far away from home, students cannot attend because of safety issues and economic reasons. Therefore educational planners have tried to find new strategies to bring schooling closer to the students. This has resulted in experimentation with multi-grade classrooms, double-shifting and satellite schools. Another way to meet the needs of safety and time-saving is to build boarding schools, which can motivate parents to send their daughters to school. This will provide children who have completed primary school with the opportunity to continue their education. Safe housing for female teachers is also important if we want to raise the number of female teachers, something that was also discussed in the previous chapter.\textsuperscript{198}

It is also important to consider the fact that girls may not be able to afford the cost of commercially-produced sanitary pads and may not have access to rags or other materials for home-made solutions. These factors are known to affect the participation in education for girls.\textsuperscript{199}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{197} Baudino (2007).
\textsuperscript{198} World Bank (1989), \textit{Bhutan Development Planning in a Unique Environment}. Washington, D.C.
\textsuperscript{199} Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), \textit{Gender Responsive School Sanitation, Health and Hygiene, Gender Task Team}, retrieved 14-08-2009.
\end{flushright}
6. MODEL

The results from the observations, workshops and interviews together with the literature review has touched upon various themes and factors which have reflected girls’ experiences and thoughts on education. In the final step of the analysis, a model has been developed. It aims to capture a more abstract dimension of the problem. The categories are both a result and a cause of exclusion. The model can be seen in relation to this particular study, but it can also stand on its own as an analytical framework.

Model 6.1 Exclusive Education

Source: Based on the interviews, classroom workshops and observations gathered in Kampala, Uganda, in November and December 2009.

‘Illness’ represents the lived experience of being hungry, tired or sick, all factors which makes it difficult to concentrate in class. These are factors which are all experienced within the body; however, these factors also reflect broader societal problems closely connected to poverty. The ‘lack of support’ category holds both social and financial dimensions, where the girls mainly emphasised the importance of parents. They hold an important role when it comes to placing a value on the girls’ education. The girls also mentioned the teacher as an important person and role-model in their lives. However, teaching is difficult due to ‘inadequate learning tools’. This is true when it concerns school facilities as well as scholastic material. The school environment can be unfriendly and reinforces social codes, which often represents values shared by the local community. Breaking the norm by being dirty, getting pregnant or bleeding through the clothes means a diversion from the norm and causes ‘shame’. Another taboo is sex, which should not be practiced outside marriage. Media constantly reports news
about girls who have been defiled in school, on the way to school or sometimes even in their home. ‘Social and physical abuse’ is affecting girls who are enrolled in school as well as those who have dropped out.

Another major factor which is withholding girls from performing well in school is the heavy workload within the household. The girls often arrive late and have no time to do homework during the evenings. The ‘gender-biased work division’ is also reflected on the labour market, affecting the girls’ professional choices. However, the study has shown the girls as active members of society. The girls emphasise the individual’s possibility to be an active student, and ‘ignorance’ can sometimes be the main cause for students dropping out of school. To feel motivated is important to cope with the pressure in school.

The above explanation is a summary of the different causes of girls’ exclusion, which has been generated from the field study. However, the model embraces a more intricate explanation and it touches upon social and physical dimensions connected to experiences, emotions and deep rooted structures. The model is a result of the two previous chapters and answers the first question of the study and visualises how the different excluding factors are interlinked through different perspectives and various levels of society.

The model for ‘girls’ exclusion from education’ can also be inverted to shift the focus from challenges to possibilities. The model below is a direct translation of the first model and presents themes which could guide the work of improving girls’ access to education. In the following chapter these models will be discussed more closely to the first question of the study and explore how the girls ascribe meaning to education and the school in relation to their own life and the wider community.

**Model 6.2 Inclusive education**

*Source: Based on the interviews, classroom workshops and observations gathered in Kampala, Uganda, in November and December 2009.*
Girls’ exclusion from education is affected by factors that can be identified within the school system. However, the study has also shown the importance of looking at the educational context in relation to aspects, which can be found outside the school. These are reflected in family and community structures and are closely connected to cultural traditions.

The school is a place where societal values and norms are being produced and reproduced. The interviews with the girls also touched upon emotional feelings connected to education, which will be the focus for this final discussion. This will lead up to a critic of grounded theory which has been the overall strategy of collecting and sorting the material. I will finish the discussion with some thoughts on challenges and possibilities connected to the creation of an inclusive education for girls.

In the interviews, the girls discussed education in connection to their individual life chances and a way of being a part of the community. They thought of the school as a place where you learn to socialise and meet people from different backgrounds. It is also in school you learn how to formulate opinions and express them in front of the other classmates. These assets are much needed in the public life.

All the girls dreamt of becoming teachers, doctors or counsellors. They emphasised the importance of being able to financially support themselves and their families. The choice of occupation was regarded as a part of the person’s future identity. When I asked the girls what they would like to become in the future they often answered with a choice of career and it shows the importance society and its citizens associate to employment. It is a question of being able to provide the family with necessities, but it is also a way of becoming a valuable member of society.

The same thing can be said to be true when it comes to the girls’ way of ascribing meaning to education. Being a student is a part of who you are. The nation and the community values education highly and see it as an important step in the country’s development. Uganda’s government has, for example, made an effort to increase the number of enrolled students by the ‘Universal Primary Education’ program. The girls enrolled in school saw themselves as an asset to the community and they were eager to share their knowledge and future income with the people around them. They could feel their future capabilities, which affected their present self-image. Seen in relation to the model of ‘inclusive education’ in the previous chapter, education is closely connected to the feeling of pride.

The girls who had dropped out of school were more confused over where the future would lead them. The perspective is changed and you will start thinking about tomorrow or the day after tomorrow instead of a planned route reaching 20 years ahead. When you do not feel you are in control over your own life it starts to lose meaning. The girls who had dropped out of school often had children who they now saw as the future hope. However, the relationship between mother and child can be complicated, and one of the girls saw her child as the reason for deprived life chances.

In the interviews, the girls who had left school communicated a feeling of being pushed out of their own life, but also from the local community. To drop out of school, have children
and not being married leaves you with a feeling of being an outsider. It is difficult to know if the feeling of exclusion is a collective punishment for breaking shared norms, or if it is the individual’s internal feeling that creates the image of an ‘outsider’. The girls’ experiences support both explanations.

The increasing enrolment rate should not be seen as evidence of increased inclusion. Inclusive and exclusive education cannot be measured only by looking at the number of children who are going to school and those who do not. The term inclusive education contains a meaning connected to human capabilities, which should be supported throughout the school system. The girls valued approachable and engaged teachers and functioning school facilities. They did not mention the school curriculum as exclusive, but they did touch upon the ‘hidden curriculum’. The girls sometimes felt ‘out of place’ in school. Therefore the exclusion can also be said to take place within the school area.

The social and physical environment is not altogether inclusive. The sanitation facilities are not equipped for the girls’ female maturation, as a result of underlying structures where girls’ presence is not taken into account. This becomes more evident when the girls reach puberty and their feeling of exclusion grows. As a result, the girls become increasingly shy in class and it decreases their possibility of exchanging ideas with the other students and restrain their development. The girls interpreted their feeling of exclusion in class as a result of them being less intelligent or hard working than the boys. They did not see the education as unequal, but rather viewed boys’ talents, in for example maths and science, in the light of biological differences. The school therefore has the power to shape the self-image of the students and their assumptions of men and women’s different capabilities.

In general, the girls talked about their own experiences of education. They placed the students’ rights and obligations at an individual level. The school system and regulations were seen as fixed and it was up to the student to fit the frame. They did not talk about the government or the school’s responsibility to meet the needs of the students. Instead, they were more anxious of meeting the set goals on their own. It shows how the school is perceived as an institution with unchangeable structures. The principle of the school buildings and the teaching and learning is similar throughout the country, as well as throughout the world. It is therefore thought about in a static way, to which the students has to adapt. It also shows the girls’ experiences of having to look out for themselves and their families and not to be dependent upon other societal safety nets.

The reason I take note of this is probably due to my own Swedish background, where a lot of responsibility is laid on state authorities at both national and local level. This is an example of where the analysis of the study is affected by my own experiences. It is also a valid critic of grounded theory, where the researcher is supposed to approach the problem as a ‘tabula rasa’. It is possible to go into the field with an open mind, but not with an empty mind. The ‘filling of the knowledge gaps’ also turned out to be complicated, since the circumstances did not allow me to shape the study as I wanted. The field of interest had to be adapted to the prevailing circumstances and the course of the study contained numerous unpredictable situations.
Otherwise, the use of grounded theory showed to be of great value to the study. When entering a new context for the first time it is necessary to let the study gradually evolve. The work has resulted in the two models presented in the previous chapter.

As mentioned earlier, the study highlights the need to start looking at educational questions not only from a school perspective. It is also an acknowledgment of the school as something more than a knowledge intermediary. Educational spaces are a part of young people’s socialisation process as it is shaping girls’ identities. The school is also a symbol of future capabilities and by being enrolled in education you will improve your life chances. Even though the enrolment rates have increased, there are excluding factors affecting girls’ access to education. These are rooted in deep gender structures and should be analysed in a long term perspective. However, there are also practical adjustments concerning the school building which can be implemented in order to improve the situation for many girls. Clean and healthy sanitation facilities with waste bins and clean water are important features and would result in a more regular attendance.

As the situation is today, the enrolment and dropout rates are difficult to measure, due to inadequate reporting systems. Special efforts need to be taken into consideration to target those children who are marginalised and do not have a permanent residence. However, the number of students entering primary one does not give information on the quality of the education. Since the introduction of UPE the quality is said to have gone down. In the spirit of “Education for All” there is a risk that the enrolment rates are increasing in a pace that deprives the students of a good quality education. More educated teachers are needed, which also imply higher salaries. As it is today, the teachers cannot support their families on their salaries and has to work multiple jobs. It is also necessary to build more schools and improve the supply of educational equipment.

The students’ rights also have to be strengthened. Today, a student’s only report system, regarding ill treatments, can be through the teacher, who himself might be the prosecutor. Overall there has to be a more defined line between the different levels of the school system to facilitate the communication and highlight the students’ needs. These are important measures to take, in order to increase girls’ safety in school.

When looking at national statistics they can hide an uneven educational distribution within countries. In Uganda there are big differences between the regions as well as between rural and urban areas. It should not be forgotten that the majority of the population still lives in the rural areas and that the uneven development therefore has to be taken into consideration in order to avoid reinforcement of the division between the city and the villages.

These are a few measures, which need to be highlighted in order to create a more inclusive education system. Other needs that should be mentioned are the provision of school meals, uniforms, shoes and scholastic material. As it is now, the education is not free and accessible for all. The benefits of putting recourses towards education have hopefully been communicated. I also hope that I have been able to emphasise the importance of deepening the educational debate and the understanding of how education shapes self-perceptions and societal conditions.
8. REFERENCES


Castle, E.B. (1963), *Education in Uganda* (The Uganda Education Commission


Douglas Mary (1966), *Renhet och fara*, En analys av begreppen orenande och tabu, Falun: Scanbook AB.


87937&theSitePK=523679&menuPK=64187510&searchMenuPK=64187283&siteName=WDS&entityID=000094946_00121301483084.


Greed, C. (2003), *The rocky path from women and planning to gender mainstreaming,* Occasional Paper 14, Faculty of the Built Environment. Bristol: University of the West of England


Greed, C. *Planning the Non-Sexist City,* retrieved 14-08-2009 from the Gender and the Built Environment Database.


OECD, (2006), C01O (xls), Gender differences in University graduates field of study.
OECD, (2007). No more failures: ten steps to Equity in Education. Paris, OECD.
OECD .(2008), Gender and Sustainable Development Maximising the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of Women. OECD; Paris.
Rousseau, Jean Jacques (1762), Emile. Paris: Renaissance du livre (19--).
Sandstedt, Eva (1986), ”Nordiska läroböcker i kvalitativa metod”, Sociologisk Forskning, nr 3.


**Internet**

World Atlas: www.worldatlas.com

**Interviews**

Rita Kyeyune, Gender Desk Officer, Education Ministry of Uganda. 09-12-02.

Josephine Abalo, Mulve Trust, 09-22-26

Fred Sempala, Kisenye Youth Centre, 09-11-13.

Josephine Pedun at Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), 09-12-25.

Maria Goveth Nakipende at Kampala Counselling and Diagnostic Centre. 09-12-17.

‘Amara’ 09-11-06.

‘Funanya’, 09-11-06.


'Chinaza’, 09-11-15.
’Imani’, 09-11-18.
’Kamaria’, 09-12-14.
’Malakia’, 09-12-14.
’Marjani’, 09-12-14.
’Ebelbe’, 09-12-16.
’Kamaria’, 09-12-16.
’Chinanza’, 09-12-15.
’Chipo’, 09-12-15.
’Judith’, 09-12-15.

Group interview 1, 09-11-09
Group interview 2, 09-11-09
Group interview 3, 09-11-12
Group interview 4, 09-11-12

**Observations**
Nakasero High School, 09-11-09.
Old Kampala Primary School, 09-11-13.
Kabalagala Primary School, 09-11-04.
Kiralamba Primary School, 09-11-04.
Walukunya, Primary School, 09-11-04.

**Classroom workshops**
Nakasero High School, 09-11-09.
Old Kampala Primary School, 09-13-11.