# A Question of Vulnerability

NGOs, Education and Girls in Kampala, Uganda

Selma Sif Ísfeld Óskarsdóttir

**Lokaverkefni til MA–gráðu í þróunarfræðum**

**Félagsvísindasvið**


HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

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Leiðbeinandi: Jónína Einarsdóttir

Meðleiðbeinandi: Sigríður Baldursdóttir

Félags- og mannvísindadeild

Félagsvísindasvið Háskóla Íslands

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## Abstract

Sub-Saharan Africa is lagging behind when it comes to access to education. Girls have been identified as the most vulnerable group in that sense; they are often deprived of an education due to cultural, religious, economic and social reasons. Consequently, many non-governmental organisations have started sponsoring vulnerable girls. However, questions have been raised if sponsorship programs should be based on gender alone, and if these organisations are portraying girls in the right light or if they are simply being viewed only as a vulnerable group rather than individuals.

The overall aim of this thesis is to explore sponsorship programs offered by local NGOs in Kampala, and how gender can be a factor when it comes to sponsorship and access to education. The thesis is based on fieldwork that took place in Kampala, Uganda, in 2012. Qualitative research methods were carried out, such as semi-structured interviews, participant observation and focus groups. The findings show that there is a clear difference of opinions in terms of gender and vulnerability amongst academics and agencies in the West and NGOs and their beneficiaries in Kampala. Even though girls are indeed in vulnerable situations in some areas there is now a disparity in education at the expense of boys in other places. While sponsorship programs appear to be effective, there is a reason to re-evaluate the girls-only approach. Further girl studies are important, as they can give vital information, help change the vulnerability picture painted of girls in third world countries and show them as independent actors in their own lives.

Keywords: Development studies, NGOs, education, sponsorship programs, girls, vulnerability, girl studies

## Útdráttur

Afríka sunnan Sahara er það svæði sem dregist hefur hvað mest aftur úr þegar kemur að menntun. Stúlkur hafa verið skilgreindar sem sérstaklega bágstaddur hópur í þeim skilningi, þær eru oft sviptar tækifæri til menntunar vegna menningar-, trúar-, efnahags- eða félagslegra aðstæðna. Þar af leiðandi eru nú mörg frjáls félagasamtök sem aðeins styrkja stúlkur til náms. Hins vegar eru nú uppi spurningar um hvort slík styrktarverkefni eigi að byggja eingöngu á kyni og hvort slík samtök sýni stúlkur í þriðja heims ríkjum í réttu ljósi eða hvort þær séu einöngu sýndar sem einsleitur, bágstaddur hópur.

Markmið rannsóknarinnar er að kanna styrktarverkefni sem í boði eru á vegum frjálsra félagasamtaka í Kampala, og hvernig kyn getur verið áhrifavaldur þegar kemur að styrktarverkefnum og aðgengi að menntun. Rannsóknin byggir á gagnasöfnun á vettvangi í Kampala, Úganda, 2012. Notast var við eigindlegar rannsóknaraðferðir, eða viðtöl við einstaklinga og rýnihópa og þátttökuathugun. Niðurstöður sýna greinilegan mun á skoðunum fræðimanna og samtaka í vestri annars vegar og frjálsum félagasamtökum og stuðningsþegum þeirra í Kampala hins vegar þegar kemur að kyni og varnarleysi. Þó stúlkur búi víða við erfiðar aðstæður hafa þær sumstaðar tekið framúr drengjum hvað varðar menntun. Jafnvel þó styrktarverkefni virðist hafa áhrif  er þó full ástæða til að endurskoða verkefni er snúa aðeins að stúlkum. Frekari rannsóknir innan stelpufræða eru mikilvægar þar sem þær geta gefið nauðsynlegar upplýsingar, hjálpað til við að breyta þeirri mynd sem dregin hefur verið upp af stúlkum í þriðja heims ríkjum og sýnt þær sem sjálfstæða gerendur í sínu eigin lífi.



Lykilorð: Þróunarfræði, frjáls félagasamtök, menntun, styrktarverkefni, stelpur, varnarleysi, stelpufræði

## Forewords

This thesis represents 60 ECTS units of my MA programme in Development studies at the University of Iceland. My supervisor was Jónína Einarsdóttir, Professor of Anthropology at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, University of Iceland. I will be forever grateful for her guidance throughout the process of data gathering and writing up of the thesis, for sharing her vast knowledge of the topic and for enabling me to constantly see things in a new perspective. My co-supervisor was Sigríður Baldursdóttir, having her by my side in Uganda proved to be invaluable as I was able to learn from her during the data gathering and her great knowledge of the country and its people aided the research process. Sigríður has also been by my side every step of the way in the writing up of the thesis ready to give her advice and support. I am proud to say that the great respect and enthusiasm they both have for Africa and its people has influenced my work.

There are a lot of people in Kampala that I owe thanks to for aiding the research process in many ways, unfortunately I cannot list all of them here but first and foremost I would like to thank all of my informants who gave their valuable time to participate in my research. I would like to thank my interpreter, Patricia, for her invaluable assistance, not only did she translate during the interviews, but she posed many questions herself, that I could not have thought of, that often led to the most fruitful conversations. To Allan and Henry I am forever indebted to for taking me into their home and making me a part of their family for a short while. I am so thankful for the friendship, help and support they gave me at a time I needed it the most, they looked after this *mzungu* in every way possible and I learned so much from my time with them. I would also like to thank Gudi who helped me contact some of my informants and aided with the research process. The three of them made my stay in Kampala a real adventure and thank you all for the Ugandan dance classes. Lastly I would like to thank all of the girls in my research for letting me into their lives and for sharing their views and opinions with me. They showed me how to always look on the bright side and to be grateful in life; they truly are some of the strongest individuals I have ever encountered.

I would also like to thank Dr Kate Hampshire, a Reader in Anthropology at Durham University. Her advice on the thesis writing and assistance while I was at Durham University

was of great help and support. My thanks also go out to my friend Guðrún Helga for giving her time to proofread the thesis for me.

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## Table of Contents

## List of acronyms

| | |
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| CLF | Candle Light Foundation |
| CREATE | Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transition and Equity |
| EFA | Education for All |
| LRA | Lord´s Resistance Army |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goals |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| NRA | National Resistance Army |
| SSA | Sub-Saharan Africa |
| TTISSA | Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa |
| UBOS | Uganda Bureau of Statistics |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNGEI | United Nations Girls' Education Initiative |
| UPE | Universal Primary Education |
| USE | Universal Secondary Education |
| WISE | World Innovation Summit for Education |

## Introduction

In the year 2000 the United Nations (UN) set forth the Millennium Declaration which provides the framework for the principals and values of the UN; peace and security, development and human rights. The Declaration was signed by the leaders of 189 countries (World Health Organization, 2005). Furthermore the key values of the Declaration were put forward in eight measurable goals, known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), targeting poverty, hunger, health, education, and other social issues, which were to be achieved by 2015 (Vandemoortele, 2012). The second goal of the MDGs is to achieve universal primary education and ensure that by 2015 children everywhere will be able to complete a full course of primary education. Even though some success has been achieved concerning education and to fulfil the second goal there is still a long way to go. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) (2014a) latest report there are still over 57 million children that remain out of school worldwide.

According to UNESCOs latest report (2014a), Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is the one area that has fallen behind the most when it comes to education, with a relatively large proportion of children of school age still out of school, or 22 percent. Even when children make it to school the quality of education is a cause for concern as well. It is estimated that 250 million children worldwide are not learning the basics even though they are in education and in SSA the student/teacher ratio at primary level is the highest in the world, as high as 40:1 in some countries according to UNESCOs report. There is a desperate need for more teachers along with adequate training for teachers. Furthermore, in the age group 15-24 in SSA, 56 million people have not completed primary education and therefore need alternative ways to acquire a set of skills to support their family (UNESCO, 2012). UNESCO (2014a) also projects that by 2015, 26 percent of all illiterate people will live in SSA. It is now clear that if changes are not made, countries in SSA will not reach universal primary completion until 2052, which is two decades after the original MDGs target date.

When looking at access to education and completion of primary education girls have been identified as the most vulnerable group within SSA (UNESCO, 2014b). They are the group that is the furthest behind of all children with only 23 percent of poor girls, living in rural areas in SSA, completing primary education according to UNESCO (2014a). Moreover, if recent trends concerning education do not change the poorest girls will not achieve universal primary completion until 2086, but then again the richest boys in SSA will achieve it by 2021. According to the UNs Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) (2010), the majority of children out of school in 2007 were girls or 54 percent. Girls are often deprived of their right to receive an education usually due to cultural, religious, economic and social reasons. They are often considered to be second rate to boys and a financial burden with their place inside the household, while boys are able to take over the family matters, or business, from their fathers. As a consequence families often choose to send boys to school but keep the girls at home. It has been demonstrated though that improving girls' access to education has a long lasting positive effect, not only on the girls themselves, but also on their families and communities (Herz and Sperling, 2004).

The lack of opportunities for girls, especially in poorer countries, when it comes to education, has caught the eyes and ears of many. In recent years many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) worldwide have started sponsoring vulnerable girls through education. In the past three decades the numbers of new NGOs have increased considerably coincided with the importance of NGOs in the international development sector (Turner, 2010). According to Turner, girls and women issues seem to be at the top of the agenda within many NGOs, with an ever growing numbers of NGOs being set up aimed solely at helping girls or women in poorer countries. The positive effect of these NGOs is that they raise awareness on women´s and girls´ poor situations around the world and they have helped individuals receive an education for instance. However with the numbers of NGOs growing so rapidly the question has been asked if these NGOs are portraying women and girls in the right light or if they are simply being shown as a coherent group of vulnerable females that need help from countries that are better off.

This thesis touches upon the above mentioned matters, education, NGOs and vulnerability of girls. Having studied anthropology and development studies I was aware of the ongoing debate on NGOs and the work they do, I was interested in examining their

sponsorship programs within education. The research field for the thesis was in Uganda, specifically in the capital Kampala and the surrounding areas. I was invited to accompany Sigríður Baldursdóttir, the chairman of an Icelandic NGO, to Uganda which seemed to fit well as a field for a research on NGOs and education. The topic of the vulnerability of 'third world' women and girls was brought up by my supervisor, Jónína Einarsdóttir. I was interested in further examining the vulnerability of girls in Uganda and if they saw themselves as vulnerable, when the rest of the world seems to think they are, so to speak.

The overall aim of this thesis is to explore sponsorship programs offered by local NGOs in Kampala, and how gender can be a factor when it comes to sponsorship and access to education. The thesis has been divided into six main chapters. The first chapter describes the theoretical framework of the thesis and the literature review. There I discuss the educational system in SSA, NGOs and the ongoing debate about their work. I explore the term ´vulnerability of third world women' and how they are displayed by NGOs and at last I will look at girl studies. In the second chapter I outline the setting of the fieldwork in Uganda, its geography, demography and history along with the educational system in Uganda. In the third chapter I describe the methodology of the research, its objectives and the qualitative methods I used to collect data. In the fourth chapter I outline the results of my research, and in chapter five I will discuss the findings of the research. Finally the conclusions are presented in chapter six.

# 1. Theoretical framework and literature review

In this first chapter the theoretical framework and the literature review of the thesis will be explained. Firstly, the educational system in SSA will be discussed. The next part will look at NGOs in general and existing theories on their work. Lastly, the term 'vulnerability of third world women' will be explored before looking at girl studies and theories on girl culture.

## 1.1 Education in sub-Saharan Africa

Over the last two decades access to basic education in SSA has increased considerably. In 1990 the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) was held in Jomtien, Thailand, where most countries in SSA agreed to universalise primary education. Since then increasing number of countries in SSA have decided to extend their educational programs and set a new goal of universalising basic education up to grade 9 or further (Lewin and Sabates, 2012). Alongside the EFA conference the commitments set by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), concerning education, have helped to improve access to basic education in SSA countries. The number of children in SSA countries that enter into the school system continued to rise following the MDGs and the gross enrolment rate reached 97 percent on average. In the years between 1999 and 2011 the number of children that were out of school fell by half (UNESCO, 2014).

Despite this increase in enrolment rate and numbers that tell of improved access to basic education there are still over 57 million children of school age that do not, for various reasons, attend school (UNESCO, 2014a). However, according to Moyi (2013), that number is likely to be considerably higher based on the fact that it only includes children of primary school age (6-12 years old). The actual number of out of school children is therefore likely to be much higher when children of lower secondary age (13-16 year old) are taken into account as well. According to UNESCOs (2014a) latest report the enrolment rate in SSA has slowed in recent years; it is the area that is lagging behind the most when it comes to

education. In fact there are still 22 percent of children of primary school age in SSA that do not attend school.

So it seems that the numbers, even though they show a change for the better, do not tell the whole story. Looking at reports and data there seems to be a recurring theme in many of the SSA countries when it comes to education; a large portion of children do not seem to reach the last grade of primary education. In fact in 2009 only two thirds of children in SSA reached the last grade of primary school and according to UNESCOs report this year the percentage of children that reached the last grade of primary school in 2010 dropped to 56 percent from 58 percent in 1999. Another problem countries in SSA are facing is that students are over age for their grade, they are repeating years and therefore do not complete a full round of basic education. There also seems to be a connection between household income and access to education, this is especially relevant when it comes to secondary education, were children from households with a higher income level seem more likely to carry on to secondary level of education rather than children from lower income households (UNESCO, 2014; Lewin, 2009). Access to education also needs to be improved if changes are to be made. Definition of what access to education means can vary but the definition by the Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE)[1] is well fitted for the problems facing SSA countries when it comes to education. Lewin (2009) sets forth the main points of that definition from a 2007 report from CREATE which "includes admission and progression on schedule for age in grade, regular attendance, achievement related to national curricula norms, appropriate access to post-primary opportunities, and more equal opportunities to learn" (p. 154). Lewin points out that this expanded definition is needed to explain the situation.

As said before, even though the statistics show an increase in children of school age in Africa which have been enrolled into education, the problem still persists that many of them are over age for the grade they attend. This is either because they have not started

[1] CREATE is funded by the Department for International Development and is based at the Centre for International Education, University of Sussex.

school at the appropriate age, they are repeating years or because of other reasons, such as financial ones, have interrupted their schooling at some point (Chimombo, 2009; Lewin, 2008a; Motala et al., 2007; Akyeampong et al., 2007). Lewin and Sabates (2012) have pinpointed the main reasons why it is so important for children to enrol at the appropriate age and that children are in the appropriate grade for their age throughout their primary education. According to them, the age of children when they are supposed to start primary education is an important period; it is "at a time when they are most receptive to learning basic skills and establishing secure foundation for subsequent cognitive development" (p. 517). They also point out how important it is for children to complete and transition between grades at the appropriate age, as it seems to affect their ability to achieve in school if they are over age for their grade. Over age children that are underachieving in class may also be victims of bullying or it may affect their self-esteem. Late entry to primary school also has an effect when, and if, these children finish their primary education which can cause problems in many countries. Children, in a six grade system, should be around 12-13 years old when they finish primary education; if they have had to resist classes or have had a late entry then they might be 14-15 years old when they finish. Lewin and Sabates point out that this is the age, in many SSA societies, that is considered to be the beginning of adulthood or marks an entry into the labouring market or marriage. Therefore children that are over age and finish primary education later are less likely to continue onto further education as they will probably be in their late teens before they can finish secondary school, an age where many of them need to work for their family or have to enter into a marriage.

The high enrolment rates in primary schools can therefore be misleading. Despite the high enrolment rates daily attendance can sometimes be under 70 percent, depending on the time of the year and what is happening in the community, e.g. at time of harvest, it can go as low as 50 percent in some places (Ampiah, 2008). The high enrolment rates therefore take away the attention from another pressing matter of how low the rates of successful completion really are. In his report for the World Bank Lewin (2008b) points out that the completion rate for children in SSA when it comes to finishing secondary school is under 30 percent. Furthermore the percentage of children that go on to secondary education after primary school is under 50% in the majority of countries in SSA that are classed as low-enrolment countries.

There seems to be a relationship between household income and the transition rates from primary education to secondary education in SSA. Even though enrolment rates in primary education have risen in the past years, and if looking at the completion rate for primary education in SSA, the enrolment rates for secondary education are still low compared to the number of children that have reached the secondary entrance level (Lewin, 2008b). As Lewin´s findings show there is an obvious link between household income and education. His report shows that students from households in the top quintile are more likely to finish secondary school, or six or more times more likely than students living in poorer households. This situation is worrying, according to Lewin, and can have an impact throughout the whole education system in SSA as it can end up undoing some of the work that has already been done to improve the education system in this area. If the transition rates from primary to secondary education, or above, keeps falling it could bring about a new low for primary education, as demand for children to complete primary school could soften as a result. According to Lewin and Sayed (2005), this has also had the effect that more high-cost private schools are being set up in countries in SSA were the public schools are of low quality. This consequently plays its part in maintaining the gap between the rich and the poor and restricting access to education even more.

When discussing education in SSA the quality of education, teachers and teaching facilities need to be mentioned, as well as the above mentioned factors, as they too play a big role in improving education. When it comes to good quality education well educated and trained teachers are vital for improvement. It is even more important for the education system to consider recruiting. This seems to be an on-going problem in SSA, as Buckler (2011) points out it is a known fact that countries in SSA need around four million primary school teachers if they are to achieve the goals set by EFA. UNESCO also makes the same point in their Global Monitoring Reports from 2007 and 2008. Looking at figures from those reports, and others (Lewin and Stuart, 2003), the problem of unqualified teachers seems to be a wide spread one, especially in rural schools around SSA. Well educated and qualified teachers are one of the main foundations to build a good quality education system, and therefore educating and training teacher's needs to be at the forefront if SSA is to reach their goals of good quality education for all. Moon (2007) points out that the key to developing good education programs, which are both relevant and accessible for people, are

meaningful teacher education policies. However, according to the Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA) (2007), there are several countries in SSA where there is no official national teacher education policy in place or strategies of that kind. This has clearly been a neglected area when it comes to policy development that has to do with education. Nonetheless it seems as though governments in SSA are realising this and there is ongoing work between several governments and international organisations to develop policies for teacher education. Buckler (2007) makes a valid point by suggesting that in policy making "teachers´ voices can enrich existing knowledge about what it is like to teach and learn in different environments and could play a key role in informing teacher education policy" (p. 244). Furthermore he argues that statistics alone should not be used to build or reform education policies in SSA.

Another point that cannot be missed when addressing education in SSA countries is the much talked about gender gap and the difference in access to education for girls and boys. According to Hans Rosling's (2013), lecture at the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) the majority of people assume that the gender gap in education is still the same as it was 30 – 40 years ago when boys made up the majority of children in education. He points out that people seem to have preconceived ideas when it comes to education and gender that date back to colonial times. However Rosling´s data shows how the gender gap is actually closing and in some areas girls have an advantage over boys now. According to UNESCO's 2014 EFA report this is the case in many middle and high income countries, where the disparities now seem to be at the expense of boys. As an example the report states that amongst countries classed as middle income, two percent have disparity at primary level at the expense of boys and in upper secondary school the disparity is up to 62 percent. Nevertheless poverty seems to play a big part in keeping girls from education and even though large areas of the world have seen the gender gap closing when it comes to education there are still areas were the problem persists. Rosling states that "poverty is now a worse problem than gender difference, but gender difference aggravates in poverty". According to UNESCO's latest EFA report, 54 percent of children out of school globally are girls. SSA is one of the areas that are lagging behind the most when it comes to closing the gender gap with two of three girls never expected to make it to school. The report also predicts that by 2015 seven percent of countries will still be very far from reaching EFAs goal

of gender equality in education and of these three quarters are in SSA. It is clear from the data that many countries in SSA are still far behind the rest of the world when it comes to parity in education. Therefore it is important to examine the work of governments and organisations, including NGOs in SSA that are working towards gender parity by supporting girls in education.

## 1.2 Non-governmental organisations

Over the last three decades the number of NGOs working around the world has grown rapidly and with that the importance and scope of NGOs has increased as well. Now there are numerous NGOs that play an important role within international organisations such as the UN, and many also have a significant say in the worlds politics and policy making (Turner, 2010; Martens, 2006). Turner (2010) underlines the importance of NGOs within international policy making and development clear by pointing out that there were over 3000 NGOs that had consultative status within the Economic and Social Council in the year 2009. The number of NGOs has also increased with their importance, at the end of the 1940s there were only 832 International development NGOs working in the international development arena, but in 2006 that number had increased to 27.472 NGOs, and that number seems to keep on growing (p. 84).

When looking at the main issues that NGOs have been advocating for in the past years there seems to be a certain theme in their work. Turner (2010) for instance points out that by looking only at the NGOs working within the UNs Economic and Social Council, and by counting the keywords current in the titles of those NGOs in 2009, it becomes clear that most of these NGOs had women and girls issues on the top of their agenda. This seems to be a recurrent theme within many of today's NGOs. In the 1940´s there were already NGOs on the scene that made women and girls issues a top priority in their work, however 84 percent of all NGOs focusing on females, and issues close to them, were not registered until after the year of 1995 (p. 84). With an ever growing number of NGOs devoting their work to help women and girls certain issues have been brought forward that might be a cause for worry, for instance if men and boys are being forgotten and the risk of them falling behind in education. Another question being asked is if quantity has taken over quality within the work of many NGOs, as the numbers of new NGOs being set up keeps growing rapidly. Are these NGOs representing women and girls in the 'third world' accurately or are they working with

a generalized image of women and girls in the 'third world' that is inaccurate and therefore their work cannot be of a real assistance in the long run for these females. Many NGOs across the world also receive more publicity through today's media and have become a main source of information for people in the West about people in the 'third world'. These NGOs can therefore easily influence people's opinions and perceptions of the individuals that they are representing or trying to help and assist (Dogra, 2011).

Benería (2003) mentions the 'mainstreaming of gender' and points out that now almost all NGOs, development agencies and international organisations have incorporated gender analysis and gender programmes into their work, being aware of the importance of gender to socioeconomic change. But it seems to be women and children that represent the 'face' of most NGOs in their campaigns, adverts and appeals for support. For instance Dogra (2011) looks at NGO messages and adverts in national newspapers in the United Kingdom during 2005-2006 and found that over 72 percent of characters and people in these adverts and campaigns were women and children, most often displayed together as a mother and child. Children made up a larger portion of the persons shown, or 42 percent, while women made up 30 percent (p. 335). The dominance of women and children in these adverts and campaigns is easily spotted when looking at emergency appeals, for instance after a natural disaster. Women tend to be shown in these appeals as carers and mothers, as Dogra describes: "Most appear in disaster appeals, where they are shown in a feeding station or in a health centre with an infant or child who is often malnourished and in distress" (p. 335). Dogra´s argument is that these images validate the argument that women and children are the ideal victims and they can be used to represent the most vulnerable ´faces of disaster´, which "enhances the suitability for help" (p. 335).

Dogra (2011) points out that it is not just the difference between how gender is displayed by NGOs that is noticeable in their appeals. There is also the difference between the 'third world' and the West, which is further highlighted by NGOs through their 'child sponsor programs'. Then images of 'third world' women, which seem to be the norm in their famine and disaster campaigns, disappear from NGO brochures and instead images of western women are shown along with images of 'third world' children that need their help. The western women are therefore shown as 'saviours' of children in the 'third world' while their own parents are either absent, cannot take care of them or have passed away. This

again is another way in which 'third world' women are victimised and are shown in need of help from the West. Western women are also in this way made out to be more powerful and capable of looking after the children than their counterparts in the 'third world'.

Margaret Kelleher (1997) explores how NGOs represent and use women in their famine campaigns; she calls it 'the feminization of famine'. This can lead to two main problems. Firstly, the often graphic and tragic way women are displayed by NGOs can take away important features from the female figure. By placing women within nature they are removed from a human level and lose their political status, and at the same time it takes away how we view famine and the political and historical background of famine. Again it displays women and children as a coherent group without any power to change their situation, thus it victimises them and at the same time places famine and poverty outside of its historical and political context.

Secondly, famine and poverty crisis are normalised by the universal emotional and physical bond between mother and child. NGOs use images of mothers and their children in their brochures and campaigns. Dogra (2011) addresses this in her article, *The Mixed Metaphor of ´Third World Woman': gendered representations by international development NGOs* were she says: "For example, Concern´s many images of 'Food Crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa' show infants clinging to their mothers. Similarly a World Vision pamphlet shows a mother in a loose pink gown that has slipped of a shoulder as she feeds her child a glass of water" (p. 335). This display of motherhood reminds us of many of the iconic paintings of Madonna and child, where the physical bond between mother and child is signified by baring a body part of the mother (Fowle, 2002). This provokes positive feelings of motherhood that people can universally relate to. However it also makes a distinction between motherhood and women in the West on one hand and 'third world' women on the other hand by showing us the most vulnerable characters of motherhood, reminding us that they are victims and helpless (Lutz and Collins, 1993). Even though these iconic images of motherhood can provoke universal emotions, for example warm, touchy-feely emotions, in a sense they also represent 'private' and 'nature'. Dogra (2011) cites Melhuus and Stolen to explain how "images of young mothers can be read as literal representation of a female-in-nature and may epitomise the private sphere in contrast to the male public and social sphere" (p. 336). Dogra continues by saying that 'third world women' are "also shown doing domestic chores,

which again arguably raises sensitive issues about bringing the private/domestic sphere into the public realm for the consumption of Western audiences, as well as feeding into a patriarchal culture by showing women in their place" (p. 336).

It is easy to spot the lack of men in NGOs campaigns and messages, with the majority of published pictures, appeals and stories being of and about women and children. According to Dogra (2011), the feminisation of 'third world women' is achieved precisely in that way. In her quantitative review of NGO messages and adverts in national newspapers in the United Kingdom in the years 2005-2006, she found that 'third world men' were only present in nine percent of NGO messages at the time (p. 338). Dogra specifically mentions a striking example in:

> Concern´s supplement on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the *Guardian*. In the entire supplement, containing 39 images, there was only one MW[2] man shown on the pages on education, which presented classroom scenes and students from Bangladesh, Uganda and Sierra Leone, with a male teacher shown in the feature on Uganda. (p. 338)

This lack of men in NGO messages contributes to the notion that 'third world women' are in fact helpless victims, deserving of help from the West, their men are seen as absent and therefore they must need all the support they can get.

Scholars like Cohen (2000) and others (e.g. Morell, Jewkes and Lindegger, 2012) have pointed out another fact; that when men in the 'third world' are mentioned in the West they are often only displayed as ´bad men´, either as absent fathers or as rebel fighters connected to war lords. This supports Chandra Mohantys (1991) criticism of how 'third world' women are displayed by some NGOs as needy and helpless. The men themselves become a problem for women of the 'third world' by a means of abandoning them or being violent towards them. The messages of NGOs can also be quite confusing and contradictory at points. Dogra (2011) points out that in these messages ´third world´ women shown without men are seen as ´traditional´ and as they are most often shown with children as well it displays their nurturing side as mothers while being traditional. ´Third world´ men are however made out

[2] Dogra uses the term ´MW´ for ´majority world´ to avoid problems that come with other terms. She does not use the common term ´minority world´ „to avoid the binary opposition it evokes in relation to ´majority world´." (p. 347).

to be a deviation; their deviance is represented mainly through their absence and through violence.

In similar manner the term ´family´ seems to have different meanings in many NGO messages and a distinction is made between what is considered to be a family in the West and in ´third world´ countries. Dogra´s (2007) example of an Oxfam appeal in the 1970s paints a good picture of the matter where there are two photographs of different families. The first one shows a white 'nuclear' family; a father and a mother, dressed in shorts and a t-shirt, and their two children smiling at the camera. The other photograph is of a 'third world' family; a woman, who is presumably the mother, with a child on her lap surrounded by five other children. There is no father on the photograph. The woman is dressed in a sari with her head covered. These images were a part of an appeal about family planning projects Oxfam supported in ´third world´ countries. The images also stated that the first sketch could be any western family but the second image was said to be of a ´real´ family in the ´third world´.

Another term worth mentioning in this instance is the term 'feminisation of poverty' which, as Lister (2004) points out, is a common one (p. 56). It is used to describe how women make up a disproportionate percentage of the world's poorest people (Chant, 2006), and was first used by Diane Pierce in 1978 after her research showed how many women struggle with poverty in America and around the world. However many NGOs´ ´feminisation of poverty´ has been criticised in recent years, especially, as Dogra (2011) points out "the fact that women make up a disproportionately high component, are typified as ´third World women´ and are usually shown without any men around paints a distorted picture." (p. 339). Chant (2008) has written about the ´feminisation of poverty´ and mentions two ways in which to eradicate poverty amongst women and empower them:

> Greater public support for parenting and unpaid care work; and second, dedicated moves to equalise responsibilities and power at the domestic level. Unfortunately, neither is likely to be easy, mainly because they threaten to disrupt gender constructions which have long served patriarchal interests (p. 189).

However, according to Chant, there are positive sides as well to the fact that NGOs are now choosing to show mainly women in their campaigns. It raises awareness about the poor situations a lot of women around the world are often in. The many images and stories of

women also show how they take part and contribute towards their community, and how they are a part of a chain in the socio economic cycle of their society.

### 1.3 Vulnerability of 'third world women'

When it comes to women in Africa they are often displayed as the 'vulnerable women of the third world'. In fact it has been a recurrent theme amongst people in the West, both within NGOs, the media, tourists and scholars as well. As a result the women of Africa are frequently victimised as such. Often it seems as no notice has been given to the fact that the women in question are all different individuals; their subsistence, their family life and the society they live in varies a great deal. Their needs, interests, opinion and outlook on life can be different from one individual to another. They have been displayed as this homogeneous group that needs all the help the 'western world' can give them. That help is often given in the same standard form even though the women are all different and might not need help in the form that the 'western world' is ready to give them, or they might not need help from abroad at all. 'Third world women' are in this way displayed as the unfamiliar, 'the other', they are seen as oppressed, poor, uneducated, domestic and constrained sexually by their partners and the society they live in. In contrast women in the West are displayed as the norm; they are educated and modern women. Western women are represented as having control over their own lives, their bodies and sexuality, they have a choice in the way they live their lives, what they do for a living and the family life they choose to lead (Hansson and Henriksson, 2013; Mohanty, 1986).

Mohanty wrote a ground-breaking article, *Under the Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses* (1986) were she challenged the notion of western feminist scholars generalizing women in the 'third world' by representing them as a homogeneous and a coherent group of women. In her article, Mohanty points out that various social factors can affect women in different ways, they are individuals and therefore a permanent distinction should not be made between women based on where they come from, that is women from the 'first world' and women from the 'third world'. Furthermore we should remember that women can also share similar experiences no matter where they live or come from, if they are a part of the western world or the 'third world'. Therefore we cannot make assumptions based solely on where in the world an individual lives. Mohanty consequently expressed her worries in the article over how 'third world' women are

represented, in particular by western feminist scholars. According to Mohanty, many western feminist scholars have made the assumption that all 'third world' women live with inequalities and are oppressed by the patriarchal society they live in:

> The assumption of women as an already constituted, coherent group with identical interests and desires, regardless of class, ethnic or racial location or contradictions, implies a notion of gender or sexual difference or even patriarchy which can be applied universally and cross-culturally (p. 337-338).

Western feminist scholars have with this grouped individuals together based solely on geographical origin, skin colour and gender, which is problematic as other factors are not taken into account such as social status, class or education. Following Mohanty´s article many feminist scholars followed in her footsteps and her article seems to have made room for a new debate within the field about how western feminist scholars display women in the 'third world' (e.g. Radcliffe, 1994; Bergeron, 2003; Kapoor, 2004; Narayan, 2009; Wilson, 2011; Sandoval, 2012). However there was not a noticeable increase in the literature until about a decade after Mohanty´s article was published when more scholars started acknowledging and addressing the matter.

In her article Mohanty (1986) divides the feminist discourse of 'third world' women into six different parts. These six different parts, she argues, have made up the monolithic group of 'third world' women in feminist discourse. The first part of the discourse is how women are described as the victims of male violence. When talking about violence against women in the 'third world' the definition of that violence is often that of a sexual oppression, such as rape and female genital mutilation. Even though violence against women is very much a reality and countless of women are victims of male violence every day, then again this paints the wrong picture of 'third world' women. It makes it possible for people to make the assumption that all 'third world' women are weak and powerless and that 'third world' men are powerful, strong and that they have a hold over the women. Furthermore it puts all 'third world' women into a monolithic group of sufferers and the men are therefore all marked as violent.

The next discourse that Mohanty (1986) brings up is how 'third world' women are represented as universal dependants, meaning that they are all portrayed as economically and politically dependant just because of where they come from. Mohanty gives the example of 'Vietnamese women', 'Women of Africa' and 'Black American Women'. It seems

to be noted that cultural and linguistic differences exist between these different groups of women but they are however all victimized and grouped together because of their status as victims and shared dependencies. As Mohanty states: “If shared dependencies were all that was needed to bind us together as a group, third world women would always be seen as an apolitical group with no subject status.” (p. 339). It seems as soon as people can be seen as the ‘cultural other’ they are placed into a homogenous group without regards to other factors other than their origin. Mohanty further explains though that even though she:

> is not objecting the use of universal groupings for descriptive purposes. Women from the continent of Africa *can* be descriptively characterized as ‘Women of Africa’. It is when ‘women of Africa’ becomes a homogenous sociological grouping characterized by common dependencies or powerlessness (or even strength) that problems arise. (p. 340).

Thirdly, Mohanty (1986) points out how Western feminist scholars display married women in the ‘third world’ as victims of the colonial process. She uses Bemba women in Zambia as an example of this and how they are portrayed as victims through marital exchange after the western colonisation. Mohanty criticises how the marital exchange of the Bemba women before and after the Western colonisation has been discussed as a fact rather than focusing on the “*value* attached to the exchange in this particular context.” (p. 314). This again leads to the definition that this is a monolithic group of victimised women in the ‘third world’ caused by the Western colonisation. According to Mohanty, it is not possible to talk about the Bemba women as a monolithic group, especially when it comes to marital traditions as the traditions changed after colonisation and with them the power relations between men and women.

Mohanty´s (1986) fourth concern is how ‘third world’ women are represented in the familial system and how Western feminist scholars have displayed them as victims of that system. ‘Third world’ women are often displayed only as mothers, wives, daughters or sisters, it seems as though they do not have a role or even exist without, or outside the family. These women have been defined by the patriarchal familial system and constrained by it, but that vision is similar to the vision that Arab and Muslim societies have on women, according to many Western feminist scholars. Mohanty argues that women are wrongly represented; they are displayed as uniform and only having a value within their family were they are oppressed by the patriarchal system. Mohanty points out that by contending this and to:

> speak of a vision of women shared by Arab and Muslim societies without addressing the particular historical, material ideological power structures that construct such images, but to speak of *the* patriarchal family or *the* tribal kinship structure as the *origin* of the socio-economic status of women is to again assume that women are sexual-political subjects prior to their entry into the family. (p. 342).

The fifth example Mohanty (1986) mentions in her writings about 'third world' women is how they are often universally represented as victims of religious ideologies. In this instance Mohanty cites Mina Modares´ research from 1981, who writes about women and Shi'ism in Iran. Modares "criticizes feminist writings which treat Islam as an ideology separate from and outside social relations and practises, rather than a discourse which includes rules for economic, social and power relations within society." (p. 324). Mohanty also criticises how Islam has been seen as a justification for the purdah[3] and how it has been used to explain how men in Muslim societies seem to have most of the control over economic resources. Again 'third world' women are being represented as a monolithic group oppressed by religion and the traditions that follow them in a patriarchal society. This plays down the fact that women can and do have different positions within their religious communities.

The sixth way women are universally represented and Mohanty (1986) looks at is how 'third world' women are often represented as victims in relation to the development process. Mohanty describes how many Western scholars writing about 'women in development' have universalised the effect of development on 'third world' women. Here Mohanty refers to scholars like Irene Tinker (1972), Ester Boserup (1970) and Perdita Huston (1979) who all seem to make the assumption that development is synonymous with economic development or economic progress and that the problems facing 'third world' women, or their needs, are all the same and include legal rights, education, and access to health service, employment and political participation. The scholars explain that these needs, or problems, facing 'third world' women stand from a lack of relevant development policies from the West were women often seem to be excluded as a group. However

[3] Purdah is the practice in certain Muslim or Hindu societies of screening women from men and strangers, especially by the means of a curtain.

Mohanty argues that like women everywhere then 'third world' women cannot be seen as a coherent group facing the same problems and lacking the same things. She criticises how development policies put forward do not seem to take into account that 'third world' women can be in different positions, they can be educated, they can be middle class housewives or they can be urban women in employment. Mohanty points out that the interests, problems and the needs of these women are not the same as the interests, problems and needs of, for instance, their "poor housemaids" (p.344), however they are all 'third world' women. Mohanty criticises how few western feminist scholars seem to see or notice if "third world" women have a freedom to act to their own interests or if they have choices, rather they tend to focus on the problems facing 'third world' women.

Even though Mohanty writes mainly about, and criticises western feminist scholars when it comes to 'third world' women it is evident that assumptions about women in the 'third world' are made, and entwined in other factors of western society as well. When looking at literature and discourse on the subject other actors most often mentioned are the media, western tourists and NGOs. Looking at western media, the picture they draw of 'third world' women is similar to the one made by western feminist scholars. There seems to be a focus on the women´s vulnerability and they are displayed as victims mainly because of where they come from without looking at their individuality. American scholars seem to have been more prominent in the discourse on how western media displays 'third world' women (e.g. Stoever, 2006; Smeeta, 2007). Mishra Smeeta (2007) points out the double standard in media in America for instance, a country where most of its inhabitants claim to be followers of women´s rights. The inconsistency in that is however easily spotted by just looking at the media and how they display women; many of them still publish material based on colonial ideas and oppression when it comes to women in the 'third world'. Stoever (2006) points out that this is often displayed by the media when it comes to religious matters and women, such as how Muslim women dress and how they are forced to wear a veil or a burqa by the men in their society, rather than choosing to do so themselves. Therefore according to many media in the West, these women are oppressed and they deserve our sympathy and help. There again the media supports the western notion of the western woman being the norm as opposed to the 'third world' woman, which becomes the 'other' woman.

Another major feature in the discourse amongst scholars is how western tourists see 'third world' women. The world seems to be getting smaller for a large group of people, especially with access to the internet and better access to information. With better, cheaper and more options offered in transportation around the world tourism to 'third world' countries has increased in recent years. Nowadays it is quite common for numerous young adults from the West to travel to other parts of the world that they find exotic and different from home. Many take a gap year after college before they enter into further studying at a university level. According to Guttentag (2009) a new term has emerged with the increase in travel from the West to 'third world' countries, the term 'volunteer tourism', has in the past few years been attracting more research attention. In the past research of the term only seemed to focus on the positive effects of volunteer tourism but recently there has been increase in the many negative effects this part of tourism has left in many countries. Mustonen (2006) touches on the issue of volunteer tourism in his writings and wonders if it can be seen as a modern type of pilgrimage. One of the reasons this type of tourism has become an issue of concern is because of the vulnerability image volunteer tourism has drawn attention to around the world. Travellers from the West are going over to 'third world' countries to help and in return they feel better about themselves as they have helped a 'vulnerable third world woman' for instance, they have done something altruistic. Research has however shown that it is most often not the people being 'helped' that gain the most from this type of tourism; it often seems to be the companies that organise such trips for western people to 'third world' countries that gain the most; they manage to make a profit and to sell their 'product'.

Another line of scholars focusing their research on western travellers to 'third world' countries are the ones looking into how western tourists see themselves in connection to the women they come across on their travels in the 'third world'. According to Mabro (1991) the view that western tourists have of women in the 'third world' countries they visit is often very ethnocentric. The tourists see them as a coherent group of women that have poverty and oppression in common. Furthermore, the tourists see themselves as superior to these women, both culturally and intellectually, they feel sorry for them and pity them. This view colours the western tourist´s whole interpretation of 'third world' women and again they are

being displayed as a monotonous group based solely on where they live rather than their individuality and other social factors such as family life, education and class.

There are still sectors of society that fall into the pit of stereotyping, some of which play a big part in the lives of many women in the 'third world' and that have considerable control over how women in the 'third world' are represented. Nonetheless, thanks to Mohanty (1986), there has been a huge breakthrough in the way 'third world' women are represented, especially from western feminist scholars, with many of them now being more aware of the dangers of stereotyping 'third world women' and displaying them as a monolithic group. In accordance, there has been a rise in 'girl studies' amongst scholars in the past years which can help contradict and give a realistic image of women in the third world based on their own experiences.

### 1.4 Girl studies

The academic community has, until recently, shown little interest in girls or girl culture as a special topic in social research and they have not been seen as an interesting study group on their own. Girl studies have therefore been grouped with women studies as many researchers have not felt the need to place studies on girls in a separate research or a study group. Ringrose and Walkerdine (2007) have, along with other researchers (Hyer et al., 2009; Tayne, 2008), pointed out that in the world of academia girls as a research group have not been taken much notice of or deemed as an important part of social research. Much of the existing research on girls and girl culture has not been based on scientific data. They also argue that much of the existing research on girls has not been performed in the right way and that the academic integrity has been absent in many of them. Jones (2008) points out that the lack of academic research and interest in girls and girl culture can perhaps be drawn from the fact that society in general showed little interest in girls' lives until the mid-twentieth century. It was not until then that marketers and corporations realised the opportunities that lay in marketing products aimed just at girls, they were a new demographic filled with possibilities. Girls had not before been seen as a separate group of consumers and marketers had therefore shown little interest in them, but that soon changed and girls became the new group of consumers, they were seen as little women or "women in training" and future buyers of products. Now things have drastically changed and it seems like marketers introduce new products almost every day that are aimed just at the

consumer group girls. Perfumes with names like “teen spirit” specially marketed for girls, deodorants named after famous pop stars and black party thong panty liners are just to name a few of the products that are made especially for girls and not for their mothers or women. But even with the vast amount of money invested in this market and the discovery of a new demographic it still seems that, until recently, the academic community has had the tendency to avoid girls as a special study group (Ringrose and Walkerdine, 2007).

According to Jones (2008), it can be difficult to define the word girl and to pinpoint where the girl is situated whereas she is not still a child but not yet a woman. The girl is therefore in a constant battle with the self as she receives conflicting messages about her status. The messages coming from society and the media are to “look sexy” but “don´t have sex”, the girl is also supposed to “be nice” and behave well but she is also encouraged to “express herself” (p. 2). Perhaps this is one of the reasons behind the lack of research on girls and girl culture, though there has been an increase in girl studies in the recent years. The girl seems to be constantly changing as well; thus it has been difficult to situate them as a group in research. The status of the girl is therefore very special, as Jones writes: “she occupies the odd position of being the most desirable of objects and being the most invisible of subjects” (p. 4). Furthermore Jones says that “girl begins as someone in the middle, the consummate apprentice, a liminal figure crossbreeding the innocence of childhood with the pollutants of womanhood” (p. 1). Girl bears the mark of femininity without it being defined by biological standards, but it is those biological standards that stand between youth, or the girl, and a full-grown woman according to Jones.

Finney, Loiselle and Dean (2011) argue that a lot has changed in recent years when it comes to girl studies, scholars have been gaining more interest in girl culture and there has been an increase in research on the matter. Culture-bound ideas on girls differ greatly and these ideas can be put forward in a different way. Now there seems to be an increased interest amongst researchers to examine how girls want society to display them or see them and their identity and body, their status in society and how their social and political roles are put forward. The importance of raising interest in girls and girl culture was emphasised by the UN by their declaration to make the 90´s the “decade of the girl child”. The declaration was meant as a platform for girls, to make them more visible in development policy making within the UN. The UN Commission also made girls one of their main focus in international

talks in Status of women in 2007. As pointed out by Finney, Loiselle and Dean, the UN's definition of the girl, a female under the age of 18, has now almost become a global emblem for girlhood with contradicting effect. On the one hand the UN´s definition has managed to homogenize girls all over, consequently putting them into one category, the "universal girl", and with that girls have been taken out of their cultural and social milieu that makes each and every one of them unique, they lose their individuality. By taking them out of their cultural and social milieu Finney, Loiselle and Dean suggest that it obscures "the impacts of structural barriers such as poverty, racism, and sexism in shaping unequal outcomes for marginalized girls." (p. 71). On the other hand, this global focus on girls in recent years has led to an increased political and economic interest and support for girls and matters connected to girlhood and culture on an international level. In the development sector this has resulted in an increase in aid programs for girls according to Finney, Loiselle and Dean, especially programs that aim to educate girls and empower them. The world seems to be slowly realising that it pays to invest in girls, as Larry Summers (1994) put it when he was chief economist at the World Bank: "Investment in girl's education may well be the highest return-investment available in the developing world," (p. 1) and that "over time, increases in girls´ education have the potential to transform societies." (p. 2). There is however still need for improvement, the global discourse on girls, girl studies and girlhood needs to be visible and further research is needed. More scholars need to realise that their choice of research can have an effect on the discussion and success for girls globally when it comes to their lives and education.

## 2. Setting of fieldwork

Now that I have discussed the theoretical framework and the literature review for this study I will move on to the setting of the fieldwork, which took place in Uganda. I will start by discussing the geography of Uganda, along with its demography. Then I move on to Uganda's history and at last I will discuss the education system in Uganda.

### 2.1 Geography

Uganda is a 240.000 km² landlocked country in East Africa and shares borders with Sudan in the north, the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west, Kenya in the east, Rwanda in the southwest and Tanzania in the south. Uganda mainly consists of a plateau with a rim of mountains, with the highest point being Margherita peak on Mt Stanley (5110 m), and it lies 600 -1300 m over sea level. Even though the country is located across the equator, it is more temperate than other countries in the same area due to its altitude and the climate is therefore not uniform. The average temperature is about 26°C all year around. The landscape is extremely varied with the home of the mountain gorillas in the rainforest in the southwest, snowy mountains in the west, with the known Lake Victoria close to the capital Kampala in the south, and the river Nile running through the country. It is immensely fertile in places with enough precipitation to guarantee a harvest about three times a year; therefore areas of the country are ideal for farming. The northeast is the driest area of the country and prone to drought; as a consequence living conditions are harder there. The rainy season for the northern part of the country lasts from April to October while the dry season is usually through November to March. The south however has two rainy seasons, from April to May and then again in October and November (Otiso, 2006; ICEIDA, 2013; UBOS, 2012).

### 2.2 Demography

Uganda has a population of almost 30 million people and it is increasing quickly with the annual rate of about 3.4 percent, which makes it one of the fastest growing nations in the world. Women in Uganda have on average about seven children in their lifetime and the

infant mortality rate is around 54 deaths per thousand live births. The average lifespan is 52 years for women and 49 years for men. Only 13 percent of the population lives in urban areas and of these 40 percent live in the capital, or approximately 1.4 million people. There are about 19 major ethnic groups in Uganda but the native ethnic groups are usually divided into four major categories based on the origin of their language: those are the Bantu, the Nilotes, the Nilo-Hamites and the Sudanic. The official language of Uganda is English, which draws from the colonial period when Uganda was under British rule. English therefore dominates the media, the school system and the business sector but still most Ugandans have low English proficiency. There are over 35 other languages spoken in the country by its native ethnic groups, with Luganda, the language of the Baganda tribe, and Kiswahili being the most widely spoken (Otiso, 2006, p. 4-6).

## 2.3 History

Uganda's history starts around 500 B.C. when Bantu-speaking people from the west migrated into Uganda and settled in the south west of the country. By the 14$^{th}$ century they were divided into few different kingdoms and around 1500 the Bito dynasties of Buganda, Bunyoro and Ankole were founded by Nilotic-speaking people migrating from where south Sudan is now. The different tribes fought over territories and around 1700 Buganda expanded at the cost of Bunyoro. By the 1840s Muslim traders came to Buganda from the Indian Ocean to trade beads, firearms and cloths for ivory and the slaves of Buganda and in 1862 British explorer John Speke, became the first European to enter Buganda. In 1875 the Buganda king allowed the first Christian missionaries to enter his kingdom, after that the French Roman Catholics arrived. Then in 1888 the United Kingdom placed Uganda under the charter of the British East Africa Company and from 1894 they ruled the country as a protectorate. By 1914, other areas and chiefdoms were integrated into the protectorate forming the Uganda as it is known today (The Columbia Electronic Encyclopaedia, 2012; BBC News Africa).

In 1962 Uganda gained independence from Britain and the country´s first post-independence elections were held that same year. Milton Obote was elected prime minister and the Buganda king, Edward Muteesa II, voted president, although largely for ceremonial purposes. In 1966 the Obote-led government changed the constitution, after a power struggle with King Muteesa, and removed the positions of the president and the vice-

president. The traditional kingdoms were then revoked in 1967 and Uganda was made into a republic under a new constitution. Obote was declared president without holding any public elections. In a military coup in 1971 Obote was deposed from power which saw Idi Amin take dictatorship of the country for eight years with the army by his side. Idi Amin, also known as the 'Butcher of Uganda', sought to stay in power at all costs; he was responsible for mass killings of 300.000 Ugandans during his presidency, alongside other extensive human rights violations. Amin also evicted the South Asian minority from the country, which had lived there since before its independence and had played a big part in building Uganda's economy. The country was thus left in ruins, with its infrastructures such as the economy badly affected. It was in 1979, in a war with Tanzania, that Amin was deposed from power and Obote returned to power for a short period (Otiso, 2006).

The current president, Yoweri Museveni, came into power in 1986 after leading the National Resistance Army (NRA) to victory in the so called 'bush-war'. In his presidency Museveni has, amongst other things, lead his country through a civil war against the Lord´s Resistance Army (LRA), but the LRA, led by Joseph Kony, has been the cause of multiple human rights violations, child slavery, mass murders and abductions in the north of Uganda. While in power, Museveni has brought stability and economic growth to Uganda after its civil wars and political struggles in the years before. The country has also witnessed one of the most effective battles against HIV/AIDS in Africa while under Museveni´s control. He has been described as a 'new generation of African leaders' by western leaders and as a 'ray of hope for Africa'. Nevertheless, voices of concern have grown stronger in recent years with talks and accusations of corruption within the government and law enforcements. Recent elections in 2011 in which Museveni was re-elected gained the attention of the international community with the likes of the European Union questioning the results (Malone and Biryabarema, 2011; Bureau of democracy, human rights and labour, 2012; Oloka-Onyango, 2004).

## 2.4 Education in Uganda

The Ugandan educational system is modelled after the British one, the former colonial power of Uganda (Otiso, 2006, p. 6). The system consists of seven years of primary education, six years of secondary education, which is divided into four years of lower secondary school and two years of upper secondary school, and three to five years of college

or university education depending on the course studied. In addition to this there is also a two year pre-primary stage of education or a nursery for three to five year old children before they attend primary school. This system has been used in Uganda in some form from the 1960's. In a 2012 report from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics it is stated that the overall literacy in Uganda amongst children aged 10 years and above was 73 percent in 2009-2010, but Otiso found that 67 percent of Ugandan adults were literate at the time of his research in 2006.

According to Otiso (2006), the Ugandan government has been providing full universal, but non-compulsory, primary education (UPE) to the children of Uganda since 1997. This led to primary school enrolment rates increasing from 2.5 million children to 6 million and annual expenditure on education increased by nine percent. At first the UPE program covered up to four children per family. As women in Uganda have on average around seven children, this could be the cause of families having to choose which one of their children should receive an education, if there were more than four in the family. This can easily cause gender biases as men are supposed to be able to take care of their parents in their old age and provide for the family, therefore it would make more sense to educate boys rather than girls. This rule was soon changed and the government expanded the UPE to now cover all children which again increased the enrolment rate to 98 percent in primary schools. In 2007 the government again expanded the free education program with Universal Secondary Education (USE) and made secondary education free. This was done in phases so students in their first two years of secondary school were made part of USE first. To be a part of the USE the children had to score 28 or less on their Primary Leaving Examination (PLE). Otiso points out that education is now the single biggest item in government spending in Uganda with over 70 percent of its education budget spent on the UPE program. Despite this fact parents still have to cover a significant portion of the costs of educating their children themselves, like parts of the tuition fees and top-ups, scholastic materials and requirement costs. This has resulted in the poorest families not being able to educate their children despite the government's efforts to implement UPE and USE for everyone.

Even though the government has introduced both UPE and USE in Uganda the gender gap and lack of girls who enrol and finish education is still a cause for concern. In their 2014 report, on improving girls' access to secondary education, Barungi, Kasirye and Ahaibwe

found that despite the introduction of USE in 2007 the enrolment rates into secondary school still remained low, especially for girls. The report shows that when looking at secondary school enrolment rates in 1992-1993 and then again in 2009-2010, after the implementation of USE in 2007, the enrolment rate for girls remained the same, however the enrolment rate for boys increased by three percent. Nonetheless, the latest statistics from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) show that for the first time more girls were enrolled in primary school education than boys in 2010. However, the data from Barungi, Kasirye and Ahaibwe, shows when looking at girls graduating from primary school, that only one third of them are still in school when they turn 18 years old. The number of boys who graduate from primary school and are still in education by the age of 18 is considerably higher, or 50 percent. Consequently the authors of the report point out how policymakers need to suggest ways to increase the enrolment rate for girls and also how to keep girls in education for longer.

In theory it seems that Uganda is well on its way to reach the second MDG, to achieve universal primary education, with the UPE and USE programs in place. Despite all the positive steps the government has taken towards a better education system in Uganda in recent years, and the positive statistics that have been published on enrolment, exams, attendance and improvements after the UPE and USE were introduced, the question still remains, is there genuine universal primary and secondary education in Uganda? There seems to be resentment towards the UPE and USE in Uganda as many believe these programs were forced onto Uganda to reach better statistics in the MDG reports and as a condition of debt relief. According to Juuko and Kabonesa (2007), the Ugandan government has "not ensured availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability of education" (p. vii). The government has also not made education compulsory nor have they provided structures or environment that promotes quality education for children. Juuko and Kabonesa further point out that there has been no complaint or case made against the state in Uganda for the breach of their duty to provide education and UPE and USE for the children, as promised. They conclude that this is due to a lack of knowledge of the children's right to an education amongst the people of Uganda. In their study Juuko and Kabonesa make recommendation for improvement of the education system in Uganda. These recommendations include ideas in which students are helped to realise their educational

rights, that they need to be made aware of their human rights and that corporal punishment is not the answer. Furthermore, the state should re-examine its educational infrastructures, such as school materials, the distance to and from school for the children and training of teachers. Teachers also need to be made aware of their rights and job security, as there is often a problem with teachers taking jobs in both private and public schools at the same time to increase their low wages. What is maybe one of the most important things that Juuko and Kabonesa suggest is that individual development needs to be encouraged as well as the idea of ´thinking outside the box´ rather than just the mere passing of exams as often seems to be the case in Ugandan schools.

Before discussing the results of this thesis on the educational system in Uganda the methodology used will be explained in detail in the next chapter.

# 3. Methodology

This chapter will explain the methodology used in the research. It will start with discerning the objectives of the thesis. Then it moves on to explaining the research methodology itself before situating me in Kampala. It will then explain how the research was conducted and talk about its participants. The different research methods used will be explored; interviews, participant observation and focus groups. At last the data analysis will be discussed along with the ethical considerations of the research.

## 3.1 The objectives

The overall aim of this thesis is to explore sponsorship programs offered by local NGOs in Kampala, and how gender can be a factor when it comes to sponsorship and access to education. There are many NGOs in the Kampala area that work towards a better education for the children of Uganda and provide support for them so they can attend school and get the education they need. I was especially interested in the work of these NGOs in connection to the educational system itself, the culture and the country, and also the NGO debate in anthropology and development studies. I wanted to see what role these NGOs saw themselves fulfilling in the Ugandan society, what their aim was and also to hear the voices of the children, and in particular girls, that the NGOs were supporting. I was especially interested in talking to girls being supported by the NGOs as gender biases are often ingrained in culture and traditions. According to Mitchell (2003) boys are often chosen by the family to receive education as they are thought of being able to take care of their parents in their old age, but girls are expected to stay home and take care of the household, therefore it seems sensible to give boys an education. According to Barungi, Kasirye and Ahaibwe (2014) this seems to be the case in Uganda at times. I wanted to know if it had had an effect on the NGOs working in Uganda and the children themselves. I also wanted to see if there was a difference in how aid is being distributed between girls and boys as it seems

that in recent years western NGOs and development agencies have focused more of their attention towards helping women and girls in need rather than boys.

## 3.2 Research methodology

Anthropology is the study of people, of societies and culture. According to Eriksen (2004), anthropology and anthropological research was obscure until a few generations ago. Anthropological research was seen by outsiders as mystical and exotic and the anthropologists themselves treated their own work almost as sacred knowledge where only the ones trained in the discipline had access to it. Therefore anthropological knowledge remained only within the academic circle except for a few stories, which the anthropologist brought back from the field, of the exotic 'others' (p. 3). This has changed and now anthropology and anthropological research has become more visible and accessible. Even though the core of anthropology is still the same as when Malinowski set out on his journey to "see the world through the eyes of the native" (Malinowski, 1922, p. 25), the discipline has evolved from the days when western anthropologists went to ´exotic´ faraway places to observe the 'others'. As Eriksen (2004) points out anthropological ideology can represent:

> certain fundamental insight concerning the human condition, applicable in many everyday situations at home. Its concepts are being borrowed by other university disciplines and applied to new phenomena, its ideas about the need to see human life from below and from the inside have influenced popular journalism and student numbers have grown steadily. (p. 3)

Anthropology is also a practical discipline; 'applied anthropology' is a term used to describe how anthropology is used to change or solve practical problems, e.g. in health and medicine, education or concerning human rights. Anthropologists have always, even from the times of Malinowski, been able to use anthropology to highlight something new and interesting in every society and culture and therefore they have often been able to dispel of fixed ideas or stereotypes people have of each other or of different cultures (Willigen, 2002).

Qualitative research method is presumably the most used in anthropology and being trained in that discipline I felt that the anthropological approach of the qualitative method would get me closer to the core of the research topic and to the people that would matter. I found this to be the best research method for a thesis of this type as qualitative and anthropological research methods such as in-depth interviews, participant observation and focus groups, would provide me with a better understanding of the research topic rather

than hard data and the statistics of the quantitative method. It was therefore best fitted to the objectives of the research.

According to Esterberg (2002), qualitative research method can largely be described as when a particular social phenomenon is being scrutinised by the researcher, qualitative researchers “look beyond ordinary, everyday ways of seeing social life and try to understand it in novel ways.” (p. 2). Many have tried to define and capture the essence of qualitative research. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) describe qualitative research as being “a situated activity that locates the researcher in the world.” (p. 3). According to them the world is made visible by practises of qualitative research such as field notes, interviews and recordings. Furthermore, Denzin and Lincoln point out that qualitative research can involve an “interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.” (p. 3).

As with most qualitative and anthropological research I could not have foreseen what would happen in the field once I got there which is why the thesis has been based on inductive reasoning or grounded approach, as Esterberg (2002) calls it. According to Esterberg inductive reasoning consists of “rather than beginning with a particular theory and then looking at the empirical world to see if the theory is supported by ´facts’, you begin by examining the social world and, in that process, develop a theory consistent with what you are seeing.” (p. 7). Based on that my research questions changed and developed while I was in the field conducting the research.

To collect data for the thesis I also used what is called methodological triangulation, but that is the term for when multiple research methods are used to collect data (Esterberg, 2002; Guion, Diehl and McDonald, 2011), such as focus groups, participant observation and interviews as I did. It can also be the use of multiple quantitative research methods. The advantages of triangulation are multiple, and as Thurmond (2001) explains they include: “increasing confidence in research data, creating innovative ways of understanding a phenomenon, revealing unique findings, challenging or integrating theories, and providing a clearer understanding of the problem.” (p. 254). The disadvantages according to Thurmond, are however that using multiple methods to collect data is more time consuming than only using one method and it requires more planning and organisation.

I used the qualitative methods of in-depth interviews, focus groups and participant observation during the research. Nevertheless, I also relied on informal conversations and knowledge from locals about things concerning the research. I also used written documents such as local newspapers, academic books and journals about my research topic and numerous websites concerning Uganda and the topic of the research. Annual reports from the Candle Light Foundation, Alnæmisbörn and other NGOs and documents from the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports added to my knowledge.

### 3.3 Me and the place

I did not have much time to prepare for my research before I went to Kampala as I was invited to go with Sigríður on a short notice. Fortunately, I had my supervisors, Jónína Einarsdóttir and Sigríður Baldursdóttir to help me. Sigríður had done her own MA thesis in Kampala, so therefore she was able to give me useful and insightful information about the area and what was to be expected. Sigríður was going to Uganda at the time to do an appraisal at the NGO Candle Light Foundation (CLF), as she is the chairman of an Icelandic NGO called Alnæmisbörn which supports CLF financially. I decided to accept Sigríður's offer to join her as I have an interest in education and the work of NGOs and I also found Uganda to be well suited for my research. We prepared for the trip together, planned questions and focus groups and made a schedule for the two weeks that she was going to spend with me in Kampala; I however would stay there for two months in all.

I and Sigríður travelled to Uganda together, to Kampala, through London, Egypt and then Ethiopia. Through Sigríður's connections in Kampala I was able to make contact with many of my informants and my interpreter and make friends. They helped me tremendously after she had left by introducing me to further informants and teaching me about life in Uganda. They taught me about life in the city, about how one should not travel on a *boda-boda*[4] in the pouring rain, about Ugandan timekeeping when some of my informants showed

[4] Boda-boda, often abbreviated simply as boda, is a motorbike taxi. Before the motorbikes people used bicycle taxis, also called boda, to get around. The name is drawn from the need to transport people across the "no-mans-land" between border posts without dealing with the paperwork of using motor vehicles. The drivers used to shout boda-boda (border to border) to potential customers.

up for interviews hours late; they taught me about Ugandan dancing and music and how to eat chicken and *chapati*[5] and *rolex*[6] from a street vendor, most of all they showed me real kindness, help and true friendship when I needed it the most.

As I had never been to Uganda before I did some reading before I left to learn about the country and the capital area where I would be staying. I explored the internet for information about Uganda and Kampala, looked up pictures of the area I was going to be staying in and talked to people in Iceland that had spent time there. The image they gave me of Uganda was generally an image of the 'Pearl of Africa´, as Uganda is commonly known as, with the beautiful Lake Victoria and the source of the river Nile as two of the country's main attractions. In contrast though I also heard about the extreme poverty of many of its peoples and their lack of opportunities of jobs and education, I read about the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the corruption that seems to be ever so common amongst the government and law enforcements. However when I and Sigríður finally arrived in Kampala after travelling for 36 hours, I quickly realised on my way from the airport, despite my travel sickness after what seemed to be too many hours on too many planes, why Uganda is called the Pearl of Africa. Everything looked so green and fertile, the scenery was magnificent and the people were friendly and smiles were all around.

Once in the city centre, I noticed that the streets were filled with small motorcycles and they also seemed to be parked on every street corner in the city. Sigríður pointed at them and informed me that this was the best way to travel around the city, on the *boda bodas* as they are called by the Ugandans. I had never been on a motorcycle before and was quite scared as the driver laughed when this *mzungu*[7] tried to jump on the back of his *boda* and then held onto him for dear life. Little did I know then that this was to become my main

[5] Chapati is a flatbread that originates from India; however the Ugandan recipe differs slightly from the Indian one. The Ugandan chapati is made to be more greasy and stretchy rather than light and fluffy like the Indian chapati.

[6] Rolex is a form of chapati rolled up with an omelette in the middle. The name comes from saying „rolled eggs" very quickly in a Ugandan accent.

[7] Mzungu is a word used in most parts of East Africa meaning white person or a foreigner. The term is often used in Uganda in a positive way to greet white people.

way of travel over the next two months and once back home I would miss this way of travelling around. Once I dared open my eyes on this first trip on the *boda* I realised that this way of travelling allowed me to see the whole city in a different light rather than just travelling by car. In a way it allowed me a closer look of life in the city. I felt like I connected more with its inhabitants and the conversations with the drivers was always insightful and interesting.

### 3.4 Conducting the research

I spent two months in Uganda conducting my research through June and July in 2012. I was based in the capital Kampala, for my time there, staying for the first month and a half in a hostel in the city where locals around my age, in their mid-twenties, would usually come to have a drink and play pool in the evenings. This gave me the opportunity to talk to and make friends amongst them, which turned out to be valuable for my thesis as they introduced me to informants and told me of NGOs that might be of interest for my research. The last two weeks of my stay in Uganda I was lucky enough to be invited to stay at friends' house, a bit outside of the city but still in the capital area. They took me into their home and to this day their kindness and hospitality towards the *mzungu* girl still amazes me; I was able to strengthen the bond of friendship, take part in their everyday life at home and see life outside the city centre. We had numerous conversations in the evenings about their way of life, the education system in Uganda and its advantages and disadvantages, NGOs and aid and development agencies in Uganda and Africa as a whole as they worked in the NGO business. Although these conversations influenced the way I perceived things and how I saw life in Uganda I will not be quoting any of these conversations directly in this thesis.

Through her contacts in Kampala Sigríður had already arranged for an interpreter, Patricia, to translate for us when needed from Luganda to English, so soon after settling in Kampala we contacted her and arranged a meeting. Patricia turned out to be so much more to us than just an interpreter; she became a valuable research assistant and a dear friend. After Sigríður left Uganda Patricia assisted me with the research for the rest of my stay there. Patricia is Ugandan and has lived in Kampala her whole life. Patricia gave us her opinion on the questions we had prepared for the interviews and during them she helped bridge the gap between us, the outsiders, and our informants with her useful insights. Although we were aware of not situating ourselves as some intellectual outsiders coming to

Kampala to hear the 'voice of the natives', as has been the topic of endless discussions and debates in anthropology for a long time (e.g. Hastrup, 1993; Gil, 2010; Simpson, 2011), we were in fact outsiders to our informants and the place, therefore Patricia's opinions and insights were of great help to us during the research.

As said before, to conduct the research I used the qualitative research methods of in-depth interviews, participant observation and focus groups, which I will discuss in detail in the following chapters. However, as Esterberg (2002) points out, in ethnographic research the researcher becomes a research instrument himself during observational research. It is impossible for the researcher to make note of everything that happens or to see and hear everything in their surroundings; therefore the research is also based on what I saw and what I heard as an individual researcher and what I chose to focus my attention on. As Esterberg explains: "you do not have an interview guide or schedule to fall back on. There´s no list of things that you *have* to focus on." (p. 61). Consequently the researcher himself decides what is important for this particular research to focus on.

The personal qualities of the researcher can also play a big part in the research process. According to Esterberg (2002), then "your own qualities shape what you can see in the field setting." (p. 62). The way people react to you in the field can have an impact on your research; how outgoing or reserved you are, how open you are to meet new people and let them in, if you have a sense of humour or are more serious and so forth, this can all shape the research process. I tried to be aware of this while in the field by being friendly and open to everyone I met. Every opportunity that presented itself to me, to spend time or make friends with local people in Kampala, I took and I was eager to learn and experience new things. As a result I met a lot of interesting and amazing people and I made some good friends in the process.

### 3.4.1 Participants

The group of participants who were interviewed for this research was a diverse one. In the 12 schools that I visited, in and around Kampala, I interviewed 8 principals and head teachers and a few teachers as well. In these schools I also interviewed 16 girls who were all supported by different NGOs. A person at the Ministry of Education and sports was also interviewed once, even though I visited the ministry twice. Then I visited a slum in Kampala

were six different parents were interviewed, five mothers and one father, these were parents that were not able to send their children to school because it was too costly for them. I then visited five different NGOs in and around Kampala; I interviewed the directors and staff members at each NGO and board members at two of them. What is interesting about the NGOs that I visited is that all of them are small grass root NGOs, three of them were set up by local Ugandans and the other two were set up by people who had strong connections with Uganda, either through living in the country or spending time there. All of the NGOs sponsor children through education; some of them sponsor children through primary and secondary school while others keep sponsoring them through university or through vocational training after school. The sponsors are mainly from abroad but a few were Ugandans. At all of the NGOs I visited the children or their families have to apply to be a part of the program, the NGOs then choose who gets sponsored. A few of the NGOs sponsor only girls while others sponsor both girls and boys, I thought that was an important fact to be able to hear different sides of the gender aspect in sponsorship programs. At last there were numerous informal conversations with friends in the NGO sector, people that had grown up being sponsored by NGOs and other locals I met while conducting the research. These conversations played a part in how I approached the research even though they were informal and therefore not quoted directly here.

### 3.4.2 Interviews

Interviews of different kinds are probably one of the most used research methods amongst qualitative researchers, as Lewis and Nicholls (2014) point out in their chapter on interviews and focus groups in the *Qualitative Research Practise*. Interviews give the researcher an opportunity to reach a deeper understanding of the individual being interviewed and of the personal context of the phenomena being researched. The tools I used in this research were therefore mainly in-depth interviews, most of them semi-structured, where the topic and some of the questions were decided beforehand, although I let the conversation flow freely within the decided topic.

In-depth interviews are a type of interviews were the researcher uses open ended questions and the interview is less structured than say survey interviews were the interview is usually very systematic, all of the questions are decided beforehand and must be asked in the same manner. In-depth interviews are more flexible, it is more like a conversation, about

a chosen topic, between the researcher and the interviewee. Ideally, the interviewee does most of the talking; the researcher listens, takes notes and guides the conversations in the right direction within the topic of the research (Babbie, 2001; Boyce and Neale, 2006). Informal semi-structured interviews are one of the main methods of collecting data in qualitative research. By conducting informal interviews rather than set questionnaires the interviewer gives the interviewee an opportunity to talk freely and in their own words explain their social surroundings and society (Esterberg, 2002). These types of interviews were well suited for my research as I did not have a theory at the beginning of the research process but I let the interviews and my findings lead me to the theories.

For the time Sigríður was with me in Kampala our days usually begun early with a visit to one of the schools where girls supported by CLF were studying, but they send girls to study at ten different schools in the capital area. We would interview the principal or the head teacher at each school and then we would interview one to two girls supported by CLF. The principals and head teachers were all interviewed at their own offices. They were asked about their opinion on CLF, about vulnerable girls in general and their thoughts on NGOs and the education system in Uganda, amongst other things. We then interviewed one to two girls in each school. The girls were all interviewed on the schools premises, most of them outside in the school garden, two of the girls were interviewed in the principal's office as it was not possible to conduct the interview outside that day due to weather conditions. There was however no one else present during these interviews besides me, Sigríður and Patricia. All of the interviews that were conducted in the schools were semi-structured with the topic and some of the questions decided beforehand, the conversation was therefore allowed to flow quite freely within the decided topic.

As we would mainly visit the schools in the mornings we used our afternoons for focus groups, interviews at the CLF with the staff and the girls at the vocational training and planning for the next days by calling informants and schools to arrange for meetings and interviews. We visited the Ministry of Education and Sports in Kampala where we interviewed people responsible for a vocational training program that is in place in some of Kampala's NGOs. We conducted two interviews at the CLF with the director of the NGO in Kampala and a CLF board member was visited. Those interviews were also all semi-structured interviews were the topic and some of the questions were decided beforehand.

After Sigríður left Uganda I conducted more interviews with Patricia assisting me with most of them and the preparation work.

CLF was not the only NGO I visited, through friends and informants I came into contact with other NGOs that have to do with education for children in Kampala and supporting them through the education system. I visited three other NGOs in the capital area and one just outside the city. I was invited to spend two days at the NGO situated outside the city and during that time I interviewed teachers at different schools the NGO runs, members of staff and also the director of the NGO in Uganda. I was able to witness how the NGO is run and walk around in their schools, observe and talk to the students. This gave me more of an insight into the work of this NGO rather than just interviewing a member of staff.

One of the NGOs based in Kampala invited me, after an interview with some of their staff members, to come and spend a day with the founder, but he lives abroad and was visiting the NGO in Uganda at the time. I spent the day with him and some of his staff and we visited a few of the schools to which they send the children they sponsor. I listened to him talk to the children, who all seemed to know him and to be able to talk to him freely, about life at school and their need for more sugar[8] and sports equipment's. There was a celebration at their head office that night because the founder and other sponsors were visiting. There I was able to talk to young people that were either at university or had graduated already and were now working and making a living. All of them had received an education from an early age, and throughout university, with the help of this particular NGO. It was inspiring to listen to their stories and to see how much it truly meant to them to have been given the opportunity to study. These people all came from poor and unprivileged families. They all told me how receiving an education had changed their lives, but it had not

[8] The children get porridge every day at school. It seemed rather important for them to be able to sweeten the porridge with sugar to make it more appetising. As the schools did not provide anything to flavour the poridge the children had to bring their own sugar, therefore this seemed to be an important issue that was brought up by most of the children I interviewed.

just affected their own lives but their families as well as now they were able to take care of their families.

Through Sigríður´s connections in Kampala we were able to interview an informant that lived in one of the city's slum. We visited the informant's house on two occasions to discuss NGOs and education in Kampala as that person had experience of the NGO sector. After Sigríður left Uganda I went back to the slum to visit the informant, I told her about my idea to interview parents in the slum that do not have the opportunity to educate their children in connection with the UPE program. She immediately told me that she would help get me into contact with parents in the slum around her. Therefore I was able to spend a day interviewing parents, mostly mothers, in the slum that were not able to send their children to school as they did not have money to pay for school fees and requirement costs.

I interviewed five mothers and one father that day and I was able to meet their children as well and talk to them about school and education. These parents told me their life stories, many of them, and some of the children, are HIV positive with most of them not able to pay for medication. They all try to make some money each day to be able to feed their children and give them at least one meal a day but some days the work does not pay off and they have to go to bed hungry. Their living conditions are very poor, to say the least. All of the parents asked me to help them and their families by paying school fees for their children as they saw education as an important part of making their children's lives better.

All of the interviews I conducted after Sigríður had left Uganda were carried out in a similar manner as to the first interviews we conducted together at the schools. They were all semi-structured with the topic decided beforehand and some of the questions, but the conversation was then allowed to flow quite freely within the decided topic. That way more questions arose throughout the interviews which usually led to interesting discussions and findings.

Patricia was not present at the interviews I conducted with the other NGOs and at the Ministry of Education and Sports as those informants all spoke English fluently. She was present and helped me during the interviews in the slum. Those interviews were conducted in both English and Luganda with Patricia interpreting and stepping in with questions that I could never have thought of as not being from Uganda or having never lived in Kampala

myself. Sometimes the anthropological curiosity took over, with me asking what I was later told by Patricia inappropriate questions about the informant's life, love and health. This was often to no amusement to Patricia who was sometimes embarrassed by my upfront questions. On one of these occasions I asked a 38 year old mother of four about HIV/AIDS in her family. This woman did not speak English so embarrassed Patricia had to ask the questions for the curious *mzungu*. The woman herself did not seem too bothered about my questions but I was told after the interview by Patricia that talking about HIV/AIDS is usually a taboo and people are not always ready to discuss those matters.

All of the interviews conducted were recorded and notes were taken during the process. We tried to have at least one day a week were we would transcribe and code the interviews and look for themes although most of them were transcribed after I came back to Iceland.

### 3.4.3 Participant observation

Participant observation has been used in anthropology from the days of Malinowski's research in the Trobriand Islands in 1914. As Malinowski himself stated, the goal of participant observation is to "grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize *his* vision of *his* world." (1922, p. 25). Participant observations have been used in different disciplines as a research method but mainly in anthropology, were anthropologists immerse themselves in the study of culture and society. Kawulich (2005) describes participant observation as "a tool for collecting data about people, processes, and cultures in qualitative research." (p. 1).

I and Sigríður conducted a few semi-structured interviews with girls taking part in the vocational training at CLF at the time, both in candle making, baking and hairdressing. Most of the data from the girls in the vocational training program was however collected through a form of participant observation. Through participant observation the researcher "takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture." (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011, p.1).

We would have discussions and conversations and generally just spend time with the girls during their work or lessons, where they would teach us how to make candles or braid

hair while talking to us. They were however all made fully aware of whom we were and that we were collecting data for a research and an appraisal. At first they seemed shy and aware that we were there conducting research. As soon as we would get talking about something of their interest though, boys seemed to be a favourite topic, or something not related to the research or our role there the conversation changed. King and Horrocks (2010) point out how important it is for the research if the participants are made to feel comfortable. I found that when the girls were made to feel comfortable around us they would start opening up. When the girls were able to feel that we were not just researchers but both girls and students just like them, with similar interests, the shyness would vanish and lively discussions usually took place. We could then steer the discussions in the right direction to talk about the NGO and if it had made an impact on their lives.

At first I tried taking notes during the days I spent with the girls, I sat with them while they were braiding each other's hair or making candles with my notebook on my knees, trying to note the conversation down while taking part in the discussion myself and learning how to braid hair or make candles. I quickly realised though that a better method was to leave the notebook in my bag and just be there with the girls, spend time with them, let them teach me their ways and just to listen. I experienced exactly what Esterberg (2002) describes when conducting participant observation, researchers can "learn more by participating than they would by other means, such as simply asking others questions. They can use all of their senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch." (p. 59). The girls seemed more comfortable with that arrangement as well; they seemed to open up more even though they knew why I was there, to collect data for my research. After a day spent with the girls I would sit in the hostel or go to a coffee shop and note down the main topics and things of interest from that day.

### 3.4.4 Focus groups

Focus groups can be an important feature when working on a qualitative research. They offer a different approach to in-depth interviews with the data collected from a selective group of people interacting with each other rather than just the one to one basis of interviews. Therefore different data can be collected through a focus group were "participants present their own views and experience, but they also hear from other people. They listen, reflect on what is said, and in the light of this consider their own standpoint

further. Additional material is thus triggered in response to what they hear from others." (Finch, Lewis and Turley, 2014, p. 212).

While Sigríður was in Kampala we arranged for a focus group discussion on two occasions. We used two afternoons to locate and ring women and girls to invite to the focus groups. Patricia talked to them over the phone as most of the women and girls we invited spoke Luganda. To the first focus group we invited women that had been a part of a small loan scheme at one of the NGOs I was researching. Seven women from the age 25 to 50 attended. They all knew that the topic of the focus group would be the small loan scheme and the said NGO[9]. Even though the topic of this particular focus group did not end up being directly relevant to this thesis in the end, it still proved to be fruitful for my research. The women who attended all considered themselves to have been vulnerable girls at some point in their lives, and some of them still saw themselves as vulnerable, particularly those who had lost their businesses.

To the second focus group we invited women that had in the past been in vocational training at one of the NGOs I was researching. Four women, aged 22 to 30, attended and they were a mixture of women who had paid for their training and others who had received their training for free or for a small fee. Listening to them was very helpful as it gave me an insight into what former candidates of the NGO thought about their time there, what could be done to improve the program and also how it had helped them in the past. For giving us their precious time we provided the women in both the focus groups with a drink of soda and money for transport.

It was interesting to follow the discussion in both focus groups and to see how the conversation progressed. The focus group discussions therefore both turned out to be successful as in a way which is described by Finch, Lewis and Turley (2014):

> Participants ask questions of each other, seek clarification, comment on what they have heard and prompt others to reveal more. As the discussion progresses (backwards and forwards, round

[9] The loan scheme had finished with some success for a few of the women who had managed to start their own business with the money they received. For others it was not successful as their businesses did not take off and therefore they were not able to pay the loan back.

> and round the group), individual response becomes sharpened and refined, and moves to a deeper and more considered level. (p. 212).

This certainly turned out to be the case in both of the focus groups.

### 3.4.5 Data analysis

The data from the interviews I conducted was analysed based on grounded theory with an open coding following the approach presented by Crang and Cook (2007). As Crang and Cook describe in their book, *Doing Ethnographies*, I began by rereading my field notes, notebooks and the interviews, I also listened to the interviews on the tape recorder. By doing this I was able to make sense of things that I had not realised while collecting the data, I was also able to think about what was being said and in what context. The next step in the data analysis that Crang and Cook suggest is to identify a set of themes in your data. I reread the material again and identified themes that I found were ongoing. Similar themes are then given labels and coded. When using an open coding each line of the said text is analysed and the meaning behind it as well, then the codes are narrowed down even further by rereading and going over the different themes again. By doing this I started to make sense of the main points in the material and I was able to make a code map to sort through the different codes that I was left with. This gave me a good overview over all the material collected and from then on I was able to connect it with theories and think about the results of the research.

The data analysis for the thesis was mainly carried out in Iceland and England, where I wrote the thesis, after I got back from Uganda. However while I was in Uganda conducting the research I aimed to have at least one day a week were I would transcribe interviews. I also tried to use any free time in the evenings to note down the events of that day, my thoughts, interests and worries, and what I thought could be useful for the data analysis once I got back home to Iceland.

## 3.5 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations should always be an important part of every research, especially in research about children. Several studies have shown that adult perceptions of what children experience, think and do, may differ greatly from what the child itself has to say (Hill, 2005). I found that an important point to have in mind as I was mainly interviewing young girls, the youngest being nine years old, about their lives and their experience of school, the teachers, the education and if having an education mattered to them. When conducting interviews

with such young people another important thing to remember is the welfare of the child, it may not be harmed by the experience of being interviewed. As these girls were expressing their opinions about their teachers and school and sharing their life stories with me I found it important to change their names in the thesis as to protect their anonymity and so they could express themselves freely without having to worry about who might read their stories. The same goes for all my informants, e.g. teachers, parents and guardians, NGO staff and informants at the Ministry of Education and Sports, their names have all been changed or withheld in this thesis.

With all of this in mind I began each interview by explaining, in English, who I was and my purpose in Uganda. I told my informants that I was a student from Iceland, studying anthropology and development studies at the University of Iceland, and that I was conducting interviews for my thesis that I would write once back in Iceland. Sigríður was present and conducted the interviews with me while she was in Uganda. As she is the chairman of the NGO Alnæmisbörn in Iceland, which supports CLF financially, it might have affected the answers of some of our informants. They were all made aware of who Sigríður was before the interview and told that she was doing an appraisal of CLF for Alnæmisbörn in Iceland. When needed our research assistant Patricia, translated from English to Luganda or Luganda to English. The informants were then told that they could stop the interview at any time and that they did not have to answer questions they did not want to answer and that their names would be excluded from the research. All of the informants participated voluntarily.

Another important ethical consideration to the thesis was for me to realise my position of power as a researcher, especially because I was interviewing children and young people. I am also a white western woman, who was there to conduct research, which probably had an impact on the power relation between me and my informants and I was most definitely always seen as an outsider by the interviewees. I was very aware of this and it made me question at times the responses I would get during the data collection. However, as Scheper-Hughes (2006) points out the subjectivity of the research and the power imbalance between the researcher and the informants need not to be daunting. The anthropologist needs to be able to produce good ethnography by being aware of his own limitations and of the field. He also needs to have his informants in mind through the whole

process by giving them honest information and to make sure that their views and opinions are heard (p. 508-509).

# 4. Results

The findings of the research are presented in this chapter. The first part is about the education system in Kampala and explores the importance attributed to education, the difference in private and public schools and difference in opinions towards gender in education and sponsorship programs. This part is mainly based on interviews with principals and head teachers of schools in and around Kampala but also interviews with staff at different NGOs. The next part examines the support programs, the goals and images of NGOs and their connection to the education system in Uganda, alongside with gender issues. This part is based on interviews with different NGOs, their staff members and directors. The last part is about vulnerable girls. The results are mainly based on interviews with girls that are sponsored by five different NGOs, but also interviews with their principals, NGO staff and parents. It explores the contact the girls have with the NGOs that are sponsoring them alongside their feedback on the NGOs, furthermore the term 'vulnerable girls´ will be examined alongside the subjects of sugar daddies and pregnancies.

## 4.1 Education

### 4.1.1 Education for all – Universal Primary Education

Almost everyone I interviewed, from girls and parents, to teachers and principals, NGO workers and staff at the Ministry of Education and Sports, had an opinion on the Universal Primary Education program in Uganda and if it was working or not. The answers I received and attitude towards the UPE program varied and I started to see a theme in the answers depending on the person being interviewed, with the Ministry of Education and Sports on one end and then unhappy parents on the other.

At the Ministry I was keen to find out how the implementation of the MDGs and the UPE program was working out. The person I interviewed there said: "we are trying our best". He said that the number of children receiving education was increasing in tune with the MDGs. He then told me that there were now more children registered in school than before

the implementation of the UPE: “our government is now paying, before the parents paid so not many could afford education”. Despite that he then went on to tell me that “universal education, it is working, however universal education cannot be free. You have to provide feeding and uniforms”.

When I asked the principals and head teachers about the UPE program there were many who criticised it and told me that it was based on a good idea but the implementation of the program and the follow up from the Ministry of Education and Sports and the government had not been very successful. One principal told me: “The education system has got some challenges. Government has promised to give grants but it takes a long time” and another principal commented on the universal education program by saying that only “some schools are practising it”. The director of one of the NGOs told me: “In UPE they are not supposed to pay, it is the school that asks for food but the school is supposed to be free. The performance is not good, UPE has the biggest fail rate, the teachers become reluctant”. I kept hearing this from other informants as well; that the quality of the education that the students were receiving in the UPE program was not sufficient. The teachers were lacking interest and they were not motivated at work and, as a director of an NGO told me “the education system limits peoples thinking, they don´t think outside the box”.

Another problem with the UPE program is that there seem to be very few government run schools. As a result children in some areas did not have the opportunity to attend school. In some areas the children have to walk for a day to reach a government run school were the UPE program is in place; therefore these children have no choice but to either stay at home or pay the tuition fee at a private school close by. One principal in a private school said: “Free education needs to be implemented. The school here that gives free education is five miles away, so in this area there is no school that is owned by the government. They say they are providing free education but the school is too far away”. Another principal told me: “There is universal education but in urban areas the schools are too few. In this area there is no public school; public schools are cheap because the government finance most of the expense”.

### 4.1.2 Importance of education

It did not seem to matter whom I interviewed, everyone agreed on the importance of education and that an education was one of the most significant factors in securing a good future for yourself and for your family. Like a mother of four told me: “my children need to go to school, when you don’t study you are not somebody, so with education you earn wisdom and you know what to do”. None of her children went to school because she could not afford the school fees. The importance, and need for education in Uganda, became especially obvious to me when I interviewed parents that could not afford to send their children to school because they could not pay school fees. I mainly interviewed mothers and listened to their children and in all cases, except for one where the father was present during the interview, the father had either left the family, was in the village or had passed away. One of the mothers said to me: “Education is important; when you are educated your future is good, if they, the parents pass on”. A young mother of three stated the importance of education even though she had never been to school herself: “I think education is a good thing, I would be understanding a lot of things, you need to read the sign of the school. If they go to school my children get wisdom and get a job”. She felt like if she had been educated herself she would now be wiser and understand things better. Moreover she would also be able to read, which she found very important.

Most of the parents mentioned that an important reason for educating their children was so they would be able to find jobs in the future and then take care of their parents in their old age. A mother of four told me: “I want my children to go to school so they can take care of me when I get old”. Another mother of three told me how she sends her children to school when she has the money: “When I get money I send them back to school, money is like a visitor, no one knows when it comes and goes. I hope that they [her children] go to school and get a job and that they will take care of me because the situation now is not good”. This seemed to be a common opinion as I heard of this often from both parents and principals. If the parents come into some money for school fees the school usually allows the children to attend for some part of the school year. Children could therefore not attend school for the first term of the year but might go back to school in the second term if the parents are then able to pay the fees. Just as a child might stay in school for the first term

but then has to quit for the year as the parents do not have the money to pay for the rest of the year.

All of the parents I interviewed asked me to help them to send their children to school by helping them pay the school fees. A mother of three said to me: “I would require help to send them to school” and a mother of four asked me: “I am asking for help to send my children to school” and a young mother of three asked me as well: “I would like to ask if you could help us”. Both Patricia and a friend, which showed me around the slum and got me into contact with the parents I interviewed, told me that the parents would assume that because I was white, I had a notepad and I was conducting interviews then I was someone of power. I would have the power and the money to help them and their families. It was difficult then at the end of each interview to repeatedly respond to their pleas for help with answers that they did not want to hear. That I could not help them or their children in the direct way they were asking me to and that I had no power over the education system.

Even though everyone agreed that education is extremely important there were mixed opinions on how long education should be. If a child is being sponsored, should it be sponsored through university as well or where should the sponsorship stop? Most of the girls and children I interviewed told me that they wanted to be sponsored or helped through university because after completing senior six they had no real qualifications, so getting a job at that point would be difficult. Many shared their opinion, like one of the principal told me: “You have to give education. If somebody stops at senior six the money is wasted, but also you have to balance and take children from the grass root”. When talking about one of the NGOs to another principal he mentioned the same thing: “A family that have failed to look after a child at an early age then the problem will go on. For [the NGO] if you leave her into university she can compete for jobs and have a future”. A head teacher agreed and suggested setting up a ‘pay it back’ system for NGOs and the children they support:

> It is necessary to continue to support the girls longer to A level where they are sustainable. If they are not supported after school their opportunities are ruined. You should have like a payback system, they pay back after education. Sustainability in the future, in the long line you should have a plan to take them [the girls] further.

Although at first it seemed like the majority of my informants thought that children should be sponsored all the way through university or else they might not stand a chance at the job market, I started getting a different response the more interviews I conducted. More

of my older informants, e.g. principals and NGO staff members and directors, told me how they believed it would be more sustainable to teach children skills through vocational training after they left school. That way they would be able to use their vocational training to get a job and save up for university. One of the principals said: “After senior six it has no qualifications but he will have the basics; counting and reading. If a kid has got a skill he can pay for his university education. University student will cost as much as ten vocational students that will be more productive”. Another principal agreed when I asked him if NGOs should keep supporting girls through university, he said: “It´s important that [the NGO] supports them to do courses after senior six, because they cannot get a job after senior six”. The majority of principals and NGO staff members agreed and many pointed similar things out, that you could support more people in vocational training than through university and that if someone has vocational skill they can use these skills to pay their way through further education.

### 4.1.3 Private vs. public

There seemed to be a big debate on the matter of private versus public schools and the UPE amongst the people I interviewed. The UPE program is only in place in public schools, so students that cannot pay the tuition fee at the private schools have to attend a public school or go without education, like one principal told me: “not everyone can afford schools”. At the Ministry of Education and Sports I was informed that “the universal education is mainly for the poor” and “the private schools are all right for the ones that can pay”. The poorer people would therefore send their children to public schools as they could not afford the fees at the private schools. The quality of the education these children were receiving was however not very good, as I was told time after time, but they had no other choice than to stay if they wanted to get educated at all.

I learned that there are very few public schools in, and around Kampala, and there are more students for each teacher in the public schools, compared to private schools, making it more difficult for the teachers. That, along with low wages, sometimes results in teachers taking off in the night to look for work elsewhere. One principal told me that “private schools have supervision and follow up on children. In public schools there are too many children, to few teachers”. Another principal of a public school said: “The government has not facilitated our schools enough, this school, because it has so many students, they

have many teachers, 27 other smaller schools have seven teachers for the whole school that have to teach all day, they are too tired". A principal of a private school said:

> It´s good to have private schools, there are very few government schools, 18 government primary schools in this area and 100 private schools. So if the private schools are not [available] there are a number of children [that] would not go to school. Private fees are higher, we don´t pay in public schools the salary of the teachers.

A director of one of the NGOs I visited pointed out that not only are there too few public schools around, but parents do not seem to want to send their children to a public school if they can afford to educate their children at one of the private schools. This director told me: "people think that people working in government are not responsible. People do not seem to appreciate public education, UPE is good but how do we make it attractive?"

Despite everyone I talked to agreeing on the fact that there were too few public schools around people had different views and understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of these two different sides of education, private and public schools. I was often told by principals that as a principal of a private school you had more choice over how and what was taught in your school, and how it is run. A principal at a private school said to me: "Public has to do and teach what government says. Private in terms of fees they charge what they want and how they control the school, private has some independence." A principal at a different school agreed and told me: "The director can decide the way his school is run in a private school". However a principal at a public school saw some advantages in the public school system, he told me: "Government pays on time, first week of the month. It used to happen that teachers didn´t get paid on time but not now." I was also told by the same principal that "public is financed by the government but private is financed by parents, grants and tributes." Therefore private schools need to rely on the money coming in from, maybe at times, unreliable sources whereas this principal saw the government as reliable source of funding for his school.

The director at one of the NGOs I visited told me: "education is business", and it seems to be a big business in Uganda with an ever growing number of private schools being set up. One of the principals argued:

> Private schools came up around [the] 90's when people started to value education and government could not take all the children. Many people have come to invest in Uganda and have also invested in the education system. That is how we now have 10 – 15 universities in

> Uganda, before we had one. Many people look at school like a business but it is a service, you must make sure textbooks are here and the food and the buildings are okay.

Eventually though it all seemed to come down to money; the teachers wages, tuition fees and even the quality of education. A principal at a private school told me:

> The money for teachers is low, they do not strike, they are not united to organise school. For government [public schools] the salary is fixed, for private you look at your ability and your students and your workers. The government is not helping in this school, it is a private school. Everything here is paid by school fees here, construction, books and everything. All the teachers cannot be employed by the government. There are government schools that have high fees so poor person cannot take their child to that school.

Parents usually want all the best for their children and all of the parents I talked to wanted their children to be educated. Often parents try and negotiate the fees at the private schools. One principal told me: "Public schools are not many and often far away so parents come to private schools and they sometimes try and negotiate school fees and often they make a deal. They look at the parents, their situation and the performance of the student". I asked about the school fees and was told by one of the principals: "We try not to raise the school fees because we have many poor parents here. The price of for example uniforms is going up though". Most of the principals I interviewed, both in public and in the private schools, showed an understanding of the parents' situations and told me that they were usually lenient towards parents that found it difficult to find money to pay the fees. One of the principals said: "Parents take long to pay, they don't have jobs. We allow the first two months without fees because [of] parents difficulties. You get a fees card that says when you can pay next and how much you have paid". Another one told me that:

> the biggest challenge that parents can´t pay fees. It´s hard to pay the full amount, the money is little and they pay late which makes it hard for schools. Many parents have problems to pay; some students drop out because of money. But the school is now supporting about 20 kids that don´t have money.

### 4.1.4 Girls vs. boys

As many NGOs now only give support to girls and many development projects nowadays seem to be aimed at helping and supporting women and girls, rather than men and boys, I was keen to find out what my informants had to say on the gender issue. All the principals and head teachers I interviewed were men and almost all of them agreed that boys should be helped and that they could not be forgotten while the western world focused on helping girls. One principal told me that "the world is now looking at only girls, boys need assistance,

boys are also vulnerable, even boys need assistance." Another principal agreed and told me that we need balance in these matters, he said: "in terms of gender balance it´s important to support boys too if that´s possible." Boys are dealing with similar problems as girls, I was informed, they are just as vulnerable and should therefore be helped as well, a head teacher said: "Boys still face the same problems; they should be given the same opportunity." A principal told me how happy he was with the work of NGOs that support girls but boys needed help as well: "[The NGO] has helped many girls and I am grateful for what they do, they should help vulnerable boys too, they add the same value to the country."

The reason I was given for why boys should be helped, and in some cases should receive more assistance than girls to stay in school, was that boys on the streets would grow up to be dangerous. They would therefore be a danger to society while girls would pose a less threat to the public, the girls would be vulnerable and likely be victims of some sort, but they would not pose a threat. One of the principal told me that "boys that have been on the streets are more dangerous than girls." A head teacher also told me: "In urban areas more boys [are] doing petty businesses and street boys. There are more girls at school; we need to balance girls' boys at school" One of the principals was very open about how we should choose who to help and said: "it is better to help boys; you have to have a look at both categories. Girl and boy are equally…, what can the girl do? What can the boy do?" Cultural reasons were mentioned by a few as well as a reason, the girls would not use their education or vocational training as they would get married and have children and then stay home to look after the family. One of the principals said:

> Girls are being helped so much, it´s okay but a father will take his son to school but tells his daughter to get married. In Uganda it's going the other way around, boys are in vocational training, girls are in school. The girls' don´t use the skills. The cultural background is, in the villages the women are in the house, sometimes they have children.

But he then went on and added: "Those girls that get pregnant and want to go back to school should be helped more than boys."

Even though the majority of the principals I interviewed seemed to understand the need to educate girls and they appreciated what has been done in order to help girls in Uganda, both by the efforts of the government and NGOs, there was only one principal that told me that it can be a problem to help boys rather than girls. He told me how pleased he

was with the government's efforts to educate more girls and that there was a genuine need for that help, he said:

> It can be a problem helping boys. Parents focus on boys, they go out and girls stay home, but now it´s a bit changed, the government rose up and said let´s focus on girls now. So now university takes more women, now you see girls in politics. The government is encouraging them; you can make it.

The person I interviewed at the Ministry of Education and Sports concurred and at first told me enthusiastically: "It is very important to educate girls, when you educate girls you educate the nation." He then told me how the number of girls in education and vocational training has been going up for the past years in Uganda: "Number of girls in vocational training has improved. There are now more female than male. Traditionally the males have dominated, NGOs like CLF that are sponsoring only girls add to the number of girls in education." He then added after a bit of thought: "Maybe with time boys will be forgotten." It is therefore important to examine the work of NGOs and their policies.

## 4.2. NGOs and sponsoring

### 4.2.1 Candle Light foundation and Alnæmisbörn

Candle Light Foundation is an NGO based in an area called Mengo in Kampala. It was founded in April 2001 by Erla Halldórsdóttir, an Icelandic anthropologist who had lived in East-Africa for around 10 years with her family before setting up the NGO. Prior to setting up the NGO Erla had conducted two social surveys in Uganda that focused on orphans and their views on the society they lived in and their opportunities for the future. Erla found there was a need for further resources for the orphans and particularly for girls that had been left vulnerable by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, as they often end up on the street when there is no one left to care for them. Erla noticed that there were other NGOs that help and support street children in Kampala, but there was a need for an NGO that would help keep the children off the streets and teach them skills that would benefit them and help them towards self-sufficiency. She therefore decided to set up CLF to support orphan and vulnerable girls in Kampala. Erla hired an assistant, who at the time was a young university student studying business, that same woman is now the director of the NGO in Kampala. They started the CLF project in a container in the back yard of another NGO which helped

street children. Over time CLF grew and they rented a house for the NGO where the girls came during the daytime to learn and work (Marta María Friðriksdóttir, 2010).

Alnæmisbörn is a charity in Iceland that was founded in 2004, also by Erla Halldórsdóttir, to support CLF. The support is mainly a financial support to pay school fees for vulnerable girls chosen by CLF to study in various schools in and around Kampala. Alnæmisbörn have however also supported other aspects of CLF such as a small loan scheme for the girls to help them start their own business, and by buying a land outside of Kampala, where there is hope for CLF to build their own house for their organisation and vocational training school in the future. Reykjavík Geothermal also lends its support to CLF by paying operational costs, such as rent.

Erla sadly passed away at the end of 2004 after a sudden illness. Her passing had a strong effect on both CLF and Alnæmisbörn, as she used to spend a couple of months each year with CLF in Uganda, and the board of Alnæmisbörn had only had two board meetings at the time. They however decided to keep Alnæmisbörn going and to keep supporting CLF, and in that way continue Erla´s work. During an interview with the director of CLF she told us how “it hasn´t been easy keeping the place running. We are struggling to get the money to pay and find teachers. When Erla died it was a terrible situation, it was not easy.”

In recent years the director of CLF has taken more of the control and responsibilities of the NGO into her own hands with good results as the organisation has grown and is now becoming well known in Kampala. Now CLF focuses more on vocational training courses for girls, such as hairdressing, tailoring, baking, computer skills, decorating, English lessons and candle making. The courses are advertised via a ‘drive’, as the CLF director called it. They rent a car with speakers on the roof and drive around the city and villages close to Kampala to advertise CLF. The director thought this was one of the most effective ways to advertise. They do use other methods as well, such as advertising in the local newspaper and they have even put an advert on television.

The girls that attend the vocational training courses have to pay a fee now. That is so CLF can finance the vocational training part of their organisation as Alnæmisbörn do not support that part of the program financially. The girls pay around 30.000 UGX[10] for a two weeks course and around 400.000 UGX[11] for the whole term. During my stay, in June and July 2012, 24 girls had paid the fees to attend the various vocational courses offered at CLF.

In 2010 CLF was awarded support from the Ministry of Education and Sports. The ministry launched a support program for selected organisations and NGOs that offer vocational training for young people between 18 – 35 years of age. The main emphasises of the program was to educate young people who were unemployed or people that had not had the opportunity to attend school. The program was launched in 2010 and the following year the ministry supported 310 organisations that offered 64 different vocational training courses to 14.976 individuals. The support given was 220.000 UGX[12] for each student. CLF was a part of the program from the beginning and they received financial support for two years for their vocational training program. In 2010 the ministry supported 22 girls to attend vocational training at CLF and the following year the number rose to 70 girls that attended various vocational courses for a three month period, from May to July in 2011. CLF applied for on-going support from the ministry for the year 2012 and was waiting to hear back from the ministry at the time of the research. The ministry informed us that those organisations that had received support before through the program, with good result, would most likely receive on-going support. On multiple occasions the director and staff members of CLF and the girls themselves maintained that the support from the ministry had empowered vulnerable girls, and girls that could otherwise not afford to pay the tuition fee, to attend the vocational training at CLF.

Even though CLF has changed their focus and the set-up of the vocational training program since the launch of the NGO there are still aspects of it that remain the same since

[10] 1360 ISK cf. currency rate on the 04.05.2013.

[11] 18.136 ISK cf. Currency rate on the 04.05.2013

[12] 9.975 ISK cf. currency rate on the 04.05.2013.

Erla set up the NGO. Alnæmisbörn, who were giving financial support to 16 girls during the time of this research, still support vulnerable girls by paying their school fees. These girls would otherwise not have the opportunity to attend school. However a few things changed following the financial crisis that hit Iceland in late 2008. Alnæmisbörn used to pay requirement costs for the girls as well as school fees but as a result of the financial crisis the NGO could not pay for both. Alnæmisbörn found it important to keep paying the school fees for the girls so they would be able to attend school. The girls however explained to me that the requirement cost consists of all the extra costs for things they need for school and to attend school. These are things for school work like textbooks, writing utensils, paper and school trips. Most of the girls are in boarding school and stay on school premises at term time. A lot of their requirement cost therefore also comes from things they need, or that are required of them for their dorms or everyday life like brooms, mattresses, school uniforms, sugar for their porridge, toilet paper and toiletries.

My opinion is that when making the decision to stop paying the requirement cost the board members of Alnæmisbörn did perhaps not realised how big a role the requirement cost actually plays in the girls' lives. Even though their school fees were being paid, some of the girls still found it difficult to stay in school because they had hard time finding money to pay for requirements. One girl told me how she now has to leave school early because she cannot afford to pay the requirement cost. Almost all of the girls I interviewed mentioned this cost and one of them said to me that her school work was going well but getting requirements, such as toiletries, was proving difficult for her because she now needed to pay for them herself. Another girl told me that her class had a school trip but she could not go because her family did not have the money to pay for the trip. The trip was a study trip for a class and the girl was worried that she had missed something important to her studies by not attending the field trip. During an interview with a staff member at CLF I asked about the requirement cost. It was mentioned that finding money for the requirement cost could encourage the girls to look for a sugar daddy or a boyfriend to help them, which could in fact put the girls in a more vulnerable situation than before.

When I came back to Iceland I attended a board meeting with Alnæmisbörn where I told them about my experience in Uganda and about the data I collected at CLF along with the interviews that took place in the schools. Sigríður also presented her report where the

requirement cost was discussed. When the board members were told of the difficulties that the girls have been going through, as a result of not having the requirement costs paid for them, they immediately decided to do what they could to fix the problem. In Alnæmisbörn's annual report for the year 2012, which was introduced at their annual meeting on the 6th of May 2013, they state that following a report from Sigridur after our research in Uganda they have decided to start paying the requirement cost for the girls again.

Most of the other feedback I got from the girls about CLF was however very positive. Many of them mentioned that the staff was friendly and helpful towards them and that they felt welcome at the CLF office. All of the girls wanted me to report back to Iceland how grateful they were for the support they were receiving from people that did not know them and that without their support they would not have been able to receive an education. They talked about how important education is for their future and that CLF and Alnæmisbörn have played the biggest part in helping them to reach their goals of a better life for them and their families.

### 4.2.2 Self image

Besides visiting CLF I visited three other NGOs in Kampala and one outside the city. I was able to interview both the directors and staff members at all of the NGOs. In line with the debate on the work of NGOs around the world, I was keen to find out how the directors and staff members saw their work in Kampala and what purpose they saw themselves fulfilling with their work at these NGOs. As expected all of the directors and staff members had faith in the work of the NGO they worked for and truly believed they were helping children and giving them a future, and by doing that they were making the country a better place. Some of my informants mentioned how their aim was to support the children, to help them develop and to grow into responsible individuals and to support them in finding a job in the future. A staff member at one of the NGOs described their aim to me: "We support children through school with education and sports and our aim is to provide young, skilled, ambitious individuals and to give them jobs, ideally to give them an education that they can then go on and get a job with."

All of the directors and NGO workers seemed to believe in their work; they felt that they were needed and that it was their obligation to help others, even though money was

little and the salaries sometimes not good. A director of one of the NGOs told me: “NGOs are really doing a good job, they are helping. It´s here to being in the helping business, the money is little, you have to juggle all the savings and money.” Another director told me: “NGOs they are necessary, important.” A staff member of another NGO said on the impact they have had on society: “We´ve had a big impact, especially on the education and sports side. We have tennis and cricket; these are the sports of the privileged so we give the unprivileged kids a chance to play them.”

Even though everyone I interviewed at the different NGOs were all eager to tell me of all the good work and how they had an impact on society in Uganda, I also heard from all of them that perhaps not all of the other NGOs working in the country were helping or even trustworthy. In Uganda, especially in Kampala, there seems to be a countless number of NGOs. Majority of the people I talked to knew someone who worked for an NGO or someone who was in the process of setting one up. I found it interesting as it seemed that just about everyone could set up an NGO. My informants at the NGOs I visited were therefore wary of some of the other NGOs working in the area. A director of one of the NGOs said: “NGOs are also business and corrupt.” She told me that in the years since setting up the NGO with her husband they had received countless offers from corrupted people, both from individuals and within the system. Once they got offered a lot of money for some containers with material for their NGO, such as mattresses and school materials, they did not take the offer. With this story she wanted to emphasise how easy it is for people and NGOs to go off the track and become involved in some type of corruption. A staff member at another NGO told me how sometimes the money is not used correctly within the NGOs or can fall into the wrong hands, he said: “The staff of NGOs don´t understand the money or the use of resources, there is money spent but there is no job done. The money we [Uganda] have received in the last 20 years is enough to make Uganda rich.”

A staff member at one of the NGOs further explained the NGO situation in Uganda by telling me how the mass number of NGOs made it difficult to get an overview of the situation. This was mentioned at every interview I conducted with staff members and directors of these five different NGOs. There were simply too many of them but they all had complete faith in their own work even though they did not have faith in some of the other NGOs. A staff member of one of the NGOs agreed and explained how even though the NGOs

thought they were helping they had to choose the right ground so their work will be beneficial for the country:

> There are so many [NGOs] that you can´t get an overview who is good and who is bad but overall they should be there. Africa needs loads of help. The country is only going to improve with economic growth, that comes with people getting jobs and creating jobs. The best NGOs are the ones that focus on that area. NGOs that focus on like art, their impact is going to be minimum, but NGOs that focus on forestry or business are going to be more beneficial, like sport, on a social level it´s important but not on an economic level.

### 4.2.3 NGOs and the education system

All of the NGOs I visited had to do with education and sponsoring children through the school system. Some of the NGOs sponsored children from primary school and all the way through university while others gave sponsorship for a shorter time. At all of the NGOs I was told how important it was for Uganda to educate the youth of the country, that they were the future and that everyone had the right to receive an education. A staff member told me:

> Every child has a right to education, for knowledge, what are you going to do if you didn´t go to school really? In Uganda if you haven´t got any education you end up doing the jobs that are not well paid. You want to get an education so you can get a job with good salaries so you can maintain and look after your family.

Even though all of the NGOs I visited approached the sponsorship and their work with the children in different ways, they all expressed their doubts on the UPE system in Uganda. Two of the NGOs had taken all of their children out of the public schools and the UPE system and one of the NGOs had their own private schools for their children. A member of staff at one of the NGOs told me:

> There are some free schools, we´ve taken all of our kids out of them basically, out of UPE and USE schools just because the quality has gotten worse. The number of class sizes are increasing rapidly and the teachers´ quality, all the good teachers go to the private schools to get paid more. So it´s the worst teachers with the most kids and the least resources. So it [the UPE system] does exist but it´s not very good. It doesn´t provide quality education. In some classes one teacher is tied to 100-150 kids in a very small classroom, you find one classroom in a government school, which is under USE that has more than 150 kids. We moved all of our kids [to private schools] and as a result our kids are doing much better.

This same member of staff then went on to tell me of the bad quality teaching and guidance the children in public schools receive and how they are not prepared for their exams, he said: “You get kids in senior 3 sitting an exam and they get half a day of school, like four hours of school a day and then they get sent home and that’s their exam

candidate." A director at another NGO simplified it and summarized what I had heard from all my NGO informants when she said: "The universal education system doesn´t work."

At two of the NGOs I visited my informants frequently told me about their worries that the education system in Uganda was outdated and that the curriculum had not changed in years. They told me that independent thinking was not encouraged and the children were taught to learn by rote, by repeating what the teacher writes on the board, rather than having them think about what they were actually learning. A staff member at one of the NGOs said: "The curriculum needs an overhaul, what they are learning is still what they were learning 50 years ago. There is no room to think outside the box." This was a term that I commonly heard from most people I interviewed at these two NGOs, that the children were not encouraged to think outside the box. It was only at these two NGOs were I heard of these concerns, it is worth mentioning that these two particular NGOs were the only ones were my informants where European.

Another matter that I often heard about and my informants mentioned when talking about the education system was the teachers. It was not that they thought the teachers were necessarily bad but somehow the education system had pushed them too far or forced them to make bad decisions. I was told that many of the teachers in the UPE system lacked interest in their job and that nothing was done to motivate them. They were badly paid and therefore some teachers changed jobs often or had two jobs which would have negative effects on the children they taught. A staff member at one of the NGOs told me: "Teachers often have two jobs, what happens is they are paid peanuts in public schools so for them to be able to earn extra income they have to get an extra job." These teachers are therefore hired by the public schools but may then have an extra job on the side at a private school where they get paid more. This results in teachers often not showing up at public schools for classes because they are teaching somewhere else for a bit more money. At another NGO they had a problem with some of the teachers taking off in the night because they found a better paid job somewhere else, the morning after there would be no one to teach the children.

My informants at the NGOs all had their own vision of how to improve the education system and how to make sure more children get educated and find a job in the future. A staff member at one of the NGOs told me of their idea:

> In more developed countries, like the UK for example companies have graduate programs, if you join a big company the first year or two is training whereas here you don´t have that. The bridge between education and employment [in Uganda] is massive. A lot of the education here is theory based and we spoke to a lot of employers and they all said that was one of the biggest obstacle for young people getting a job is that they have no idea what it´s like to work in an office. So that is something we try and do with our career program, and it seems to be working, the kids are getting jobs.

Many of my other informants had similar stories and ideas, many talked about implementing more vocational training, like a staff member at one of the NGOs said: "We need to encourage more vocational training" and a director at one of the NGOs told me: "University is expensive for sponsors so they should only be sponsored up to senior 6, but when you have qualifications or skills they can support themselves through university." At one of the NGOs they told me how they were now supporting their children all the way through university but they were trying to encourage more of them to do vocational training instead. They told me that if every child would get a university education there would not be enough jobs to go around. They also explained to me how everyone wants to do the same degree as a result of a bad education system, where the children do not get any career guidance, and are not being taught to think outside the box. A staff member at this NGO told me how they have tried to change this:

> They get career guidance and the younger kids get mentoring from [staff] in the office, during holidays we have holiday programs. Massive problem is the lack of information, schools don´t do that, CV writing, public speaking etc. We have 10 kids leaving school this year and nine of them wanted to do the same course, a business course, because that´s what everyone else did and that´s what they´ve heard is good. So we try and give them information.

The majority of the people I interviewed at different NGOs agreed that it would be a good idea to introduce the children to vocational training after school rather than sponsoring them throughout university. There were however mixed feelings about this at few of the NGOs where they were worried about the children's future because possibility of a job at the end of senior six seemed unlikely. A staff member of one told me:

> We believe supporting a child up to senior six is not good enough, they´re not going to get a job. We were only up to senior six like other NGOs but we go from primary school all the way through. One thing we introduced in the last two years is further education. Beforehand we had a small scholarship so we could allow up to three to get higher education at once whereas now we [have] 30-40 kids in higher education.

Those 30-40 children were however split between university and vocational training, I was told, but this NGO however emphasised that they did not want to leave their children

after senior six, they felt that they had an obligation to follow them further, like a staff member said to me: “We like to try and help them get a job, we support them through primary, secondary, university until they get jobs, we support them until the end.”

### 4.2.4 Sponsorship

All the NGOs supported the education of children, and therefore an obvious part of my conversations and interviews with the NGO workers and directors was the people they help and sponsor, the children and their families. I was told that in the past few years many of the NGOs had changed their policies and their ideas about sponsorship. They had drifted away from the idea that NGOs should be there to cater for the child’s every need, even though they are vulnerable. These NGOs believe that an approach like that does in fact only help for a short period of time but that it leaves nothing behind after the help is gone and the children and their families are on their own again. A director of one of the NGOs said to me: “Sponsoring can then be a problem” and then she added:

> Even though you pay for a child to go to school that doesn’t mean they are going to succeed. If they have been supported all their lives and through university then what? They don´t know how to cope. They need to work for it and then they understand it better.

She emphasised that it does not work to be handed everything for free, both for the children and, more importantly she added, for the parents, she said: “The problem with sponsored school is the parents, they are not motivated about the education, they get it for free.”

As many of the children being sponsored live with their grandparents, as a result of their parents passing away or not being able to take care of their children, a director of one of the NGOs mentioned the grandparents in addition to the parents, she said: “A lot of the children live with grandparents. Do they get motivated or are they just coming because it is free?” The director then added: “Nothing is free; it doesn’t work to have everything free from day one.” She told me that she has three teenagers who work at her house during the holidays and that is how they pay their school fees, she also said: “some parents come and clean beans or clean the school and that is how they pay for top up school fees.” This director believed, like some of my other informants that it did not benefit anyone, no matter how vulnerable they were, to have everything handed to them for free, they had to work for things to appreciate them better. The director also mentioned how the family could be a

liability if the system does not change, the 'pay it back' system, where the children pay back in some way to the NGO that sponsored them after school, does not work according to her, she said:

> The pay it back system is not going to work, everyone here that goes to university is dragging the whole family behind them. That's why they can't move forward, they have all the cousins to pay for. They should have a pay it forward system, not pay it back system.

There seemed to be a similar theme at most of the NGOs I visited, even though some of them were still paying for a large amount of what the children needed then it seemed to be done under a similar manner. A staff member at another NGO explained their policy to me when he said:

> We provide the school requirements, not to all kids though, but to those who really need it if the families cannot afford it at all. Once a year we buy a full set of uniform for each member, if they lose or damage that throughout the year it is up to them to replace it. We pay for exam costs and registrations as well.

Another NGO worker told me of their approach to this: "We charge one dollar and for vocational training, the government doesn't support us." This NGO charged young people one dollar to attend different courses with them, vocational courses and traditional school courses. The director at this particular NGO thought that many people in Uganda needed to change their way of thinking, he said: "We are trying to teach the Ugandans about service for money, they expect service for free." A director at another NGO made similar comments about the Ugandan way of thinking when it comes to aid, and said that maybe it was a result of the many NGOs in the country, that people had gotten used to getting service for free, she said: "some are narrow minded, they think: if someone will give me money my problems will be solved."

I was told that it was not just the receivers of aid, the children, the parents and the grandparents that needed to change their way of thinking, at all of the NGOs I visited I was told how they themselves, and other NGOs in Uganda, needed to change their policies. A director at one of the NGOs pointed out that more NGOs need to pick up on this idea that everything does not have to be free, that it is not beneficiary for anyone and that change is necessary so that sponsorship can improve. He said: "There is need to sensitise NGO workers, people think the money is not coming." A director at another NGO agreed when she said: "NGOs have to change their policies." Then she added: "Africa needs more than that" when she told me how NGOs and development agencies in the West needed to get

behind this idea that the best way to help was not necessarily to give everything away for free even though people were vulnerable. They needed to get to know the people and what worked for them so she told me: “If you are working with people it’s good to identify with people to some extent.”

### 4.2.5 Gender issues

With an ever growing number of NGOs setting up projects and holding out a helping hand to mainly females rather than males I questioned my informants at the different NGOs about the gender issue in the development and aid sector. Most of the directors and staff members of the NGOs I interviewed, keep in mind that they were from both Uganda and Europe, agreed partially with the principals I interviewed and did not see a reason to help girls rather than boys, or the other way around either. A director of an NGO I visited, that supported both girls and boys, told me how NGOs that only help either girls or boys were not helping: “It can´t be like that, that is discrimination and shouldn´t be like that, it´s an intervention, gender mainstreaming.” A staff member at another NGO told me how they deal with the situation and make sure that they do everything to even their numbers when it comes to gender:

> We do have slightly more boys; I think it´s like 48:52 to the boys, that was at the end of last year. But we only took on girls this year to try and get it back to even. I don’t see why boys’ shouldn´t get the same chance as well.

At one of the NGOs I was told how there might have been a reason for helping girls rather than boys in the past but that now, in modern Uganda, the genders were more even than ever before so there is no need for one gender to be supported more than the other. When I asked a staff member if girls were more vulnerable than boys if they were not educated his response was:

> In early marriages and traditionally in Uganda the woman would be entitled to be home so the man would work for the woman. Her job was to stay home and do all the housework and the man’s job was to go find food. But now it has changed; now boys and girls get the same education and they get the same jobs, I don’t think that boys are falling behind. Most of the NGOs that are supporting women’s empowerment are supporting women not girls. I don´t think it has reached the point where it’s gone the other way, it´s gone full circle like positive discrimination, I don´t think we´ve gotten to that point yet.

At one of the NGOs I visited the director, who was from Europe, told me how she thinks that this focus on girls rather than boys amongst NGOs has come from western

countries and the aid sector rather than Africans themselves. She told me: “Aid is trying to force Africa to no discrimination; it has always been there but just in the village, now the west is forcing Africa to put it in the forefront.” She then told me about the numbers in the NGO she works for, she said: “We have about 60 percent focus on the girl child.” Another director, from Uganda, disagreed and told me how Africa needs to change, that Africans need to change their way of thinking to be more in line with European countries, he said: “The women [in Uganda] have just realised that they need more, they need to work. The cultural background plays a part, in the villages the women are in the house and sometimes they have children.” After some thought he however added that maybe the Ugandans have gone a bit into one direction with gender and education with a growing number of girls in higher education, he said: “In Uganda it´s the other way around, boys are in vocational training and girls are in schools.” The director then added: “The girls don´t use the skills because of their cultural background.” After hearing the views and opinions of the different NGO staff members it is vital to hear from the girls themselves.

## 4.3 Vulnerable girls

### 4.3.1 The girls’ views on the NGOs

The majority of the girls supported by the NGOs seemed to know what their NGO stood for, whom they help and why they help them. They knew that their NGO helps children and supports them so they have the opportunity to receive an education. It was only the two youngest of the girls I interviewed, eight and nine year old, who did not seem to know exactly who was supporting them, even though they knew that someone was helping them by paying their school fees. They did however know members of staff at the said NGO when we named them and asked if they had been to visit them at school or if they go to the office to see them. I received various answers to that question, if the NGOs visit them at school over term time, as some of the girls told me that they get visits from their NGO a couple of times during the term and one told us that her NGO: “sometimes calls for parents meetings.” Others said that their NGO used to visit them at school but they had stopped coming for visits now and yet another said they were not familiar with the same NGO ever coming to visit them at school over term time. The director at one of the NGOs said that she used to go herself to visit each school twice a term in the past, but now it was too costly for the organisation as they needed to pay for transport to all the schools. The NGO or its staff

members did not have a car at their disposal so they would have to hire a private taxi to get to the schools, which are scattered around the city, with a few of the schools outside of the city itself. Many of the girls do however go and visit this NGOs office while on school holiday. The girls go to the NGO to help out or, as one of the girls told us: “to have something to do”. They help with small jobs around the office or help the staff members in any way they can. The girls told me that they take their report cards to the office, at the end of term; to show the director and other members of staff how they are doing academically. It seemed as though most of the girls were keen to go to the office to help out even though it was during their time off school and that expressed, to me, that they were comfortable with going there and with the members of staff as well.

All of the girls were asked about their opinion of the NGO supporting them and they all gave mainly positive answers and feedback. What has to be remembered though is that when Sigriður was present she was introduced to the girls as the chairman of Alnæmisbörn, the NGO in Iceland that pays for the school fees for some of the girls we interviewed. That might have made some of them think twice about saying anything negative, or discouraged them to talk freely. However when we questioned the girls further and assured them that we were not there to report anything they told us back to staff members, and that they could talk to us freely, they usually told us in more detail about their opinion of the NGO supporting them, but even then their opinion and experiences seemed to be mainly positive.

Most of the girls told me that the staff members at the NGO supporting them were usually nice to them and that they were like aunties and uncles to the girls. Many of the girls told me how they could rely on the NGO staff and that they were nice to them, one of the girls told me: “there never seems to be a problem with [the NGO]” and another said that “when you tell [the NGO] something they follow up.” That was a sentence I heard often about the same NGO, both from the girls and from some of the principals, when they told us about their relationship with the said NGO, and this seemed to be the case with most of the NGOs I was querying about.

Despite generally positive judgements of the NGO staff, I was told by some of the girls that at times they felt that the staff members of their NGO did not listen to their problems or pay their problems enough attention, especially when the girls tried to talk about their financial problems. That turned out to be one of the main negative feedback I

received from these girls when asked about positive and negative things about the NGOs supporting them. Like a 20 year old girl told me: “The problem with [the NGO] is that they don´t listen.” A few of the girls told me how they felt that they could not put their complaints forward to NGO staff members as they were then told by the staff that they were being ungrateful. A 20 year old girl said: “They tell the group they should be grateful. I told Sarah[13] that I needed a book and Sarah told the group they should be grateful, we shouldn´t be asking for additional items.”

Almost all of the girls I talked to seemed to be very thankful and appreciate the help they had received from the NGO supporting them. Some of them found it astonishing that people in countries so far away would sponsor them and help them through school by paying for their school fees. One of the girls said to me: “We are happy and thankful for their help, I really appreciate it.” Her friend added: “I want them to know what they have done for us. They don´t know us but have supported us for five years.” Another girl said: “[The NGO] has helped girls to get good education full of joy and happiness. If it wasn´t for [the NGO] we wouldn´t have got the education so I give thanks to the founder and those supporting the organisation.” Some of the girls also told me how their situation would be different if they had not had their NGO to help them and if they had not received an education. One of the girls said: “[The NGO] helping people is good, I would be in the village or in a marriage if [the NGO] had not paid for me. It´s bad because education is important, people are not educated, they don´t know what it is to be educated.” She then ended the interview on a similar note as the other girls when she said: “I want to say thank you for everything because they have really helped us.”

### 4.3.2 Vulnerability

The girls that are sponsored by the NGOs are all considered as ‘vulnerable girls’ by the NGOs. The director of one of the NGOs defines vulnerable girls as girls who cannot support themselves with basic needs; food, clothing, school fees and housing. I asked all of the girls

[13] This is not the persons real name, her real name has been kept anonymous as other names in this thesis.

that same question; what is a vulnerable girl and do you consider yourself to be one? I was especially interested to hear their answers to those questions as all of the NGOs in the research support vulnerable girls. These girls all needed help to pay for school fees and many were orphans, having lost either one or both parents, but still a minority of the girls I interviewed thought of themselves as particularly vulnerable, even though they would fit their own description of a vulnerable girl. An 18 year old said that she was not a vulnerable girl "because there is another who needs much more. I think it´s a young girl without parents or relatives, you sleep outside and you don´t go to school or have no food." When asked what is a vulnerable girl the answers were similar between the girls. Most of them agreed that a vulnerable girl was a girl that could not support herself, a girl that did not have health, had nowhere to stay or was an orphan. One of the girls, a 17 year old mother of a new-born, said that a vulnerable girl is a girl that cannot support herself and needs help. She said that a vulnerable girl is "a person who is in need of help, even street girls. Someone who is lonely, you feel like you are nobody. You need to be told that you are worth something."

The girls all have that in common that they, or their guardians, have not got the resources to educate them. All of these girls receive support from the NGOs because their families, either their parents or guardians, have not been able to support them through the education system. These girls have experienced hardship in most angles of their lives and family life is there no exception. Some of the girls who were being cared for by relatives, other than their parents, told me how they did not really feel welcome and felt like a burden on their relatives. One of the girls even told me: "My aunt doesn´t love me even though she took me here." Her aunt had taken her from the village to the city after her father died and her mother left her. It was still the duty of the aunt to take care of the girl even though she did not receive much love or affection from the aunt. An eight year old girl, who was staying with her sister, told me: "I want to be in boarding because my sister beats me. In school they are nice, they don´t beat me." She told me how her sister treats her differently than her own children but she had to move there to go to school, while her mother stayed in the village. Nonetheless, the family bond often seemed to be very strong and it is seen as the duty of the extended family to bring up the children that are left orphaned after their parents' death. However, there are those that have been abandoned by their extended family and

have nowhere to go like one of the girls told me: “I have only my mother; she is everything to me, the mother, the father, the uncle.”

### 4.3.3 Sugar daddies

As these girls are all considered to be vulnerable girls they were asked about what is in popular discourse often called sugar daddies. Generally sugar daddies are perceived as older men that engage in a sexual relationship with younger women or girls who take part in the relationship out of poverty or need of some sort (Mlyakado, 2013; Norton and Mutonyi, 2010). These cross-generational relationships seem to be common amongst some Ugandans, or at least a well-known fact. On my travels around the city, billboards which were made to raise awareness about problems that can occur due to relationships of this sort were a regular sight. I also never had to explain the meaning of sugar daddies during interviews as the girls all knew exactly what I was talking about when I mentioned the term, although none of them admitted to me at first that they themselves had ever had one or even that they knew someone that had a sugar daddy. Some of them however told me later on that they had boyfriends or older male friends that helped them out, but they were never called sugar daddies. It is interesting to point out that almost all of the girls I interviewed seemed to know what a sugar daddy was but still claimed they had never heard of anyone that had ever had such a relationship with a man.

The basic explanation that the girls gave me when asked about sugar daddies and relationships with them, was that they were young girls taking part in sexual relationships with older men because these girls needed something. It could be, as a 17 year old girl told me, “nice things like jewellery or clothes” or other expensive things, like another 17 year old girl told me; “because these girls need some stuff they can´t get.” I was however also told by the girls more often that a girl would engage in a relationship with a sugar daddy if she could not take care of her more basic needs, such as food, clothing, housing, school fees and requirement costs. These explanations from the girls of the cross-generational relationships are interesting as most of them entail a girl “getting a sugar daddy” if she is in need of something, it being either things of basic need or more superficial things. None of the girls talked about these relationships in a way that could be understood as the man pursuing a girl for a relationship and the perks that came with it for him. With that in mind the answers to the next question were intriguing, as I asked the girls who is using who in these

relationships. The majority of the girls agreed with a 17 year old who told me: “the man is using the girl, it is always the man.” The answers were therefore often contradicting to me, like I heard from an 18 year old girl: “girls want to get money, and sometimes they want good things so they decide to get sugar daddies. The man is using the girl.”

Even though a majority of the girls agreed to this understanding of the cross-generational relationships there were a few that said the relationships were actually double sided and, like a 19 year old told me, that “the girl needs stuff from the guy and also the guy needs something from the girl”, and “all of them are using each other, they both benefit. He gives you money, shopping, takes you where you want to go, but the girls also have to pay.” When asked in what way the girl pays the man for taking care of her I did not get very specific answers, a few girls mentioned that the girl needed to engage in a sexual relationship with the man, or pay him in sexual favours. Others told me that the girl just became the girlfriend with everything that a relationship of that sort consists of. Then when the man has had enough of the girl he gets a new girlfriend. This seemed like an inevitable part of these cross-generational relationships, like one of the head teachers told me: “it is not sustainable, sugar daddy runs out. They [the girls] start suffering when sugar daddy runs out.”

I asked all the principals, and head teachers that I interviewed, about sugar daddies and cross-generational relationships and received contradicting answers from them as well. One of the principals told me that it is indeed most often the case that “the man influences the girl, he has money, here money can do anything. Most girls will accept a man if he has money. The girls are not using the man, it’s about money.” He then added: “Some girls think it is prestigious to have a rich man” and that a “girl cannot sleep with a man to get a uniform or requirements, requirements are something that sustains their lives, these girls want to live a luxurious life.” With this he therefore told me that it is very much the man who is using the girl in these cross-generational relationships, but then he was also implying, maybe without realising it, that these girls choose to get a boyfriend to pay for superficial things that they really do not need but want.

One of the principals said that it is really “not easy to see if they have sugar daddies. If we find out we advise them, we have an office in charge of guiding and counselling.” Another principal concurred: “Sugar daddies is personal so you often don’t know, but

sometimes they disguise it as a sister-brother relationship." The principals found it a difficult thing to deal with as the girls could easily hide these relationships, especially the girls that were in boarding. The principals found that often the girls would enter into such relationships out of term time when they were not on school premises every day. A principal at one of the schools I visited told me: "there is too much, especially in the city. The girls do not understand their future, after using, men dump the girls and they are more vulnerable than before."

### 4.3.4 Pregnancy

Vulnerable girls are more likely than other girls to get pregnant early. I received quite a lot of information on pregnancies and relationships when interviewing both the girls at the schools and their principals and head teachers. When asked if they ever expel children from school, and the reasons behind expulsions, most of the principals and head teachers informed me that drug use, fighting and pregnancy are some of the main reasons for expulsion. Usually when the school finds out that a girl is pregnant she is expelled, or has to leave the school during the pregnancy. This is because a pregnant girl is most often thought to be a bad influence on the other girls at school, like one head teacher said to me: "if they would not stop while they are pregnant they would be giving a bad picture to the others." This is what I was told by most of my informants in the school system, both by principals and head teachers; however one principal informed me that the schools were actually not allowed to expel pregnant girls: "nowadays we are not allowed to put them out, before we had a much more harsh approach," but the girls are advised that it is not ideal for them to stay in school during pregnancy. Another principal explained the situation in a similar manner: "it depends on how you deal with it," meaning that the girl does not necessarily have to be expelled. He also told me: "we can expel, before you expel you call the parents and do some guidance and counsel. Expelling is like sentencing someone to death," and with that he told me how important education is for these girls and how taking that away from them could be disastrous for the girls, their future and their families.

As already mentioned, few of the girls said they have boyfriends that help them out; they were however never spoken of as sugar daddies. A girl of 17 told me how she had to get a boyfriend because she could not afford to pay the requirement cost at school. She needed help to pay for her requirement cost, such as rim of paper, books and sugar, so she

could afford to stay in school. This girl ended up getting pregnant by her boyfriend, who ran away when she told him about the pregnancy. He was afraid that he might go to prison as the girl was under age. She has not seen her boyfriend since before the baby was born and the man has never seen his child. The girl said: "I was deceived and I got pregnant, when I told him I was pregnant he ran away. He was 19 – 20 years old; I've never seen him since. He can't come here because he thinks they will arrest him." The girl now lives with her sister who looks after her child during the day as an NGO supported the girl to go back to school after she had her baby, which is uncommon in Uganda. Most girls do not return to school after childbirth.

In some of the schools I however learned that the girls are allowed or invited to come back after they have had their baby. That is to say if they have someone at home who can look after the baby while they are at school and if they, or their family, can support a new member of the family without the girl having to find work. A head teacher told me that they "advise pregnant girls to stop and come back after they have their baby, we give them a chance if they want to come back." Nonetheless, I learned that in most cases the girl does not actually want to go back to the same school as before the pregnancy. Both the girls themselves and some of the principals told me that if a girl comes back to the same school after giving birth she might face some difficulties, the other students might mock and tease her, or they might think that she is cheap or promiscuous. One of the principals said that "they fear humiliation so they don´t come back to the same school after they give birth." In majority of the cases I heard of, and going by what many of my informants told me, majority of girls do not return to school at all after giving birth. It turned out to be too difficult for many of the girls to return. They would either not have anyone to look after the baby or they were breastfeeding and were not allowed to take the baby with them to school. Most of them were simply unable to deal with the added cost of having a baby along with the cost of getting an education and staying in school, paying school fees and requirement cost. But even though this played a big part in their decision of not returning to school after having their baby, they were not solely the reasons behind it. The girls' self-image seemed to change along with their new role of motherhood. A 20 year old mother of two, who dropped out of school when she got pregnant at 16, told me that even if she had the opportunity to return she would not go back. I asked her why and she said: "I didn´t want to go back after I

produced, I felt too mature to go back. Going back to school the other students are girls but now I am a woman." She does want her children to be educated though and said that when she fell pregnant she did not want to leave school, she wanted to stay and get an education but that was not possible with the pregnancy.

When asking about the men, or boys, in this equation most of the principals were keen to tell me that the girls usually got pregnant during holidays or out of term time. This meant that the men, or boys, fathering the babies did in most cases not attend the same school as the girls, if they were in school at all. I was told that the girls, who were mainly in boarding, go home during holidays were they meet boys, or older men, who get them pregnant, therefore it is not the schools responsibility or the schools fault as such. One of the principals told me, when talking about the problem of pregnancies and sugar daddies, that:

> If you don´t have a visitors card with a picture on you do not come to visit so school is strict but on holidays problems occur. We take phones and radio so they have no contact. Girls get pregnant on holiday, if we do check-up the father is not in the school, it is a problem at home, the parents have a problem, not the school.

I found out that some of the schools even do check-ups on the girls throughout the term to see if they are pregnant, one of the principals said to me:

> We have a nurse who checks if they are pregnant when they come in, then they check midterm. If she is pregnant they call the parents and the girl leaves, she cannot be pregnant at school because it affects the others, she will spoil the other girls. If they abort she can come back.

Many girls fall pregnant before they turn 18 years old, when they are still minors. This was mentioned in two of the schools I went to. One of the principals at a primary school where all the students are under 18 years of age, told me: "as a school we must know who is responsible because it is a criminal offence and the police must be involved because in primary they are all under 18." This principal, and his school, were taking on some of the responsibility, unlike many of the other schools, even if the girl got pregnant outside of school during holidays then he saw it as the schools concern as the girl would be under age. Another principal told me that they would contact the police and work with the parents:

> Last year there was a girl who kept getting sick; I have discovered she was pregnant. We call her parents; she told she has a boyfriend. The police went to his house and he agreed to take care of the girl. She got to sit her final exams. Many come back and sit their final exams; it depends on how you treat them, the situation, if they come back or not.

Most of the principals seemed worried about the number of young girls that were getting pregnant. They saw it as a great problem affecting the girls' future knowing that most of them would not return to education. The next chapter will examine these results in connection with the theoretical framework and literature.

## 5. Discussion

In the first part of the thesis I have put forward the main theories and literature review on education in SSA, NGOs and vulnerability of 'third world' women. Then I have described the methodological approach and the result from my qualitative research on access to education and sponsorship programs with focus on gender in Kampala. I have presented the different views and opinions of my interviewees; principals, head teachers, NGO staff and directors, girls being sponsored by NGOs and parents, on education, NGOs, gender and vulnerability. In this chapter I will discuss the findings of my research in connection with the literature and theories.

In 1990 most countries in SSA agreed to universalise primary education, which along with the MDGs on education, led to an increase in enrolment rates in the following years. Nonetheless the enrolment rates have slowed down considerably in recent years according to UNESCOs latest report (2014a). Now SSA is the one area that is lagging behind the most when it comes to education. According to Lewin (2009) and UNESCO (2014a), the main problems seem to be that children are not completing a full round of basic education, they are often over age for their grade and there is a connection between household income and access to education. The opinions of my interviewees on the implementation of UPE and the MDGs varied but the overall reaction was that the implementation of UPE had not been successful as parents still had a considerable cost to pay if they wanted to send their children to school. At the Ministry of Education and Sports my interviewee said that education is never free, even though he also informed me that the implementation of the UPE program had worked well and there had never been as many children enrolled in school in Uganda. However parents and principals are dissatisfied with the implementation of the UPE. They agreed that the idea of it was good but the implementation and follow up had not been as it should have been. Not every child has the opportunity to receive an education in Uganda; it depends on the parents' income, if they have any at all. The UPE system is therefore not

working for everyone as there are still a considerable number of children that go through life with little or no education.

The quality of education and training of teachers need to be at the forefront at a well working educational system. According to Buckler (2011), SSA needs around four million primary teachers to achieve the goals they have committed themselves to. Moon (2007) points out that meaningful teacher's education policies are vital to develop a good educational system. Meanwhile there are several countries in SSA that have no official teacher education policy. I found that in Kampala the quality of education was being questioned by parents and also by NGO staff members. A common problem was that teachers ran off in the middle of the night to go work somewhere else or they were working in UPE schools and also in private schools at the same time, where they would get paid more for their work. Therefore teachers would often not show up for work in the UPE schools while they were teaching in private schools, consequently children in UPE missed out. Teachers also seemed to be overworked and not motivated. The parents in my research had not got the means to pay for private schools and there was often not a UPE run school close by so the children went without education. Nonetheless all the parents I spoke to agree on the importance of education for their children, especially the ones that had not been educated themselves. They saw education as a way for their own children to make a future for themselves and their families. The often low quality of teaching and lack of facilities meant that parents who had enough income did not want to send their children to UPE schools, some NGOs had even taken all of the children they sponsor out of UPE schools and enrolled them into private schools. The gap between the rich and the poor seems to keep growing when it comes to education with the private run schools on one hand and the UPE schools on the other.

According to Rosling (2013), poverty keeps girls from education. The gender gap in education is however closing, though mainly in high- and middle-income countries. In some areas there is still a considerable gender gap in education and disparity at the expense of girls. UNESCO (2014a) states that two of three girls in SSA will never make it to school and 54 percent of children out of school are girls. As Turner (2010) points out there is an ever growing number of NGOs that now devote their work only to sponsor girls or women. My informants in Kampala however mainly agreed that boys should be sponsored as well and

that they need help just as much as girls in 'third world' countries. Boys were said to be just as vulnerable as girls, if not more, as if they would be left on the streets they had more of a chance to become a danger to society than girls. The girls might end up as victims of some sort but they would not become a danger to others. It was not seen as a necessity anymore to only assist girls as times have changed in Uganda. Women are now seen in politics and the media and the role of women in the household has changed. According to the latest statistics from UBOS, from 2011, there are still more males enrolled in university education than females in Uganda. However there are now more women at university than ever before and women exceed men in some tertiary education institutions like business and management. The work of NGOs in Kampala, in the last years, which sponsors girls have clearly made an impact as well because according to UBOS latest statistics there are now more girls enrolled in primary education than boys. However there are still more boys that graduate from primary and continue into further education than girls, according to UBOS (2013). I found that people often thought that this over-emphasis on sponsoring girls came from the West and that Africa was being forced to oblige. This is in line with Dogra´s (2011) theories on NGOs and gender, but she has pointed out how NGOs use images of mostly just women and children in their appeals and campaigns in the West. With that they seem to be appealing to people's positive feelings about motherhood and kindness. Dogra argues that these NGOs are showing ´third world' women and children as a coherent group that needs help from the West. This also supports Kelleher's (1997) term of the 'feminisation of famine' were NGOs use females as their front in famine campaigns to get sponsors.

Despite the above mentioned critics there are NGOs that have undoubtedly supported communities, men, women and children alike all around the world. There are examples of well executed NGO campaigns and projects that show how much can be achieved through their work both on large scales, like international NGOs that work from within the UN (e.g. Chaiban, 2014; UNICEF, 2014), and local NGOs that work within communities on the grass root level, like the ones in my research (Sigríður Baldursdóttir, 2014). At every NGO I visited my informants truly believed that the work they were doing was for good and that they were in fact helping children in Kampala. Interestingly though they were not always so sure of the other NGOs working in the country and many said there were too many NGOs being set up in Uganda. In line with my informants worries there has

been an increase in research on NGOs recently and interest has been shown in their work. With the number of NGOs growing rapidly questions have been raised about the quality of aid they can offer and how they execute their projects. Avolio-Toly (2010) noticed a model for success amongst NGOs in education, and argues that this model can be implemented by NGOs working in all sectors. The models she observed were "a specific focus on incorporating the community in planning and implementing projects, forming partnerships with local civil society and government, adopting innovative approaches to providing services, and building up the capacity of the community and local institutions." (p. 2). This model is only a very wide framework but it can offer an important guidance to NGOs and their staff.

Interestingly I found that the NGO staff and directors I interviewed called for some sort of regulation or framework to work within by the half of the government. There seems to be a different way of thinking as well when it comes to sponsorship as many NGOs have implemented policies and ideas based on neoliberal theories. Most of the NGOs agreed that supplying the children and their families with everything they needed for free would not be beneficial in the long run. It would make the children needy and their families greedy and lazy as they would not have to work for the things they were being supplied with. When the sponsorship would come to an end the children and their families would therefore be no better off than before as they had not learned to take care of themselves or work for things in life. This is in line with the neoliberalism that has been adherent in the development sector since the 1980's when the World Bank changed their emphasis in development towards a more neoliberal policy making in 'third world' countries (Peet and Hartwick, 2009; Banks and Hulme, 2012). Nonetheless, it was evident that the NGO staff I talked to wanted to get the message across that the best way to help in Kampala was to identify with its people and their needs, as many felt that they were not being listened to by the West and that western ways of aid where being forced upon them.

The West often seems to have this obsession with portraying people in Africa, especially females, as vulnerable which has been based only on the fact where in the world they live. People and agencies in the West therefore often victimise women in the 'third world' where they should not. Mohanty (1986) criticised this, she points out that these women are in fact individuals with their own lives, interests and desires. These women, just

as women in the West, differ in a lot of ways, e.g. based on their social status, class and education. They are not a coherent, monolithic group and therefore they are not all vulnerable. The NGOs in my research all support what they consider to be vulnerable children, with some of them only supporting vulnerable girls. In general the description of vulnerability was someone who cannot support themselves with basic needs, such as food, clothes, housing or school fees. Interestingly though, and in line with Mohanty´s article, the girls being sponsored did in fact not see themselves as vulnerable, even though the NGOs supporting them saw them in that way. The girls' definition of vulnerability embraced someone who was worse off than themselves, even though none of these girls, or their families, could afford school fees, some of them did not get fed at home nor had any close family to look after them.

The girls in my research were according to most of the interviewees vulnerable, even though the girls did not see themselves that way. When discussing the girls' vulnerability, with principals and NGO staff members, the topic of sugar daddies and their relationships with younger girls often came up. These relationships were something that principals and NGO staff were worried about and were thought to play a part in making the girls more vulnerable. Everyone I talked to seemed to know about these kinds of relationships; most often a sexual relationship between an older man and a younger girl were the man would provide the girl with things she needed or wanted in exchange for sexual favours. The girls themselves would not admit to having sugar daddies, as these relationships were clearly seen as taboo, but some of them made it clear that they in fact had a male friend or a boyfriend helping them out with money and things they needed. This is an ambivalent game were both parties are gaining something in return for something else; the girl is given what she needs or wants and the man in return gets what he wants. However not everyone agreed with that definition directly and the authority, principals and NGO staff I interviewed usually claimed the girls to be the victims in these circumstances. Despite these explanations it was usually made clear that the girls themselves decided to 'get a sugar daddy' instead of a man pursuing a girl for such a relationship. Therefore the decisive authority was in that way in the hands of the girls themselves as they would have to make the decision to look for someone who could help them out with things they wanted or needed. In that sense these girls cannot be seen as vulnerable but rather as taking control over their own lives in way.

Inevitably some girls however fall pregnant after these relationships. Many a times the men end up running off as they could face an arrest for being with an underage girl. That system does not benefit anyone involved as the girls are then left with a baby to look after, most often on their own. Moreover, girls are in general not allowed to continue their education if they fall pregnant as it is thought they set a bad example for other girls. Therefore they have to leave school and most of them do not return to education after giving birth as there is no one to look after the baby. Consequently the NGOs usually stop supporting the girls as well as they do no longer attend school. In the end they are therefore often left in a vulnerable situation due to these facts. It is clear that a change needs to be enforced in these matters and others that have been discussed in this thesis.

## 6. Conclusion

The overall aim of this thesis was to explore sponsorship programs offered by local NGOs in Kampala, and how gender can be a factor when it comes to sponsorship and access to education. The views of principals, teachers, parents, NGO staff and girls were gathered by semi-structured interviews, participant observation and focus groups in and around Kampala in June and July 2012.

Based on the findings of this thesis it is clear that the implementation of the UPE system in Kampala has not been as successful as it should have been. There is a call for a follow up from the government and the Ministry of Education and Sports, as neither parents nor NGOs are happy with the current system. With too few teachers to cater for the demand, and an array of children that need education, the system and its facilities are too weak. There are too few UPE run schools, which means that some children do not even have the opportunity to attend school as it would take them a whole day to get there. Their only other option might be a private run school which is often too expensive for many parents so these children miss out on education and a way to make a better life for themselves and their families.

The need for more varied opportunities after basic education was apparent as it can be very difficult to make a living or to find a job with only the basics to build on. Therefore many NGOs are now promoting vocational training as a feasible option to the children they sponsor as sponsoring them through university can prove too expensive. With the vocational training the NGOs feel that they are giving the children something to build on and skills for the future. In the matter of CLF, and in accordance with the data I and Sigríður collected, a vocational training school is now being built on a land outside Kampala that the NGO owns. In the future CLF can therefore offer vulnerable girls to come and learn a vocation and invest in their future.

With an ever growing number of NGOs in Kampala there is a clamour for a clear framework, regulations and policies, along with a follow up from the authorities. There is a definite need for the work of NGOs in Kampala and their work is much appreciated by the people they sponsor. Nonetheless, the authorities need to develop a better overview for all the different NGOs that work in the city, and the country as a whole. The NGOs themselves have realised this along with a change in their mind-sets when it comes to sponsorship programs. However the matter of gender still needs to be addressed and more research is required so equality and balance can be achieved in NGOs work to benefit everyone involved and to ensure a better access to education for both girls and boys. It is time for NGOs and agencies in the West to start revaluating their one-sided sponsoring programs for girls according to the advice and views from principals, teachers and NGO staff in Kampala. There is a clear difference in terms of gender and vulnerability amongst academics and agencies in the West on one hand and then NGO staff and their beneficiaries in Kampala on the other hand. This needs to be harmonised and addressed with further research and policy making in collaboration with local authorities and NGOs on the grass root level. With more girls now enrolled in primary education it would also be interesting to perform a follow up research to see if this enrolment rate, which has been achieved in the last few years, follows through to higher education.

In terms of the girls in my research and the question of their vulnerability there is a need to look at their stories and lives from different sides. In the eyes of many the girls have been in vulnerable situations, many have gone without housing, food and education for some time before they entered into the sponsorship programs. However the girls' did not see themselves as vulnerable individuals even though sectors of their lives might have been considered as vulnerable. This is where the obvious need for further research in the field of girl studies comes to light as research of that sort can help to overcome the stigma of victimisation and the tendency to see women and girls in 'third world' countries as a coherent vulnerable group. Girl studies are a research field that can help to show these girls in a more realistic way and not just as the 'vulnerable girls in Africa', it can aid towards displaying the girls as actors in their own lives instead of just being portrayed as vulnerable bystanders or victims. As I found out the girls in my research were in fact clever, strong-minded and proud individuals who had taken action in their own lives by applying for

sponsorship to go to school or vocational training to better prepare for their future. That is the picture that needs to be portrayed because it is a realistic one and further girl studies can help make that possible.

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