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Women's access to higher education in Uganda and its impact on  
economic growth

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## Abstract

This thesis examines the role of women's access to higher education for achieving economic growth, based on a study from Kampala, Uganda. Higher education is understood as a tool that can be used to transform society by equipping the population with the right skills and knowledge to participate in the labour market and be internationally competitive. Primary education is free in Uganda, with equally high enrolment rates of boys and girls. During secondary education, many students drop out of school, especially girls, which leads to low enrolment rates in higher education. The research is based on two questions: "In what way does Uganda emphasize the importance of higher education in their plans on becoming an upper middle-income country?" and "How can women's access to higher education contribute to sustainable development?"

The Capability Approach and the Human Capital theory will serve as the theoretical orientation for this thesis. Together, they offer a conceptual structure to understand how women, higher education, and economic growth may be related. The methodology chosen for this study is a case study approach, and the data is mainly gathered through qualitative, semi-structured interviews with women in Kampala, Uganda.

This study concludes that Uganda emphasizes the importance of higher education for development by committing to a number of international goals and a national goal of becoming an upper middle-income country by 2040. At this time, the commitment seems to be mostly on paper, but it will be interesting to see what course of action Uganda will take in the years to come. Women's access to higher education has significant ripple effects that contribute to sustainable development. The main reason why it is substantial to increase women's participation in education is that they are already underrepresented, but consist of half the population. Everyone in society has to be included for real change to happen.

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## Abbreviations

AHED	African Higher Education Dynamics Series
BTVET	Business Technical and Vocational Educational Training
CIFF	Children's Investment Fund Foundation
CHET	Centre for Higher Education Transformation
EAC	East African Community
GNI	Gross National Income
HE	Higher Education
HERANA	Higher Education Research and Advocacy Network in Africa
HIV/Aids	Human immunodeficiency virus/Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MIC's	Middle Income Countries
NDP	National Development Plan
NDP	Second National Development Plan
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNSDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Group

## 1. Introduction

The topic of this master thesis is women and higher education and its economic benefits for development. More specifically, I will explore this theme in a Ugandan context. The main focus is higher education, and the benefits for economy and development it can produce, especially when making sure women and men have equal access. This study will look at Uganda and its historical background to make the scope of this research more specific. Moreover, its current socio-economic situation and the different international goals and agreements and what they have done to improve the world's education situation. It will also look at Uganda's goals to become an upper middle-income country and what actions they have taken to achieve this. The thesis will make a connection between Uganda's current situation, their goals for future development, and women in higher education. This includes looking at Uganda's very young population, high unemployment rates, high drop-out rates, especially for girls, and connect this with theories about higher education and women's participation as a significant contributor to development. The goal is to learn more about what a country like Uganda, with all its resources, is doing to improve the situation when it comes to, amongst others, drop out rates and unemployment and have one of the world's most rapidly growing populations.

Uganda is an exciting country to use as an example because it has such a large young population, that could be an excellent resource. They also have free primary education for everyone, several higher education institutions, including East-Africa's oldest. They have committed to international goals like the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development goals, which each has targets to achieve higher enrolment rates in schools and higher quality in education. This study will use reports on these themes to see how Uganda can achieve economic growth by investing in one of its most significant resources; a large, young population. A large part of this population is not utilized as they are dropping out of school, and that's why it is essential to learn who they are and what measures to take to ensure that they also get the chance to complete their education. And learn what the outcome will be for individuals and society. It is clear that education is an essential investment for a country, making it interesting to learn what Uganda's specific goals are related to education, how they plan on achieving them, and what the expected outcomes will be. This study will look at relevant reports and data gathered from interviewing women in Uganda who could finish their education up to the university level. Also, their thoughts about why



they decided to go for higher education, finding jobs after completing their education, and if their education is relevant on a national level and what all this will mean for Uganda's economy and further development.

### 1.1 Problem statement

Uganda has one of the largest young populations in the world and struggles with high unemployment rates. The country has developed a national plan to become an upper middle-income country by 2040 that they want to achieve through economic growth. One of the focus areas to achieve economic growth is through education. Uganda offers free primary education, but few people continue their education to higher education, especially women. This research aims to look at how education generates economic growth and how education is interlinked with having a large young population and high unemployment rates. Because women have lower educational attainment than men in Uganda, this research will focus on women in education. In addition, this study aims to learn about the choices of some Ugandan women to take higher education, what led them to make that decision, and the potential outcomes of them doing so.

### 1.2 Research questions

To address the objectives mentioned in the problem statement, I created two research questions. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison writes; "research questions take the purposes and objectives of the research and narrow them down into specific, concrete areas of focus; they narrow the boundaries of the research and help the researcher to decide where to go in the research" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018, p. 165). I divided the research into two by creating two different questions. The first question is, "In what way does Uganda emphasize the importance of higher education in their plans on becoming an upper middle-income country?". The question focuses on higher education in Uganda and what part it plays in the plan on achieving economic growth. The second research question is, "How can women's access to higher education contribute to sustainable development?". This question aims to focus the research on women in education and learn about their access to higher education in Uganda and its impact on economic growth.

## 2. Context

This study's research questions include finding out about the higher education situation in Uganda and what the country's plans are for reaching their goals on becoming an upper middle-income country by 2040. It also includes finding out about the importance of focusing on women in education to achieve economic growth and sustainable development. This chapter will set the context of four themes that will present itself later in the research that is relevant to understand the background for the research questions and to be able to answer them.

### 2.1 Uganda

Uganda is a country located in East-Africa, in the middle of the African continent, right on the equator. The population is 42.72 million people, and the capital city is Kampala, which is also the biggest city in the country (TheWorldBank, 2019b). Its neighbouring countries are Tanzania, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South-Sudan, and Kenya (Haslie, 2019) and in the south-east Uganda borders to Lake Victoria, Africa's largest lake (UgandaTourismBoard). The landscape is diverse, including big cities, lakes, rivers (including the start of the river Nile), rain forests, plains, and wildlife reserves. Uganda is located approximately 1,100 meters above sea level, making the temperature, on average, 26 degrees throughout the year, with rainy seasons from March till May and October till November (GovernmentofUganda, 2012).

During colonial times, Uganda was a British protectorate. It lasted until 1962 when they got their independence and became a republic. Authoritarian regimes and violent conflicts characterized the country's rule until Yoweri Museveni seized power in 1986 through a military coup (Globalis, 2017). Museveni is still president, which makes him head of State and head of Government, and some say that the rule is again going towards authoritarian. There is a multi-party system, but there are no limits to how many terms a president can rule. The constitution was ratified and promulgated in 1995 and provides for an executive president, to be elected every five years. The next general election will be held February (TheStateHouseofUganda, 2012).

English is the official language in Uganda and is the language of instruction in the education system. Swahili is also an official language, and in addition, there are about 40 other local

languages (Haslie, 2019). Uganda is one of the world's countries with the highest population growth, with 5,1 births per woman, which makes the population grow with 3.7% annually (TheWorldBank, 2019b). At the same time, Uganda has been strongly affected by the AIDS epidemic, which has resulted in a young population with a median age of just 16.7 years (UNDP, 2020). This is a challenge for economic growth when such a large portion of the population is not of working age. The main part of the working population works in the agricultural sector, and Uganda's export of commodities like fish and coffee is essential for its income (Haslie, 2019). After their independence, Uganda had an excellent economic starting point, but this changed quickly when the former president Idi Amin decided to banish all foreigners from the country, which turned out to be a big setback for the country's economy (Globalis, 2017).

One of the strategies that Uganda has implemented to gain economic growth and better the standard of living is to focusing and investing in education. Uganda is a member of the United Nations and most of its underlying agencies, and has committed to the Millennial Development Goals and later the Sustainable Development Goals, which both have several targets focusing on the importance of education for development. Since 2003 primary education has been free for all children in Uganda, which drastically improved the population's literacy (Haslie, 2019). In 2015 71,5% of all women and 85,3% of men could read and write (Haslie, 2019). The main capital Kampala is also home to East-Africa's largest University, Makerere University, established in 1922. Makerere University is also Uganda's biggest institution for higher education, with its 30 000 students (Haslie, 2019). Even though the country is investing in education, especially by making primary education free, there are challenges keeping the children in school. The primary completion rate is 53% (TheWorldBank, 2019b), while only 32.1% of the population over 25 years old has at least some secondary education (UNDP, 2020).

## 2.2 Focus on women in education

To narrow down this study's scope, I have chosen to look at women in higher education and the impact on economic development in Uganda. A report that provides in-depth knowledge on this subject is "Accelerating Uganda's Development: Ending Child Marriage, Educating Girls" published by The World Bank in 2017 (TheWorldBank, 2017). It gives insight into the Ugandan economy's state and the cost of not investing in girls, which entails; marriage, early childbearing, and low educational attainment for girls and their impacts. This also states that

the youthful population can be an asset if it is educated and provided access to productive work. It argues that a large part of the population is not utilized because of early marriage and childbearing and high fertility rates. The report states that “In Uganda, official statistics show that the poverty rate in households headed by persons with no formal education is 2.3 times higher than the households headed by persons with at least some secondary school education” (TheWorldBank 2017, p. ii)

Because girls get married early and have children, they are at higher risks of dropping out of school, and according to the report, this means that the girls, their children, and the country do not reach its full potential. It says that Uganda has one of the most youthful populations in Sub-Saharan Africa, and one of the highest rates of women out of the labour force, which means that the benefits from empowering women and focusing on women in education, could be significant (TheWorldBank 2017). The report argues that “While there is support in Uganda for ending child marriage, preventing early childbearing, and educating girls, investments are not sufficient for lasting change” (TheWorldBank 2017, p. 22). It goes on by saying that:

Ensuring that girls receive a good education and do not marry early are targets under the Sustainable Development Goals. Uganda and several other countries in sub-Saharan Africa have adopted laws and national strategies to end child marriage, prevent teenage pregnancies, and invest in girls’ education. But while laws and strategies can help, they are not sufficient. Targeted interventions are needed to deal with economic constraints as well as social norms and cultural traditions contributing to poor outcomes for girls. This requires long term financial investments and political will (TheWorldBank 2017, p.22).

### 2.3 Higher Education in Uganda

The history of higher education in Uganda starts with Makerere University, which was established in Kampala as a technical school in 1922, when the country was still a colony, for the training of Ugandans in artisan roles such as carpentry, building, metal fabrication and mechanics (Cloete, Maassen, & Bailey, 2015). During the 1970’s Uganda experienced conflicts and political turmoil which led to a setback for the famous Makerere University. The infrastructure was ravaged, and talented academics fled to Europe and North America. Later, in the 1980’s, the University was beginning to recover and implemented reforms to promote economic stability and liberalisation (Cloete et al., 2015). “These reforms came in the form of conditionalities from the World Bank: structural adjustment policies across Africa advocated a reduction in public spending on higher education and a shift of public funds to primary

education” (Cloete et al., 2015 p. 111). Cloete et al. (2011) observed that when looking at funding in the context of Makerere University:

The University had insufficient funds to build its research capacity due to the relative decrease in public funding of higher education over the last 20 years. Currently, Makerere’s research funding relies mainly on private donors and foreign development agencies; but, as Maassen (2012) has shown in his study of donor funding in sub-Saharan Africa, donor funding is an unsustainable means of funding research for a flagship university (Cloete et al., 2015 p. 115).

Lack of funding for higher education can be traced back to the 1980’s, not only in Uganda but in universities all over the continent. “Since the 80’s there has been a perspective in the international development discourse that suggests that public investment in higher education provided lower social return than investment in primary and secondary levels” (Schendel & McCowan, 2015, p. 275). The logic behind this decision was that it would be rewarding to focus on primary education and education for all. When that was achieved, the focus could shift to higher education. Western models of higher education mainly influenced African universities given their colonial legacies, and the institutions aimed to enforce values of the colonizing society by training individuals for the state’s service, which was also the case for Makerere University (Schendel & McCowan, 2015). This changed in 1967 when the Association of African Universities (AAU) was formed and decided that Africa needed its own higher education model. They argued that they needed “developmental universities” to focus on assisting the government to reduce poverty by training qualified “manpower” (Schendel & McCowan, 2015). This work then had a setback when international organisations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, started to promote their economic stability and liberalisation reforms, as mentioned previously.

In recent years there has been researched on higher education in low-income countries that suggests that development depends on a flourishing higher education system.

HE is crucial for societal tasks, including the formation of professional areas such as education, health, and public administration; the creation, absorption, and adaption of new technologies; the strengthening of democracy and enabling of spaces for critique and scrutiny of government and policy; and the preservation, study, and development of local and national cultures and heritage (Schendel & McCowan, 2015 p.276)

The history of the lack of funding to HE has affected the institution’s quality of education. Amongst others through universities not being able to hire additional lecturers to cope with rising student numbers or following the rapid increase in academic’s wages (Schendel &

McCowan, 2015). Another consequence of the limited investment in HE is University's ability to fully participate in the global research community, which has led to that "African universities contribute only 1% of international research output" (Schendel & McCowan, 2015 p.285). There are several examples for how this affects the quality of higher education and universities ability to contribute to development in their communities, but one example is that "in light of constraints of public funding, there is also pressure to expand private HE provision, resulting in a dramatic increase in the number of private institutions in lower and middle-income countries context" (Schendel & McCowan, 2015 p.288). In conclusion, higher education has the potential to be a great impact in development work in their context, but is constrained by a range of limiting factors:

Some relating to inputs (such as sufficient access to and quality of primary and secondary education, and adequate funding to the sector); some factors within the University (e.g., quality of teaching and learning and a relevant curriculum); and some to the characteristics of the external environment (e.g. political conditions for academic freedom, the employment market, etc.) (Schendel & McCowan, 2015 p.292).

#### 2.4 Vision 2040

Uganda has launched a Vision 2040, where they announce strategies and policy reforms in order to develop from a low-income country to an upper middle-income country (NationalPlanningAuthorityUganda, 2013-2018). To achieve this, they need to increase the GNI (Gross National Income) per capita of \$1,025 to a GNI per capita between \$3,996 and \$12, 375 (TheWorldBank, 2020). The Uganda Vision 2040 has several key strategies and policy reforms that focus on education to achieve economic growth:

- Accelerate government reforms in the education system and the curriculum to obtain a globally competitive human resource with skills relevant to the development paradigm.
- Develop and implement a specific policy to attract and retain top-rated professionals in the Universities to make Uganda a Centre of Excellence in Education in the region (NationalPlanningAuthorityUganda, 2013-2018, p. 103).

To achieve the Vision 2040, the National Planning Authority Uganda is developing deliberate plans to determine the situation, how strategies can be implemented, and the expected outcome. The most current plan is "Second National Development Plan (NDP II) 2015/16 – 2019/2020" (NationalPlanningAuthorityUganda, 2015). The Plan presents five priority areas for investment: agriculture, tourism, minerals, oil and gas, infrastructure development, and human capital development. Education is mentioned as an essential tool for human capital development, and so is equality and women's empowerment. Under the section of human capital development, it states that:

The availability of appropriate and adequate human capital facilitates increase in production, productivity and technological growth thus making it one of the key endogenous drivers of economic growth. (NationalPlanningAuthorityUganda, 2015, p. 125)

This could show a link between investing in people as resources and them being an important tool for economic growth. It would make sense that to utilize this in the best way, girls have to be included to ensure that more than 8.47% (TheWorldBank, 2017) complete upper secondary education and contribute to society with the skills they have gained through up to date, quality education.

The National Development Plan was made by the Ugandan government to transform Uganda into an upper middle-income country through strengthening the country's competitiveness for sustainable wealth creation, decent employment, and inclusive growth. The plan is to fast track skill development and harnessing the demographic dividend to achieve a suitable employment creation strategy to achieve these objectives. This plan states that employment creation is central to the national socio-economic development process (NationalPlanningAuthorityUganda 2015). According to the: "Young people: The untapped resource for development" report, 68% of the working adolescents and 59% of the working youth were subsistence agricultural workers. It continues by saying:

The level of education of the working youths was generally low with almost two-thirds of youth having either no formal or primary level education. Thirteen percent of the youth were neither in employment nor education/training. The proportion of idle female youth nearly doubled that of their male counterparts (UgandaBureauofStatistics, 2017, p. 41).

The report comments on the Uganda National Development plan by saying:

The country has put in place a number of policies, strategies, and plans that are hinged on international frameworks to achieve unity in diversity and equal opportunities for the general population. With 78% of the population being 30 years and below, the aspirations of young people must be properly guided for Uganda to achieve its national vision (UgandaBureauofStatistics, 2017, p. 62).

According to the National Development Plan one target to achieve economic growth is to enhance human capital development. The explanation for doing so is:

Uganda's labour market continues to face a shortage of requisite skills, with only a few people being in possession of some form of tertiary education qualification. There was a

mismatch between the curriculum at the tertiary institutions and the labour market requirements, which explains the high graduate unemployment rates on Uganda's labour market. The student enrolment in science and technology at both private and public universities is less than 27% which is way below the UNESCO minimum of 40% required for a country to economically take off and participate in the global knowledge based economy. About 4% of the population above 15 years of age has an educational attainment above the secondary school level (NationalPlanningAuthorityUganda 2015, p.7)

The National Development Plan also has a target to reduce unemployment through quality education and skills development. Under this target, the Plan includes the Sustainable Development goals 8 and 4. SDG number 8 places emphasis on reducing unemployment, especially amongst youth. SDG number 4 is: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all (NationalPlanningAuthorityUganda 2015). It continues by stating the importance of focusing on human capital development: The Uganda vision 2040 identifies human capital development as one of the key fundamentals that need to be strengthened to accelerate the country's transformation and harnessing of the demographic dividend. The availability of appropriate and adequate human capital facilitates increase in production, productivity and technological growth thus making it one of the key endogenous drivers of economic growth (NatioalPlanningAuthorityUganda 2015, p.125).

## 2.5 Summary

This chapter introduces Uganda as a country with its historical background and general knowledge about geography, economy, politics, and educational situation. It continues by setting the scene for learning about women in education in Uganda, with information about the school system with the main focus on higher education. Furthermore, Uganda's Vision 2040 is introduced, their government's commitment to promoting sustainable and economic development towards the year 2040. This research's background is this vision of economic growth and the measures the government will implement to achieve it and, to some extent, includes focusing on women and higher education.



### 3. Literature review

The sequence of this literature review. That entails reviewing reports about the current situation, firstly regarding its large population and high birth rates, which is one of the reasons why Uganda is an interesting country to study in relation to this theme. Secondly, I will review articles and data about the educational situation in Uganda, more specifically focused on girls, and reasons why they according to the statistics have a lower chance of completing primary and secondary school. For this purpose, I will use data from the Ugandan government and other research conducted in neighbouring countries that I will argue can be compared to some extent. In addition, the review will examine reports combining the two already mentioned subjects, meaning research looking at the economic benefits of investing in girl's education, and the affect it can have on both the fast growing population and unemployment.

After setting the background for the research, I looked into the governments commitment to the education in the country. It is interesting to review the international Sustainable Development Goals focusing on education, to see what impact these might have had on the measures the government has taken in regard to education. Uganda's government also has its own national development plan, which includes a goal to become an upper middle-income country by 2040. This is relevant and interesting to review because it shows how the country is planning to achieve economic development and through what means. The national development plan is quite long and comprehensive, so this review will focus on the sections that refers to education, job creation and equality.

The first part of the review and the discussion section in the thesis focuses on Uganda specifically to get to know the country, and set the scene for the terms of the discussion. The second part will take a more general approach on how education, job creation and economic development are interlinked. This will be discussed in relation to equality, and how, with that in mind, education can lead to economic development. To be able to review this, I have used articles and books about a couple of theories that I will compare and discuss to understand more about the role education has in development work. I will also review literature that looks in to education and women more specifically, in relation to economic development.

This review will show why I have chosen the literature that I did, and how they contribute to learning more about the questions I am asking in the problem statement. I will also set the ground for my research, after looking at themes and discussions on the field, and finding out what gaps might need to be filled. This study will not explore a whole new field, but rather

build on already existing research that I will review here and combine to set the ground for my research. There are already so much research on education in general, both in relation to girls and women, and to economic development, and there are a lot of research on primary and secondary education and its importance for development. However, since this research will focus on higher education, I have decided to combine the previous mentioned research and build on to that.

In addition to reports from the Ugandan government about the education system in their country, I wanted information from a different perspective and that's how I learned about the HERANA project. HERANA stands for "The Higher Education Research and Advocacy Network in Africa", (Cloete & Schalkwyk, 2018) and was formed as a partnership of eight flagship universities on the continent; University of Botswana, University of Cape Town, University of Dar es Salaam, Eduardo Mondlane University, University of Ghana, Makerere University, University of Mauritius, and University of Nairobi (Cloete & Schalkwyk, 2018). The research focuses on higher education and one of the flagship universities is in Kampala, Uganda where I also did some of the field work for this study. This project came up as it is supported by, amongst others, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, NORAD, and their web pages seemed like a good place to start to learn more about higher education and foreign aid.

Other than reports from the Ugandan government and the HERANA project, I have also used a reports about investing in education for girls and the economic benefits for Uganda, published by the World Bank. The World Bank is involved in development projects in Uganda with \$2.9billion, as of February 2020, and 70% of this investment is supporting infrastructure development, including health and education (TheWorldBank, 2020). With so much money invested I considered the report to be thorough with reliable and updated data and statistics about education. To supplement the information retrieved from the aforementioned literature, I used a few master theses' written on the same subject, that I considered being relatable or comparable to my thesis. These were available through my university's literature search engine, and the equivalent at the University of Oslo.

### 3.1 Women in education

The World Bank has produced a report called "Accelerating Ugandas Development: Ending Child Marriage, Educating Girls" which is part of the series "Uganda Economic Update 10<sup>th</sup> Edition" (TheWorldBank, 2017). This report was finalised in 2017 and discusses the situation

in Uganda where a large part of the population is under 18 years, and what a great resource they could be for the country if educated and given access to productive work. One of the challenges Uganda is facing when trying to educate this young population is early marriage, early child bearing and high fertility rates for adolescents (TheWorldBank, 2017). The consequences are low education attainment especially for girls, and a sizeable share of human capital not utilized. The report analyses the impact this has on Ugandas economy, and how investing in education will benefit girls and women on an individual level but also society as a whole.

The report draws a link between focusing on women in education and economic growth:

Recent research suggests that human capital accounts for two thirds of global wealth worldwide, with produced and natural capital accounting for the rest. Improving outcomes for adolescent girls would contribute to increasing Uganda’s human capital, and thereby its wealth and long-term capacity to generate future incomes. Said differently, educating girls and ending child marriage and early childbearing would help in ensuring the long-term sustainability of Uganda’s development path (TheWorldBank 2017, p.29)

The report also shows how the education of a mother and their child is connected. It says that estimates for Uganda suggest that child marriage has a large and statistically significant impact on secondary education enrolment and completion. An example from the report shows:

child marriage may reduce the likelihood of completing secondary school by 12 to 23 percentage points depending on how early girls marry. This is confirmed by the fact that once a girl is married, statistical analysis suggests that it is very difficult for her to remain in school (TheWorldBank 2017, p.31)

**Table 1** *Impact of child marriage/early childbearing on educational attainment*

Indicators	Estimated Impacts
(1) Girls dropping out of school	According to parents and principals, early pregnancies and marriages are major reasons for dropping out of school
(2) Educational attainment for girls	Child marriage reduces the likelihood of completing secondary school by 12 to 23 percentage points
(3) Marriage vs. schooling trade-off	Once a girl is married, statistics suggest that it is very difficult for her to remain in school, whatever her age
(4) Intergenerational effects	Child marriage affects the education of the children of girls marrying early at least indirectly

(TheWorldBank 2017, p.31)

This table suggests that:

While child marriage for a mother itself may not have a direct negative impact on the education of her children, the fact that child marriage may reduce the educational attainment of the mother leads to a negative impact on the education prospects of her

children (boys and girls). The results from the table point to a large negative impact of child marriage on educational attainment for girls, and to some extent on the education of their children too (TheWorldBank 2017, p.31).

According to the report “Accelerating Uganda's Development: Ending Child Marriage, Educating Girls” from 2017, Uganda has made progress towards higher educational attainment for girls. Still, fairly few girls complete their upper or even lower secondary education. Uganda has made efforts to promote educational attainment for both boys and girls, amongst others by introducing the policy of providing free primary education in 1997. In addition, ten years later, Uganda introduced a program to provide universal access to post primary education and training, and became the first country in sub-Saharan African to introduce a Universal Secondary Education Policy (TheWorldBank 2017). According to the report, these efforts has:

Made Uganda progress towards higher educational attainment for both boys and girls. Gender parity has been achieved at the primary education level. At entry into lower secondary, intake rates are similar for boys and girls, but girls start to fall behind towards the end for lower secondary. At the upper secondary level, the gap between girls and boys is more pronounced, in part due to child marriage and early child bearing, two issues that affect girls much more than boys (TheWorldBank 2017, p.25)

According to the National Development Plan made by the Ugandan government, there has been made significant progress in strengthening gender equality and women’s empowerment:

There has been formulation of a gender responsive regulatory framework, including policies and strategies. Further, there has been a process for institutionalization of gender planning in all sectors and increased collection of gender disaggregated data and information through research. As a result, there has been improvement in the number of women in political leadership and gender parity in enrolment of girls at primary level, in addition to increased ownership of land by women. Despite the progress made, only 27% of registered land is owned by women and although 70% of the women are engaged in agriculture, less than 20% control the outputs and proceeds from their efforts (NationalPlanningAuthorityUganda 2015, p.xxii)

The National Development Plan also states that:

In order to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment, Government will ensure a framework for coordinated interventions through a national policy to eliminate gender based violence and strengthen the capacity of women for increased competitive entrepreneurship and provide appropriate technologies to women (NationalPlanningAuthorityUganda 2015, p.75).

### 3.2 Educational attainment and employment

In Uganda, most of the working population are employed in the agriculture sector. According to the report “The National Population and Housing Census 2014 – Education”, 63% of the population between 14 and 64 years were engaged in subsistence farming, and 9% were employed in the sales and service sector, which are the two sectors that occupies most of ugandas population. Following the table underneath, the majority of people in subsistence farming were the people without education.

**Table 2 Education Attainment and Occupation for Persons aged 14-64 Years**

Occupation	Never Attended	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Total
	0.0	0.2	2.6	24.0	2.4
Associate Professionals	0.1	0.1	1.4	11.4	1.2
Clerical support Staff	0.2	0.2	0.8	4.2	0.6
Sales and Service workers	4.8	6.5	15.6	13.1	8.8
Subsistence Farmers	77.4	72.3	47.6	18.2	63.5
Market Oriented Agriculture Farmers	3.8	3.8	3.3	2.4	3.6
Craft and related Trade workers	1.2	2.5	6.1	6.6	3.4
Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers (Excluding Boda Boda Riders)	0.5	0.8	2.6	1.7	1.2
Boda Boda Riders (Bicycle/Motor Cycle)	0.6	1.4	2.0	0.7	1.3
Elementary occupations	3.7	3.9	5.5	3.5	4.3
Domestic Helpers	3.1	3.7	4.6	1.5	3.7
Other	4.8	4.6	7.8	12.7	6.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

(UgandaBuerauofStatistics 2017, p.49)

The report continues with policy recommendations in line with the SDG’s and the National Development Plan and the goals of Uganda becoming an upper middle-income country by 2040. It states that:

Education is associated to economic growth in three ways: first, growth in average years of schooling per worker is associated with growth in output per worker. Secondly, increasing the number of educated workers helps a country to move up the ladder to production of more technologically sophisticated goods; and thirdly, the role of educated labour in any production process can be seen as learning or creating technology that generates more output holding levels of inputs constant, rather than an input itself (UgandaBuerauofStatistics 2017, p. 65)

According to the report, the problem in Uganda is that the educational attainment with higher qualifications is very low, which implies a shortage of skilled manpower in the country, and that is why focusing on education is important to achieve economic growth

(UgandaBureauofStatistics 2017, p.65).

The report “Accelerating Uganda’s Development: Ending Child Marriage, Educating Girls” from 2017 also shows how educating the country’s youth can contribute to creating jobs and economic growth. It makes the point that:

Uganda’s youthful population has the potential to achieve increased productivity and to build its resilience to shocks. Today, almost six in ten people in Uganda are below the age of 18 years, making Uganda’s population one of the most youthful in the world. This youthful population is an asset if Uganda’s youth were provided with the appropriate education and enabled to fully participate in production processes at an increasingly higher level of productivity (TheWorldBank 2017, p.iv)

The report goes on and argues for why it is important to focus on girls and education:

Despite progress over time, adolescent girls still have on average in Uganda lower educational attainment than boys at the secondary level. In addition, rates of child marriage and early childbearing remain high. Educating girls and ending child marriage and early childbearing is essential for girls and young women to have agency in their life, not only as wives and mothers, but also beyond those roles. It is also essential to enable Uganda to reach middle income status (TheWorldBank, 2017, p. 22).

Figures from the “Accelerating Ugandas Development: Ending Child Marriage, Educating Girls” report shows the trends in education attainment for girls in Uganda (%):

**Table 3 Trends in Educational Attainment for Girls in Uganda (%)**

Primary Completion		Lower Secondary Completion		Upper Secondary Completion	
Age Group		Age Group		Age Group	
All 15 - 49	38.72	All 18 - 49	17.59	All 21 - 49	8.47
15 -18	37.35	18-20	20.36	-	-
19 - 22	51.82	21-24	26.37	21 - 24	12
23 - 30	45.55	25-30	20.45	25 - 30	10.08
31 - 40	29.35	31-40	12.43	31 - 40	6.93
41 - 49	25.56	41-49	8.91	41- 49	4.4

Source: World Bank staff using latest publicly available DHS.

(TheWorldBank, 2017)

This table shows that most girls quit or drop out somewhere between lower secondary and upper secondary (TheWorldBank, 2017). The report problematizes girls getting married and getting pregnant while still in school and the affect this has on their education attainment, as girls getting married and/or pregnant are not likely to continue their education. Of all women ages 18-49 years, 46.5% gets married before turning 18, and 37.7% gets pregnant (TheWorldBank, 2017). The consequences on an individual level affects health, household welfare, women’s earnings, land ownership, knowledge of HIV/Aids and more (TheWorldBank, 2017). For the society, and the country’s economic growth, keeping girls in

schools also has a big impact. Both because educating women will equip them with the tools they need to be productive members of society, and also because women who finishes upper secondary wait longer with having children. According to the report Uganda can save US\$2.4B annual welfare benefits from lower population growth by 2030 (TheWorldBank, 2017).

### 3.3 Higher education

This study has been inspired by the article “A review of major obstacles to women’s participation in higher education in Kenya” by Daniel N. Sifuna. As Kenya is Ugandas neighbouring country and also in Sub-Saharan Africa they share certain similarities that can be compared. The research Sifuna reviews is also applicable to my thesis as it discusses the link between women and higher education also in general. He states that ‘the low levels of educational attainment, especially among women, represent a very serious constraint on development in most of the Sub-Saharan countries in general...’ (Sifuna 2006, p.85). And then he continues by dividing educational development into progress for individuals and for the nation:

At the individual level, for example, education is perceived to be the ultimate liverator, which empowers a person to make personal and social choices. Education is also perceived to be the ultimate equaliser, particularly in promoting greater equity for women, and the poor disadvantaged groups, since education is often the only capital such groups can aspire to acquire (Sifuna, 2006, p. 85).

The points he is making fits into my research because he draws on the same theories as I do, and divides investing in education into progress for individuals at the one hand and progress for society at the other.

There are two reports from the Ugandan government about education that I will use as supporting evidence which explains the state of higher education by showing the numbers of everything that has to do with education, from primary to higher education, and including numbers on both boys and girls. One is from 2016, called “Education and Sports Sector Fact Sheet 2002-2016” published by Ministry of Education and Sports (MinistryofEducationandSports, 2016) which shows progress over 14 years in enrolment in all levels of education for boys and girls. The second is called “The state of higher education and training in Uganda 2017/18” and was published by National Council for Higher Education in 2019 (NationalCouncilforHigherEducation, 2019), and is a report on the higher education institutions in Uganda. This report also shows progress over the past 6-7 years, but



looks more closely into the different higher education institutions and the different courses they offer. This gives a good insight into what type of education people choose, and can be used in relation to unemployment rates for example.

### 3.4 HERANA

To look closer into the higher education situation in Uganda, but also the African continent in general, I have used a study called “Knowledge production contradictory functions in African higher education” which is a part of African Higher Education Dynamics Series (AHED) that aims to promote and disseminate scholarly work in the field of higher education studies (Cloete et al., 2015), and which is based on a study undertaken by the Higher Education Research and Advocacy Network in Africa. HERANA is coordinated by the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) in South Africa (Cloete, Bailey, Pillay, Bunting, & Maassen, 2011). In addition to that, I have also used a study called “Universities and economic development in Africa”. The evidence and analysis in this study is also based on the results from the HERANA project, both Phase 1 which was initiated in 2007 and Phase 2 that started in 2011 (Cloete et al., 2015). The main aim of Phase 1 was to investigate the relationship between higher education and development – economic and democratic – in Africa. Phase 2 maintains its focus on Africa; eschews common assumptions about African universities and persists with its strategy of scientific based advocacy (Cloete et al., 2015).

The HERANA project is focused on contributing to a better understanding of the (positive and negative) factors that affect African flagship universities in their knowledge production function. A better understanding of these factors, including from a cross-African comparative perspective, will make it possible for each individual institution and the national authorities involved to develop more appropriate policies and to use more effective policy tools and incentives for stimulating the performance of the university in the direction the country requires; that is, in the direction of becoming a stronger and more relevant knowledge-producing university (Cloete et al., 2015 p.xiii).

The HERANA project began in 2009 with Phase 1 which consisted of collecting data from eight African universities. The universities were selected because of their background as the most prominent university in their country since independence. They also had broad “flagship” goals built into its vision and mission statement. In this study, the term flagship university is explained as a research-intensive or research-led university (Cloete et al., 2015 p.19). The reason for looking at these African flagship universities in relation to economic development are their function in knowledge production.

The university’s unique contribution to development is via knowledge – either transmitting knowledge (teaching) to individuals who will go out in the world and



contribute to society in a variety of ways, or producing and disseminating knowledge (research, engagement) that can be applied to the problems of society and economy (Cloete et al., 2015 p.33).

The study “Knowledge production contradictory functions in African higher education” looks at how universities engages in developing communities. The reason why this is important is because “a central tenet of the Higher Education Research and Advocacy Network in Africa project is that Africa needs a robust, differentiated higher education sector in order to bolster the continents development” (Cloete et al., 2015 p.203). In the study the researchers also present finding from Phase 1 of the project.

Finding from the HERANA Phase 1 research indicated that the eight African flagship universities under study were engaging in activities (such as consultancies, or service-oriented work), fuelled by the need to secure external research funding, that were responding to the needs of communities but that were not necessarily contributing to the production of more knowledge (Cloete et al., 2015 p.204).

When looking specifically at Makerere University in Uganda, the research found that “Makerere University’s strategic plan (2008/2009 – 2018/2019) ties itself closely to the institutions role in national development. The formulation of the plan was guided by the question: How can Makerere University reposition itself to meet emerging development challenges in Uganda?” (Cloete et al., 2015 p.266). One measure that the university has taken to promote development in communities is, according to a student survey conducted at Makerere University as part of HERANA Phase 2, “that the university is beginning to offer a “training ground” in democratic citizenship in terms of developing key competencies such as critical thinking, leadership skills, and diversity and social skills” (Cloete et al., 2015 p.267).

“Universities and economic development in Africa” begins by presenting the concept of knowledge economy:

Over the past couple of decades, “globalisation” and the emergence of the “knowledge economy” have given rise to new economic, social, political and cultural challenges to which nations, regions and higher education systems and institutions are responding. It is widely assumed that in the context of these new challenges specific knowledge, competencies and skills – often referred to as “human capital” – come to play an increasingly important role in developmental efforts, as do research, innovation and technological development (Cloete et al., 2011 p.2)

The study then draws a line between higher education institutions and delivering the knowledge requirements for development by based on research showing “a strong association between higher education participation rates and levels of development” (Cloete et al., 2011

p.3). It continues by discussing the relationship between higher education institutions and the role of the state. More specifically, one chapter of the book is focused on Uganda, and Makerere University which is one of the flagship universities researched in the HERANA project. Through the HERANA project they discovered that in Uganda “the state was playing an important role with respect to funding, as well as encouraging private sector provisions of higher education. The states policy document, the “National Development Plan”, gives some prominence to the role of tertiary education in development” (Cloete et al., 2011, p. 151).

When researching Uganda and the importance of knowledge economy in relation to higher education, the researchers discovered that “at the national level the importance of the knowledge economy and the importance of higher education were rather weakly reflected in national policy statements”, while at the institutional level “there was much stronger reference to the knowledge economy. The important role of the university in development was also in the strategic plan” (Cloete et al., 2011 p.153). But, in conclusion, “there was no broad agreement between national and institutional levels that knowledge, and by implication higher education, is key to development” (Cloete et al., 2011 p.153). The reason for why they research knowledge economy in relation to higher education is to learn how universities are contributing as a tool for development. In the case of Makerere University, it receives critique for not significantly changing from a predominantly undergraduate institution, which is relevant because a higher education institution needs to produce research to contribute to the knowledge economy, and that is done through masters and PhD programs (Cloete et al., 2011). In the research from Makerere University it is elaborated that:

In terms of output variables such as research output and the production of doctorates, Makerere performed poorly. The two key factors that seemed to be weakening the academic core were the low throughput from masters to doctorates and the low research funding available to permanent academics. Positive developments were the increase in master’s students and the tripling of research output, albeit from a low base” (Cloete et al., 2011 p.156).

In relation to development, the research focuses on how universities can contribute to development. The results from Makerere University was that “While the university did have development-related structures and special programmes linking it to development initiatives, the problem was that in too many cases these initiatives were driven by individuals rather than being institutionalised” (Cloete et al., 2011 p.159). At the same time, the university seemed to be focused on development activities “While government support for research was low, the university, within tight budget constraints, was trying to increase research related to

development activities. However, research related to development was not significantly rewarded through incentives beyond the traditional academic promotion system” (Cloete et al., 2011 p.159). Finally, in the book, the main findings from three years of HERANA research is listed, and looks at the results from all the universities researched combined. The conclusion about universities and economic development in Africa was:

In none of the countries in the sample was there a coordinated effort between government, external stakeholders and the university to systematically strengthen the contribution that the university can make to development. While at each of the universities there were exemplary development projects that connected strongly to external stakeholder and strengthened the academic core, the challenge is how to increase the number of these projects (Cloete et al., 2011 p.165).

### 3.5 Ugandas young population

The government of Uganda, together with UKAid and UNFPA has compiled a report called “Young People: The Untapped Resource for Development” and researches how the large young population of Uganda could be a resource when trying to become an upper middle income country by 2040 (UgandaBureauofStatistics 2017). The report states that investments must be made to improve the wellbeing and productivity of Uganda’s youths, as they make up the largest part of the population. According to the report there is a lot of potential in the large, young population that needs to be invested in through job-creation and improved opportunities for entrepreneurship (UgandaBureauofStatistics 2017). Another way to invest in the young population is through education, as the report states: ‘Uganda’s labour force must be well educated and endowed with high quality skills that will make the country competitive in the global market’ (UgandaBureauofStatistics 2017, p. iii). The report looks at how this can be achieved, amongst other, to improve school completion at all educational levels, for boys and girls. In addition, it problematizes child marriage and girls having children very early, and how investing in adolescent’s girls’ education will prove particularly beneficial to Uganda;

as it is associated with reduction in school dropout, child marriage, teenage pregnancy and improved sexual and reproductive health. Girls with access to and control over economic resources are more likely to invest in their families (UgandaBureauofStatistics 2017, p. iii).

The report is very useful when looking at the link between higher education, and what it means for a society to invest in girls in terms of economic development.

“Young people: The untapped resource for development” explains the importance of having an educated population and what it means for the society:

Education develops a country's economy and society; therefore, it is a key milestone of a nation's development. Education provide knowledge and skills to the population, as well as shaping the personality of the youth of a nation. Education is very important for an individual's success in life. Education is generally seen as the foundation of society which brings economic wealth, social prosperity and political stability. The economic and social status of the population depends on education obtained by individual since education contributes to individual capability in managing quality of life. Education in society prepares young people for adulthood as the next generation of leaders. Educational attainment is an important indicator of the society's stock of human capital and level of socioeconomic development (UgandaBureauofStatistics 2017, p.29).

### 3.6 Rural vs. urban areas

The difference between rural and urban areas when it comes to access to higher education is pointed out in "The National Population and Housing Census 2014 – Education" report.

**Table 4** Tertiary level Gross Enrolment by background characteristics

	Male	Female	Total
<b>Residence</b>			
Urban	8.7	6.7	7.6
Rural	3.4	1.8	2.6
<b>Sub-Region</b>			
Kampala	14.5	12.0	13.2
Central1	5.2	4.5	4.8
Central2	3.4	2.5	3.0
Busoga	4.4	2.4	3.3
Bukedi	4.9	2.1	3.4
Elgon	5.4	3.3	4.2
Teso	4.3	2.1	3.1
West Nile	4.6	2.4	3.4
Acholi	6.1	3.1	4.4
Lango	4.0	1.9	2.9
Karamoja	3.7	1.7	2.6
Toro	3.3	1.8	2.5
Ankole	4.2	2.7	3.4
Bunyoro	2.6	1.5	2.0
Kigezi	4.5	2.3	3.3
<b>Religion</b>			
Anglican	5.1	3.3	4.1
Catholic	4.4	2.7	3.5
Muslim	4.9	3.4	4.1
Seventh-Day Adventist	5.4	3.5	4.4
Orthodox	4.7	3.3	3.9
Pentecostal/ Born Again/ Evangelical	6.0	3.9	4.8
Others	4.0	2.4	3.2
Total	4.9	3.2	4.0

(UgandaBureauofStatistics 2017, p.35)

Table 4 shows the number of students enrolled in Ugandas tertiary education level as a percentage of the population of official school age for the tertiary level. The total is 4%, which is, according to the report, lower then the Sub-Saharan average of 6% and the world average at 26%. As some of the interviewees mentioned also mentioned, this table shows that there are more people from urban areas enrolling in tertiary institutions than people from urban areas. There are also more men than women who enrolls. The region who has most

people enrolling for tertiary institutions is Kampala, which is the capital city (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2017, p.35)

The report “Accelerating Uganda’s Development: Ending Child Marriage” from 2017, also points out differences for girls from urban and rural areas with this table that shows that almost twice as many girls from rural areas are subjected to child marriage than girls from urban areas.

**Table 5 Child Marriage and Early Childbearing by Region (%)**

	Child marriage (18-22 years)	Early childbearing (18-22 years)
<b>All</b>	<b>36.5</b>	<b>28.6</b>
<b>Region</b>		
Kampala	17.8	19.4
Central 1	26.9	22.9
Central 2	37.4	34.5
East central	42.0	35.4
Eastern	49.4	38.1
North	51.5	35.3
Karamoja	59.7	33.9
West-Nile	36.5	23.8
Western	39.5	33.1
Southwest	23.9	13.8
<b>Residence</b>		
Urban	22.5	24.6
Rural	40.6	29.8

(The World Bank 2017, p.26).

It also states that the links between poverty and child marriage, early childbearing, and low educational attainment for girls are very clear in Uganda (The World Bank 2017). The report “Young People: The untapped resource for development” from 2017 presents this table showing differences in the population in rural and urban areas:

**Table 6 Adolescents and youth Age Specific Sex Ratio by residence and regions**

Background	10-19				18-30				15-24			
	M	F	T	sex ratio	M	F	T	sex ratio	M	F	T	sex ratio
<b>Residence</b>												
Urban	937	1,096	2,033	85.5	1,094	1,365	2,459	80.1	894	1,146	2,040	78.0
Rural	3,444	3,401	6,844	101.3	2,477	2,869	5,346	86.3	2,468	2,637	5,105	93.6
<b>Sub-Regions</b>												
Kampala	137	182	319	75.7	245	311	557	78.8	176	245	421	71.9
Central1	505	542	1,046	93.1	479	600	1,079	79.9	406	503	909	80.8
Central2	475	466	941	102.0	402	436	839	92.3	370	388	758	95.4
Busoga	477	481	958	99.3	333	408	741	81.5	338	377	715	89.7
Bukedi	252	256	508	98.3	166	202	368	82.3	178	196	374	90.9
Elgon	232	238	470	97.5	169	194	363	87.3	173	189	362	91.4
Teso	245	245	490	100.1	169	198	367	85.7	177	189	366	93.7
West Nile	355	363	718	97.9	242	302	545	80.0	247	277	524	89.5
Acholi	201	198	399	101.4	145	171	316	84.8	146	157	303	93.3
Lango	280	285	565	98.2	205	242	447	85.1	207	227	434	90.9
Karamoja	123	126	249	97.2	96	116	213	82.6	90	100	190	89.3
Tooro	315	317	632	99.4	269	308	577	87.4	246	268	514	91.7
Ankole	364	370	734	98.3	298	341	638	87.3	282	307	589	91.7
Bunyoro	247	246	493	100.2	223	242	465	92.2	198	210	408	94.5
Kigezi	173	182	355	95.0	128	163	291	78.6	128	150	279	85.2
Total (2014)	4,381	4,496	8,877	97.4	3,571	4,234	7,805	84.3	3,362	3,783	7,145	88.9
Total (2002)	3,081	3,136	6,217	98.3	2,515	2,957	5,472	85.1	2,306	2,578	4,884	89.5

Note: Population in '000

(UgandaBureauofStatistics 2017, p.9)

According to this there was “higher sex ratio in rural areas than in urban, implying that there were more female adolescents and youths in rural areas than in urban areas”

(UgandaBureauofStatistics 2017, p.8). This is an important factor to look at because the fact that more young females than males are in the rural areas implies that more of the young females than males are hindered from accessing benefits associated with urban centres

(UgandaBureauofStatistics 2017, p.8). The National Development Plan for Uganda states that there have been efforts made to minimize the differences between rural and urban areas:

The Government has attempted to address regional disparities in poverty and development through the introduction of the equalization grant, and through the introduction of special programmes. The equalization grant was introduced in Fiscal Year 1999/2000 as a top block grant to a number of districts, mostly in Northern and Eastern Uganda to give those districts wider fiscal space to address some of the most pressing service delivery gaps. The grant was given to districts for purely social delivery (NationalPlanningAuthorityUganda, 2015, p. 76).

### 3.7 Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations Sustainable Development goals are a common work plan for the United Nations 193 member states that came into force from the 1. January 2016. This work plan consists of 17 goals and 169 targets which promotes sustainable development. The goals are developed by UN and are a continuation of the Millennium Development Goals which was the common work plan for the member states from year 2000 until 2015 (UnitedNations,

2015). These goals and targets are universal, which entails that they apply to all the member states. For the purpose of this study, the SDG 4 and 5 are most relevant as the sustainable development goals are one of the international frameworks that the education in Uganda is anchored upon (UgandaBureauofStatistics 2017).

The Sustainable Development goal number 4 is called Quality Education. It states that: “Obtaining a quality education is the foundation to creating sustainable development. In addition to improving quality of life, access to inclusive education can help equip locals with the tools required to develop innovative solutions to the world’s greatest problems” (UnitedNations, 2015). This goal has ten targets, and three of these are especially relevant for women’s access to higher education and their role in developing Uganda to become a higher middle income country by the year 2040. The first is 4.3: “By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university”. The second is 4.4: “By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship”. And the third target is 4.B:

By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries (UnitedNations, 2015).

The last target was supposed to be reached by this year, so it makes it relevant to look at the progress in Uganda the last five years, and if the target has been reached and what has been done to try and reach it.

The Sustainable Development goal number 5 is called Gender Equality. It states that:

Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large. Implementing new legal frameworks regarding female equality in the workplace and the eradication of harmful practices targeted at women is crucial to ending gender-based discrimination prevalent in many countries around the world (UnitedNations, 2015).

This statement shows the importance of including gender equality when working with sustainable development because it can’t be done without including the whole population, and education is an important part of that inclusion. None of the targets for goal number 5 is

directly linked to higher education, but there is one target that is relevant for the access and participation for women in higher education in Uganda. Target 5.C: “Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels” (United Nations, 2015). This target is linked to target 4.B because a policy for promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women could be a scholarship and specially to promote communications technology, technical engineering and scientific programmes for women.

In the article “Higher education and the post-2015 agenda: a contribution from the human development approach” the authors Alejandra Boni, Aurora Lopez-Fogues and Melanie Walker discussed higher education’s role in sustainable development, amongst others by looking at the Sustainable Development Goals. To add on to what is already written about Goal 4, they list the different targets that are directly or indirectly related to higher education:

- By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education, including university (Goal 4.3)
- By 2030, increase by (x) per cent the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship (Goal 4.4)
- By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations (Goal 4.5)
- By 2020, expand by (x) per cent globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries (Goal 4b)
- By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of cultures contribution to sustainable development (Goal 4.7) (Boni, Lopez-Fogues, & Walker, 2016, p. 18).

Other SDG’s that is relevant to look at in this study is goal 8 and 10. Goal number 8 is called “Decent work and economic growth” and works to “promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all” (United Nations, 2015). This matches with the NDP of Uganda, where one of the goals are to promote decent work for economic growth. The target of goal 8 that is most fitting for this study is 8.5 which is “by 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including



for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value” (United Nations, 2015)

Goal number 10 is called “Reduced inequalities” and the aim is to “Reduce inequality within and amongst countries” (United Nations, 2015). One of the examples for why this goal matter is because “up to 30 per cent of income inequality is due to inequality within households, including between women and men. Women are also more likely than men to live below 50 per cent of the median income” (United Nations, 2015). Several of the targets for goal 10 has similar focus as target 8 and 5, as economic growth and gender equality is interlinked and important for working with reducing inequality. According to Uganda’s NDP, this is considered important for reaching their Vision 2040 and it states that “the country has put in place a number of policies, strategies and plans that are hinged on international frameworks to achieve unity in diversity and equal opportunities for the general population” (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2017, p. 62).

One of the relevant targets for this study is target 10.1 “By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average” (United Nations, 2015). Other relevant targets are:

- 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status
- 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard
- 10.6 Ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions (United Nations, 2015)

### 3.8 Summary

The literature review chapter aims to provide a foundation of knowledge on the research topic and to get an overview of what other researchers have done before. It also gives a chance to identify gaps and see where new research fits in. This review identifies reports made by The World Bank and Uganda Bureau of Statistics with research done on relevant fields for my research; girls and women in education in Uganda, employment opportunities, ending child marriage and child bearing, and the economic benefits of supporting women in higher

education. Furthermore, the review identifies relevant articles written about the same themes by other researchers. And lastly, it presents relevant SDG's and their connection to this research and Ugandas commitment to becoming an upper middle-income country.

## 4. Theoretical framework

This chapter will set the theoretical framework that will work as a tool to answer the problem statement and research question. Firstly, I will define the key concepts used to create the problem statement, which is needed to answer the research question and clarify what they mean in this context. Secondly, I will define and evaluate relevant concepts and theories. This will be done by conducting a literature review to establish how other researchers have identified and drawn connections between these key concepts and evaluate the approaches different authors have proposed. I will also determine what theories and concepts best fit my research and then justify why that is the case.

### 4.1 Concepts and definitions

The problem statement in this study includes several concepts that are important to understand the research context and explain the results. These concepts will be used frequently throughout the research and create a conceptual framework for this thesis.

#### 4.1.1 Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were established in the concept of sustainable development, which entails "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (United Nations, 2015). The SDGs function is that they are universal, and all countries that commit to them will work together towards a sustainable future. According to the United Nations web page for the SDGs, "They address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice. The 17 Goals are all interconnected, and in order to leave no one behind, it is important that we achieve them all by 2030" (United Nations, 2020a). The purpose of the Goals is that all countries committed are working with the same aims and targets in mind, which all the member states have agreed to. There are 162 countries and territories working towards the 2030 Agenda, 131 Country Teams working with implementing the UNSDG strategic priorities and 34 UN agencies, funds, and programs to deliver sustainable development (United Nations, 2020b). Uganda is one of the member states committed to working towards these goals. In addition, they have made their own national plan for sustainable development and economic growth with targets to reach by 2040. The national plan is inspired by the SDG's, where specific Goals are mentioned and adapted to a Ugandan setting.

#### 4.1.2 Young population

The first sentence of the problem statement says that Uganda has one of the world's largest young populations. According to the report: "Young people: The untapped resource for development," 78% of Uganda's population is below 30 years (UgandaBureauofStatistics 2017). These numbers are from 2014, but I choose to use them because it comes from a report that will be used thoroughly through this research. According to this report, the term young people are defined as 10-30 years; the term adolescents is 10-19 years and teenagers are 12-19 years old. It also lists the various definition of youths; 15-24 years being a universal definition, 18-35 years being the definition in the East African Community (EAC), and 18-30 years being the Ugandan definition (UgandaBureauofStatistics 2017, p.2). Because the research for this study is conducted in Uganda, term youths will be used by the Ugandan standard.

#### 4.1.3 Unemployment

Another concept used in the problem statement is high unemployment rates. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) unemployment rate is defined as:

The number of unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force, where the latter consists of the unemployed plus those in paid or self-employment. Unemployed people are those who report that they are without work, that they are available for work and that they have taken active steps to find work in the last four weeks. When unemployment is high, some people become discouraged and stop looking for work; they are then excluded from the labour force. This implies that the unemployment rate may fall, or stop rising, even though there has been no underlying improvement in the labour market (OECD, 2020).

According to the "Young people: The untapped resource for development" report, the unemployment rate for youths in Uganda was 13% in 2016/17 (UgandaBureauofStatistics 2017, p.63).

#### 4.1.4 Upper middle-income country

Upper middle-income country is a term that will come up in this research, as it is Ugandas goal to become one by the year 2040. The World Bank defines being an upper middle-income country like this:

The worlds Middle Income Countries (MICs) are a diverse group by size, population, and income level. They are defined as lower middle-income economies – those with a GNI per capita between \$1,006 and \$3,955; and upper middle-income countries –

those with a GNI per capita between \$3,956 and \$12,235(2018). Middle income countries are home to 75% of the worlds population and 62% of the worlds poor. At the same time, MICs represent about one third of global GDP and are major engines of global growth (TheWorldBank, 2019c).

According to the World Bank Uganda is now a low income country with a GNI per capita at \$620 in 2018 (TheWorldBank 2018). In the National Development Plan made by the Ugandan Government they state that the Plan is in line with their Vision 2040 which aims at: “Transforming the country from being predominantly peasant and low income to a competitive, upper middle-income status with a per capita income averaging at USD9,500 by 2040” (NationalPlanningAuthorityUganda 2015, p.2). Economic growth is another term that is used in the problem statement which here refers to Ugandas goals of becoming an upper middle-income country by raising their GNI per capita, and all the efforts that includes.

#### 4.1.5 Educational attainment

When it comes to education, which is one of the means in which Uganda will achieve economic growth, it is relevant to look at attainment. The report: “Education: A means for population transformation” states that education attainment refers to the highest level of education and individual has completed.

In a formal education system, successful completion usually results in a qualification that is recognised by the relevant national education authorities. For the case of Uganda completion means an individual attended through any level of education (primary, secondary, Business Technical and Vocational Education Training sector (BTVET), tertiary and University) and did the final examination or assessed in any form to confirm completion at that level’ (UgandaBureauofStatistics 2017, p.37).

According to the report attainment is important because:

“Education attainment is one of the salient indicator of the quality of a country’s human capital and level of socio-economic development. High educational attainment also associated with better health, increased civic engagement, decreased violence and crime, and other factors linked to sustainable development” (UgandaBureauofStatistics 2017, p.37)

#### 4.1.6 Demographic dividend

Another term that is not directly mentioned in the problem statement, but will be important in this research, is demographic dividend. It is closely linked to young population, unemployment for youths and education for women. United Nations Population Fund defines it: “The demographic dividend is the economic growth that can result from shifts in a population’s age structure, mainly when the share of the working-age population (15-64) is

larger than the non-working-age share of the population (14 and younger, and 65 and older)” ((UnitedNationsPopulationFund, 2020). It can also be explained like this:

Sustainable development cannot be achieved without assuring that all women and men, and girls and boys, enjoy the dignity and human rights to expand their capabilities, secure their reproductive health and rights, find decent work, and contribute to economic growth. Developing policies and investments to secure that future requires that governments know the size, sex, location and age structure of their present and future populations (UnitedNationsPopulationFund 2020).

#### 4.1.7 Rural and urban areas

One of the findings that will be discussed later is the difference in educational attainment and also the opportunities for people in rural and urban areas. To be clear about what these concepts entails and to have an understandable discussion, it is useful to have a definition. In the case of urban and rural areas, because of differences from country to country it is difficult to come up with one universal definition that is applicable for all countries or even regions within a country. According to the United Nations Statistics Division one way to differentiate the two terms is:

The traditional distinction between urban and rural areas within a country has been based on the assumption that urban areas, no matter how they are defined, provide a different way of life and usually a higher standard of living than are found in rural areas (UnitedNationsStatisticsDevision, 2017).

Other criteria's that can be useful to differentiate the two is concentration of population, in addition to “the percentage of the economically active population employed in agriculture, the general availability of electricity and/or piped water in living quarters and the ease of access to medical care, schools and recreation facilities” (UnitedNationsStatisticsDevision, 2017). Numbers from The World Bank shows that for the case of Uganda, 75% of the population lived in rural areas in 2019 (TheWorldBank, 2019a).

## 4.2 Human capital theory

When I started researching themes for the thesis and looked into an angle to higher education, the link between human capital and development became apparent. It gives an economic perspective on education and its impact on economic growth in developing countries. The human capital theory explains the relationship between education, productivity, and income. Theodore W. Schultz argues that:

skills and knowledge are a form of capital, and this capital is in substantial part a product of deliberate investment, that it has grown in Western societies at a much faster rate than conventional (nonhuman) capital. And that its growth may well be the most distinctive feature of the economic system (Schultz, 1961, p. 1).

Capital refers to production factors that generate goods or services in an economy – the various inputs that produce economic output, and the human capital theory explains how education is one of those inputs (Thomas & Burnett, 2015). The human capital theory highlights the economic reasons explaining human behaviour (Rajapakse, 2016).

Human Capital Theory is the most influential economic theory of western education, setting government policies' framework since the early 1960's (Fitzsimons, 2017). The theory has been the basis for development projects and international agreements working with economic growth since. Capital refers to factors of production that generate goods or services in an economy – the various inputs that produce economic output (Thomas & Burnett, 2015). In this theory, Human Capital is a person's or a population's skills and knowledge. Increasing these knowledges and abilities is seen as an investment in a society, a nation, or an individual level. One way to invest in human capital is through education and training. That is why the Human Capital theory is relevant for development, and especially when discussing education and sustainable development. From Thomas and Burnett's chapter "Human Capital and Development," they list several definitions of human capital, amongst others they write:

More recently, Frank and Bernanke define human capital as "an amalgam of factors such as education, experience, training, intelligence, energy, work habits, trustworthiness, and initiative that affect the value of a worker's marginal product." In short, human capital includes anything that contributes to the productive capacity of the workforce. (Thomas & Burnett, 2015, p. 12).

Therefore, in development work, the way to invest in society to ensure economic growth has been to invest in education. One paradigm that has this focus is the liberal capitalist paradigm. The vision is that economic growth is crucial so that new countries, lower-income countries can catch-up with developed countries. And the link to education is that schooling is instrumental in forming productive workers (McCowan, 2015). After the Second World War, the UN member states signed the Declaration of Human Rights, a universal set of rights that all humans, regardless of background, are entitled. One of these rights is the right to education, for which the governments in each state are responsible. Following the Human Capital theory and the Development Theory, which in short involves that development equals transformation from "traditional" to "modern" and from producing and exporting

commodities to be industrialized, many new states and low-income countries started to invest in free primary education for all. According to McCowan, "Human Capital theory has prospered and is undoubtedly the key driving force for national investment in education and the advocacy for supranational agencies in low-and middle-income countries to this day" (McCowan, 2015, p. 37).

The link between education, productivity, and income is central to the human capital theory. Schultz discovered that "a significant element of economic growth that had, hitherto, been unexplained could be accounted for by education" (Lauder & Brown, 2015 p.303).

With the rise of technology, it was assumed that more educated workers were needed to service the economy. These knowledgeable workers were considered more productive than those with only primary education because they could put their knowledge to good use in maintaining and developing technology. It was further assumed that employers would, over time, always choose educated workers because they would raise productivity and hence profits (Lauder & Brown, 2015, p. 303).

This way of looking at economic growth makes it relevant to research higher education, as that is the highest level of education. According to this statement, it leads to the highest possibility of raised profit and productivity. Uganda's government has the same view on the importance of investing in human capital when they talk about developing their country. The Uganda Vision 2040 identifies human capital development as one of the key fundamentals that need to be strengthened to accelerate the country's transformation and harnessing of the demographic dividend. The availability of appropriate and adequate human capital facilitates an increase in production, productivity, and technological growth, making it one of the vital endogenous drivers of economic growth. Education is therefore seen as a human right, it is the heart of sustainable development, and it is essential to the development (UgandaBureauofStatistics, 2017 p.1)

The investment in human capital through education starts at a young age if a child gets the opportunity to go to primary school, or even some type of preschool. Research shows a strong relationship between parental education and the effect it has on child learning (Brown, 2006). One explanation for such a relationship could be, according to Brown in the article "Parental Education and Investment in Children's Human Capital in China", that "more educated parents make greater investments in children's human capital by providing a higher level of



goods and services that complement learning and by devoting more time to their children" (Brown, 2006, p. 760). The same article also uses a study by Sathar and Lloyd from 1994, where they investigate the impact of parental education on educational expenditures using survey data from Pakistan. "They found that household spending on children's education is up to 75% higher if mother ever attended school relative to households wherein mothers did not" (Brown, 2006, p. 760).

In conclusion, investing in human capital can be done by a government. From the example above, the Ugandan government wishes to make appropriate and adequate human capital facilities available to increase production, productivity, and technological growth, which will secure economic growth. The investment in human capital can also be made individually, Kariuki et al. argue:

Human Capital Theory affirms that people invest in themselves, through the accumulation of different types of human capital, like formal education, knowledge, and information in order to constitute stocks of generally intangible human capital with the potential of increasing their owner's market and non-market productivity (Kariuki, Wasike, & Ambula, 2016, p. 1151).

The goal of investing in human capital is, amongst others, to be an attractive employee. According to the theory, investment increases a person's attractiveness to the labour market. According to Kariuki et al., "employees are viewed as owners of human capital, who decide the amount of investment in their human capital" (Kariuki et al., 2016, p. 1156). In another sense, this means that "less educated workers are more likely to be employed in insecure jobs than highly educated workers, and thus, they may be more likely to perceive job insecurity" (Kariuki et al., 2016, p. 1157).

In Kariuki et al. King and Sethi (1999) makes the evaluation on Schultz (1961) that "economic freedom benefits those workers who have attained most schooling as well as those who accumulated the most work experience similarly" (Kariuki et al., 2016, p. 1157). Kariuki et al. also made the argument that "with the current competition, the government has a role in regulating the quality of both public and private education as individuals compete for credential, especially a higher institution of learning" (Kariuki et al., 2016, p. 1160).

### 4.3 Capability approach

Unlike the liberal capitalist paradigm of development theory, where modernization theory and human capital theory are central, there is the liberal egalitarian paradigm. This paradigm's vision is the equality of opportunity and fundamental entitlements, with individual agency, well-being, and liberty. Human development and human capabilities are central theories in this paradigm. It links to education with the view that educational opportunities must be distributed fairly and must equip individuals for full participation in society (McCowan, 2015). Frediani et al. explain that:

On the one hand, the capability approach is concerned with personal and societal transformation. Freedom is defined as the choice, ability and opportunity people have to pursue their aspirations. Therefore, the capability approach is precisely interested in revealing the processes that shape people value and the enabling and constraining factors influencing people's freedom to pursue such values. At the core of this concepts of freedom is the notion of agency comprising the individuals and collectives ability to act upon what is valued (Frediani, Clark, & Biggeri, 2019).

Amartya Sen is the Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and the winner of the 1998 Nobel Peace Prize in Economic Science. He writes in his study "Development as Freedom" from 1999, developed the concept of freedom, and expanded the idea of development to break away from utilitarian and income-led approaches, such as the Human Capital theory (Frediani et al. 2019) (Sen 1999). According to Nadeera Rajapakse "the Capability Approach has emerged as an alternative to standard economic theory, by incorporating ethical principles to the capitalist model" (Rajapakse 2016, p. 3). With this approach, the focus is instead on the individual investment of taking education, than the investment it is for society to focus on education as a means for economic development. According to Sen, the capability approach broadens the picture when referring to investment in personal skills and abilities, because humans are not just means of production (Rajapakse 2016). The capability approach is essential to include as an addition to human capital theory because it provides a useful framework and normative tool to articulate both the learning processes and social value of education (Rajapakse 2016, p.7).

The concept of the capability approach gives a different perspective on development, because: The freedom to think, talk, and act concerning what one values is a meaning of development closer to a concern with human flourishing than narrower notions of a certain level of GDP per capita or a pre-specified level of resource (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005, p. 29).

In his study, Amartya Sen writes, "Development as Freedom" that freedoms are something that people enjoy in their lives. He lists five types of instrumental freedom: (1) political freedoms, (2) economic facilities, (3) social opportunities, (4) transparency guarantees, and (5) protective security. He compares freedom to the "capabilities" that a person has to lead the kinds of life they value – and have reason to value (Sen, 1999). He argues that development work should shift from focusing on well-being to agency, and he discusses this in relation to development work targeting women. The argument is that women can be active agents of change instead of being passive recipients of welfare-enhancing help.

While there is every reason not to slacken the concern about women's well-being and ill-being, and to continue to pay attention to the sufferings and deprivations of women, there is also an urgent and basic necessity, particularly at this time, to take an agent-oriented approach to the women's agenda (Sen, 1999, p. 191).

The argument for change from well-being to agency is that empirical work has shown that examples of women's agency, such as women's ability to earn an independent income, have ownership rights, find employment outside the home, be literate and educated and contribute in decision-making processes outside the family, is raising the relative respect and regard for women's well-being. In other words, focusing on women's agency will also contribute to women's well-being (Sen, 1999).

Regarding the capability approach and education, education affects all the freedoms that Sen lists as instrumental. Knowledge gives a person the possibility to develop their capabilities or freedoms to live the life they value. One example is the freedom to participate in society, and as Sen writes: "Since participation requires knowledge and basic educational skills, denying the opportunity of schooling to any group – say, female children, is immediately contrary to the basic conditions of participatory freedom" (Sen, 1999 p.32). Education can expand a person's freedoms, be it political, economic, or social, and, consequently, independence and empowerment. Education influence women's agency and voice, and can in turn, "influence the nature of the public discussion on a variety of social subjects, including acceptable fertility rates (not just in the family of the particular woman) and environmental priorities" (Sen, 1999 p.193). Through human development, the capability approach can also be used when looking at economic growth. "The rewards of human development go, as we have seen, well beyond the direct enhancement of quality of life, and also include its impact on people's productive abilities and thus on economic growth on a widely shared basis" (Sen, 1999 p.144).

Someone who has also developed the capability approach is the American philosopher and professor at Brown University, Martha Nussbaum (Svendsen, 2019). According to Frediani et al. 2019 the main differences between Amartya Sen's capability approach and Martha Nussbaum's is that the latter calls it the "capabilities approach" in plural and advocates for a list of specific "central human capabilities"(Frediani et al., 2019). She has made a list of ten capabilities, which are as follows; being able to:

(1) Live a normal life span, (2) have a good bodily health, including reproductive health, (3) experience bodily integrity, freely move around, and make reproductive choices, (4) use one's senses and imagination, and think, (5) experience emotions and have emotional attachments, (6) exercise one's practical reasoning in order to form a conception of the good, and critically reflect about one's life choices, (7) establish affiliations, that is, live with others and have a social basis for self-respect, (8) live with, and express concern for, other species, (9) play, laugh and enjoy recreational activities, and (10) participate effectively in political choices, and control one's social and physical environment, including to hold property and seek employment (Tengland, 2020, p. 82).

Frediani et al. also argues that the list with specific capabilities has "limited space for negotiating how these capabilities might be realised in concrete situations and is routinely sceptical of any values or preferences that depart from the established "norms" (Frediani et al., 2019, p. 11)

In the study "The Capability Approach, Empowerment, and Participation," the authors discuss Human development and the Capability Approach in a perspective of empowerment and participation. This chapter also includes some limitations to the approach (Frediani et al., 2019). Here it is mentioned that the approach has received criticism for not clarifying the targeted participants of analysis, and being too individualistic. A second critique of the approach is that it offers local solutions to global problems, and in that way leaves out structural inequalities, "Gore (2000) refers to the capability approach process as the partial globalization of development policy, providing local solutions to global problems" (Frediani et al., 2019 p.8). According to Frediani et al., there has been criticism of Sen's focus on immediate causes of poverty with the consequence of "neglecting the underlying social processes" (Frediani et al., 2019 p.8).

The two theories are relevant to this study because they offer two different takes and explanations of higher education's importance. From the Human Capital theory, I explain that

higher education equips people with skills and knowledge that make them attractive for employers and more productive citizens in society, which will generate economic growth. From a Capability Approach perspective, higher education contributes to expanding people's freedoms and focuses on individuals and the lives they want to live. The CA is also concentrated on local or individual solutions, while the Human Capital theory is focused on national or universal solutions. This makes the approaches suitable to combine as they cover different parts of why women's access to higher education contributes to sustainable development in Uganda.

#### 4.4 Summary

The theoretical framework in this study is meant to be a tool for my research, to be able to answer the problem statement and the main research question. Human capital theory and the capability approach are already well-established theories in the field of international development and education, and I use them here in my thesis to interpret and understand my data. When I established my problem statement, it became clear that I needed theories that could cover different parts of the term development. One side of my research is very much linked to economic growth, and another is linked more towards human development. They again are, of course, connected, but can provide different perspectives by keeping them somewhat divided. In addition to the two main theories, the articles and concepts mentioned in this chapter were chosen because they build on either the capability approach or the human capital theory.

This chapter aims to present the theoretical and conceptual framework used in this research to come one step closer to answer the research questions. It begins with defining concepts relevant to understanding the context of Uganda and applying it in the discussion. Secondly, it presents the main theories, Human Capital theory, and the Capability Approach. It explains what segments of each I have applied in this research to be able to discuss higher education. Lastly, the chapter concludes with why these two theories are suitable and how they can complete each other.

## 5. Research methodology

This chapter aims to explain the choices I have made, from planning the thesis and research, conducting the interviews, analysing and organising the findings and the work of getting everything down on paper. Hopefully this can work as a guide to understand why I have made the choices that I have, and what brought me to the conclusions of my work.

### 5.1 Planning the research

When deciding what to research for my master thesis, I knew that I wanted it to include higher education. Most of my existing knowledge about education and development revolved around primary and secondary education and how to make sure as many as possible, both boys and girls, enrolled in primary school. I chose to research in Uganda because I had been there before, as an exchange student, and had some pre-existing knowledge about the country and contacts that I could use to gain access to informants. Before traveling to Uganda, I started developing a research design that would lay the project's foundation. This included research topic, literature review, problem statement, how to collect and analyse data, and who I would need to collect the data (Cloete, Schalkwyk, & Mias, 2017). After researching the educational situation in Uganda, I decided that I wanted to focus on higher education, because after years of working on free access to primary education, Uganda is starting to include higher education in their targets to develop their country.

I discovered that Uganda has a plan of becoming an upper middle-income country in the year 2040 and thought this could be the basis of my research, asking the question, "how will they achieve this?" In the plan of becoming an upper middle-income country, it became clear that to achieve economic growth, Uganda has to deal with primarily; a large young population that keeps growing because of high fertility rates and high unemployment rates amongst young people. In addition to this, I soon discovered that a lot more girls than boys drop out of their education. To narrow down the scope of this study, I decided to focus on women in education. It seemed that Uganda has a lot to gain by investing in women and education, and it would be interesting to get a better understanding. From this information, I developed the problem statement and a brief interview guide to start thinking about what information I would need from the informants to answer my research questions.

To find theories that would help to answer my problem statement, I started by searching for relevant literature. I chose to search in the course curriculum, where I found a few articles and

book chapters about the link between education and development, in addition to Amartya Sen's book "Development as Freedom." This was very useful in understanding development strategies and provided a different perspective when discussing development and education (Sen 1999). Because I decided to use Uganda as the country I wanted to learn more about and have as an example when discussing education and development, the Ugandan government's web pages seemed like a sensible place to look for data and figures that could give an overview over the educational situation in the country.

When choosing the literature to build my thesis on, the goal was to have a range of different perspectives. This is important to best familiarise me with the subject I am writing about and manage to create an interesting discussion. I evaluated each source of information to decide if it would give valuable input to my thesis and learn from it that would complement my existing knowledge. I also assessed if the source was valid and if the information I gathered from, it would be the most accurate and updated I could find. Another reason to use a range of different sources, both in terms of authors and type of source, like books, other thesis's journal articles, and published reports, is to be aware of what has been researched on in the field so far. This way, I can identify themes, debates, and gaps in the subject I want to study and use it to decide what approach I want to take when undertaking my research. When I narrowed down my subject to higher education for women in Uganda and the economic benefits, I decided to build on previous research from various sources.

To narrow the thesis down and make it more specific, I have decided to focus on higher education. Both because a lot of research and international goals and aid has focused on primary education, and because it is interesting to see how higher education can contribute to development. Primary education and higher education are of course interlinked, so it is necessary to take into account the affect primary education has on those who continue to higher education, and how governments and organisations choose to fund education and what connection there is between primary and higher education in that regard. The number of higher education students keeps increasing globally, and there has been a shift from higher education only being available for the elite to mass and then to global higher education in a lot of countries (Parvazian, Gill, & Chiera, 2017). To narrow it down, even more, I have chosen to focus on women in higher education. That is because even though the proportion of women has increased in higher education over the last 40 years, men remain the majority in Sub-Saharan Africa (Parvazian et al., 2017, p. 1).

When planning the research, I had to send a research application to NSD, the Norwegian center for research data for approval before I could leave for Uganda and start the fieldwork. The application included describing the study's purpose and theme, explaining what type of information I would gather, from whom and how the information would be stored and for how long. I had to attach the interview guide and confirm that I would get informed consent from all the participants. The approval I received from the NSD will be attached to the appendixes.

### 5.2 Purpose of the research

The purpose of this study can be divided into two main categories. The first part of the problem statement focuses on Ugandas goal of becoming an upper middle-income country, the economic growth they need to achieve to manage that. The second part of the problem statement focuses on the individuals that choose to take higher education and how they were able to make that decision and their thoughts on how this would impact their life's and the lives of the people around them. To be able to answer this I needed to learn more about why women in Uganda choose to go for higher education, and their own thoughts and reflections around the impact it can have on their life and the society as a whole. In addition, I needed to learn more about how the government of Uganda intends to reach their goal of becoming an upper middle-income country, and how they facilitate for access to education for women.

### 5.3 Qualitative research

The data I needed to answer the research topic would be based on peoples lives, their perception of the reality they are a part of, and therefore I chose a qualitative research approach. According to Hamersley (2013 in Cohen et.al, 2018 p. 287) qualitative research is defined as:

A form of social inquiry that tends to adopt a flexible and data-driven research design, to use relatively unstructured data, to emphasize the essential role of subjectivity in the research process, to study a number of naturally occurring cases in detail, and to use verbal rather than statistical forms of approach (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 287).

Methodology is a tool to gain insight, and qualitative research is useful to understand the meaning behind people's choices and actions. This can be achieved by participating in society, talking to people and interpreting what is going on (Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2011). Typical methods for data gathering in qualitative research is through observation, interviews and discussions in groups (Johannessen et.al, 2011 p.33). It is



challenging with a research topic that requires detailed understanding of meanings, actions, attitudes, and behaviours, because it is based on humans and their lives and opinions. It is not something static, but can change while the research is undergoing, and it is up to the researcher to interpret the data according to the conception of the data. Still, qualitative research is the best way to go in-depth in a case and try to say something about the greater context (Cohen et al., 2018).

#### 5.4 Case study

Based on previous research on the field, and numbers showing that few percent of the relevant population enrol in a university or other tertiary institutions, I wanted to learn more about those who decide to start their higher education. What made them able to make this decision? What do they want to accomplish by having a university degree? And where do they see that degree taking them? I also wanted to learn more about the impact that an educated population has on society in general, and then take a closer look at Uganda as a country to understand how focusing on higher education can contribute to development. To answer these questions, I, as a researcher, needed to gather data that would give me insight into the education situation in Uganda, especially higher education and women. The purpose was to gain new insight into this reality. To do that, I chose a case study approach.

The methodological choices that I made were based on the case study research approach. This approach fits well with my research questions as it defined by Simons 2009 in Cohen et al. 2018 as “an in-depth investigation of a specific, real-life “project, policy, institution, program or system” from multiple perspectives in order to catch its “complexity and uniqueness”” (Cohen et al. 2018, p.375). A case study provides a unique example of real people in real situations, which I aimed for when asking why women choose to take higher education. This approach enables readers to understand ideas more clearly than by merely presenting them with abstract theories or principles. Doing this usually requires more than one tool for data collection and many sources of evidence. That is why I have chosen a combination of qualitative interviews and document analysis. Other methods like questionnaires, group interviews, or other quantitative methods wouldn't work because they wouldn't go in-depth in the phenomena and people's lives and situations.

A case study, as other research approaches, has its disadvantages. Shaugnessy et al. 2003 in Cohen et al. 2018 suggest that “case studies often lack a high degree of control, and

treatments are rarely controlled systematically and have little control over extraneous variables” (Cohen et al. 2018, p.378). This makes it more challenging to make, for example, cause and effect conclusions, and there is potential for bias as the researcher might be both participant and observer. At the same time, the strengths with this approach are, according to Wellington 2015 in Cohen et al. 2018, “that they are illustrative and illuminating, accessible and easily disseminate, holding the reader’s attention and being vivid accounts which are ‘strong on reality’” (Cohen et al. 2018, p.378). In this case, the strengths outweigh the weaknesses as this study’s goals are to learn about individual people’s situations, personal opinions, and life choices. To get this in-depth information, it is more useful to have conversations as in qualitative interviews, and then supplement with data from reports about the same topic. This gives valuable information that would be difficult to get from other methods like statistics or short questionnaires that are not personal. Case studies recognize the complexity and “embeddedness” of universal truths, which is what I am trying to present in this study. It is also why I chose this approach with the decision that its strength outweighs its weaknesses (Cohen et.al 2018).

The case study approach says something about how to collect data. In addition to that, I wanted to have a plan for analysing the data and who to collect it from and how to get in contact with informants. The plan to analyse the data that I made before doing the interviews was to transcribe them as soon as possible so as to get an overview over what information I could expect in the other interviews, and also to write it down while it was still fresh in my memory to get it as accurate as possible. In addition to that, I wanted to divide my findings into themes to compare the interviews and see what the different informants answered on the same themes. What the themes would be I chose to decide after conducting and transcribing all the interviews, so I could make an informed decision based on what the informants gave most information about in line with the research questions.

### 5.5 Sampling

After deciding the plan for analysis of the data, I made a plan for who I should interview and how I would gain access to them. Because my research topic is about women and higher education, I decided to talk to women in Uganda that is either currently a student at a higher education institution or is a former student who has started their career relevant to their studies. The decision to divide the informants in these two groups was made because it seemed relevant to get different perspectives in age and also the fact that one group has

managed to get a stable career while the other is more uncertain and is probably more up to date on how the job-seeking situation is. In addition, the choice was also about access. The students that I interviewed were either studying at the same university where I had my exchange semester, which made it easier to reach out and know where to go. And the other students I interviewed were students at a different university, which I thought would give the data more diversity and perspective, and I came in contact through a friend that I knew from my exchange semester who were a student at said university.

The other group of informants had finished their education, all of them on either bachelor or master level at a university. Most of these people were teachers, only two were not, but all the informants in this group worked at the same school. This was a choice I made because I got access to the school through two acquaintances that are teachers, and because I had limited time, it would be beneficial to have all the interviews at the same place. For the interviews, the sample consisted of women that are students, at two different universities, and women that have completed their studies and are either working at teachers or other jobs at a school. The teachers were educated either primary or secondary teachers, and the others were educated in accounting and administration. The complete information about the informants is showed in Table 7. I considered this to be a good sample, taken into account factors such as expense, time and accessibility. The most important thing about the sample is that it should represent the population on which I am doing my research, and that is why the aim was to have women in different ages, and life situations, to get perspective and also to learn if the situation in the country has changes form the previous generation to this one.

**Table 7 Informants**

	Working with a university degree	University student	Abbreviation
Informant 1		Kyambogo University	SK1
Informant 2		Makerere University	SM2
Informant 3		Makerere University	SM3
Informant 4		Kyambogo University	SK4
Informant 5	Teacher		W1
Informant 6	Teacher		W2
Informant 7	Teacher		W3
Informant 8	Teacher		W4
Informant 9	Accountant		W5
Informant 10	Administrator and teacher		W6

### 5.5.1 Snowball sampling

The type of sampling method that I used to find informants was non-probability samples. This type is described as:

The selectivity which is built into a non-probability sample derives from the researcher targeting a particular group, in the full knowledge that it does not represent the wider population; it simply represents itself. This is frequently the case in small samples or small-scale research, for example, one or two schools, two or three groups of students, a particular group of teachers, where no attempt to generalize is desired (Cohen et al., 2018 p.217)

This method fits well to what I was doing in my research where I had a small sample, with students from two different schools, and people that have education with different occupations, but mostly teachers. There are different types of non-probability sampling, and I used snowball sampling.

In snowball sampling researchers identify a small number of individuals who have the characteristics in which they are interested. These people are then used as informants to identify, or put the researchers in touch with, other who qualify for inclusion; these, in turn, identify yet others – hence the term snowball sampling (Cohen et al., 2018 p.220)

Snowball sampling was how I was able to gather informants. Two of the students I interviewed were studying at the same university where I was a student. The first of those two I got to know through school, and then she introduced me to the second student. The other two students at Makerere university I got access to through a friend I made during my exchange semester. He introduced me to one girl and then she had a friend that also could interview. The other informants that all have university degrees and jobs, were all working at the same school. I got access to one of the teachers in that school through a Norwegian friend who works at the same school. When I was finished with interviewing the first teacher I asked her if she could think of anyone else I could talk to, and then she took me to one of the other teachers. At the end of that interview I asked her if she knew anyone, and then it continued like that for all of the rest of the informants. This type of sampling works best when it's a small-scale research and where the researcher do not seek to generalize their findings beyond the sample in question (Cohen et al., 2018). What is positive with this type of sampling is that by being introduced to new informants through someone they know, either a friend, an acquaintance or a colleague it seems like it takes shorter time for them to be comfortable in the interview setting and that the conversation flows more easily.

### 5.6 Conducting interviews

The first group of interviews was conducted at the universities. The idea was that the students should not have to travel anywhere, so I came to where it was best for them. In all the cases for the students' interviews, we found a café/cafeteria on campus where it was quiet, I offered to buy a soda, and we sat down at the table furthest away from the entrance and the bar/kitchen area. I started by giving them information about my research and why I had asked them to help me while handing out a form of consent explaining that they would be anonymous and decide to withdraw from the research at any time. I used a tape recorder during the conversations, which I asked in beforehand if they were comfortable with it. This was the best solution so I could give all my attention to the informant, and concentrate on the answers rather than taking notes. The interviews were semi-structured, meaning I had an interview guide with questions I wanted to ask, but I was still flexible to add extra questions if the conversation took a different turn and follow up new information I might get during the interview that I was not expecting. The interview guide that I used as a guide is attached to the appendixes.

For the second group of informants, I met them all at the school where they worked. Again, this was most convenient, as they preferred to do it during work hours. For each of the interviews, we wanted to find a quiet place, which is not always easy in a primary school. It varied from interview to interview if we found a good place to conduct the interview. The different locations were at a library which we had to ourselves, some in their empty classrooms, some in their offices, and one chose a table in the hall outside their office. Most places were quiet, but we were interrupted by the bell that rang quite often, and on a couple of occasions, students who wanted words with their teachers. One of the interviews was extremely disruptive, as the informant had to leave the office on several occasions, which really took away the conversation flow. That was the downside at having the conversations during work hours, but since that is how they wanted to do it, I had to make the best out of it. The interviews were conducted similarly to the first group by explaining the project, handing out forms of consent, and asking if I could use a tape recorder, which everyone accepted. The interview guide was slightly different, but I was following a semi-structured style for the interviews.

#### 5.6.1 Language and translator

All of the interviews were conducted in English and without a translator. Even though English is my second language and the second language of all the informants, I assessed that we would understand each other well. Both in Uganda and Norway, we learn Norwegian from primary school, and in Uganda, English is also one of the official languages. From what I have observed and been told during my four stays in Uganda, most people speak English very well and use it in their everyday life, at work or in official context, but also because there are so many different languages in Uganda that English is often used to communicate between Ugandans themselves. There are differences in the quality of education from school to school and district to district in Uganda, as this study also shows, which means that the level of English language skills also varies. Since I only talked to people from Kampala or the area around, which all had completed their primary education in that same area where the quality of education is supposed to be of the highest level in the country, I came to the conclusion that we could easily communicate in English.

I have learned English from 13 years in school, but I do not use it in my everyday life and have not practised it regularly as opposed to many Ugandans. But in the last years, I have lived in English-speaking countries and studied in English, so I felt confident that I could

make myself understood and conduct the interviews in English. I believe it was an advantage that I did not have to use a translator, as the conversation will flow more freely and make it easier to ask follow-up questions. In addition, I had the opportunity to connect to the informants in a different way than I would with a translator, which may make it easier for them to trust me and maybe open up more and feel safer about asking what could be considered sensitive questions. There is also the risk of losing valuable information in the translation. Even though I have to interpret the answers myself, there is always riskier with a third party involved, which also adds their interpretation. In conclusion, I think the choice I made to conduct the interviews without a translator was the best for this interview setting.

### 5.6.2 Reflections in retrospect

In retrospect, I understood that there was a misunderstanding during almost all the interviews with the informants who are educated and working. When I spoke about higher education during the interviews I meant any type of university degree or examination from a tertiary institution. In my opinion, that was a given, but most informants understood this as having a master level or higher degree. Some informants would excuse themselves, saying they “only” had a bachelor’s degree, which I didn’t understand why they did because that was absolutely good enough for my research. Other times I phrased my question differently and asked about a university degree instead of higher education, and that is when I believe I got the most accurate answers. From my perspective, those two terms can be used interchangeably, but as it turns out, that is not a universal perception. In the end, I do not think it made the answers less valid because it became clear during the interviews if they were referring to a bachelor’s degree or a master’s or higher, it just took a bit longer than necessary to get there.

### 5.7 The role of the researcher – power and position

When conducting interviews like this, it is important to reflect on the role that the researcher has. I was very open with the informants about the research theme and what type of questions I would ask before they agreed to participate. The subject of my research, women and education and economic growth, is not particularly sensitive, but can, of course, be for some. I made it clear to the participants that they would be made anonymous and that they could withdraw from the research at any time. Giving them anonymity includes: "The essence of anonymity is that information provided by participants should in no way reveal their identity" (Cohen et al., 2018 p.129). Because all the participants are adults, over 18, I considered it safe

that they understood the terms of being a participant and that they could give informed consent.

The principle of informed consent concerns autonomy, and it arises from the participant's right to freedom and self-determination. Self-determination required participants to have the right to weigh up the risks and benefits of being involved in a piece of research, and deciding for themselves whether to take part. As part of the right to self-determination, the person has the right to refuse to take part, or to withdraw once the research has begun (Cohen et al., 2018 p. 122)

Regarding power and position, there can often be an asymmetric power relation between the researcher and the participants. For instance, this could be: "the former may have more power than the latter, be this by status, position, knowledge or role" (Cohen et al., 2018) p.136. As the participants were my age or older this helped reduce the power differentials. So did the fact that I met the participants at either their university at a place they picked and felt safe, or their workplace where they chose the location, either their office or another place they felt they could talk freely. Some of the participants that were older than me, had higher education and higher status because of their jobs; it felt more like the asymmetric power relation was the other way around. But it evened out during the interview because I was the one asking the questions, and I didn't consider it to be an issue during the conversations.

Another factor that affects the power dynamic is that I am white, privileged, and traveling from a European country to research in an African country and context. Because of the history of white researchers visiting, what has been called "third world countries" or "underdeveloped countries" to conduct research on people or societies, I made it clear during my fieldwork that I was only there to learn. That is why I wanted to have research questions that would give me more insight in the state of higher education in Uganda, and not have a hypothesis where I conclude with one thing or the other, as I don't know the country well enough to give any definitive answers or tell anyone what to do. The only thing I can do is to learn about women in higher education in Uganda, write down what I find out and give my reflections.

### 5.8 Working with data

I tried to transcribe the data as soon as possible after the interviews, because that's when the information is "fresh", even though I recorded everything and took notes, it was easier to transcribe when I had the information fresh in my memory. This was not always possible to accomplish, as I in more than one occasion did one interview straight after another. When transcribing I listened to the recording while typing everything I heard. In some cases I had to



listen to some parts of the audio file several time, to be completely sure that what I heard was right, in some instances there were background noises and disturbances. In most cases the loud was clear, and it was over all a good experience using the audio recorder.

After transcribing the interviews, I began the process of data reduction, so I could get an overview at what the informants were actually saying and to focus on the parts that were relevant for my thesis and research questions. Especially because when I transcribed the interviews I typed every word that was said, so I wanted to remove the superficial words that weren't relevant for understanding the essence of what the informants were expressing. This was the first step to analyse the data, and helped preparing and organising the data.

Qualitative data derive from many sources, and for this paper those include; interviews that are transcribed, documents and reports and audio materials. Qualitative data analysis focuses on in-depth, context-specific, rich, subjective data and meanings by the participants in the situation, with the researcher as a principal research instrument (Cohen et.al, 2018 p.643).

While transcribing the interviews, to get them from audio to text, I also did data reduction.

That means, according to Gläser and Laudel 2003 in Cohen et.al 2018;

distilling from the complexity of the findings the key points of the phenomenon in question, reducing complexity without violating it, catching the essence of the issue or the situation, enabling the researcher to identify, for example, patterns, key issues, casual processes and sequences (Cohen et.al 2018, p. 643).

### 5.8.1 Coding

When analysing the data, I chose to categorise the information into four key themes that were frequently mentioned and made me see a pattern in the data; importance of emotional and financial support from parents, especially mothers, to be able to go to university, scholarships and gender equality in education, unemployment and economic growth, and the difference in urban and rural areas. Next interpreted the data and drew conclusions, which was done with the information I had about the context of the country and the theoretical framework I had chosen for the thesis, in addition to information from similar studies that have been conducted before. To understand the information gathered through the interviews I analysed the data. According to Taylor and Gibbs in Cohen et. al “qualitative data analysis concerns how we move from the data to understanding, explaining and interpreting the phenomena in question” (Cohen et al., 2018 p.642). There are different ways to interpret and present qualitative data and how to do it depends on fitness for purpose. “In abiding by the principle of fitness for purpose, the researcher must be clear what he/he wants the data analysis to do as this will determine the kind of analysis that is undertaken” (Cohen et al., 2018 p.647). For the purpose

of this research I decided to analyse the data by generating themes that could fit the research questions. The themes became apparent early in the interview process as I started analysing as soon as the first data was collected, so I knew what to focus during the rest of the research.

### 5.8.2 Analysing qualitative data

There are several challenges with analysing qualitative data, for example that: “Data are so rich that analysis involves selecting and ordering on the part of the researcher. As a result, this might involve some personal bias to which the researcher needs to be alert” (Cohen et al., 2018 p.648). Having done research on the topic beforehand I of course had some expectations on what to discover during the interviews, and though I am aware of this, it is impossible to completely put away my biases. But even though I had research questions I wanted answers to beforehand, I didn’t decide the themes in which I present the data until after I had conducted all interviews and transcribed them. That is when I observed themes emerging and decided to present it according to theme and figured it would make the findings easier to interpret in relation to the background and research questions. By deciding the themes after conducting the interviews I believe that the integrity and wholeness of each individual is not lost, and that I am able to consider the whole set of responses of an individual.

### 5.8.3 Document research

In addition to conducting interviews, I also selected existing data for the focus of my analysis. Because the aim is to learn more about higher education and women in Uganda, I needed more context to understand the situation. I was looking for reports that could paint a picture of the education system in Uganda, and also the job-situation for those with higher education. From the website of the Ugandan government I found four relevant reports and one national development plan, that seemed like they could shed a light on the education situation in Uganda, how it is developing, why it is important to focus on women, and what concrete goals Uganda has for the future when it comes to education, economic growth and sustainable development. The three reports are; “Young People: The untapped resource for development” created by Uganda Bureau of Statistics together with UNFPA and UKAID (UgandaBureauofStatistics, 2017), “Accelerating Uganda’s Development: Ending child marriage, educating girls” created by the World Bank (TheWorldBank, 2017) and “The cost of not investing in girls. Child marriage, early childbearing, low educational attainment for girls and their impacts in Uganda” created by CIFF (Childrens Investment Fund Foundation), Global Partnership for Education and The World Bank (Wodon, et.al, 2017). In addition, I

decided to look at the “Second National Development Plan 2015/16- 2019/20”, to see what the government of Uganda are prioritising in their goal to becoming an upper middle-income country by 2040 which this plan states (NationalPlanningAuthorityUganda, 2015).

To find the sources which I have used in thesis, I have searched in the course curriculum from the first and second year of the master. In addition, I have searched for articles and other master theses that were similar to mine, either because of the theoretical framework or the subject. I used the search engine oria.no, which is a part of Oslo Metropolitan University’s learning centre and library that has given me access to relevant information as a student at OsloMet. To find the newest and most accurate numbers, statistics and relevant definitions I have used the web pages of well known institutions such as Norad, OECD, UNESCO and The World Bank. The government of Uganda produces reports on the state of their population and these are available on their web pages and have been very useful. In addition, my supervisor informed me of three research projects and studies I could use when writing about higher education in Uganda, and the connection between higher education and economic growth.

### 5.9 Validity and reliability

When practicing a qualitative method, like semi-structured interviews where the data analysis relies heavily on the researcher’s interpretation, one way to “quality-check,” the research can be through validity and reliability. “Validity in qualitative research revolves around to what extent the researcher’s approaches and findings accurately reflect the purpose of the research and reflects reality” (Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2011, p.230). Two techniques can raise the probability of valid results in the research. One is observation over time: “involves to invest enough time to get to know the field, to be able to distinguish between relevant and non-relevant information, and to build trust. It is difficult to understand a phenomenon without knowing the context” (Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2011 p.230). The second technique is triangulation, which means that: “the researcher during the fieldwork uses different methods – for example, both observation and interview” (Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2011 p.230). In addition to this, the validity can be strengthened by “presenting the results to the informants to confirm the results, or by letting other competent people analyse the same data and see if they end up with the same interpretation of it” (Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2011 p.230). My research is valid in the sense that I have conducted the research systematically, based it on already existing research and reflected on the choices that I took during the fieldwork. In addition, I observed the context over time. I

had been to Uganda two times before I came to conduct fieldwork, I talked to people from Uganda that I knew about my thesis and I believe I came to understand the context in which I researched.

Reliability revolves around the data from the research, what data is being used, how they are gathered, and how they are analysed. In qualitative research, the methods of gathering data are usually not structured, at least compared to quantitative research; conversations are a big part of data gathering, and so is observation, which is difficult for a second researcher to copy. In addition, a researcher is a tool in itself, and no one else has the same biases and can interpret the results in the same way (Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2011). “To improve the reliability in a qualitative research the researcher can give an in-depth description of the context and an open and detailed presentation of the process of the research process from start to finish” (Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2011 p.230). I would say that the data is reliable according to this recommendation, because I have a chapter with a detailed description of the context and the literature reviewed, to give the reader an insight to my pre-existing knowledge when conducting the interviews.

### 5.10 Summary

The methodology chapter aims to explain the choices the researcher made from start till finish of the research project, and highlight the different procedures used to identify, select, process and analyse information about the research topic. This methodology chapter begins by explaining the background and planning of the research and what decisions that were taken in order to begin with data gathering. It clarifies why I decided to carry out the research in Uganda, why I chose writing about women and higher education, and why that is interesting and important knowledge to be in possession of. Moreover, the chapter continues by giving an explanation for choosing the case study approach, and what that entails. That entails, amongst others, conducting qualitative interviews. For this study, a semi-structured interview approach was chosen, and this chapter highlights the process of finding suitable informants and carry out the interviews.

The chapter continues by reflecting on the role as a researcher, and the power dynamic in an interview setting. Furthermore, it explains how I worked with the data, by transcribing and coding and eventually dividing it into four themes or main findings. It goes on by explaining the documents I have researched for this study and how I chose the sources. Lastly, the

chapter discusses the reliability and validity of this research, which is about the consistency and the accuracy of the data and is a system to assess the quality of the research. It can be difficult to determine in a qualitative study because the goal is not to find measurable data but rather understand people's opinions and choices. Still it is important to be aware of, and make room in the methodology to reflect over because all researchers have different backgrounds and point of view, and will interpret the data accordingly. At least by writing methodology, the researcher can make it clear why they interpreted the data in the way they did.

## 6. Findings

In this study, qualitative interviews have been one method to answer the research question, in addition to analysis of three reports and a national development plan. This chapter will reveal how the information gathered from the interviews and the reviewed documents have answered the research questions and can contribute to a discussion in relation to the theoretical framework. This chapter will be divided into themes, chosen according to the most common findings from the gathered data. The themes will be presented and linked to the relevant data to show its importance in how to answer the research questions. To answer the research questions about the educational situation in Uganda, how the job-market is, the importance of focusing on women in higher education and the reflections from female students, interviews with students and former students at the biggest universities were chosen as a method. The other research questions were mainly answered by analysing reports on these topics, as well as some information from the interviews.

### 6.1 Employment and economic growth

When conducting the interviews, it was essential to get the participants point of view on the job situation in the country and what kind of work they could see them self doing after studying. It was also interesting to learn how the choices they made about their education were linked to their thoughts about their job-life. This could say something about their motivation to take higher education. One of the first questions asked in the interviews was “What made you decide that you wanted to pursue higher education?”.

For me it was a given. My mother had prepared me after primary that I would go to secondary, and after secondary I would go to university. And back then, or even now, everyone longed to go to Makerere University, is is a prestigious university. There was no other option for me. I needed to be relevant, so when you look at the job world they would hire your, and you would stand a better chance if you have higher education. I have always wanted to be in an office, because I grew up seeing people in offices. It looked like they had a good life, and that good life made me want to go higher so I could have everything that I wanted in life for myself without begging anyone for it (W5).

It is a routine in the country, that is what we look up to when we are in school, growing up. I wanted to go to university, get my degree. Sometimes people say it without knowing what it is all about, but you know that is what you have to do (W8).

I think it is a must. Why would I go to school, and not continue to university? I have to study; why should I stop after high school. I always wanted to study, graduate, and then get a good job (W10).

On a question about what the job situation in Uganda is after finishing university, one participant answered:

I see people graduating and spending years and years without getting a job. Actually I think our education system educates 70% job seekers, rather than job creators. So that leaves a challenge, because if they have no one to employ them, they will just go unemployed. I think most people graduating from university have that challenge (W10).

Another participant answered on the same question that:

I think right now it is really becoming hard. I have around three relatives that have their masters, they finished their degree but they don't have jobs. People go for masters, then PhD and then they still don't have jobs. It is really becoming discouraging for the parents to invest in their children, because at the end of the day they might not get a job after ending their degree (W6).

One question I asked the informants is "Why do you think there are so many unemployed youths in Uganda?". The answer from one informant was:

I would say it is because of the education system mainly. Many people study degrees that does not give them jobs. And then there is this status thing where people think "I can't do this, I can't do that, I went to school, how can they see me farming or on a construction site". But the biggest challenge is that some of the things people are studying is irrelevant (W10).

When talking about opportunities after graduating, several of the participants mention entrepreneurs as if that is the solution for the high unemployment rates. One of the informants said that:

You find so many people that are jobless. So I think the system has to change where we create job makers and not jobseekers. I feel there should be an overhaul of the education system, where we need to teach the hands-on skills that will actually make these girls relevant. So when people are looking for a job they can think, 'can I create on with my hands?' (W5).

On the question "What do you think could change the situation with all the unemployed youths in Uganda?", one of the participants answered:

I think it can change in many ways, but what I'm thinking is; if I didn't get a job after I graduated I would do something else, maybe start my own business, take a short course and learn a skill. In addition, I would not be discriminative against where I go to work and what I do as long as it pays me. Some people are out of work because they don't want to go outside of Kampala (W8).

Another of the informants also talked about creating more jobs in Uganda and said that; "I don't think you need to create all those jobs, you just need to be able to make one yourself, to

create something, start a business. You can make your own job; you don't have to work for someone" (W9). A third informant also mentioned creating your own business and having vocational training when asked what changes could be made in the education system to lower the unemployment:

The first thing would be changing the education system so that regardless of what we studied we can always be job creators; we can be employers rather than employees. Another thing is that those who newly graduated should not be afraid to take a job they didn't take a degree in, or something they did not plan on doing. People should start small businesses and don't be picky about jobs (W10).

When asked what her thoughts are about vocation training she answered:

Of course I would say vocational training is more practical rather than the academic, but it also depends on what a person wants to do in the future. If we could get a little bit of academics but also a little bit of vocational I think that would be nice, so people don't have to rely on others to get jobs (W10).

To understand more about the informants' motivation for taking a university degree, I asked the question: "In your opinion, is it easier to get a job if you have a university degree?"

Not for all courses, not for everybody. It depends what you do, what connections you have, who you know. And also your personal efforts. In my case, I wanted to get a new job because I live on this side of the city, but used to work at the other side. One day I saw the poster for this school, which I had heard was a good school, so I walked in and asked them, and that is how I got the job I have now. But that is not normal. People struggle in Uganda to find jobs, even teachers. There are schools where teachers are not paid well, and sometimes they are not paid at all, they can go three months without salary. The salaries are not good in the government schools (W8).

Most of the informants that have a university degree work as teachers and I wanted to know if they chose that degree because it would make it easier for them to get a job.

First of all, I got into education because I knew it was easier to get a job, because there are very many schools that need teachers to come in and teach. Though they sometimes do not pay very well. But I knew from the beginning that if I do education I could get a job, either in a national or an international school. I had hopes I would get a job also because we do school practice, where we go out and teach before we are given that certificate saying you are a fully trained teacher. I did school practice in two schools, and I knew if I failed getting a job anywhere else at least I could come back to those schools and try to see if they had any opportunities (W7).

With education it is really quite easy to get a job. Apart from other courses, because they are quite hard, because of the competition. But with education we have so many schools, so many children, so many people building new schools so it is quite easy to become a teacher (W6).



The participants who are currently studying explain that to get a job either while being a student or after, you have to have connections, because when people want to hire they first look around in their immediate family and then they can hire from outside. One of the students also problematized how people take an education in occupations that doesn't hire. "School of management, where I study, is the cheapest faculty, so it always has a lot of students. In all universities. And after there are no jobs. There is a lot of accountant for example" (Sk1). The students also explain that the reason they have chosen to go to university is to get a job, and one of them mentioned that she would like to have a master degree. On the question: 'Is it common to take a master degree?' she answered:

In this day and age, yes. The competition is high; people are coming from different countries with the same qualifications so you have to have a competitive edge. You have to have something better, something more. So when people are hiring it is easy to hire someone who has more knowledge. So If you have a masters you have a higher advantage than someone who just has a bachelor degree (Sm2).

When asked how it is to get a job after finishing a degree, some of the students found it difficult to answer. The same students who talked about taking a masters replied:

That is a tricky question, because when people are finished at university they don't get a job. I have a list of people who have gone years jobless even though they went to university. So that's why I talked about taking a masters you know, you go higher to be safe and secure (Sm2).

## 6.2 Support from home

One theme that early in the interview process became apparent when asking the questions about what gave the informants the opportunity to go to university was the support they received from their families. Both in terms of economic support and emotional support. Several of the informants mentions the importance of their parents supporting their wish to take higher education, with special focus on their mother. One participant, that has completed her education, said about taking a university degree; 'Some of my family members did not agree with me. But my mother said 'do whatever you want'' (W10). "What made it possible for you to go to university?" was one of the questions for the informants.

My parents, and my friends. I should say my parents because when I finished my year 13, I had to go work to look for somewhere to get a little money as a young girl, so I happened to get a job in a school. My employer there was a friend of my mothers, and he said that I was doing good and that I should go to university. Then my father could not say no, he believes in my mother (W8).

When I was in secondary I loved school, but there is a lot of work and competition to get into university, so I had to read a lot. At one point I got into a depression, there

were just books books books, and no play, and that set me back. My mother had encouraged me to take higher education, so in the beginning I was doing the whole university thing for her. She was a single mother and worked very hard for it. Then I managed to get a government sponsorship (W5).

When asked “What are the most common reasons for why women go for higher education?”, one of the informants answered:

Every parent wants the best for their kid, and now there is a raising number of middle class people in Uganda, so they know the importance and they encourage their girls to go to school. And then they graduate and have their own families, and they give them their values for education (W10).

Another informant, who also has completed her education, answered on the same question that:

I think women are the pillar of the home, if women have an education the children will definitely get an education. So most of the time the women want to support their children, they want to support their homes and also they want to grow their careers, so if they have higher education they can support their families. I think that is the most common reason, to be able to support the family and have a career (W6).

Some of the participants have mothers with higher education, and other doesn't. In both cases they are very clear that their mothers support is important for them to be able to stay in school and finish their education. One of the informants said about her mother that: “Surprisingly my mother does not have higher education. But at least she is a woman who always wished that her children had it better than what she had. She was very hard working and very supportive” (W5). Later in the conversation she also said that taking a bachelor degree was not a question for her, and that her mother had prepared her for it since primary school, and then made sure she got through secondary school so she eventually could go to university (W5). One of the other educated participants said that her mother had encouraged her to take a university degree because then she would never lack a job. In addition, she got inspiration from seeing her mother working as a primary teacher and wanted to be a teacher herself. Both her parents had been very supportive, with her father paying for her tuitions, but because he himself didn't have a university degree it was the mother who had to convince him it was valuable (W8).

Another important aspect when talking about support to take higher education is the economical support. In Uganda there are tuition fees for all university degrees, and even though there are some scholarships, they are not for all and a lot of people depend on their

parents or other family to pay. Several of the participants talk about the sacrifices their parents did by saving up money to pay for their education. One of the participants answered on the question “what made it possible for you to go to university?” that:

It was my mother, she worked hard. Also I had very good grades, but I still did not get a sponsorship from the government. So the grades I got made it possible to apply for university and my family’s ability to pay my tuition (W10).

On the question ‘What do you think could encourage more women to go for higher education?’ one of the participants that is a former students replied:

I think the first think is the parents. Some people think that you go to school and only finish if you are rich, but that is not true. My family is not a rich family, but neither so poor. But the commitment my mother put in, is important. My father would always listen to her. And she made sure that whether there was money or not, we had to go to school. My mother would go to the school and ask to push the deadline a little further so we could make it. The last born in my family is starting university now (W8).

Several of the informants talks about the relationship between mother and daughter, and how having a university degree as a mother will make it easier for them to provide their kids with quality education all the way to university. “Will you support your children to go to university?”

Definitely. I have an 11-year old and a 14-year old, so they are not there yet but they will be. Me, I am a career woman, so a career woman equals a career mother, equals career children. They have to go all the way (W5).

It works like a circle. You drop out in year twelve or year ten even, and you do what your mother is doing, and then early pregnancy happens and early marriage, and then it continues like that. If there is higher education in the picture, they will educate their children too, and help them pursue higher education (W6).

### 6.3 Women in education

During the interviews, we also discussed the measures that government has taken as an attempt to improve gender equality in higher education. One of these measures is to give women one extra point when applying for higher education so they can add it on their grades and get a better score, and therefore, a better chance to get accepted to the higher education institution of their choice. There are also different types of scholarships provided by the government, but also private institutions that could benefit girls who would like to pursue higher education. Some of the participants have taken their education through a scholarship

and other paid their tuition with help from their families. One of the students explained the scholarship application process like this:

You can get a scholarship when you're in your final year in high school. They give us forms, that you have to pay for. Anyone who wants can get this form, it is optional. I think those people who have high grades, they have high chances of getting scholarships once they fill in the forms. There are also scholarships based on what district you belong, because some districts are better than others, in terms of their resources, standards of living (Sm3).

Further, the same student goes on to explain different types of scholarships:

There are also scholarships for sports, they are all given out by the government and a jury. Then there are those given by different private companies to less privileged people. And also Total (a gas station) has been giving out scholarships for those who study in the oil and gas sector so they can hire them later. There are also scholarships for those who study medicine. And there are those who are only for girls to support girl child education (Sm3).

One of the former students got a scholarship and explains the situation like this:

My plan was not to be a teacher actually, I wanted to become a lawyer, but because of my grades or my score, I was awarded a scholarship for a bachelor in education by the government. And then I just took it, but eventually loved it (W6)

When asked if it is common to get a scholarship by the government she replied:

Right now it is not so common because they are really raising the points because there are so many smart kids coming up now. But in those days it was really easy. And it depended on the school, some of the schools are not really that good because of their resources. So now it is more difficult and more and more people wants to go for higher education (W6).

She also added that she would not be able to go to university if it had not been for the scholarship she was awarded. Another question was whether she thought the extra point added by the government on girls' score is helping, to which she said:

I think it really helps them, because they think it brings the levels up. I know that they boys have higher chances. In Uganda people believe, especially the fathers, that when you educate boys it will really do good for the family. But then I think that extra point really encourages the girls and it increases the number of girls going for higher education (W6).

"What do you think could encourage more women to pursue higher education?" is one of the questions for the participants from the research. One of the informants answered that:

In my days it was incentives, like the government gives out one extra point for women. That encouraged me. And they work for equity and equality, but at the end of

the day I still feel that the girl child is marginalised for so many reasons. When I look at my country Uganda, there are still some cultures that think that a girl's role is in the kitchen or in the home. Some families have not empowered the young girl to go for education. Ugandan girls still need that awareness, to be exposed to the idea that the girls can do what the boys can do, and they deserve equal opportunity. They need more awareness and more incentives aside the one point given to get into university (W5).

When asked what could be common reasons for why women don't go for higher education she said:

First of all, finances, and the family. Another thing I will say is attitude, cultural attitude. Some people, some men, wouldn't want their lady to have higher education than them. And some think, you are a lady why should you have higher education. They want us to have basics and then getting back to the home (W5).

On the same question three of the other participants answered:

It could be because they have dropped out of school early. Or it could be financial reasons, that they don't have the money. Number three, some of the girls are still experiencing stigma in the sense that if you go to school for higher education you will not get married, that kind of thing. So society tells you that it's not possible to have high education and get a man at the same time (W7).

Maybe if they didn't pass their exams, but that applies to guys as well. Or if they don't have money, which also applies to guys as well. In my view there is nothing specific to women in this country that stops them from carrying on. We don't discriminate men and women, maybe in the olden days, but not now (W9).

I think the most common issue for why they don't go to university has to do with culture. In Uganda people believe that after completing your first education, like your bachelors, the second thing you have to do is get married. So if you don't do that, they believe that if a woman gets to thirty, thirty-five they are too old, and it is getting too late for them. So culture has a lot to do with education, women have to get married at an early age, and so people are getting stressed so they drop out of their studies to get married. It is a lot of pressure (W6).

About family being a common reason for why women might not take higher education she explained that it could be both because the family weren't able to support financially, and it can mean that when the woman gets a family of her own it makes it more difficult to pursue higher education. She believes that a common reason for why women drop out of education, both at university level but also at primary level, is pregnancy.

At university some people ask for leave so they can give birth and go back to school after, but a lot find it difficult to come back after. But then there are those that get pregnant at 14, and there is a school rule in Uganda saying that if you get pregnant you

don't get any more chances, so you can't be pregnant in school and then come back. Bot in primary and secondary, if you get pregnant it means permanent dismissal (W5).

In addition to pregnancy, having a family in general makes it more difficult to complete a university degree:

Women drop out because of resources. Most of them can not afford it. It is the women taking care of the children in most households, and you have to pay for your own education if you are not sponsored by the government and also if you do get a sponsorship there is a lot of pressure taking care of the children So you also find people giving up, not just because of the resources but because of the pressure at home, no one is helping out. They have to educate their children, take care of the children. So yes, it is the issue of marriage and having children, and then a lack of resources (W6).

You know, once a lady gets a family, begins child bearing, you know, they have a husband and then the children they have produced so that commitment can become a kind of baggage. And then you have an issue with finance because you can't use the money on yourself, you have to spend the money on educating your children (W5).

One of the participants is an educated teacher, and her first job was teaching at an upper secondary school, and she talked about how the girls there expressed their wishes of going to university.

A lot of the girls wanted to go for higher education, but the main problem that we have is resources. Most of the parents, most of the mothers can not afford it, many of them are also single mothers. Some of them drop out because they don't have money. And then we have the early pregnancies, most of them drop out. And then we have the dowry issues, where some parents would rather have their girls get married than spend their money on education (W6).

When asked more questions about women in higher education she said that:

Actually it would be really nice if most of the women went for higher education, if you do that and get a job you can educate your children. You realise in Uganda, most of the fathers are not taking care of their children, they leave it to the mothers. So if a girl child gets an education they again will give their girls an education. So it will really help the population to educate girls, and get more resources. And to go for higher education would be really good for the girl child (W6).

Another of the participants also elaborated on her thoughts about women in higher education:

First of all, there needs to be an availability of funds to encourage women to take higher education. Also talking to them and telling them that we as women we need to have education at a higher level, because sometimes you find that people think that this society is dominated by men, but still we as women can be the ones to lead in society. So if you have higher education you have to opportunity to get higher, senior positions in society. Women take higher education because we want to have our own money; we need that independence. We are no longer in the ages where we want to

depend on men. And then we can also give the best to the children we give birth to (W7).

#### 6.4 Differences in rural and urban areas

In addition to scholarships, support from home, receiving one extra point from the government, there is one other aspect that can decide if a woman in Uganda is able to go to university. According to this research, that aspect is where you are from. There is a difference between urban and rural areas when it comes to access to education and who is more likely to be able to afford university tuition. One of the participant said that:

In the urban areas, most women are taking education, their families are supportive. It is different in the villages where they look at women as housewives and mothers, so I think they need to change those attitudes, and then women would be encouraged to come to school. Also, most people in the city are more privileged, so they have that chance to come to school and pursue education in higher institutions (W10).

One of the students also talked about how it is to get accepted to university:

“I think its difficult for some people, like in the villages. Because the way their education is can be different. They don’t have the same teachers as the people in the cities” (Sk4). While another student said that the extra point from the government to get accepted could really help with the difference between rural and urban areas.

There is a lot of girls in my class, and both from the north and the east, that is where the education is really weak. So we are really happy they are able to come from the weak schools too, like the government schools (sk1).

According to one of the participants who works as a teacher there is a problem with girls dropping out, and that’s why there are fewer girls taking higher education. This can especially affect girls in the rural areas.

We have so many drop outs. In primary, it is so easy because we have the universal primary education from the government, but still there is a lot of poverty. And then in the villages, the parents don’t take their children to school, because they are needed at home, they have to work in the garden, cook food and so on, so the levels of drop out are very high there. When they reach secondary education they can’t afford it, and some get married early because it’s a cheaper option for their parents (W6).

When asked if its would be easier for a person growing up in Kampala to go to university than people from other parts of the country, she answered:

It is easier; it is a big difference. Because most parents in the villages are farmers, they don’t have a lot. Some people can go to university if they get a scholarship from the

district, that is for the best performing students. Most of the children in the villages drop out, they can not afford university. So there are just a few students at university coming from the villages, most of them are already married by that age (W6).

One of the other informants told about her experience growing up in the city with her father while the rest of the family stayed in the village. She was able to get an education, and after graduation she moved to the village to help out. That is when she became a role model for the other girls in the village because they, and their parents, would see that she was doing very well when she was educated. She said that:

A reason for why girls drop out of their education could be their environment. For example, the girls from the village often think that if they get a husband, life will be great. If the girls grow up seeing these beautiful women dressing smartly, knowing they didn't go to university, but they look good, they might think that is the way to live. So it is also about role models (W8).

The follow-up question to that was: "Is it easier to get into university if you live in the city than in the village?"

It is mostly about the money, no matter where you come from, but also exposure. There are people who have money, but still don't know how important education is. Like in my village, they needed exposure to understand the importance of staying in school (W8).

## 6.5 Summary

The finding chapter aims to present the main findings from the research after the data has been transcribed and coded to show the research results. This chapter presents four different themes; the first is regarding the connection between employment and economic growth. The second theme concerns the importance of receiving support from home, emotionally and financially, to complete primary education and choose to take a higher education degree. The third theme is about what measures are taken to improve women's participation in school, but also the obstacles they face when participating. And lastly, the fourth theme is the differences between rural and urban areas in education in Uganda. These findings lay the groundwork for the discussion in the next chapter and the prospect of answering the research questions.



## 7. Discussion

This chapter will combine what I have learned from my fieldwork, the interviews and the reports from the literature review and the information from the context chapter, and discuss this with the relevant theories, Human Capital theory, and the Capability Approach. I have divided the findings into four themes, and I will also use these themes to structure this chapter. The summary will look at how my findings and the discussion of these can answer the two research questions.

### 7.1 The promises of higher education vs the reality of labour infrastructure

One of the main findings from the fieldwork is the connection between education and employment. It may seem obvious that there would be a connection because schooling, in most cases, leads to an opportunity for work, but it is not necessarily the case. When I asked the women I interviewed why they wanted to pursue higher education, several women replied that it was because they wanted a good job. And by a good job, it seemed like they meant an occupation that is reliable, where they can make their own money and gain independence. Although almost all of the informants said they wanted to go to take higher education to be secured a job, several of the informants also talked about a situation in Uganda where it is challenging to get a job.

An informant currently working as a teacher told me that she had three relatives that all have a master's degree, but still having problems getting a job (w6). Another told me the same thing that people graduate from university but then spend years and years without getting hired (w19). There seems to be a situation where the common conception is that higher education will lead to employment, whereas this might not be the reality according to the findings from the fieldwork and the data gathered from the reports presented in this study.

On the one hand, according to numbers from the report "Young people: The Untapped resource for development" (UgandaBureauofStatistics, 2017), 68% of the working adolescents and 59% of the working youth were subsistence agricultural workers. This means that most of the working young population has an occupation that does not necessarily require higher education. Besides, the same report shows that 78% of the population is 30 years or below. Hence, it is not just the majority of the working population that has employment that does not require higher education, but a majority of the people in the country as a whole. This

can be seen in Table 2 Education Attainment and Occupation for Persons aged 14-64 years, 63.5% who work with subsistence farming, and only 18.2% of those have tertiary education.

To get more knowledge about Uganda's unemployment situation, the informants were asked why they think people struggle with unemployment. A majority replied that they believe it is because of the education system. One said that many people study degrees that do not give them jobs but choose their degrees because of status (w10). A second informant had the opinion that the education system creates job seekers, while they should create job makers (w5). This opinion is in line with a third informant's reply that she would maybe start her own business if she weren't hired within her field of education (w8). Back to information number 10, she also said that the education system should be changed, so people become job creators and be employers rather than employees (w10). This is almost the same wording as informant 5, which makes it seem like this might be a common thought in Uganda or Kampala.

According to numbers from Uganda's National Development Plan, the problem in the labour market is that there is a shortage of requisite skills, and there aren't enough people with some form of tertiary education qualification (NationalPlanningAuthorityUganda, 2015). The informants and the National Development Plan agree that it is a mismatch between the curricula in tertiary education and the labour market requirements. According to the Plan, this is what creates the high graduate unemployment rates in Uganda. This is a problem for Uganda's mission on becoming an upper middle-income country in many ways; amongst others, because the student enrolment in Uganda in science and technology is less than 27% compared to the required 40% set by UNESCO for a country to economically take of and participate in the global knowledge-based economy (NationalPlanningAuthorityUganda, 2015).

The solution to most of the informants' unemployment problem was to become a teacher, which is not a sustainable solution because there is a limit to how many teachers are needed. The National Development Plan, on the other hand, aims to reduce unemployment through quality education and skills development, which will be done in guidance with the Sustainable Development Goals 8 and 4, which are mentioned in the plan. Goal 8 focuses on unemployment, especially amongst youth, while goal 4 focuses on quality education. The Plan draws on the Human Capital theory. It states that "Human capital development is one of the key fundamentals that need to be strengthened to accelerate the country's transformation

and harnessing of the demographic dividend" (NationalPlanningAuthorityUganda, 2015 p.125).

Employment is central to the Human Capital theory because the Capital in this regard is a person's skills and knowledge, and that is what everyone needs in one way or another to get employed. Besides, employers or workers are what makes the wheels of society turning. Employment leads to income on an individual level, which is then invested back into the community by spending money. Furthermore, educated workers are considered more productive than those without primary education because they would have more knowledge to be put to good use in servicing and developing technology. On the other hand, employers would want to choose educated workers because they would raise productivity and hence profits (Lauder & Brown, 2015).

This explains the desire from employers to hire people with higher education, and why all of the informants answered that they chose to go to university so they could get a job. The problem with the high unemployment rates seems to be, on the one hand, that there aren't enough jobs and the other side that there aren't enough skilled and educated workers to employ. This gives the impression that people who take a university degree does not necessarily consider what occupations would be "safe", meaning where there are higher chances of getting hired. It could also mean that the universities are not regulating their courses and degrees according to the labor market's needs. These two problems are, of course, interlinked, but the work has to start somewhere. According to Uganda's National Development Plan, it seems like the plan is to start investing in the appropriate and adequate human capital to increase production, productivity, and technological growth, which will lead to economic growth.

According to the Capability Approach, employment is also about a person's individuality and empowerment, earning a living, and having money to live the life they value. Having an income is a big part of a person's ability to develop their capabilities or freedoms. Amartya Sen makes a point of the chance for women to earn an independent income, and how this affects their well-being and agency. Being employed and having a steady income contributes to a person's ability to expand their freedoms, often through economic capabilities. This explains why some women from the fieldwork informed me that they wanted to take higher education to gain independence by earning their own money.

One interesting aspect that became apparent from the interviews regarding unemployment is that all informants seemed aware that it could be challenging to get a job after graduating. Even the women I talked to that are currently studying at university told me that there is high competition for the positions. When people have finished their studies, they struggle to find jobs or even get interviews. It seemed like the solution was, in their opinion, to take even more education, all of the students said they would like to take a master's degree, and that would make them employable. The reason was that the more knowledge and the more competitive, the more employable you are. According to the Human Capital theory, this would be accurate because employers believe higher education equals more productivity. Still, the question is if their knowledge is relevant and matching the labour market in their country. The HERANA project shows that there is also a lack of funding to the tertiary institutions, which makes them more dependent on tuition fees and less flexible to adjust their subjects and research towards what is needed in the labour market.

There is a problem concerning the labour market and education matching, according to the informants. One of the students I interviewed even said about her degree: "School of Management, where I study, is the cheapest faculty, so it always has a lot of students. In all universities. And after there are no jobs" (Sk1). It suggests that university fees also have an implication on the labour market and unemployment rates. If people choose their degree based on the tuition fee's cost, it makes sense that there is a mismatch between the labour market and the knowledge people have gained through higher education. The same student also commented that "there are many accountants, for example", which begs the question, who are all these accountants supposed to be accounting for?

Another aspect of unemployment that some of the students made me aware of is that even if they take higher education, one or maybe two degrees, there are still those who hire only through connections. As one of the students put it; when people want to hire someone, they first look in their family if anyone needs a job, and if that's not the case, they can start looking elsewhere. It makes the theory of Human Capital not applicable because suddenly, it does not matter who has the highest education, more skills, or knowledge because it is not the background on which the employer is hiring. As for those I interviewed who worked as teachers, it seemed like the period where they had internships working at different schools during their studies was essential for them. They explained that they could network while

doing their internship, and either these contacts would help get them employed, or they would feel safe applying for jobs knowing that they could probably go back to one of the schools they worked at and get hired there. Simultaneously, several of the informants made a point out of teachers not having difficulties getting jobs and that there always would be children that needed teachers and new schools being built, and that's why they chose the occupation.

## 7.2 The importance of emotional and financial support

Looking at Table 4 Tertiary level Gross Enrolment by background characteristics shows that only 4% of the population of official school age for the tertiary level was enrolled in tertiary education. These numbers are from 2017, so it can be assumed that they are still relevant. This information made me interested in why people want to take higher education, and what makes them able to make that decision? According to Amartya Sen, one important reason to support girls' education is the results, which usually lead to them supporting their own children's education when they grow up. The importance of having a mother who values and see the benefits of education were also made clear during the interviews.

One of the fieldwork participants told me that a friend of her mothers encouraged her to go to university and talked to her mother about it. Her mother supported this, and then her father could not say no "because he believes in my mother" (W8). Another told me about her single mother working very hard for her to take her education and encourage her to pursue higher education, for which she was lucky to get a government sponsorship (W5). In line with one of Sen's arguments about women with education supporting their children's education, a third participant explained that a common reason for why women take higher education is because there is a rising number of middle-class people in Uganda that knows the importance of education and encourage their girls to go to school (W10). She continued by saying that when these girls graduate and have their own families, they will pass on their education values.

This argument is supported by the report "Accelerating Uganda's Development: Ending Child Marriage, Educating Girls" made by The World Bank. It points out that educational attainment for girls affects the possibilities their children will have in education. The example made here is that early marriage for girls will reduce their educational attainment and negatively impact the education prospect of their children, boys, and girls. According to Table 3 Impact of child marriage/early childbearing on education attainment, the estimated impact

of girls' educational attainment is that "child marriage reduces the likelihood of completing secondary school by 12 to 23 percentage points" (TheWorldBank, 2017). The argument can be made that the prospects of a girl's chances for higher education are very much affected by her mother's educational attainment, so if the mother didn't complete secondary school, her children are less likely to complete their secondary education.

There seems to be a circle, and the only way to break out of it is by starting somewhere, making changes. The report "Accelerating Uganda's Development: Ending Child Marriage, Educating Girls" argues that child marriage has a significant impact on secondary enrollment and completion. It is a circle where one aspect has consequences for the other, and the only way to change is to somehow break the loop. According to these numbers, secondary school seems to be the critical point. Those who graduate are more likely to continue to higher education and wait with marriage and childbearing, which again will lead to higher chances for their children to complete their education. On the other hand, if a girl does not complete secondary school, they are more likely to drop out and get married and start childbearing, or it could be the other way around, that they drop out because they get pregnant or married. Either way, the result is the same: their children are less likely to complete secondary themselves and take higher education.

From the interviews, I got the impression that this is visible in the statistics and everyday life. One of the informants told me that in her opinion, one of the most common reasons why women go for higher education is because of the mother. She confirms the results from the "Accelerating Uganda's Development: Ending Child Marriage, Educating Girls" report by saying that if women have an education, their children will get an education. The reason she gave was that women are the pillar of the home, and they want to support their children, their homes, and they want to have careers, and through having higher education, they can do this. So, in other words, women chose to take higher education to be independent, earn a living, and then support their children in their learning.

Even though these results show that if the mother has completed her education, it is more likely that her children will, too, some of the women I talked to had a mother that dropped out of their education. One said that her mother did not have higher education, but she always wished that her children would get the opportunity to have it better than she had. Even though she did not have higher education, she was very hardworking and supportive. A second

informant explained that her mother was a primary teacher and told her that she would never struggle to find a job if she studied in university to become a teacher. On the other hand, her father did not have any higher education. Still, he agreed to help pay her tuition fees after her mother had convinced him that higher education is valuable (W8).

When discussing the importance of receiving support from home to go to university, it is not only about emotional support but also economic support. There are tuition fees for all degrees in Uganda, and while there is a possibility to get a scholarship, most people have to pay the full tuition themselves. Even though you work hard and get good grades, it still comes down to money and your family's ability to pay the tuition. One of the women I interviewed told me that she was able to go to university because she had worked hard to get good grades. When she didn't receive government sponsorship, she was fortunate that her family was able and willing to pay for her. The argument can be made that the economic situation of a family is also a circle that is very difficult to break. Being able to take higher education is dependant on having money, and getting a well-paid job so you can support your family and give your kids education is dependant on you getting that education in the first place.

According to an informant I interviewed, there is a belief that only rich people take higher education and finish. She argues that it is not valid, because her family is not wealthy, but at the same time not poor. It is not sure here what she defines as wealthy or poor, but she continues by saying that her mother's commitment was determining. Her father would listen to her mother, and she would make sure that whether they had money, the children would go to school. Her mother would even go to their school and ask them to push the tuition fees deadline. As for the previous evidence showing that there is a circle of a mother's educational attainment and her children, the informants confirm this. On the question "will you support your children to go to university?" one answered definitely. As she is a career woman with higher education, she also expects her children to go all the way in their education (w5). A second informant explained that it works like a circle. Girls drop out in year twelve or eleven and do what their mother does, and then they get pregnant and married and so it continues. But if there is higher education in the picture, the women will educate their children too, and help them pursue higher education (W6).

All the evidence suggests that the mother's emotional support is the deciding factor deciding if girls can complete their primary education and proceed to a university. The mother has the

power to affect the people around her, her husband, other family members, or people in the community, and because of that, her opinion and support matters. With this information, one course of action could be making more mothers role models in their community, especially the mothers who do not have higher education. Based on information from the interviews, it appeared evident that mothers with higher education would understand the values of education, and that is why it would be particularly important to target non-educated mothers.

### 7.3 Women in education

According to the context and literature review, there are fewer women than men attending university, and during the interviews, I wanted to learn more about being a woman in the educational system in Uganda. The women from I interviewed told me about their decision to take a university degree and how they could make that decision. In addition, they explained why, in their perception or opinion, other women might not be able to make the same choices they had.

#### 7.3.1 Governmental measures to increase women's participation in higher education

The government in Uganda supports women in Higher Education through an incentive that adds to an extra point when women apply for university and other tertiary institutions to encourage them to apply by giving them an advantage. The plus point is helpful for many women, and one of the informants explained that in Uganda, people, and especially fathers, believe that when you educate boys, it will benefit the family, but that extra point encourages girls and increases the number of girls attending university. In addition to the extra point, there are also government scholarships available. One informant mentioned during the interview that private businesses also give out scholarships to get employers with the right skills, but I haven't been able to confirm this anywhere else.

Several of my informants were able to get a university degree because of the scholarship they were given. According to one of the women who is currently a student, the process of obtaining a scholarship starts in the final year of upper secondary. There you get an option of applying through a form that you have to pay for, and everyone is allowed to apply, but there are higher chances for students with good grades. According to this student, there is also a type of scholarship you can apply for if you are from a certain district, as some districts are "better" than others in terms of resources and standard of living (Sm3). Furthermore, there are



also scholarships for sports given out by the government and a selected jury. There is also supposed to be a scholarship for people studying medicine, maybe as an incentive to educate more doctors and health personnel.

There is evidence to suggest that both the tuition fees and the scholarships are essential for the field of study people choose. What I learned from the interviews talking about the costs at university is that the degrees with cheapest tuitions get an overweight of applicants and accept more students. It would seem that this produces too many employees within one field of study that will apply for the same jobs, and the result is more applicants than what is required by the labour market. In addition to tuition fees, the scholarships can also persuade people to choose a different study than what they were planning. One of the teachers that I talked to told me that she wanted to become a lawyer, but she didn't have the grades to get accepted. Then she received a scholarship from the government to take a bachelor's degree in education. I have not been able to find out exactly how many scholarships are awarded and within what fields of study. If the country needs more teachers, and it is easy to get a job in that occupation, it is good to award scholarships in education. When it comes to tuition fees, the government should also raise or lower the costs according to what skills or knowledge would be most useful in the country's labour market.

### 7.3.2 Obstacles for women to enter higher education

Even though Uganda's government has taken some specific measures to increase the number of girls in higher education, as the extra point added on to their grades, the women I interviewed seemed of the opinion that a change of attitude towards women in education is needed. For example, on the question "What do you think could encourage more women to pursue higher education" one of the women who works as a teacher answered that the extra point helped her when she applied for university and was encouraging. But at the same time, there is still work left to be done because the girl child in Uganda is marginalised. In her opinion, there are still many cultures where a common thought is that girls should work in the kitchen and the home, and many families have not empowered their girls to go for education. That is why there needs to be more awareness, and as the informant said: "Ugandan girls need to be exposed to the idea that the girls can do what the boys can do, and they deserve equal opportunity. They need more awareness and more incentives aside the one point given to get into university" (W5).

The cultural aspect that can contribute to hindering women completing their education or go for higher education seemed like something many of the informants perceived as an issue. I was told that some men do not want women to have higher education than them, and some think that women do not need higher education because their roles are in the home (w5). Someone also mentioned that there is some kind of stigma around women with higher education will not get married and that they get told by society that you can't have both marriage and education at the same time (W7).

One of the other women I talked to assumed that what I meant was a master's degree or higher when I asked about higher education. I should probably have made it clearer that higher education, in this case, referred to any kind of university or other tertiary institution education. The misunderstanding probably happened because the woman I interviewed had a bachelor and a master's, so in her case, it would maybe make sense to call her master's degree for her higher education. Also, I could have used the term university education; higher education may be more of a Norwegian term that I should not have translated directly. Either way, her reply to why women don't go for higher education is still interesting and relevant. She explained that the most common issue is culture. When you have completed your primary education, for example, a bachelor's, the expected thing is to get married. When you reach thirty, thirty-five years old, you are "too old" and it is "too late". Apparently, there is a lot of pressure on women to get married at an early age and start a family, so they get stressed and drop out of their studies (W6).

When it comes to family planning for women the Human Capital theory is very clear; if women wait with starting a family they have the opportunity to go to school for a longer time, thus becoming more skilled and knowledgeable, which again increases productivity and contributes to economic growth. According to Amartya Sen, the Capability Approach is clear on the fact that education contributes to expanding a person's freedoms, which again leads to independence and empowerment (Sen, 1999). In addition, education influences women's agency and voice, which can lead to women partaking in the public discussion about family planning and, more specifically, fertility rates that are acceptable, not only in the family but also in a society (Sen, 1999 p.193). This makes the argument about awareness and a change of thought about women and education even more valid.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, women dropping out of their primary education seems to be a substantial obstacle to taking higher education, the reason being that it is not common to go back to school after quitting. According to Table 1: "Trends in Educational Attainment for Girls in Uganda (%)" the completion rate for lower secondary school is 17.59% for women in Uganda. In comparison, the completion rate for higher secondary is only 8.47%. The interviews confirm the difficulties many experience with returning to school after dropping out. This is a reason why women don't continue their education to university or other tertiary institutions. These numbers also give more evidence that the time between lower and upper secondary is the most vulnerable, in terms of dropping out and not being able to reach full potential.

When young girls drop out because they are pregnant, according to one of the informants (W5), there is a school rule, saying you can't come back, which counts for both primary and secondary education. If this is the case, it is something the government should do something about if they want to make sure that as many people as possible get at least primary education and reach their goal of becoming an upper middle-income country. The report "Accelerating Uganda's Development: Ending Child Marriage, Educating Girls" supports what I learned from the interviews; that there are still few girls that complete their upper or even lower secondary education (TheWorldBank, 2017). It also states that Uganda has been focusing on girls' educational attainment and reducing gender parity in school by, for example, providing free primary education for everyone since 1997. The report states that progress has been made, and gender parity has been achieved at the primary education level. As we have seen before, the problem is that in secondary school, girls start to fall behind, and the gap between girls and boys just continues to grow. From the report, I learned that the reason why girls drop out is much of the same as I learned in the interviews; it is in part because of child marriage and early childbearing issues that affect girls more than boys (TheWorldBank, 2017).

Through their National Development Plan, the government of Uganda states that there has been progress in strengthening gender equality and women's empowerment without going into details about what the progress entails. There is mention of a gender-responsive regulatory framework and increased data collection and information about gender through research. According to the report, there has been an improvement in the "number of women in political leadership and gender parity in enrolment of girls at primary level, in addition to increased ownership of land by women" (NationalPlanningAuthorityUganda, 2015 p.xxii). The report

also explains what measures will be taken forward to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. That includes eliminating gender-based violence and strengthening women's capacity for increased competitive entrepreneurship and providing appropriate technologies to women.

These measures taken by the Ugandan government to improve gender equality and empower women is very much in line with Amartya Sen's Capability Approach and his arguments on how to do development work. He argues that there should be a shift in focus, from women's well-being to their agency (Sen, 1999). While well-being is a significant part of development work, Sen argues that it leaves women as passive recipients of welfare-enhancing help. With a shift to agency, as the goal seems to be in the National Development Plan, the women will be more competitive and better equipped to participate in the labour market. According to Human Capital theory, developing work with the goals of women's agency is also an investment in them as productive members of society. With a focus on entrepreneurship, they can create their own workplaces and maybe hire others. And focusing on appropriate technologies will improve their competitiveness in the labour market, thus making them more desirable for employers. All of this leads to women working for their own and other women's agency. According to Sen, empirical work has shown that "women's ability to earn an independent income, to have ownership rights, find employment outside the home, be literate and educated and contribute in decision-making processes outside the family is raising the relative respect and regard for women's well-being" (Sen, 1999 p.191).

As mentioned earlier, creating awareness about women's importance in education could be an important tool when working with keeping girls in school. In that regard, I talked to a couple of the informants about role models and how we are affected and make choices based on the life of people we look up to. One of the women made the point that by encouraging women to take education at a higher level, the women can take a leading position in society and encourage even more women to go as far as possible with their education. In her words: "Women take higher education because we want to have our own money; we need that independence. We are no longer in the ages where we want to depend on men. And then, we can also give the best to the children we give birth to" (W7). All the points that are made so far as to why it is important to work with women and education is supported and summed up by the Sustainable Development Goal 5, which states, amongst others, that "Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in

political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large" (United Nations, 2015).

The discussion in this section leads to some of the same conclusions as the section before, in order to get more women in higher education, there should be more and supportive role models. Cultural attitudes are very influential and changing that can only happen from within, through local solutions made by local people who understand the cultural context. I was inspired by one of the informants who told me that she became a role model for the girls in her village, and her story is an excellent argument for exposure and working with changing cultural attitudes. The argument when "changing" people's attitudes towards women in education could be focused on money and being a productive member of society. But I think a more substantial argument would be for the women to make educated decisions about their lives and the lives of the people around them. The way to do that is to participate in decision making in society.

#### 7.4 Differences in opportunities of higher education rural vs. urban areas

One of the fieldwork findings shows that there are substantial differences between rural and urban areas when it comes to education, for both boys and girls, in Uganda. This is interesting to discuss because it means that it is not equal who gets the opportunity to take higher education, which is contradictory to the Sustainable Development Goal 4.3, that Uganda has committed to, "By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university" (United Nations, 2015). In the report "The National Population and Housing Census 2014 – Education" made by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, there is a table showing tertiary level Gross Enrolment by background characteristics (Table 4). Here we can see the difference in rural and urban areas; the numbers show that 7.6% of the enrolled students come from urban areas while only 2.6% are from rural areas. Besides, the region that is best represented in terms of students enrolled in tertiary institutions is Kampala, the capital city.

In my research, I mainly talk to women from urban areas because I did the fieldwork in Kampala, Uganda's capital city. One of the women had her family living in a rural area and shared her experience with the educational differences. I talked to a student who went to class together with people from rural areas and could share what she had learned about the differences through them. Also, one of the teachers talked about the experience of teaching

children living in rural areas. Other than the information I got about the differences in rural and urban areas was the personal opinions of the informants. In conclusion, the data from the informants about the differences make it a second-hand source. But with the information, I got from the reports based on research done in rural areas, I can still make some valid arguments.

Some of the informants explain the reason for the big difference. One said that in the urban areas, families are more supportive of women taking higher education. In contrast, in rural areas, they consider women as housewives and mothers, so there is work to be done in encouraging girls in rural areas to take education. In addition, she said, people in the city are more privileged, so they have a better chance to pursue higher education (w10). Another explained that most parents in the villages are farmers, so most people can only afford university if they get a scholarship from the district, which is for the best-performing students. There is a chance for those students who do well and manage to stand out because of their grades. Unfortunately, through the interviews, I have learned that the primary and secondary schools in rural areas often are of lower quality than those in urban areas, which is also a hinder to reach higher education.

According to one informant who is currently studying at a university, the quality of education in rural areas is different from urban areas. One reason is that they don't have the same access to teachers as people in the cities. Another student told me that she hoped the extra point for girls given by the government when applying for university would help even out the differences in urban and rural areas. She said that there are girls in her class from both the north and the eastern regions in the country, which are, according to her, where the education is weakest. "We are happy they are able to come from the weak schools too like the government schools" were her exact words (Sk1). In one way, the government really has a chance to level out the differences between rural and urban areas through these scholarships given out according to districts because then the students would not have to compete between, generally speaking, "poor" and "rich" areas. Simultaneously, if the government schools that are supposed to offer free education throughout the country are a part of the problem, that is also a good place to start to lower the differences.

The National Development Plan acknowledges the difference in urban and rural areas. It explains that the government has attempted to address the regional disparities through the

introduction of an equalization grant to districts in mostly northern and eastern Uganda (National Planning Authority Uganda 2015, p.67). It was introduced in the fiscal year 1999/2000, but there is no mention of results in the National Development Plan, so there seems to be more work left to be done. In addition to the difference in the quality of education, there are also numbers showing a "higher sex ratio in rural areas than in urban, implying that there were more female adolescents and youths in rural areas than in urban areas" (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2017, p.8). Based on that, rural areas seem like the best place to start working with women's agency.

As discussed earlier, role models and awareness seem like essential tools for change. One woman that I talked to told me her story about her education. Originally her family is from a village, but because her father had a job in the city, she was allowed to live with him and take her education there, and eventually, she would take a university degree. After that, she went back to the village to help out her family and work there, and she noticed how interested people were in her education. According to her, in almost no families were there girls with higher education. When people saw that she was doing well with education, she became a role model for the other girls and encouraged them to stay in school and wait with marriage or having children. I asked her directly if it is easier to get into university if you live in the city than the village, to which she replied:

It is mostly about the money no matter where you come from, but also about exposure. There are people who have money, but still don't know how important education is. Like in my village, they needed exposure to understand the importance of staying in school (w8).

Suppose the government's goal is to improve women's participation in higher education and education in general. In that case, the significant differences in rural and urban areas appear to be a suitable place to begin. Evening out the differences in the quality of education will give more girls the opportunity to make an informed choice about whether to apply for higher education. Another reason why urban areas is a good place to start is that statistics show more women than men living in rural areas. Those women could be of school age, and by starting there, it could encourage more girls to stay in school. Or those women could be adults with children, and then be more aware of the benefits of supporting their children through their education with the knowledge that everyone has equal access and opportunity to higher education.

## 7.5 Summary

This chapter has combined the knowledge from the context, literature review, theories, and findings to create a discussion and answer the research questions. The discussion aims to examine the meaning, importance, and relevance of the research results and show how it relates to the research questions (Cohen et al., 2018). This chapter starts by combining the information from the findings that highlights the difficulties in finding jobs after getting a degree and why the unemployment rates are high, and the information from a report which also discusses the large young and unemployed population in Uganda. The second part of the chapter discusses the results from the findings indicating the importance of emotional support from your parents, especially the mother, to decide about going for higher education. It also discusses the relevance of financial aid, which is highly relevant in Uganda as university education is not free. The third part of the chapter discusses women in education, a broad theme, which can be argued is the theme throughout the study. But this section is divided into two particular objectives and discusses measures made by the government to promote women's access to higher education and the obstacles women face in school. The last section of the chapter examines and discusses the different obstacles people from rural and urban areas face in the education system. These four sections of the chapter are the foundation for answering the research questions in the conclusion that will be the next chapter.



## 8. Conclusion

This chapter will continue where the discussion chapter ended by answering how the previous findings answer my research questions. Firstly, I will show how the four themes are all linked together and that for example the consequences of giving a scholarship to a girl in a rural area so she can go to university can contribute to raising awareness about the value of women in higher education, thus inspire even more women to take higher education. Secondly, I use the four themes discussed in this chapter to answer the question: "In what way does Uganda emphasize the importance of higher education in their plans on becoming an upper middle-income country?". And lastly, I use the same four themes to answer the second research question: "How can women's access to higher education contribute to economic growth?".

All the themes from the findings in this study are connected in some way, where one has an impact on the other, and the consequences of working to improve, for example, educational attainment for girls, has a positive outcome for the other themes. The first theme, emotional and financial support from family, has the most significant impact, according to this study, on girls' and women's possibility to stay in school and choose to take higher education. This, in turn, will possibly affect their opportunities to get a steady job and income and has an impact on the country's economy. In addition, their educational attainment will also affect their children's lives and education. Higher educational attainment is shown to be crucial for fertility rates, child marriage, and when a woman begins childbearing, all of which is affecting the economy. As shown in this study, the government in Uganda has taken some measures to improve education equality and promote women's participation in higher education. They have also committed to national and international goals working with women and education in the years to come.

### 8.1 The importance of higher education to become an upper middle-income country

This study is based on two research questions, the first being: "In what way does Uganda emphasize the importance of higher education in their plans to become an upper middle-income country?" In this setting, what is meant by emphasizing the importance of higher education is how the Ugandan government expresses its commitment to improving the country's higher education situation. The other part of the question, their plans to become an upper middle-income country, refers to Uganda's Vision 2040 that they have initiated to accomplish economic growth. To answer the question, I have looked at Uganda's National

Development Plan to see how they include higher education in their goal to achieve economic growth and the reason for why they have included it. I have also looked at the SDGs to which Uganda has committed to understanding the connection between sustainable development and higher education and focusing on women in education.

In the Vision 2040, the government of Uganda emphasizes the importance of Higher Education by expressing a need for attracting top-rated professionals to raise the quality in the universities and implement policy reforms and develop new curricula that are up to date on an international level. The NDP lists several goals for achieving economic growth; one of them is investing in human capital development. One way to invest in human capital development is through education, and especially higher education, thus concluding that the NDP also emphasizes the importance of higher education to become an upper-middle income country.

When taking into account that Uganda has committed to the SDGs and expressed the need for human capital development in their NDP, the conclusion could be that this is the way they emphasize the importance of higher education to develop to a middle-income country. It can also be argued that they underline the importance through providing scholarships, adding an extra point for women's grades when they apply for higher education, and the fact that the government makes sure data is gathered from the tertiary institutions, so it is possible to carry out research. On the other hand, these commitments are not new, and 2030 is the completion year for the SDG, and 2040 which is the completion years for the NDP, is not far away, suggesting that new approaches are worth trying.

The findings show that Uganda aims to promote higher education to create knowledgeable and skilled workers who are updated on the newest technology and can compete in the international labour market. According to this study, the problem is that the curricula taught at Ugandan universities are not necessarily up do date and there is a lack of people doing Ph.D. and other research projects, which often is the key driver for developing new knowledge and technologies. One reason why this is happening is because of a lack of funding from the government, which is in disagreement with their commitment to creating human capital development.

In conclusion, Uganda's government recognizes the importance of higher education and women's participation in higher education as an economic development tool. But as the

findings show, there are several obstacles women face in the education system that could be a hinder for participation in higher education. There is also the issue with those who complete higher education, but are struggling to find meaningful employment that might feel like the hard work and studying was “wasted”. Even though the government recognises the importance, maybe they should work harder to show how important it is. If the government goes all in to invest in their population’s human capital development, then it would be easier for everyone to make the choice of investing in their own human capital.

## 8.2 Women’s contribution to achieving economic growth

The second research question that this study is based on is “How can women’s access to higher education contribute to sustainable development?”. To answer this question, the study has reviewed reports showing the expenses Uganda can save on lower fertility rates, through ending child marriage and early childbearing. The best way to accomplish this is by making sure girls stay in school. The research shows that women who complete their primary education waits longer with having children and have fewer children in total. As less women are enrolling in higher education institutions, it was essential for me in this study to find out why that is and what measures can be taken to make sure that everyone has equal access to education.

Women are less likely to complete their primary education and enrol in tertiary institutions than men, and there are several reasons why. According to the findings, finance hinders women in Uganda completing their education and entering higher education because of tuition fees. There are also cultural attitudes towards women and education that can be a determining factor in whether they continue to higher education or not. Women drop out of school because of marriage and childbearing, and it is not common to continue the education after dropping out. There are still opinions in society that women should stay home and take care of the house and children, and for that reason, they don’t need a higher education degree. According to statistics from Uganda, more women are living in rural areas, which is also a hinder for women to reach higher education. The reason being enrolment statistics in higher education institutions shows that people from rural areas are underrepresented. According to this study, some of the reasons are cultural, as mentioned, but also because the quality of primary and secondary education is lower than in the cities, and there are fewer schools and longer distances, which is also constraining people from completing their education.

The women I talked to who either studies at a university now or have a university degree and are currently working, spoke about the benefits of taking higher education. It gives a sense of empowerment, which is probably relatable for many people, at least for me. It provides a sense of security because a university degree is a promise of a steady income and independence. According to this study, women who have their own income, distribute it in a way that benefits more people and positively affects the health of themselves and the family. The women I talked to also said that those mothers with higher education would always support their children to stay in school and encourage them to taking a university degree because they know the value of education.

Women with higher education can make educated decisions about their lives and the lives of people around them. They can participate in society and contribute to making decisions that will benefit all women and society as a whole. One of those decisions could be about family planning and fertility rates and what is acceptable. Research shows that women who wait longer with childbearing have fewer children and experience better health for themselves and their children. All these outcomes are beneficial for society to become an upper middle income-country because the only way to achieve that is to include everyone. The goal is to increase the GNI per capita from \$1,025 to a GNI per capita between \$3,996 and \$12,375. To reach this goal, women need to be included in policy reforms for higher education, decision making, and the labour market.

In conclusion, women's contribution to achieving economic growth could be substantial when reducing or removing the obstacles they face in the education system or society. Increasing women's access to higher education will contribute to sustainable development because and educated population makes better choices for themselves and their society for the future. As shown in this study, women are role models for their children and others, especially when it comes to education, meaning that increased access for women in higher education will subsequently lead to them working for and promoting quality education and higher education to the next generation. And with the Capability Approach take on education, higher education is vital for women's agency

### 8.3 Suggestions for further studies

The first interview I had was with a student. We had a long and interesting conversation, during which she started talking about sexual exploitation in universities, between professors

and students. This was not something I had expected to write about, but as it is very interesting, I decided that I wanted to include it in the research. She talked about students being exploited by professors for good grades, or for not being failed at their exams, and it sounded like a big issue. After conducting more interviews and telling other informants that I had heard this, I understood that I would not get enough information to include it in the research. First of all, it is a severe issue and would take a large part of the thesis, making the study utterly different because it would give it a whole new topic. Secondly, I didn't get that much feedback on this theme from the other students or the informants who are former students. It could be because it is a sensitive issue, and they did not feel comfortable talking about it, but it could also be because it is not that common as the first informant made it out to be. Either way, I decided to exclude it from the findings because it does not answer the research questions and because I couldn't confirm how big the issue is, and because it would distract the reader from the findings that fit in this study. For a different thesis, it would be a very interesting research topic.

Another theme that I would have liked to include, or recommend as a topic for another thesis is the difference in infrastructure between schools in rural and urban areas. In a couple of interviews, it came up that the quality of education is lower in rural areas. This can be a reason for the uneven proportion of students from urban and rural areas in higher education. As I didn't have any specific studies about the difference in quality and infrastructure in schools according to region or district, I didn't discuss this topic, merely included it in the findings and mentioned it in the discussion concerning something else. But from what I have understood from conversations and observation, the schools in rural areas often lack resources such as books, desks, and other learning materials. The teachers working there are less motivated, usually because the salaries are so low that they need multiple jobs, and the teacher-parent relationship is not very strong. Besides, these schools are often government schools because those are the only ones that are entirely free, which would make it interesting to discuss what the government can do to raise the standard. Another aspect of the difference in urban and rural areas is that it is often longer between schools, and few secondary schools to cover big areas, making it less motivating to study and more tempting to start working. For a different thesis, I would like to discuss this in relation to higher education and see how much this affects people's opportunity to apply for education at a tertiary institution.



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W10. (2019) /Interviewer: E. E. Johnson.

## Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview guide

Appendix 2: Information letter fieldwork

Appendix 3: Consent form

## Appendix 1: Interview guide

### Questions:

- What is your occupation? (Student, where? Or done with education, what job?)
  
- **If student in high school,**
- Did you grow up around here, Kampala area?
- Do you have siblings? Big/small family? Other sisters?
- What do you want to be when you grow up? And why?
- How do you think you can achieve your goals?
- What do you think is the biggest challenge to achieve your goals for the future?
- Do you want to take higher education? Why, why not?
- Has going to university always been a goal for you?
- If yes, what would you want to study?
- Do any of your family members go to university
- Have you considered what your chances are for getting a job with that degree?
- What would you say society expects of young people to do after high school?
  
- **If currently in university,**
- Did you grow up around here, in the Kampala area?
- Do you have a big family/many siblings? Sisters or brothers?
- What do you want to be when you grow up?
- When did you decide that you wanted to go to university?
- Was it completely your decision, or was it expected from you?
- What made it possible for you to go to university?
- Why did you choose to go take higher education?
- Have you always wanted to go to university?
- What are you studying?
- What are your goals after you finish this degree?
- Have you considered what your chances are for getting a job with that degree?
- Have you ever experienced anything, at university or at home/other situations, that has made you want to drop out?

- **If working,**
- Did you grow up around here, in the Kampala area?
- Do you have a big family/many siblings?
- When you were younger, what did you wanted to be when you grew up?
- Are you currently working with something you have an education in?
- What made you decide that you wanted to pursue higher education?
- Has it always been your plan to have the job you have now? / Have you had others?
- What degree did you take?
- Do others in your family also have higher education?
- What made it possible for you to go to university?
- Did you choose that degree because you knew you could get a job?
- Did you ever experience anything at university, or in other situations, that made you want to drop out?
- How was it for you to get a job after studying?

- **For all**
- What do you think could encourage more women do pursue higher education?
- What do you think are reasons for why women go to higher education?
- What do you think are reasons for why women might not pursue higher education?
- What do you think could be reasons for why women drop out of university?
- Would you say there are typical boy degrees or girl degrees? If so, what?
- How would you say the job-situation is after finishing university?
- In your opinion, is it easier to get a job if you have higher education? Why, why not?
- What are your thoughts on academic education vs. vocational education?
- Why do you think there are so many unemployed youths in Uganda?

## Extra

Here is a list of examples of what could be important factors for why women choose to pursue higher education and complete their studies:

- Being able to pay the tuition fee
- Support from family (not economic)
- Feeling safe in the school environment, and also being safe while traveling to and from school
- Curriculum that is up to date and will make the students compete on a national and international job market
- Availability of learning materials, example: books, computers other equipment
- Clean and separate toilet facilities for girls and boys
- Prospects of a job after getting a degree
- Higher number of female teacher's /school leaders as role models
- No pressure of having to start a family or settling down
- Teachers showing up to class on time

Do you agree with these examples?

Is there anything you would like to add?

Can you mark three of those that are most important for you and your decision?

## **Are you interested in taking part in the research project:**

### ***“Women’s Access to higher education in Uganda and sustainable development”?***

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to learn more about access to higher education in Uganda. In this letter I will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

#### **Purpose of the project**

The purpose of this project is to learn more about women in Uganda’s access to higher education. Who gets the opportunity to apply for higher education, what are the intake criteria etc.? I will also focus on the connection between higher education and sustainable development. This will be my master thesis, and the information I gather will only be used for the purpose of writing this paper.

#### **Who is responsible for the research project?**

Oslo Metropolitan University in Norway, is the institution responsible for the project.

#### **Why are you being asked to participate?**

I have selected people that are currently students in universities or other higher education institutions. I am interested in talking with teacher students, because I want to learn more about how the becoming teachers views the right to education. And they have the perspective as students and teachers. I am also interested in talking with women that already has a university degree.

#### **What does participation involve for you?**

If you choose to take part in the project, it will involve sitting down for an interview one time. I will not ask any personal details, only what and where you study. I will record the answers electronically.

#### **Participation is voluntary**

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you choose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

#### **Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data**

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

- The only persons who will have access to the information is only me. My supervisor at Oslo Metropolitan university will be getting updates about my work, but no personal

details about participants in the project. Later the people who grade my master thesis will read my paper where all the information about participants is anonymous.

- The information will be saved on a memory stick that only I have access to. The recordings of the interviews, and any other information about participants will be kept separate. If I do a survey it will be on paper without names or any other personal indicators.
- The participants will not be recognizable in the published paper. The only information included is field of study.

### **What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?**

The project is scheduled to end 15.05.2019. The electronically recordings will be deleted when I transcribe the interview. No personal data will be saved after the project has ended.

### **Your rights**

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

### **What gives us the right to process your personal data?**

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with Oslo Metropolitan University, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

### **Where can I find out more?**

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- Oslo Metropolitan University via Ellen Carm. Email: [Ellen.Carm@oslomet.no](mailto:Ellen.Carm@oslomet.no)
- Our Data Protection Officer: Vegard Forberg – [vegard.forberg@oslomet.no](mailto:vegard.forberg@oslomet.no)
- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: ([personverntjenester@nsd.no](mailto:personverntjenester@nsd.no)) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader  
(Ellen Carm)

Student (if applicable)

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## Appendix 3: Consent form

### Consent form

*Consent can be given in writing (including electronically) or orally. NB! You must be able to document/demonstrate that you have given information and gained consent from project participants i.e. from the people whose personal data you will be processing (data subjects). As a rule, we recommend written information and written consent.*

- *For written consent on paper you can use this template*
- *For written consent which is collected electronically, you must choose a procedure that will allow you to demonstrate that you have gained explicit consent (read more on our website)*
- *If the context dictates that you should give oral information and gain oral consent (e.g. for research in oral cultures or with people who are illiterate) we recommend that you make a sound recording of the information and consent.*

*If a parent/guardian will give consent on behalf of their child or someone without the capacity to consent, you must adjust this information accordingly. Remember that the name of the participant must be included.*

*Adjust the checkboxes in accordance with participation in your project. It is possible to use bullet points instead of checkboxes. However, if you intend to process special categories of personal data (sensitive personal data) and/or one of the last four points in the list below is applicable to your project, we recommend that you use checkboxes. This because of the requirement of explicit consent.*

I have received and understood information about the project and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in an interview for the project *Women's Access to higher education in Uganda and sustainable development*”?

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. 15.05.2019

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(Signed by participant, date)