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Educating a Girl Child: Community Perceptions on Educating Girl Children in Rural Uganda

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Master of Science in Global Development Studies

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Declaration

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Abstract

There is paucity of information regarding perceptions of the importance of girl child education in the rural communities of Uganda. And yet the country has programs that foster girl child education such as the Universal Education System (UES) for primary and secondary level, the National strategy for girl's education in Uganda (2015-2019) (Ministry of Education and Sports, (MoES) (2013). The study embarked on using a cross-sectional research design with both qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the current community perception of the importance of educating a girl child in Uganda's Rural context. Sixty household interviews were conducted for quantitative data. Three FGDs and Eight Key informants were deeply interviewed. Thematic and content analysis and Descriptive statistics were used together to analyze the data. Results revealed that although the rural communities are trying to take a positive lens towards girl child education due to the benefits such as supporting their families, reduced early marriages and infant mortality rate, increase in respect and value for girls and their family, participation in leadership and effective decision making and increased literacy and self-esteem among girls, there is still a big challenge of failure to afford school fees and requirements, poor parenting, society perceptions and cultural stereotypes, long distances to school, child labor and parental loss that act as barriers to girl child education at community/household level. The other is the unfriendly school environment to a girl child ranging from teacher-student affairs (Rape and defilement), limited girl child support, and peer influence. Different strategies and institutions have come to advocate for girl child education by offering scholarships and formulating policies among others. In conclusion, girls still grapple with barriers ranging from home-based/community to school-based constraints to accessing education. Poverty, and cultural norms, attitudes, traditions, and stereotypes are still a big hindrance to a girl's education. There is a need to strengthen community sensitization of the importance of girl child education. Facilities such as boarding sections for girls and girl centers in addition to education institutions could be established. Girl centers can build self-esteem and act as quick responses to urgent issues that may hinder girl child education including rape and defilement. Also, the enhancement of incomes of the parents or poverty alleviation projects could raise the household income levels, which would enhance parents' ability to support girl children's education.

Key Word: Girl child education; Importance, Barriers, strategies, rural context, Uganda.

List of acronyms

BDLG	Bugweri District Local Government
NMBU	Norwegian University of Life Sciences
DEO	District Education Officer
DIS	District Inspector of Schools
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
NSGE	National Strategy for Girl's Education
ATK	Advancing The Kingdom
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
LC	Local Chairperson
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USE	Universal Secondary Education
GEP	Gender in Education Policy
KM	Kilo Meters
UWEP	Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program
ABEK	Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja
NDP	National Development Plan
ESSSP	Education on Sports Sector Strategic Plan
BRAC	Bangladeshi Rural Advancement Committee
MoSE	Ministry of Education and Sports
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labor, Social Development
PROGRESA	PROGRama de Educación, Salud y Alimentación
KI	Key Informant
UBOS	Uganda Bureau Of Statistics
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Funds
HE	Higher Education
GPA	Grade Point Average

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Globally, the narratives around girl child education especially in Africa have attracted many scholars (Petroni et al., 2017; Shabaya* & Konadu-Agyemang, 2004; Tuwor & Sossou, 2008). Providing girls with quality education is very vital in empowering women and promoting the social and economic development of a country (Adeola & Olufunke, 2010; Schurmann, 2009). Educating a girl child comes with various benefits to both her life and the nation. Individually, education improves the earning capacity of a woman just as that of a man hence contributing to the social-economic mobility of women. It also improves women's self-esteem in the family and community at large. To the nation, various research shows that in addition to family planning and basic health care, education for women plays a major role in controlling population growth and ensuring smaller, healthier, and great educated families. This comes because employment for women increases the opportunity cost of their time hence giving birth to fewer easily manageable children. In addition, educated women use their skills to contribute to the economic development of the nation by reducing poverty rates, improving nutrition, and increasing life expectancy (Herz, 2004, Ferdous, 2018, Sahoo, 2016). To emphasize the last point, I quote Napoleon Bonaparte who said, "Give me an educated mother, I shall promise you the birth of a civilized educated nation" (Bonaparte, Nd). The benefits demystified above are changing perceptions of the value of girls and secondary education among the parents in rural African contexts (Iddy, 2021).

The Government of Uganda is committed to providing equal access to quality and affordable primary and secondary education to all Ugandans (Chapman et al., 2010; Deininger, 2003; Kan & Klasen, 2021). Additionally, it recognizes that all Ugandan citizens have a fundamental human right to an education. In an effort to ensure that everyone attends school, the government has made efforts to provide Education For All (EFA), such as the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997 and Universal Secondary Education in 2007 (Worldbank, 2019). Nevertheless, there are still differences between the enrollment and completion rates for girls and boys. Additionally, efforts to enhance education for both girls and boys continue to be a crucial component of a nation's social and economic development (Ferdous, 2018).

In different parts of Uganda, studies have been conducted on the barriers that girls face in getting educated making it a distant goal to attain. Some of the barriers discovered include social-

economic challenges where poor parents are not willing to sacrifice their money for a girl's education who will later be married and not benefit them, the role of patriarchal ideologies, lack of hygiene facilities for girls at school during their periods, cultural factors like early marriages, long distances to school among others (Miria, 2009, Worldbank, 2019). However, these barriers may not apply specifically to Bugweri District due to the geographical, religious, and social differences. Therefore, this study seeks to identify perceived barriers to girl child education in Bugweri District.

The communities, especially those in rural areas, have not realized the importance of educating a girl child. Girls are merely seen as a home-productive labor force and a source of economic benefit through the dowry system (Afridi et al., 2022). If people realize the benefits and the importance of educating a girl child in a community, then there will be gender parity in educating both boys and girls and the barriers to girl education could be reduced (Fussy & Iddy, 2022; Iddy, 2021; Sabates et al., 2021). However, given the current disparities in the education of boys and girls, this study aims to deeply monitor the importance and the impacts of educating a girl child in rural society and explore the barriers to girl child education.

1.1 Rationale for the study

There is paucity of information about the current narratives regarding status quo on girl's education and attributed importance in the rural communities of Uganda. And yet the country has programs that foster girl child education such as the Universal Education System (UES) for primary and secondary level, the National strategy for girl's education in Uganda (2015-2019) (Ministry of Education and Sports, (MoES) (2013). However, a study conducted by (Jones, 2011) revealed that regardless of the existing initiatives, girl children still face school access barriers ranging from household, community to school factors. There is an urgent need to create awareness of the importance and impacts of educating a girl child towards development especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. There is need to foster a shift in the way parents in rural Uganda perceive the significance of providing their daughters with a secondary education (Iddy, 2021).

1.2 Objectives and research questions

The overall objective of this research is to explore the perceived importance of girl child education as well as investing in the barriers for improved gender parity in education in rural areas.

1.2.1 Specific objectives include:

1. To identify the importance and the impacts of educating girls in the development of the community in Bugweri District.
2. To investigate the home/school environment barriers to the girl child education attainment in Bugweri district.
3. To explore the mitigation strategies put in place to increase girls' education in the Bugweri district.

1.3 Research questions

1. What are the importance and impacts of educating a girl child in Bugweri District?
2. What are the home based barriers that hinder the girl child's education in Bugweri District?
3. What are the community barriers to girl child education in Bugweri District?
4. What are the school environment barriers that hinder girls' education in Bugweri District?
5. What are the in-situ mitigation strategies employed to increase girls' education in Bugweri?

1.4 Operational Definitions

Girl child - The term "girl child" generally refers to a female individual who is under the school going age. Under this study, it is used to highlight the unique challenges faced by girls, particularly in the areas of education access.

Education - The process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes through various forms of learning, such as teaching, training, research, and practical experience.

Home-based/community barriers - The obstacles and challenges that girls face within and around their homes and families that prevent or limit their access to education.

School - School is an educational institution where students attend classes and learn various subjects and skills from teachers or instructors. It is a formal setting that provides a structured and organized environment for learning and socialization.

School barriers - The obstacles and challenges that prevent or limit girls' access to education and their ability to succeed in their education within the school premises.

District Local Government - is a unit of administration at the district level responsible for the provision of public services and governance within a particular geographical area known as a district. District Local Governments are created under the Local Governments Act of 1997, and they operate under the guidance and supervision of the Ministry of Local Government.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of the literature has been done in line with the objectives of the study.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Through education, the capabilities of a person are enhanced which enables hm/her to be able to bring about social change in the community he/she lives (Chávez, 2015). My study framework is derived from the Human Rights Model and the Human Capabilities Approach. The human rights model was advanced by UNESCO and UNICEF advocating for human rights through Education for All (EFA). In this rights-based approach, every human being, even children, is entitled to get an education even though they are not certain that education will reward them in human capital terms. In this sense therefore, every child is entitled to receive and get access to quality education with dignity and respect without discrimination (Craissati et al., 2007; Unicef, 2007).

On the other hand, the Human Capabilities Approach developed by Amartya Sen focuses on how individuals can live to lead their lives they can value and have a wide range of choices they can make in their lives (Sen, 1997, 2001). According to Robeyns (2005), evaluations and policies in line with Sen's argument on the quality of people's lives need to focus on what they can do and be. This can be done by removing obstacles in people's lives such that they have freedom and a choice to live a life that they reflect on and have a reason to value. The approach emphasizes the quality of life and people's well-being as essential, and this is attained through the freedom given to individuals that enables them to achieve a good life given access to valuable capabilities. Examples of valuable capabilities include having access to education and being able to learn valuable things, being able to have a decent job, Freedom from any kind of violence for example sexual violence, domestic violence, hate speech, being able to enjoy leisure activities, spending quality time with family, freedom to practice your religion among others. Having access to different resources is also important to enhance a person's quality of life (Robeyns, 2003, 2005). For the purposes of this current study, having access to education is important because education

plays a vital role in a person's life enabling them to become who they want to be as it gives them many options to shape their future.

The approach also assumes that once people get an education then economic development and social improvements in a community will be realized (Chávez, 2015). In bringing about social change, Sen talks about the importance of expanding female education as it reduces gender inequality, cuts down fertility rates, and improves the quality of public debates (Sen, 1997).

2.2 Importance of educating a girl child in building community development

The power of education cannot be underrated. Education has been the central driver of human development. When a person is educated, it does not only provide individual knowledge, understanding, and information but the society is set for development and change holistically. Furthermore, education is a key element in a country's economic growth through the development of human resources (Goel, 2004).

For a society to achieve higher economic growth, women should also be empowered by helping them acquire education to the fullest (Ferdous, 2018). Studies have found that women invest most of their money into their families 10 times more than men do (Duflo, 2011, Bank, 2011). Moreover, an educated woman has a higher chance of running away from poverty, living a healthy life, and uplifting the standard of living of her children, family, and the entire community (Ahamad and Narayana, 2015). The consequence of this is that when a girl child is educated, she develops some kind of power that can transform and develop a community in many ways, and this makes it imperative in investing in girls' education (French Gates, 2014).

In addition, Women ensure that future generations are also educated. Therefore, she ensures the continuity of education from generation to generation. As one of the African proverbs goes, "If you educate a boy, you educate an individual. But if you educate a girl, you educate a family-and a whole nation" (Suen, 2013). This means that when a girl acquires an education, she ensures that her children also go to school (Ahamad and Narayana, 2015). This also means that taking a girl to school is investing in the whole nation.

Educating girls has the benefit of reducing child marriages. It is believed that a girl with 12 years of school is 5 times less likely to get married as a child, unlike those girls that have no or little education (Global Partnership for Education, 2018). Furthermore, on average an extra year a girl

stays in school above the fifth grade, her being married as a child is delayed. Therefore, keeping girls in school until they complete their education ensures that girls get educated and marry later when they are in the best position to care for their children (Ahamad and Narayana, 2015, Nabugoomu et al., 2020).

Girls' education also reduces the prevalence of maternal and infant mortality. Educated mothers/women are equipped with a better understanding and knowledge of health care and the importance of fewer pregnancies hence less likely to have complications or die during pregnancy or childbirth (Ahamad and Narayana, 2015). Global partnership for Education highlights that there is a significant decrease in maternal deaths if all mothers finish primary school (Global Partnership for Education, 2018).

For infant mortality, educated women are in a better position to save the lives of their children because they will be able to learn all it takes to keep their children healthy and are also able to acquire the necessary support for their children (Herz et al., 2004). For example, Gakidou et al. (2010) approximated that more maternal education can reduce more than 50% of the global reduction in deaths of children under 5 years between 1970 and 2009 (Gakidou et al., 2010). As a result of this association, there have been more campaigns to see that girls' education is equally invested in (Schultz, 1993). Moreover, when girls are educated, the number of female health care service providers increases and they can help with prenatal medical care, labor and delivery, delivery complications, and follow-up care (Ahamad and Narayana, 2015).

Educating girls helps to reduce the population explosion. This is because when girls are kept in school, it reduces early marriage which is the driver of giving birth to many children (UNICEF, 2021). A study done by UNESCO in Brazil revealed that educated women had 2.5 children on average while those that didn't go to school had 6 children each (UNESCO 2000). This pattern is the same in individual studies done in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Herz et al., 2004). Therefore, it is imperative to educate girls to reduce the rate at which the population is growing.

Another benefit of educating girls is that it decreases domestic and sexual violence that girls face. It is believed that in areas where there are high rates of poverty and low levels of education for women hence earning less, women are regarded as an extra economic burden (Herz et al., 2004). As a result, women, and girls many times are the victims of domestic and sexual violence. Therefore, educating girls helps them understand their rights and they cannot be easily exploited

or abused. A study done by Noureen and Awan in Pakistan revealed that educating a girl child can bring great changes in a woman's lifestyle by making them aware of their rights, increasing their self-esteem, reducing their dependency, lifting their status in the family and society, boosting their confidence, and enhancing their mobility (Noureen and Awan, 2011). Another study by Sen in West Bengal revealed that 'access to secondary stages of education may have an important contributory role in enhancing women's capacity to exercise control in their lives through a combination of literacy and numeracy skills, and enhance self-esteem' (Sen, 1999). These benefits of education ensure that girls and women have control over their lives and can withstand any violence against them.

However, even though there are many benefits accrued to educating a girl child, there are still barriers that are hindering this achievement.

2.3 Home based barriers to girl child education in a rural context.

2.3.1 Social economic barriers

One major reason that hinders many children from attending school, especially girls, is poverty. Many Sub-Saharan African countries have high rates of poverty that pose obstacles to acquire education and yet at the same time, its education that can equip people with skills to overcome poverty (Mbilinyi, 2003). Moreover, one major driver of breaking this vicious cycle of poverty is educating the girl child (Noureen and Awan, 2011). Unfortunately, parents in poor societies decide not to take girls to school due to the huge opportunity and direct costs incurred than that of the boys (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995). Examples of opportunity costs include girls offering more productive labor to help the family earn more income than boys. Parents even go ahead to withdraw girls from school and send them to their market businesses (Miria, 2009). In one study, it was found that, "Girls in Africa and in fact almost in every region, work (at home) more than boys regardless of whether they are school going...." (World bank 2002 b). Also, a study than by Blackden & Bhanu, in World bank (2002b) reveals that in Zambia, the time spent by girls on direct productive work is four times higher than that of boys. Unfortunately, the results of the hard work for girls are not spent on their development (Mbilinyi, 2003).

The direct costs are the school fees and uniforms that seem to be expensive for them to afford (Mikisa, 2019).

2.3.2 Cultural barriers

The culture, beliefs and norms of a given society influence the direction of how life should move. For example, in the African society, men are regarded as superior to women and they are expected to be extraordinary in the world of knowledge and technology. On the other hand, women are expected to always stay home and do family chores (Mushi 2002, World bank 2002b). As a result, much of the family development is all invested in the boys because they are the ones that make up the clans and the girls are expected to marry and be represented by their husbands. Therefore, in their minds, they don't see reasons for investing more in the girl's education and this leads to the low levels of enrollment of girls, poor performance in schools and later increased dropouts (Mbilinyi, 2003, Ferdous, 2018).

2.3.3 Improper community support

When I talk of community support, I am speaking about the parents and other community members like the elders, Local counselors (LCs), religious leaders. Their support of the school programs is very important in the education of both girls and boys. On the contrary, the parents lack this basic knowledge because they never went to school either or have little education. Which means that illiterate mothers that communicate with their daughters have little support they give to them and therefore their education suffers. In a study carried out by Bruns and Rakotomalala (2003) poses that educated mothers influence their children's attendance to school (71%) compared to those that never went to school (47%) (Bruns and Rakotomalala, 2003). In another study done by Chevalier et al. in the UK about intergenerational transmission of education reveals that there is a stronger effect of maternal than paternal education and the children's early school-leaving. (Chevalier et al., 2013). Therefore, the community should embrace school programs and provide a conducive environment for the children, especially the girls to be involved fully in school (Mbilinyi, 2003).

2.4 School based barriers to girl child education

A complex and complicated curriculum is a barrier to a child's education and its worse on the side of girls who come to school already tired from the home chores and preoccupied by what they will have to do when they go back home. If the learning does not involve practical lessons or does not relate to normal life, then the girls are bound to give up. In addition, inadequate teaching materials also pose a challenge to the learning process and gives girls a hard time understanding what the

teacher is teaching, hence losing morale. Lack of hygiene places for girls and enough school facilities is another barrier to effective learning for girls. During their menstruation periods, they will need special clean areas that provide privacy and lack of these will lead to low attendances for girls. Changing rooms for girls, toilets and water are not to lack at the school premises (Gachukia, 2004; GlobalPartnershipforEducation, 2020; Mbilinyi, 2003).

Teachers are another challenge leading to low levels of education for a girl child. The Ugandan education sector has a high level of teacher absenteeism that leaves learners with on one to teach them. Also, the performance of girls depends so much on the adequacy and quality of teachers. The absence of these makes the learning process boring and unenjoyable which lowers the morale for girls stay in school.

And lastly, the grounds for school sports and games are great areas for attracting girls who barely do not have any other place for recreation activities. Absence of these also causes a barrier to girls especially those talented in sports (Gachukia, 2004, Mbilinyi, 2003, Global Partnership for Education, 2020).

Policies play a very important role in creating a good learning environment for learners. All the above-mentioned factors depend on the education policies in the country. The more investments the government makes in education, the better the learning process of the girls. A study done by the world bank in 2019 noted that after the introduction of UPE, there were huge increments in the enrollment in the primary section. Unfortunately, the policies did not match the increased enrollments with enough facilities, teachers and building of more secondary sections. As a result, due to limited opportunities to progress to secondary level, many girls lose morale of completing primary section (World bank, 2019).

3.0 THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this section, a detailed research procedure has been written following the description of the study area, research design and approaches, target population, sampling, data collection and analysis methods.

3.1 Description of the study area

The study was conducted in the rural areas of Uganda's southeastern District of Bugweri. Bugweri District, located in the Busoga region of Eastern Uganda, began its operations as a Local Government on July 1st, 2018, after being carved out of Iganga District Local Government. Bugweri District is located in the Eastern Region of Uganda. It is bordered by Namutumba District to the north, Iganga District to the east, Mayuge District to the south, and Bugiri District to the west. The district is situated approximately 132 kilometers (82 miles) east of the capital city, Kampala, and covers an area of about 379 square kilometers (146 square miles) with 505 persons per square kilometer population density. The district's headquarters is located in the town of Bugweri, which is also the largest urban center in the district. The area is mainly rural and is known for its agricultural activities, with crops such as maize, beans, and coffee being the main sources of income for the local population.

Bugweri is one of the districts that are worst hit with girl child school dropout in Uganda (Wikström, 2011). Several factors contribute to the high rate of girl child school dropout in Bugweri district including alarming religion, poverty, early marriage, cultural beliefs, and practices that prioritize boys' education over girls', limited access to education and basic resources such as sanitary pads, long distances to schools, and inadequate infrastructure and facilities. These challenges can make it difficult for girls to attend and complete their education. The area also has attracted efforts by the government, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders to address the issue of girl child school dropout. These efforts include providing scholarships and bursaries to disadvantaged girls, improving school infrastructure and facilities, raising awareness on the importance of education for girls, and engaging communities in efforts to promote girls' education (Isiko, 2022; Kakal et al., 2022). This informed the choice of Bugweri district to investigate the status of girl child education and the constraining community stereotypes of girl child education in the rural context of Uganda.

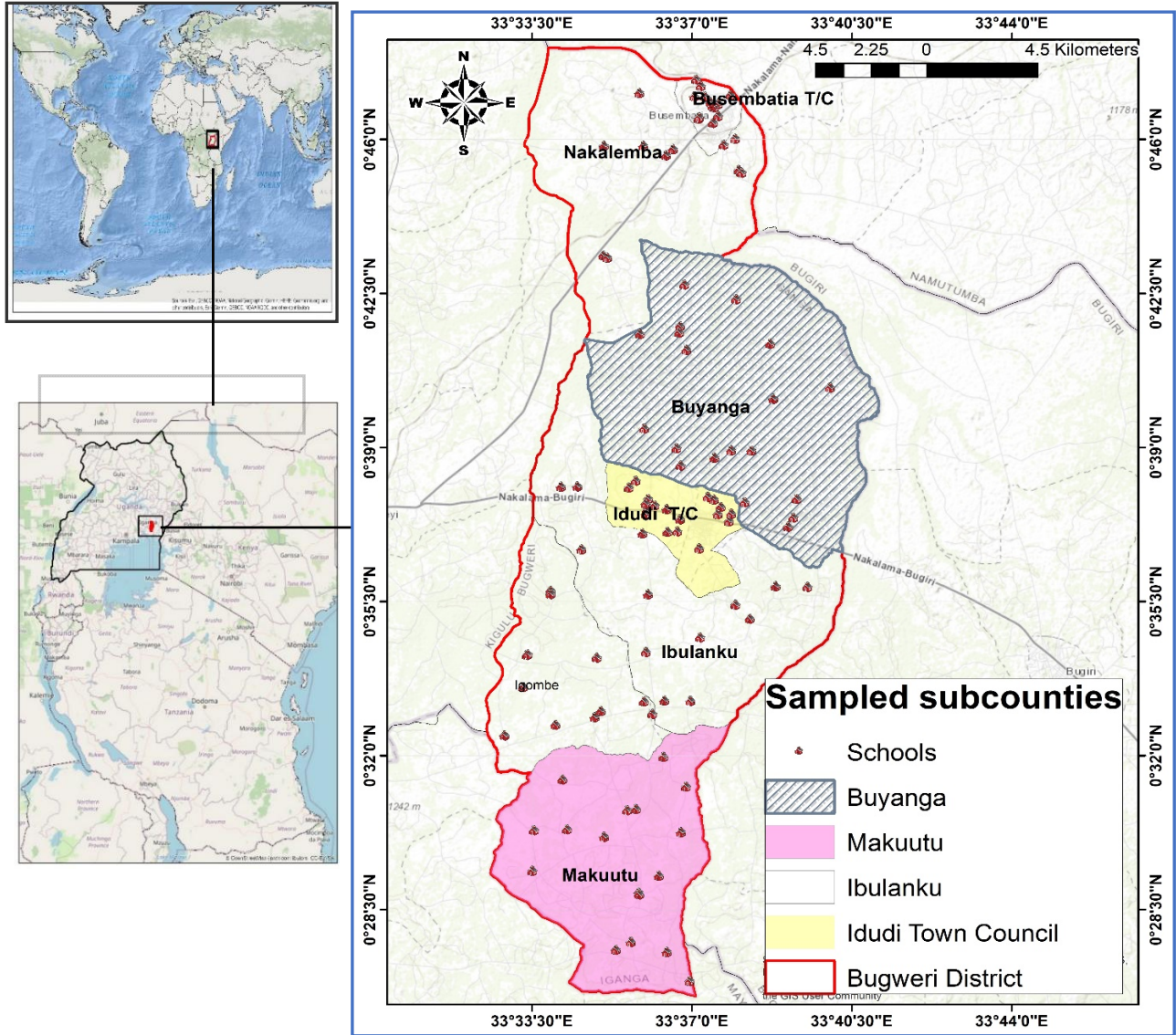


Figure 1: Location of the study area (Bugweri district)
 Source: Developed by Research Assistant using GIS

Bugweri has several schools ranging from pre-primary to primary and secondary schools. According to UBOS, (2014) data, the district had more than a hundred (100) schools.

Table 1: List of Education Facilities in Bugweri district by 2014 (UBOS)

SN	School Name	X	Y	Remark
1	Busembatia P/Sch	569674	86202	Govt aided
2	Busembatia S/Sch	569514	86070	Govt aided
3	Focus P/Sch	569430	86143	
4	Agape P/Sch	568881	85594	Private aided

5	Agape S/Sch International	568909	85649	Private aided
6	Busembatia High S/Sch	569460	85412	
7	Primary Sch	569674	85707	Under construction
8	Lady Agnes N/P Sch	570177	86579	Private aided
9	Trust Junior N/P Sch	569368	86279	
10	Standard S/Sch	568710	86520	Private aided
11	Community Primary School	568968	86957	Private aided
12	Mizion Nursery School	569128	86520	Private aided
13	Town Side Secondary School	568780	87231	Private aided
14	Bulunguli Pri Sch	566679	72631	Private /closed
15	Bulumburi Primary School	566335	70451	
16	Kiwanyi Bugweri Primary School	566503	76583	Govt
17	Bumoozi Primary School	571782	76181	Govt
18	Bupala Primary School	574215	74348	Govt aided
19	Buwanga Budala Primary School	571913	73876	
20	Buwooya Primary School	568144	71080	Govt
21	Buwoya Primary School	567988	71806	
22	Nakusa Primary School	570209	71715	
23	Dakaba Memorial Primary School	569528	71408	
24	Bwigula Primary School	572861	69685	
25	Bukasozi Central Academy Pri. Sch	570749	69544	Private
26	Bubinga Pri Sch	572512	68522	Govt
27	Bubinga High Sec School	572730	68905	Govt
28	Idudi Moslem Pri Sch	570207	69062	Govt
29	Idudi Town Ship Sec Sch	569778	69350	Private
30	St.Lawlnnce Sec Sch	569508	69659	
31	Daystar Sec Sch	570112	68746	Private
32	Goodwill Pri Sch	569670	69047	Private
33	Yunus Nkuuutu Juniouir Pri Sch	569257	69770	Private
34	Idudi Primary School	568904	67609	
35	Goodhope Nur/Pri	568391	75922	Private
36	Kalalu Primary School	568132	76917	Govt
37	Seep Nur/Pri Sch	568092	76639	Private
38	St.Justine Nursery And Primary School	568305	78651	
39	Lubira Primary School	570408	78039	Govt
40	Buniantole Primary School	566749	63276	Govt
41	Nakivumbi Parents Sec School	567493	61250	
42	Bukoteka Church Of Uganda	564130	67578	
43	Butende Muslims Pri	563296	70201	Govt
44	Butende Primary School	563966	70204	Govt
45	Busesa Kindergaten	566777	69205	Private
46	Busesa Mixed	566834	69687	
47	St.Kizito Nursery Primary School	566740	69055	Private
48	Transformer	566731	69479	

49	Bugweri College	566049	70159	Govt
50	Busesa High	567611	68311	
51	Busesa High School	567587	69259	
52	Nkuutu Memorial	567096	69411	Govt
53	Good Hope Primary School	568018	68326	
54	Rewened Secondary School	568132	68827	Private
55	Mulanga Primary School	566826	65693	
56	Ibulanku Primary School	566606	68241	
57	Nakivumbi Primary	568554	61233	Govt
58	Nawansega Pri School	568949	63894	Govt
59	Buwaabe P/Sch	573297	66002	
60	Nakibembe Primary School	570957	64674	Govt
61	Nsale Pri Sch	570380	65261	
62	Wante New Age Primary School	572008	66026	
63	Bubenge Islamic Primary School	562879	65846	Privately owned
64	Bubenge P/School	562877	65708	Govt aided
65	Bulyansime Moslem Primary School	563070	60232	Govt aided
66	Butalango P/School	561765	61812	Govt aided
67	Modern Academy N/School	567004	60691	Privately owned
68	Bright Star N/School	566664	61213	
69	Bulyansime Primary School	564915	60807	
70	Menya Zirabamuzale S School	564662	60551	Privately owned
71	Mpitta P/School	564752	63048	Govt aided
72	Nawanpendo Primary School	561009	59790	Govt aided
73	Namalera Catholic Church	561911	63157	
74	Walanga Primary School	561953	63187	Govt aided
75	Sunrise Nursery / Primary School	566133	51148	Private
76	Busima Primary School	565530	50824	Govt
77	Namayundu Primary School	562136	54125	Govt
78	Waibale Primary School	567594	50727	Private
79	Kigulamu Primary School	567456	58899	Govt aided
80	Naitandu Primary School	568166	55742	
81	Nakafunyu Primary School	568375	57648	Private
82	Makandwa Primary School	563352	57945	Govt
83	Nabweya Primary School	562203	55829	Govt
84	Bunalwenyi Hillside Sec School	567268	53919	
85	Bunalwenyi Child Devt Centre	566457	53217	Private
86	Bunalwenyi Primary School	566477	53136	Govt
87	Walutaba Pri Sch	563539	55860	Govt
88	Makutu Pri School	565989	56663	Govt
89	Makutu Secondary School	566340	56714	Private
90	Nakaphuli Nursery / Pri School	565051	55546	Private
91	Idinda P/Sch	566479	86671	Government aided
92	Hanahada Ismalic Institute	566638	84452	Private aided
93	Minani P/School	565038	84453	

94	Naigombwa Muslim P/School	567844	84320	Government aided
95	Namalembe P/School	567561	84057	Day and boarding govt aided
96	Hudha Islamic Centre Primary School	565012	79866	Private aided/under construction
97	Nawangisa P/School	565176	79778	Government
98	Joyen/P/School	569901	84507	
99	St Scholastic P/School	570368	84753	
100	Bishop Williger's Sen Sec School	570598	83353	
101	St Michael Girl's School	570509	83439	Govt aided
102	St Mulumba P/School	570627	83335	Govt aided
103	Bituli P/School	571029	71702	Govt aided
104	Nanyunano P/Sch	568527	49515	Govt aided

Source: Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), (2014).

3.2 Research design and approaches

This research was conducted by a cross-sectional research design using the embedded mixed method (qualitative and quantitative methods combined). The reason for using the embedded design was that using qualitative method solely would give me insufficient data and moreover, one of the questions would be best answered by using the quantitative method. Therefore, with this mixed method, it allows to acquire data of a high platform that enhances each other from the different methods and aids in exploring the problem being researched as it offers rich and in-depth knowledge about the phenomena under study (Thomas et al., 2010, Bryman, 2016). It is the best tool for researching and accessing information on problem-based topics as it allows participants to air out freely their experiences, opinions, and feelings about the variables under study (Creswell and Poth, 2016). Therefore, with this method, I was able to collect rich and vast information about the perceptions surrounding girl child education in Bugweri District.

3.3 Study population, sampling, and data collection

The study population included the households of Bugweri district and a few participants that were interviewed. On the qualitative part, I employed a purposive sampling method to select respondents for the study. It is a widely and commonly used sampling method in collecting qualitative data (Bryman, 2016). According to Bryman (2016), purposive sampling is where a researcher selects a sample according to what is relevant and meaningful for the study. With this method, a researcher finds participants, constructs, and conducts interviews with the research question in mind. Therefore, through this method, I was able to approach key participants that

would provide the answers to my research questions to accomplish the objectives of the study. Snowball, a non-probability sampling technique was also used to locate other key participants. With this technique, the few participants you start with help you to locate other participants that would give you the information you want (Bryman, 2016). It helped so much during the household survey where participants would direct us to another household with the characteristics that would answer the research questions.

As explained above, Bugweri district has three town councils namely Busembatia, Bugweri, and Idudi town council, and it has five sub-counties which include Ibulanku, Igombe, Makuutu, Buyanga, and Namalemba. Out of these, I purposively targeted the four areas including Ibulanku, Makuutu, Buyanga and Idudi Town Council. The reason behind was to sample two sub-counties near town and those deep in the rural areas with poor girl child enrollment rates such that I could have a representative sample. It was through my first interview with the District Educational officer (DEO) and the District Inspector of schools (DIS) that I was able to access the enrollment information and select the sub-counties to sample in my study. Also, through the snowball sampling technique, the DEO and the DIS contacted and directed me to other Three (3) key informants including the Police officer, Local Council Leader (LC I) and a head teacher on whom I had the interviews done. From them I was also introduced to the other Three (3) key participants. In total, I had Eight (8) Key informants (KIs) that provided in-depth one-on-one interviews including the District Education Officer, Inspector of School, head teachers, Local Council Leaders, and the officers from the Police Family Protection Department of the police. Snowball was a helpful tool in that the participants were well versed with their colleagues in the same area with relevant information and, it seemed very easy to recruit participants. However, some key informants had the same opinions and information that would not allow me to have a full picture of what I wanted to achieve (Bryman, 2016). To overcome that, I decided to have some focus group discussions in the same sub-counties but different villages to also include the girls such that I can have a different perspective of the issues about girl child education. We conducted (three) focus groups of girls who dropped out of school and those still in school in Makuutu, Buyanga, and Ibulanku. This helped to get access to detailed information from my participants (Bryman, 2016). The focus group discussion as noted by Bryman reduces the power relationship that exists between a female researcher and a female respondent in feminist studies (Bryman, 2016).

Moreover, in my study, most people interviewed were girls and women, and therefore the group discussion created a conducive environment for women and girls to share their opinions freely.

For the quantitative part, I used a questionnaire with both open-ended and closed-ended questions in the body. According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, the estimated number of households in Bugweri District as of 2020 was approximately 44,500 (UBOS, 2014). However, due to the limited time I had for the field work, we were able to conduct Sixty (60) household interviews through a paper questionnaire. Having a girl child currently in school or formerly in school was the major factor that determined respondents' household selection. The local leaders aided during the snowball to pick out those households. The questionnaire tool was pretested on (ten) 10 households to remove inconsistencies and reduce inaccuracies in the questionnaires. The main intention of the household survey was to capture data on the home environment barriers to girl child education as noted in the literature review section. The quantitative data that was collected from the household survey and the qualitative data from the interviews and the FGDs complemented each other and gave rich data.

3.4 Field entry and data collection exercise

The study employed three research assistants to conduct the household interviews. The research assistants were university students and natives of the area making it easy to freely enter the community and conduct interviews. These were well-versed in the local language (Lusoga) in the area. Besides, we conducted data collection training for the research assistants to prepare them to collect accurate information.

3.5 Data analysis

3.5.1 Qualitative data

I used thematic and content analysis guided by the research objectives and questions backed up by the relevant literature. After transcribing the interviews, I did a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is one of the common methods used in analyzing qualitative data. Thematic analysis is when a researcher uses a reiterative technique of reorganizing data from the interviews grouped into themes that bring out the meaning and answer the research questions (Bryman, 2016). This is because this method helps you to find patterns, re-occurring themes and gives you insights into different perspectives in the data collected. After identifying themes, I did a content analysis to make groups of the themes in line with the objectives and the research questions through

classification and coding (Berg and Lune, 2012). Coding is a process where the collected bulky data is broken down into smaller components and the created smaller parts are given names/labels (Bryman, 2016, p.11). In this study, I was able to categorize the emerging themes into sub-themes and then into the main themes in line with the objectives. This was only possible after I listened to the recorded interviews repeatedly while following it through the transcriptions and coding out any links in the themes that I saw. Listening through the interviews and reading the transcriptions before, during and after coding helped me to avoid fragmented data and losing its context. After I got all my themes ready, I then listened to what each participant said in line with the themes created and that helped me analyze the diverse views of the participants.



Figure 2: (a) The researcher and the Research Assistant conducting a focus group discussion for school dropouts in Ibulanku sub-county (b) The researcher conducts a key informant interview with the District Education officials at Bugweri DLG headquarters.

3.5.2 Quantitative data

Descriptive analysis was majorly used in this report. Frequencies and percentages in graphical representations were used to describe the information regarding the responses given across the investigated variables. I only had one question about the home/community environment barriers to girl child education that needed to be analyzed quantitatively. Therefore, I chose to use diagrams to display the results and responses got from the field. One of the biggest advantages of using this method is that it's relatively easy to read, interpret and understand (Bryman, 2016, p.337).

3.6 Assessment of Study Trustworthiness

Reliability and validity are some of the tools used to measure and evaluate the trustworthiness of quantitative studies (Bryman, 2016, p.41). Reliability is concerned about the replicability of the results from a study. This means that another researcher can carry out the same study and arrive at the same results. In terms of this research, reliability is high because interviews done were with key informants that have firsthand information, for example the DEO and the DIS in the Education's office. Furthermore, interviewing officials not directly connected to the education's office like the Police Officers provided same and more insights into the study. I have also used the district and the ministry documents to triangulate and confirm if what I got from the field was related to what was documented. On the other hand, validity looks at how viable are the conclusions from a research study (Bryman, 2016, p.41). It looks at the accuracy of the methods used in a research study in comparison with the results. In terms of my study, validity is not that high. More households needed to be surveyed to get a deeper and thorough understanding of the perceptions around girl child education in Bugweri. We see that of the 44,500 households as per 2014 statistics in Bugweri, only 60 were surveyed which was a small number.

On the qualitative part, there are four criteria that have been advanced to measure trustworthiness which include: credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability. With these four tools, I will assess the trustworthiness of the study through discussing the limitations and any merits that have impacted on the criteria. Credibility is connected to the study being believable (truthful), looks at the relevancy of the topic and the logical consistency of the ideas. It strengthens the internal validity of the results through triangulation. It also requires that participants are given a chance to validate results and ensure that nothing is misinterpreted (Bryman, 2016, p.384). In connection to the study, during the analysis stage, I have always made direct phone calls to the study participants asking them to confirm if what I had was rhyming with what they told me. And, with the different methods used like household survey, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews enabled triangulation which increases the credibility of the study.

Confirmability looks at the issues of biasness. It emphasizes that researchers need to act in good faith to improve the neutrality and objectivity of the study (Bryman, 2016, p.386). Krefting notes that many times the criterion for assessing quantitative research is evaluated on qualitative research and it is found not appropriate and lacking. He adds and says that social science research is

subjective in nature (Krefting, 1991). In terms of the study, I will look at myself in the epistemological interpretivism position as noted by Clark et al., (2021). Epistemological interpretivism means that it is hard to study and understand a social world using a scientific model. Knowledge is socially constructed and therefore it is hard for a researcher to detach themselves from social realities. However, I was very careful not to let my personal interests, opinions and feelings distort my study in all stages.

Dependability is related to the complete record keeping by the researcher at all phases in the study such that auditing of the work done is made possible (Bryman, 2016, p. 384-386). Consistency, accuracy and completeness of the study design, the process of carrying out research, the findings, and the conclusions presented can be confirmed and audited by looking at the records kept. To ensure dependability of the study, I have kept records of all the phases of the research process including the proposal, data collection instruments (interviews and questionnaire), transcripts such that they are available in case of any review needed (Bryman, 2016).

Transferability according to Bryman (2016), is the possibility of the study to be transferred to other places or subjects. This is possible if there have been thick descriptions of data in the study that can be used by the researcher in another area of study possible (Bryman, 2016, p. 384). In terms of my study, I'm sure that there have been thick descriptions and the transferability aspect is high and possible.

3.7 Ethical consideration

An introduction letter from the University research department provided a detailed purpose of my data collection exercise (see appendix iv). An inception meeting with the district administrative offices was held to obtain permission and carry out the data collection exercise in the respective district units including the Chief Administrative Officer, Education Officer, and the Inspector of Schools at BDLG headquarters. Before proceeding with interviews, a consent form would be presented to the interviewees (see appendix v), and willingly accepted to use their information for academic purposes. One other thing I made sure that I did was to do no harm. According to Bryman (2016, p.126) explains harm as stress, loss of self-esteem, physical harm and anything that hampers the participants development. During my fieldwork, I have ensured that participants had freedom to express their feelings and were free to discontinue their participation in case they were uncomfortable. Nothing was out of force but willingness. Respondents also consented to using

their pictures for the report writing while at NMBU. I had also registered with the Norwegian center for Research Data (NSD) in Norway and notified them that I would be collecting personal data and using some it in my research.

3.8 Limitations

One major limitation of this study is the surveyed small sample size of the households. Bugweri as per 2014 statistics had 44,500 households and due to limited time, I only managed to interview 60 households which is a very small number compared to the total households in the district. This could affect the credibility of the study.

Also, I collected data during the festive season and some officers travelled to their home villages for Christmas. Therefore, I failed to interview some officers like the Probation's officer, the Community Development Officer (CDO) of which I think they could have provided me with quality information about my study.

3.9 Socio-demographic characteristics of the interviewed population

In this section, the profile of the interviewed respondents is described following the household information. This information was vital while interpreting the results in the findings section.

Table 2: Social demographic characteristics

Socio-demographic X-tics		Frequency	Percent (%)
Sub-county	Idudi Town council	22	36
	Makuutu	32	52.5
	Buyanga	7	11
Sex	Male	10	16
	Female	51	84
Marital status	Married	44	72
	Widow (er)	7	11.5
	Divorced/seperated	10	16
Father's education	Never attended school	17	28
	Primary school	19	31
	Secondary school	20	33
	Higher education	5	8
Mother's education	Never attended school	17	28
	Primary school	19	31
	Secondary school	17	28
	Higher education	8	13
Age	18 to 30 yrs	1	2
	30-45yrs	19	31
	>45yrs	41	67
Ethnicity	Basoga	48	79
	Baganda	2	3

	Bagweere	1	2
	Badaama	1	2
	Other tribe	9	14
Salaried household	Household head	9	45
	Household head and spouse	9	45
	Household head, spouse & any other	2	10
Source of income	Peasantry/agriculture	35	49
	Formal employment	5	7
	Informal employment	4	6
	Business	27	38
House material wall	Mud/unburnt bricks	3	5
	Burnt bricks	48	79
	Concrete/cemented	10	16
House material roofing	Grass thatched	2	3.5
	Iron roof	57	93
	Tiles	2	3

Source: Field survey data (2022)

The sampled households for questionnaire interviews constituted 52.5% of respondents from Makuutu sub-county, followed by 36% from Idudi Town Council and lastly 11% from Buyanga sub-county. Of these, 84% of the respondents were females and 16% were males. The married respondents dominated the survey with 72% followed by the divorced/separated with 16% and then the widowers with 11.5%. In line with the father's education, 33% had a level of secondary school, 31% went up to primary level, 28% never attended school and only 8% attained higher education. When we look at the mother's education from the table above, the greatest number were those that had attained a primary school level with 31%. Those that never went to school and those that went up to the secondary school level tallied 28% each. And only 13% of the mothers were able to attain a higher education level. When we come to age, most of the respondents were above 45 years at 67%, followed by those aged 30-45 years at 31%, and only 2% of the respondents were aged 18-30 years. The survey was conducted in the Busoga region, and it is not surprising that the highest number of respondents were Basogas with 79%. The 14% in the ethnicity category represents the other tribes except the ones indicated in the table. The Baganda respondents were 3% and the Bagweere and the Badama were 2% each in the sample. In line with the salaried household, 45% of the respondents had the household heads receiving salaries at the end of the month. Still, 45% of the households had a household head and spouse receiving a monthly salary at the end of the month and lastly, 10% of respondents had the household head, spouse, and some other person receiving the salary. When we come to the source of income, many of the respondents had their main source of income from peasantry/agriculture with 49%, followed by 38% whose

main source of income were Businesses (for example retail shops, and restaurants). Formal employment constituted 7% and informal employment had 6% of the respondents. The visited households were dominated by houses that used burnt bricks to make their walls at 79%, followed by houses with concrete/cemented walls at 16%, then those houses built with mud/unburnt bricks at 5%. With house roofing material, the majority had iron roofed houses at 93%, followed by those with grass thatched roofs at 3.5% and lastly, those with tiles were 3%.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter, results, interpretation, and explanation are presented. The section also embodies the discussion of the findings. This will comprise interpreting the findings concerning the scholarly work from the local settings of the study area and validation with literature from elsewhere around the world. The section is divided into three major sections following the objectives of the study and, a paragraph has been written after the findings of each main objective relating the findings to the study framework discussed above which is the Human Rights Approach and the Capability Approach.

4.1 Perception of benefits of girl child education in the community

Results on the perception of benefits associated with girl child education depicted that the majority had positive benefits of educating a girl child in this community 82% (see *Figure 2*). Only 18% could not acknowledge the positive benefit of educating girl children. Increased positive perception towards girl child education in this community was surprising given that the status quo reports that parents pay a deaf ear towards educating female children as revealed by studies (Nabugoomu et al., 2020). Nabugoomu and others reported that parents neglect girl child education in Uganda. Parents' neglect of girl child education was attributed to the pressure to contribute to family welfare through bride price.

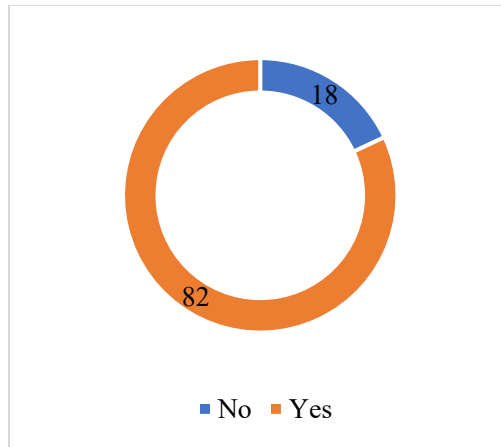


Figure 3: Responses for perception on benefit for girl child education
Source: Field survey data (2022)

Also, a country report by Bantebya et al., (2014) revealed that parents especially in eastern Uganda are described by poor girl-child parenting. In this study, it is said that even though Ugandan laws accept marriage at the age of 18, parents are pushing their daughters to get married at an earlier age in the interest of receiving bride price. They have failed to guide their daughters into a better future and instead turned them into ‘commodities’ in exchange for wealth leading to sexual transactions, early marriages, and consequently school dropout. However, the increased positive perception towards girl child education in the Bugweri community is due to the belief that intimate relationships and sexual behavior among young people are forbidden and highly prohibited by the community elders as also revealed by Bell & Aggleton, (2013) and Bantebya et al., (2014). Furthermore, the perception of the positive benefit of girl child education increased because it was revealed that currently educated girls attract more opportunities than boys in line with employment. During a key informant interview in Idudi town council, the chairperson of the local council one (parish chairperson) submitted that:

“...in my community these days, girls are turning out to be more resourceful.... girls are grabbing opportunities than boys... our girls grow up knowing that they don't have an inheritance from their fathers unlike the boys... and even when girls get better opportunities, they still support their families... the boys are reluctant to grab available opportunities hoping to receive their portion of the inheritance from father’s wealth....” (*Idudi Key Informant interview dated 27th December 2022*)

Therefore, this thought among the community members has driven them to give attention and be positive to girl child education since they are turning out to be more resourceful than boys. Furthermore, during another key informant interview, 34 years aged woman reported that:

“... these days, girls are hardworking more than boys...most of the boys are drug addicts, indiscipline, some have escaped to urban areas leaving their parents without support compared to girls who are at home all-time participating both in production and domestic work..., this sometimes makes parents have a bias on girl child education...” (*Idudi Key Informant interview dated 29th December 2022*)

Therefore, looking at the benefits associated with educating girl children, parent’s perceptions have been altered from only supporting their sons to also sending their daughters to school as they have proved and observed that adult daughters are so caring and provide more support than adult sons and find that educating girls is very fruitful as it equips them with better skills to render support to their parents as revealed by (Edewor, 2006). And this is also in agreement with the capabilities approach where it is argued that education enhances a person’s capabilities and, in this case, girls acquired skills and were able to live valuable lives support their families too (Robeyns, 2003; Sen, 1997).

4.1.1 Benefits of girl child education

Results of the benefit accrued to girl child education are presented in Figure 3. In order of importance: increased literacy, respect for family, support to the family, reduced infant mortality rate, participation in decision-making, reduced early marriages, reduced food scarcity, increased value for girls, and participation in leadership were the associated benefits of girl child education in the community.

a) Increased literacy levels

Increased literacy levels received the highest responses of 69%. It was reported that when girls went to school and completed up to the higher levels of their education, they were able to educate their young siblings to complete school. Not only that, but these girls also became educated mothers in that they were able to encourage their daughters and sons to attain an education which in turn increased the literacy levels in the community. In the end, educating girl children resulted

in a literate generation within the family and the community at large and these results are in line with those advanced by Sperling & Winthrop, (2015). In this study, it was highlighted that educating girls has a positive generational cycle on the literacy levels within a community. Furthermore, it was stated that there is a huge return on the girl’s education whereby a single highly educated girl kicks off a positive education cycle and empowerment as it is transferred from mother to daughter and then goes from generation to generation. To emphasize the above point, I quote Ahamad & Narayana, “If we educate a boy, we educate one person. If we educate a girl, we educate a family” (Ahamad & Narayana, 2015). Therefore, educating a single girl creates a positive generational ripple effect that helps in challenging the barriers to achieving a high-quality education not only for girls but also boys.

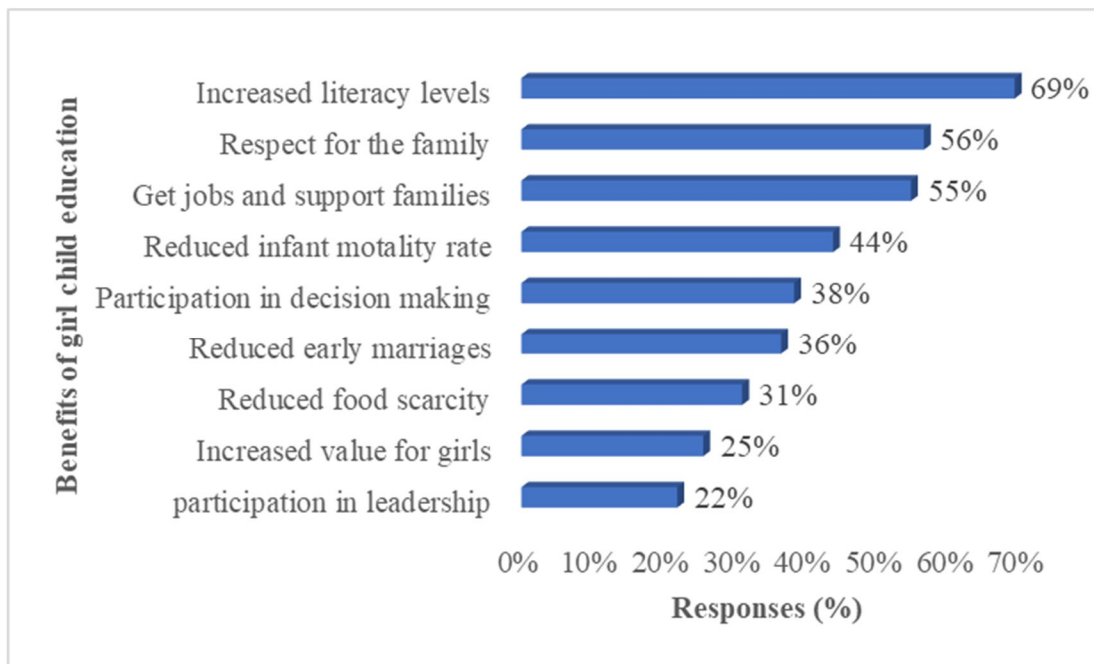


Figure 4: Benefit of girl child education
Source: Field survey data (2022)

b) Respect for the family

Respect for the family was another benefit of educating a girl child that received 56% of the responses. A family that educated girls received such great respect in the community especially

when girls would marry wealthy In-laws and responsible people. During a key informant interview with the DIS, respect for family is highly raised when girl children are educated.

“...actually in Idudi town council, there are five renown families popular for having educated their girl children and successfully obtained great careers and I would like to speak about a few... one of these five families educated their two girls and are police officers both at a rank of Assistant superintendent of police working in Kampala City and serving in different police stations... another family has a girl who is a secondary school teacher in one of the best schools in Uganda... and the other family has a midwife... these homes compel the community to respect them especially when these children have come back home for vacation driving their cars...” (*Idudi Key Informant interview dated 27th December 2022*)

In this community where some parents believed that girl child education is a menace to the family progress and development, shockingly remained wondering about the progress of these homes where girls have successfully studied and changed their lives. The results of attaching respect to the families that have educated girl children are in line with Kohli et al., (2021). Kohli and colleagues revealed that educating a girl child in a community challenges the social norms that are anchored on gender inequality thus calling for culture change. As a result, families that have gone ahead to educate their daughters and overcame the cultural norms have turned out to be successful and hence commanded respect from the community. In another study done in Rwanda, it was revealed that girl child education didn't only command respect to the family, but also it elevated respect of women from their families and increased their opportunities to feature in public forums and ability to make autonomy decisions in the family (Burnet, 2011). Also, girl child education was revealed to be a source of respect as it transformed women's roles from just being housewives, to employed and salaried working family members as revealed by Somani, (2017).

c) Get jobs and Support families.

Support to families received 55% of the responses. It was reported that educated girls were able to find job opportunities easily and eventually were able to provide their families with the necessary support needed. It was added that educated girls would prioritize developing their homes and supporting their families, which was not the case with the boys who would instead support their

parents' in-law. During a key informant interview with the DEO, educated girls had better jobs and were supporting their parents and siblings.

“...educated girls have enhanced the livelihoods of their families...we have a family in Idudi town council whose educated girls have come back and changed the lives of their family... they have opened up business enterprises for their mother, they have opened up business enterprises for their father... they have gone ahead to improve on the facelift of their home...” (*Idudi Key Informant interview dated 27th December 2022*)

In another key informant interview with the DIS, he mentioned that:

“...girls always have a strong association with their parents especially with their mothers and they will always make sure that their parents are catered for as far as their basic needs are concerned...” (*Idudi Key Informant interview dated 27th December 2022*)

The families in Bugweri community that have not endeavored to educate their daughters and have instead neglected them have missed out on these benefits of an educated girl child. The results of educated girls getting jobs and supporting their families are in line with Edewor, (2006). In this study, it was revealed that girls often visited their parents, sent them money, and made regular calls which wasn't the case with their male counterparts. The girls would also spend quality time with their parents when they were ill while the boys would just come for a day, give them drugs, and then leave. This showed that the girls were more caring than the boys and it confirmed the importance of educating a girl child as far as family support is concerned. In another study done by (Sohail, 2014) it is believed that women perform 66% of the world's work and produce 50% of the food and yet they earn less than men and own only 1% of the property. Regardless of the statistics above, they have managed to fight poverty in their families and societies because they can get good jobs and invest more in their communities than their male counterparts. This has also proved that investing in women's education is both the right and the smart thing to do as it equips them with better skills and knowledge to compete for better jobs. Furthermore, educating a girl child has dual benefits: the first benefit is to the girl herself (and her family) and the second one is to her society. Girls were more rewarding than boys and that's why parents have continuously invested in their education to act as their old-age security as revealed by (Edewor, 2006) and (Sohail, 2014).

d) Reduced infant mortality rate.

The reduced infant mortality rate received responses of 44%. It was reported that when girls got an education, they were able to take care of their children efficiently. It was added that taking girls to school equipped them with knowledge to attend antenatal visits while pregnant and after birth, they would provide what was best for their children, for example, giving them a balanced diet, taking them to the hospital instead of the shrine (traditional healer) for treatment, and taking them for immunization. This greatly reduced the death of infants as educated mothers could take care for their children and keeping them healthy. The results are in line with Amwonya et al., (2022) a study done in Uganda about female education and maternal health care utilization. It was revealed that educated mothers continuously utilized maternal healthcare services and this resultantly reduced the infant mortality rates. It was further revealed that educating girls broke the superstitions around immunization of children (Amwonya et al., 2022)

Also elsewhere, in a study conducted in India to determine how mothers' education affected the mortality of boys and girls, it was found that educated mothers decreased the mortality rate of children below the age of 5 years (Bourne & Walker, 1991). This confirmed the fact that education does not merely lead to increased wealth but also leads to increased health and saving of lives. Das Gupta, (1990) also asserts that children survive death because educated mothers can accord them with improved childcare which helps them grow healthy (Das Gupta, 1990). Another study done by (Edewor, 2006), noted that educating girls is one of the most vital investments developing countries need to make because, in the long run, it leads to benefits such as improved nutrition and child health. Additionally, the study found that girls' education had outstanding effects on infant and child mortality. This was not surprising given that the children were always under the care of educated females.

e) Participation in decision making.

Participation in decision-making had 38% of the responses. In the Bugweri community, men are the dominant people that make all the decisions within the family and the women are expected to just follow. It is the same reason why girls and women have always been left out in the decision-making processes within their families and the community at large. However, this trend has begun to shift given that some girls that have attained an education are proving to be understanding and important to be included in the decision-making processes. In one of the key interviews with the

DIS, it was reported that educated girls were now viewed as people who would contribute equally and even more efficiently in decision-making than some men and they were deemed important to participate.

“...once girls go to school and finish their higher education and return home with successful careers, it changes their status and people begin to see them as people of integrity and wisdom...you even see people going to them for advice on how they made it to be that successful...others go to them for connections...they receive respect from the community and they are always trusted to give great advice just because of the higher education they attained... for this reason, even their own families will want to hear from them before any decision is taken...

He added:

“...I know of a family in Idudi town council whose parents wanted to sell a piece of land and they couldn't do it without their daughters' authorization...therefore, it becomes so hard for educated girls to be pushed out of the decision-making processes...” (*Idudi Key Informant interview dated 27th December 2022*)

In this case, therefore, girls that have never attended any school or even those who dropped out of school are at a disadvantage because their status will remain low within the family and the community. Also, even when they get married, it's highly likable that their husbands will dominate all the decisions in the family and this is in line with (Adato et al., 2000). This was a report that was seeking to examine the impact of PROGRESA, an anti-poverty social program in Mexico that provided cash support and benefits to children directly linked to their mothers. The support was majorly to see that their children attended school and visited clinics for nutritional supplements. The results of the report found that husbands became the sole decision-makers in families where wives had low levels of education. They added that men would undermine their wives when they were less educated, and women were proposing adult education as an alternative to build their status and influence in their families.

f) Reduced early marriages.

Reduced early marriage had responses of 36% where respondents agreed that the longer girls stay in school, the lower the rates of early marriage. They also added that educating a girl child reduces her chances of getting married at a younger age and increases her chances of getting married when she is old enough to take care of her family. In an interview with the police officer at Makuutu regional police post, he noted that taking girls to school has reduced cases of early marriage in the community. He submitted that:

“...even though we still have some cases of early marriages, they were worse before the introduction of Universal primary Education (UPE) in Uganda, cases of early marriages were very rampant in Makuutu because parents could not afford school fees for primary going children...”

“...their girls didn’t attend school and with the cultural belief, that any girl who started her menstruation period would be quickly married off and they were about the age of 12-13 years, made the rates of early marriage shoot high...”

“...however, this has changed greatly especially with the introduction of Universal Secondary Education (USE) where girls can at least join a secondary school even though the completion rates are still low...”

“...nevertheless, this keeps the girls in school until they are above 18 years before they get married...in Uganda, you are considered an adult and able to make independent decisions...” (*Makuutu Key Informant interview dated 28th December 2022*)

These thoughts from the respondents in Makuutu community are in line with Ahamad & Narayana, (2015) who in their study also emphasized that keeping girls in school delays their marriage. Also, they commented that on average, when a girl stays in school past the fifth grade, each additional year of school delays her marriage for another year. Furthermore, Ahamad & Narayana stated that by the time educated girls think of marriage, their bodies are old enough to bear and take care of

their children. Rasmussen et al., (2019) note that early marriages are so rampant in girls who are least educated, and he recommends interventions to help girls stay in school. This is because girls who stay longer in school due to the educational interventions lead to reduced school dropouts and hence reduced early marriages. Also, it was revealed that educational attainment made girls economically self-sufficient. This reduced the mentality of relying on men's gifts and other financial support which usually lures girls to marry at an early age (Raj et al., 2019; Rasmussen et al., 2019).

Furthermore, respondents revealed that girls getting married when they are mature enough reduced maternal deaths and infant mortality. These would clearly follow the instructions provided by the health officials upon conception. Ahamad & Narayana, (2015) also emphasized that mothers who are educated reduce complications during pregnancy periods and also during childbirth (Ahamad & Narayana, 2015).

g) Reduced food scarcity.

Reduced food scarcity came up as one of the benefits of educating a girl child and it received 31% of the respondents. It was noted that girls were closer to their parents than boys after they got married. In a key informant interview with the DEO, he mentioned that girls made sure that their parents had some income generating businesses that would help them earn some money to support them with the basic needs, especially food.

“...a girl child is different from a boy child...girls will send money and food but also they want to see that their parents have access to food at all times and that's the reason as to why they set up small businesses for their parents like poultry farms, shops in the market and also, they usually buy cows to supply milk to them and earn from it too...”

“...this makes parents become self-sufficient...whereas boys will just want to give cash which makes parents dependents...the day the boy has no money then it becomes tough for the parents to survive the situation at hand...”

In the same interview the DIS added,

“...parents would never take their girls to school and little did they know that they will be their source of food in future...they expected this from the boys but what is happening is the opposite...”

“...boys mind so much about the In-laws than their parents...they want to look good before the parents of their wives and they do less to look after their parents...surprisingly, educated girls are the ones coming back to their homes and developing them and providing food to their parents...” (*Idudi Key Informant interview dated 27th December 2022*)

These results are in line with Edewor, (2006) a report that was examining the changing perceptions about girls' education and their values in Isoko, Nigeria where respondents reported that girls have proved to be more rewarding than the boys. They do provide food for them and send them money than the boys who would always give them excuses. They added that previously, it was only boys that were sent to school with a thought that girls would benefit their husbands than their parents. However, with the care girls offered to their parents after school, proved to them that it is even better to train a girl than training a boy (Edewor, 2006).

According to Quisumbing et al., (1996), women's education does not only provide food security to their families but also in the long run benefits society and the nation. Women have played an important role in developing countries through maintaining the pillars of food security namely: food availability through production, food accessibility and affordability and lastly nutrition security and yet they face lot of challenges. Women with a basic education were actively working and helping to raise the incomes from agricultural produce through their quick adoption of the new technology. In this study, it was found that these women with a primary education invested in high-value crops like coffee and it was easy for other women to adopt and plant the same crop than men hence increased production of food.

h) Increased value for girls

Increased value for girls was also perceived as one of the benefits of educating girls and 25% of the respondents agreed. The respondents revealed that educated girls were valued too much and common men would fear to approach them which was not the case if a girl was less educated. In an interview with a Headteacher who doubled as a parent too, she commented and said that:

“...when a girl graduates, she has higher chances of marrying a man who is responsible and educated who will treat her with care...this is because the degree adds value to her and ordinary men fear approaching her...she is also careful with who she is associating with...”

“...value also increases when she gets a better job and earns good money... educated girls are also in better position within their families... their husbands cannot easily trick them because they are able to notice it...”

(Idudi Key Informant interview dated 27th December 2022)

The thoughts from the community of Bugweri are in line with Adato et al., (2000), Sperling & Winthrop, (2015) and Edewor, (2006) where all reveal that education increases value for girls and girls also value themselves with what they are empowered to do. Women no longer wait for men to provide everything for the household but also join with their husbands and help each other. This means that education not only increases value for women but also empowers them to help their husbands.

However, it is surprising to see that increased value for girls received a lower percentage and yet most of the responses depicted respect for families where educated girl children belonged. Bugweri community is also characterized by strong cultural norms, and this could be one of the reasons why a few respondents valued the education of a girl child. Some people still believe that women are only meant to be caregivers and work in the kitchen and its only men that must work in better jobs. Others still believe that an educated woman is a stress in marriage, and they do not support women getting highly educated. Therefore, some of these inconsistencies are cultural. The evidence of this thought is backed up by a study done in Ghana to examine the access and barriers to education for Ghanaian women and girls where it was found that the society does not support girl child education claiming that educated women are not marriageable and they do not perform well in cooking and are not good wives. In fact, they say that educated wives have no discipline and decay in morals (Tanye, 2008). Therefore, this could also be the reason why respondents in the study area did not strongly attach value to educated girls.

The capability approach is a vast normative framework that is used to assess the well-being of an individual (Robeyns, 2005, 2006). As discussed above, having access to education allowed girls to become knowledgeable and gave them a chance to flourish and this is a valuable capability

(Nussbaum, 2004; Robeyns, 2003; Sen, 2001; Sen, 1999). Capabilities refer to the actual opportunities that can help a person achieve the various functionings (the achievements or outcomes) that an individual can attain, and it looks at what they can be and do. To illustrate the above statement, take for example: a girl being able to go to school is a valuable capability and the girl being educated is an achievement. Valuable capabilities like girls being able to learn or having access to education is a crucial aspect in the capabilities approach as it helped them gain skills and knowledge to compete for valuable jobs, empowered them to become less vulnerable in the society, elevated their respect in society and so forth. Again, quality education improved the standard of living of the girls and gave them the ability to shield themselves and their families from poverty to live a life that they valued (Nussbaum, 2004; Robeyns, 2006). To sum up here, Nussbaum, (2004) highlighted that education increases the opportunity set of women and allows them to improve on their well-being as they can easily move out of an abusive marriage, take part in politics, and participate in decision making processes, hence living valued lives.

4.2 Community and School Barriers to girl child education

Results of household and community-based barriers to girl child education are presented in Figure 4. In order of the most pressing barrier to the least: failure to afford school fees and requirements, poor parenting, society perceptions and cultural fallacies, long distance to school, child labor, loss of parents were the associated household and community-based barriers of girl child education in the community.

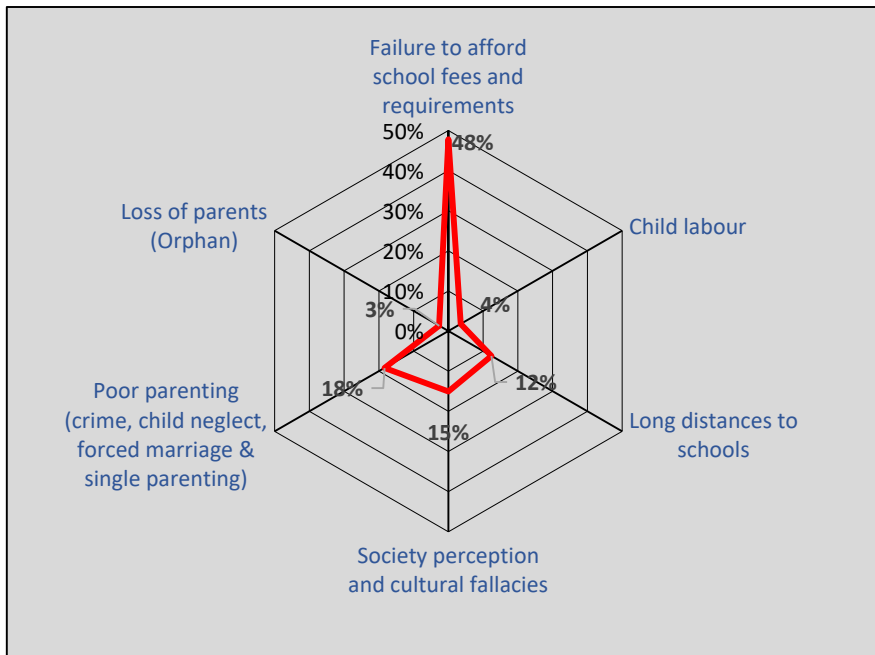


Figure 5: household and community barriers

Source: Field survey data (2022)

a) Failure to afford school fees and requirements.

Responses to failure to afford school fees and requirements were recorded as the highest with 48%. This was attributed to lack of money by the parents due to increased poverty levels in the community. Many of the parents were engaged in peasantry/agriculture which does not yield enough income to support all the family’s basic needs like food and educate all their children. In addition, several parents in this community had an average of more than 6 (six) children in the family, which proved to be very expensive to provide for hindering the education of the girls. To explain this further, in a focus group interview with the girls that dropped out school in Busoola village, Ibulanku sub-county, an 18-year-old girl narrated that:

“...we are 8 children in my family and its only my mother helping us all whose only job is digging and selling the little she harvests to get money...when my father died, it became difficult for my mother to educate us all and so I sympathized with her to relieve her of the burden such that she can educate my young brothers... I stopped going to school when I was in senior two (2) ...”

She added:

“...even my elder sister didn’t complete school and she decided to get married due to lack of school fees...primary was a bit easier but secondary was expensive and that is when I dropped out...” (*Busoola FGD dated 29th December 2022*)

It was observed that the nearby school in Busoola village was a private secondary school which was very expensive for parents to afford and yet it provided quality services. Also, the government schools were distant and known for providing poor quality services and were not affordable either due to the increased school fees demands from parents. This is in line with the study done by Deininger, (2003) in Uganda. It was revealed that even when Uganda introduced free universal school programs, the costs at the secondary schools did not reduce which hindered many from completing school.

It was revealed that among the various factors that led to crime, lack of school fees as a barrier to girl child education in Bugweri community is one of them. Some girls that needed to continue with school and yet could not be supported by their parents were easily seduced and abused by men leading to high cases of defilement as shown in *figure 6*. These men would promise girls school fees and yet they just wanted to have sexual relations with them and then dump them. In an interview with ‘Mama police’ officer in charge of the district family affairs revealed that one of the causes of the increased defilement cases in the district is the inability of the parents to keep girls in school and provide all their school requirements and needs.

“...girls passionate about school and yet their parents can’t afford are easily seduced by men for sexual relations in exchange for school fees and other necessities... they ask them to collect fees in secret places where there are no people, and this gives them a chance to defile these girls...poverty by the parents has made it hard for girls to go to school which has again escalated the defilement cases...” (*Idudi Police Key Informant interview dated 30th December 2022*)

Those thoughts from the police officer are in line with Kurgat et al., (2023) study done in Kenya. In this study, it was revealed that the economic status of a household is a great determinant of child defilement in the community. Furthermore, it was said that a family that is unable to provide all basic requirements for its members opens doors for people that take advantage (Kurgat et al.,

2023). Therefore, the lack of money to afford school fees and scholastic materials for the girls was a great obstacle to girl child education in Bugweri community.

b) Poor parenting

Poor parenting received the second highest response, with 18% of the respondents agreeing. As depicted in appendix I, most of the parents did not complete their education, a good percentage never attended school. It was observed that many parents did not understand the value of spending time with their children, instead they would get busy in their gardens, informal businesses and hanging out in the village and town center. Less time was accorded to parent-child talk and parents only talked to their children when sending them for something or barking at them for doing wrong. This observation explains why there were rising cases of child neglect/desertion at the district police post as shown in Figure 6. Low literacy levels of the parents and lack of time to attend to their children led to poor parenting that negatively affected the confidence and attitude of the girls leading to poor academic performance in their schools. The literacy level of the parents, especially that of a mother, is very crucial in the education of the children. Atayi, (2008) documented the importance of literate mothers in decreasing the rate of girls dropping out of school. It was reported that 36% of the children whose mothers are illiterate drop out of school compared to 16% of the children whose mothers are educated (Atayi, 2008). Also, spending quality time with children helps you direct them in the right paths to a bright future. In a study done by Campaert et al., (2018), it was revealed that lower levels of monitoring and supervision done by the parent to their children led to a higher moral disengagement in 1 years' time and it was concluded that poor parenting practices especially poor monitoring and harsh discipline were the causes for moral disengagement because they reinforced parental approval for aggression of their children (Campaert et al., 2018).

In the area, poor parenting was also reported to be the highest contributor of crimes against girls in school going age. For instance, as depicted in Figure 6, cases of defilement had the highest frequency of 74% in 2020, 43% in 2022 and 42% in 2021. The highest record of defilement was recorded in the year 2020. This was partially due to the sudden lock down and school closure in a bid to curb the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. These COVID-19 measures intensified child insecurity and moral degeneration which translated into severe immorality among the young girls

especially in rural areas (Datzberger et al., 2023; Mwenyango, 2022). Also, the extensions and consistent lockdowns in Uganda that led to closure of schools ignited domestic violence against women hence leading many family wrangles due to men’s failure to provide for the family. This intensified social psycho depression among children especially the girls forcing them to indulge into unhealthy relationships thus early marriages and consequently school dropout (Nabukeera, 2021). This explains the Daily monitor report on 27th July 2020 where over 2300 under aged schoolgirls were reported to have conceived and more than 128 married during lockdown in Uganda (Oketch B. et al., 2020).

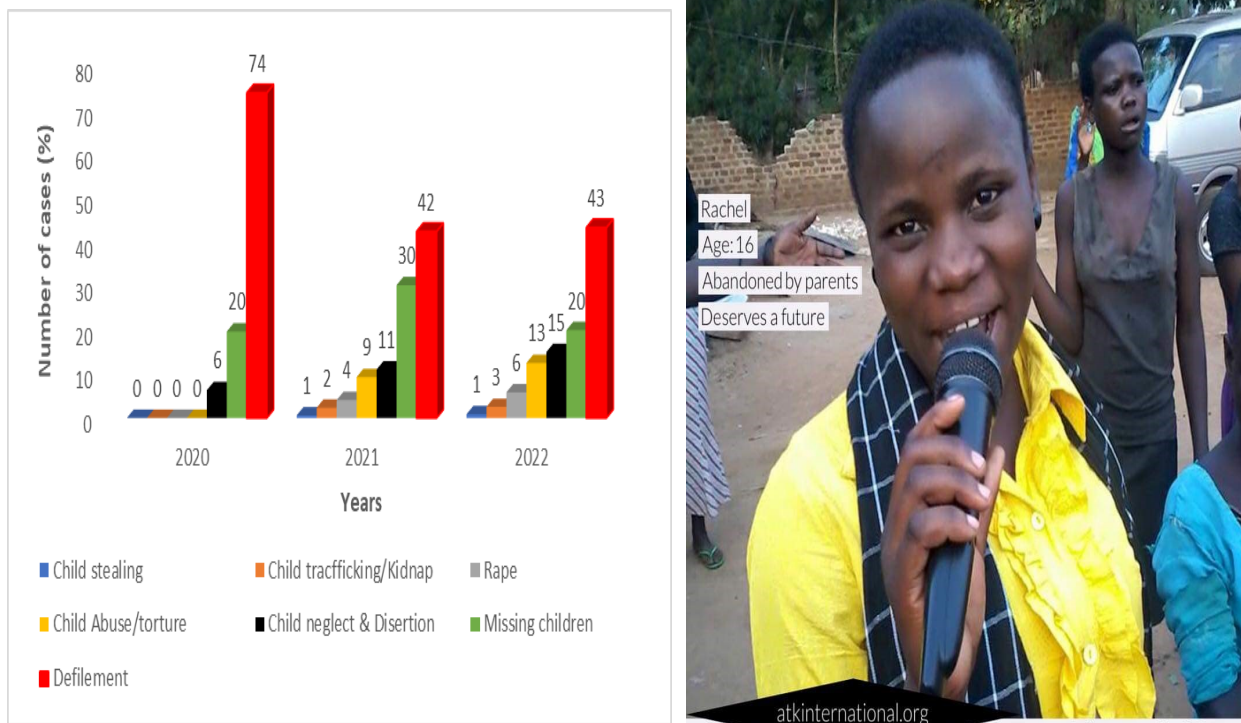


Figure 6: a) Crimes that hinder girl child education in Bugweri district (a) abandoned 16-year-old girl. Source: Figure (6a) Bugweri District Police Station; Figure 6 (b) ATK international Facebook page

c) Society's perceptions and cultural fallacies

Society perception and cultural fallacies received the third highest responses of 15%. In Bugweri Community, a boy child is treasured more than a girl child because they believe that boys are the ones that build up a clan and benefit their families, while girls will just get married off to other men and in that case, they would benefit the family in which they got married to. For this reason, parents saw it as worthwhile to invest in the boy than investing in the girl which has hindered the

girls from attaining and completing their education. In an interview with the local village council, he pointed out that as soon as the girls' breasts developed, then they were ready for marriage and parents would begin negotiating the bride price for their daughters. Mr. Kyeyune [not real names], revealed that:

“...the only thing parents are happy about giving birth to girls is the bride price issue...culture demands that the man pays for the girl in marriage and all this dowry goes to the parents...that is why they do not care about taking them to school because they know they will benefit the man they get married to...” (*Idudi Key Informant interview dated 27th December 2022*)

The result above falls in line with Atayi, (2008) whose study was looking at disabling barriers to girl child education in the Arua district Uganda. She highlighted that cultural norms and perceptions about girls are a strong hindrance to girl child education. They are looked at as marriage materials and only mind about having children. She went ahead and said that parents don't educate their girl children because they know that the benefits of her education will be enjoyed by the son-in-law instead of them. Those who try to educate their daughters still have a higher bride price in their mind which changes nothing (Atayi, 2008).

Also, in an interview with Mama police, the family affairs officer, noted that other men hinder girls from attending school by using clan spirits and rituals to detain them for sexual abuse while lying to them that they offer protection. Mama police reported that:

“...a young girl of 15 years was lied to by an uncle that he possessed her with the family spirits, and she was to be obedient to him...he prohibited the girl from attending school, shaving her hair and socializing with her peers in disguise of she would die if she did the things mentioned above...”

She went on and emphasized that:

“...that's how the girl dropped out of school even when we saved her from this man, she had lost interest...other girls are sacrificed to the clan

spirits that do not allow them to go to school but only stay in the shrines...”
(Idudi Police Key Informant interview dated 30th December 2022)

In line with the above observation, a study done by Kainuwa & Yusuf, (2013) on the Cultural Traditions and Practices of the Parents as Barriers to Girl-child Education in Zamfara State Nigeria, noted that socio-cultural practices and traditions, beliefs, customs, and insecurity are crucial in hindering girl child education and in most cases, these traditions are upheld by parents. They do this to have the blessings of their clan spirits (Kainuwa & Yusuf, 2013).

It was also revealed that girls face a challenge of unequal gender norms and roles where most of the household chores and petty businesses are done by girls. This has given girls limited time to attend to their studies and their performance in school reduces all the time. Due to the poor grades, other girls tend to be demoralized and hence drop out of school. Others are tempted to fall in love with other men when they are taken to the markets to attend to the petty businesses of the family hence early marriages. In agreement with the above observation, Kainuwa & Yusuf, (2013) reported that girls and females were raised to assume the domestic roles for example collecting firewood, cooking, taking care of the children and engaging in small family businesses. In another study done in Bangladesh, it was reported that parents compromise on the education of their girls by placing the gender norms as a priority. Instead of working hard to see that their daughters achieve a higher education, they are dedicated to seeing that their daughters enter marriage early in the future (Arafat et al., 2021). Therefore, Society's perceptions and cultural fallacies and the socio-cultural gender norms were one of the leading factors that are causing the increased rate of school dropouts of girls in the study area.

d) Long distances to school

Long distance to school was another barrier that recorded 12% of the responses from the community. This percentage is significant enough to show that it is one of the factors that have also hindered girls from attending and completing school.

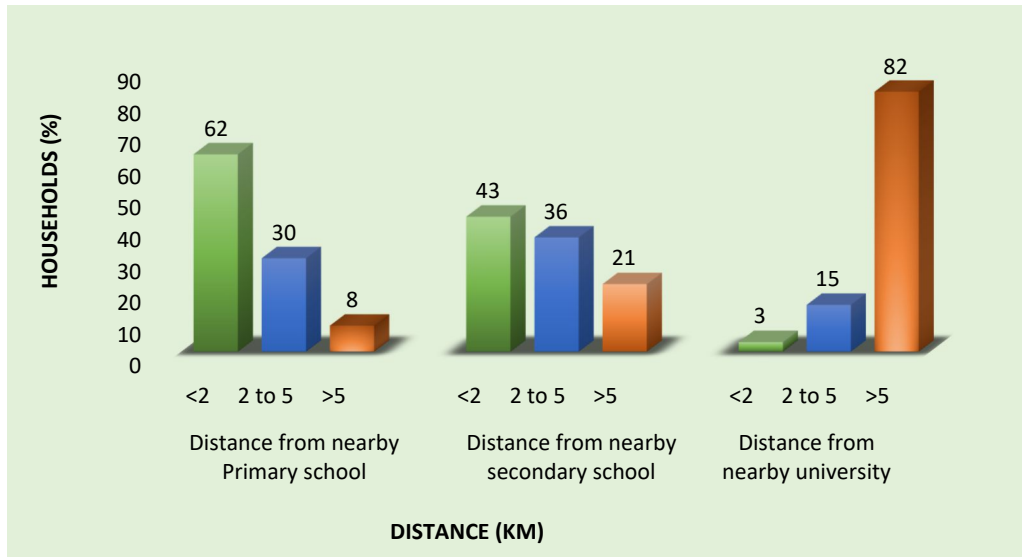


Figure 7: School distance from households in Bugweri

Source: Field survey data (2022)

Figure 7 above shows that long distances, especially secondary schools, are further than the primary schools which has contributed to more girls dropping out of school and less girls completing secondary education. Moreover, the universities are further and it's the reason why the completion rate of girl's education is very low. It was reported that the long distance to school was not problematic for the boys because they would bike and would not face a lot of challenges like the girls. The long distances to school have made parents to feel insecure in sending their girls to school by themselves due to sexual harassment that is a common act done to girls on their way back home from school.

These results are in line with a study done in India that was to examine the impacts of distance to secondary schools' achievement. It was found out that a distance between 2 to 3 km reduced the opportunities of a girl in acquiring a secondary education and hence became a barrier to their completion of school. It was only households that were well off that could afford to drive their girls to school every day that their girls managed to complete school (Das & Das, 2021). Also, in Mozambique, in a study to ascertain barriers to girl child education, the UNICEF offices noted that among the factors that are hindering girls from attaining and completing their education is the long distances they needed to walk to school (Roby et al., 2009). Therefore, as seen in figure 7, most secondary and university schools are at a distance between 2KMs and more than 5KMs which has hindered many girls from completing their education.

e) Child labor

Responses on child labor were 4%. Child labor was mostly seen through working on the sugarcane plantations and working as house maids. School-going children could double it up with work to earn some money for the family and for themselves too. Child labor was both influenced by the parents to provide for the family and children were motivated to go to work because they would get money to meet their needs that parents could not meet. For the sugarcane jobs, the community reported that it had decreased greatly due to the fall in the sugarcane demand during COVID-19, but it was otherwise one of the leading causes of school dropout. In a FGD, an 18-year-old girl narrated that she dropped out of school because she wanted to have some money and get herself clothes to match her friends. Her mother could not afford to provide for the family and buy the clothes that she wanted. She revealed that, I quote:

“...a friend of mine found me a job in Kampala to work as a house maid and when they paid me, it was a new world for me...I had never held money that belonged to me and I felt like the world is mine...I could buy all that I wanted things like new clothes, shoes and I also bought a new phone...I saw that it was useless for me to continue with school and yet I could earn my own money...” *(Busoola FGD dated 29th December 2022)*

From the above narrative, it was out of peer pressure that the girl wanted to quit school and work to earn money and be like her friends. However, in the same focus group, a 17-year-old girl narrated that, I quote:

“...I still wanted to go to school but my mother forced me to go to Jinja and work as a house help for ...she told me that I need to work so that my family can have food and also help my young brother finish school...when I went to work as a house help, I never went back to school...when I was in Jinja, I fell in love with a man and now I have a child...” *(Busoola FGD dated 29th December 2022)*

Also, during the household survey, it was observed that girls were taken to the markets to attend to their parents' food stands (emidaala) because they are the only available cheap labor that did not cost them money.

It was very hard for the girls that went to work and started earning some money to come back and complete school. In fact, a study was done by Alabi et al., (2014) in Nigeria in relation to the above. Child labour interfered with a girl child's education in that it led to them dropping out of school. The study showed that most of the girls in Nigeria were taken to work as house helpers. This has greatly contributed to girls dropping out of school hence failure to complete their education.

f) Loss of parents (Orphans).

Loss of parents received 3% of the responses. Loss of parents leads to early marriages and dropping out of school. Respondents revealed that some girls dropped out of school after the loss of their parents that were paying their school fees. In an interview with the key informant The DEO pointed out and said that the death of parents has left many children helpless with no one to take care of their school needs and it has led to increased school dropouts especially amongst the girls.

“...parents are very crucial in a child's life...even when they don't have enough money, you see them struggling to pay school fees in installments for their children to learn...”

The DEO further added that:

“...it is not with the same love that an extended family member can take care of an orphan...many times they are discriminated from the other children and denied opportunities...”(*Idudi Key Informant interview dated 27th December 2022*)

Also, in a focus group interview with girls who dropped out of school in Makuutu sub-county, a 17years girl revealed that she was studying until her father passed on.

“... I stopped going to school when my father died...I was in my primary 4 (four)...he was the only one earning salary in my family...my mother was just a housewife and all she did was some small gardening at the backyard

of our house...when my father died I knew that was the end of me going to school and I was right...I ended up getting married..." (Makuutu FGD dated 28th December 2022)

In connection to the above narratives, the study done by Harms et al., (2010) has found out that children who have lost their parents suffer from both psychological stress and monetary (school fees) stress. Parents do not only offer school fees to their girl children but also social support. Psychological distress comes about when a child loses to be a child anymore and now, they are expected to prematurely grow and begin to take up the roles of adulthood. Also, the study indicates that girls are emotionally more affected than boys which often leads to slower school progress and eventually dropping out of school (Harms et al., 2010).

4.3 School based factors that influence girl child education.

Results of school-based barriers to girl child education are presented in *Figure 8*. These include peer influence and immorality, teacher student affair and poor girl child support. Responses were recorded on a scale of 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree.

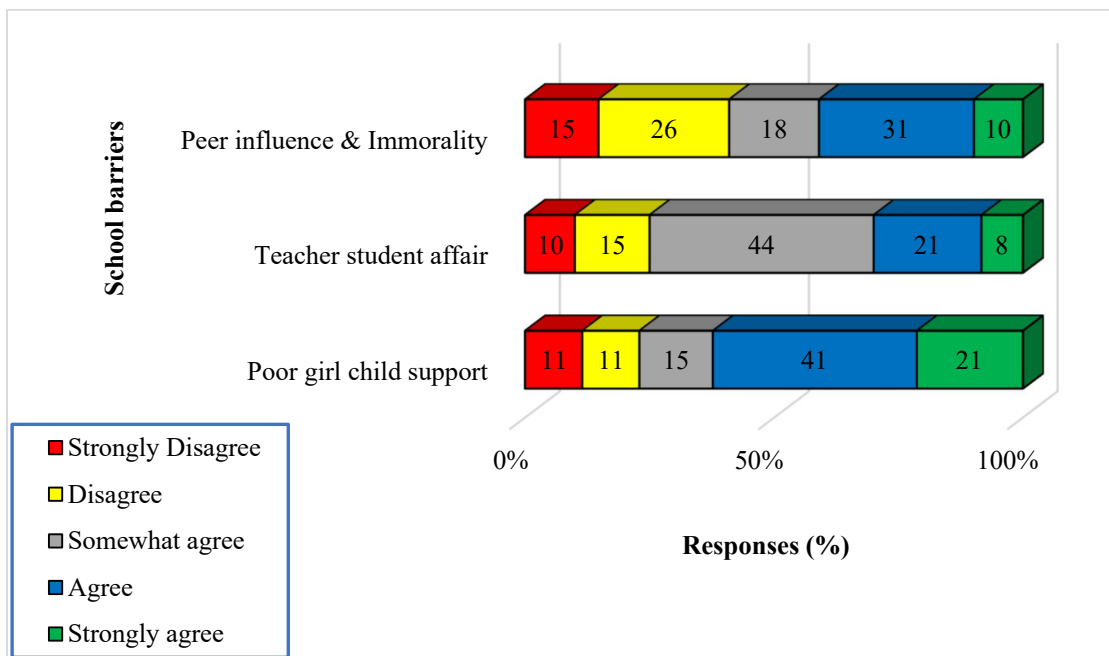


Figure 8: School based factors that impede girl child education.

Source: Field survey data (2022)

a) Poor girl child support

In order of significance, respondents highly agreed to poor special support services to girl child among schools (62% agreed) including counseling and guidance, as the most impeding school factor to girl child education in the area. The results underscoring poor girl child support among schools was further observed through the poor girl child social amenities such as routine counselling and guidance from female teachers, who were very few in many schools. In an interview with the DEO, he mentioned that less female teachers in schools have costed the girl child education.

“...it was very sad when I visited a school in Kalalu village and in the entire primary school, among the 17 teachers we only had 2 female teachers and the rest were men...and it was reported that there was a time when both of them were sick and they couldn't attend school that day which meant that the school operated without any female teacher present for those days which was very unfortunate...”

He added that:

“...lack of female teachers makes girls feel uncomfortable, especially when they need to discuss sensitive topics like puberty and sexual health...”
(Idudi Key Informant interview dated 27th December 2022)

In line with the above, various studies have documented that the lack of female teachers in schools is one of the leading factors impeding the education of girls. In a study done by Jain et al., (2017) in India, it was noted that girls are most likely to enroll and complete school if the schools they go to have female teachers. Also Jamal, (2016) added that parents will hesitate to send their girls to schools that do not have female teachers. Female teachers give girls a platform to share extensively about their sexual health and that means that without them it would discourage them from attending school.

Another observation that was made in the various schools was the lack of infrastructures essential for quality education like classrooms, lighting, seats, clean water, toilets, and changing rooms. Girls are usually more affected by this because they are more prone to infections and diseases when toilets are not well maintained. Also, with no changing room at school, it makes it hard for

them to attend school on the days they have their menstruation cycles. This is supported by a study done by Hennegan et al., (2016) where it was found that girls skipped school during their menstruation periods, others feared to stand in class and answer questions fearing shame in case their uniforms were stained. Also, in the same study, girls skipped school due to lack of private rooms to help them change their sanitary pads.

b) Teacher-student affairs

Teacher student affairs was also revealed majorly by primary dropouts as one of the most important factors contributing to declining girl child education (29% agreed). Respondents also revealed that some of these relationships were criminal, where teachers defiled their pupils, contributing to the frequency and high numbers of defilements in the area, as depicted in Figure 5 (cases) where defilements are reported highly in schools.

During a key informant interview with the district police officer in charge of family affairs, it was revealed that many girls are raped and defiled by teachers, especially in primary schools. It was further echoed that these students are, however, threatened not to be reported by the culprit or the offender. Girls who try to report go through a lot of negligence and torture and, in most cases, receive no response from the concerned school offices, such as the senior women teachers and school administrators. It was further revealed that if the pupil successfully reports to the senior woman teacher, the culprit is the teacher in charge of girl issues, who will prevent the victims from accessing justice due to corruption.

During a focus group discussion of school dropout girls in Busoola village, Ibulanku sub-county, 17 years aged girl submitted. She reported, I quote:

"...When I was in primary six, one class to complete primary level, I hated school...this was due to **Mr. xxxxx** who would always call me and say that "You are so sweet." he said it for the first time, and I thought he would stop, but he carried on..."

"...I started feeling shy and stopped schooling for some days...when he realized that I wasn't going to school, he came home and told mom that that he was disappointed in me, I could not tell mom since

mom thought I didn't want to study...” (*Busoola FDG dated 29th December 2022*)

Many issues of similar tenet were reported to exist in schools of Bugweri district. Furthermore, the district police blamed the teacher-student affairs on parental negligence. Parents don't listen to their children, especially girls. During the interviews with the village police post officer in charge in Makuutu sub county, it was reported that some parents collaborated with the perpetrators and delayed justice to their girl children. It was revealed that:

“.... there is a case of a girl child who was raped by her schoolteacher...when I interviewed her, she told police that she has always reported to her mother, but she would not advise adequately or talk to the teacher (perpetrator), until the teacher got her by force and raped her badly till bleeding...

“...the very confused girl was locked in one of the schools' storerooms by the perpetrator after raping her, so that she would calm down... However, the badly raped girl jumped over through the window and moved to police herself, and we arrested the teacher (perpetrator)...”
(*Makuutu Police Key Informant interview dated 27th December 2022*)

The lack of strong policing and disciplinary committees for teachers in schools has also fostered the infiltration of teacher student affairs (Sugai et al., 2000). However, these reduce girl child school completion and enrollment. Even the few that have enrolled are hunted by the perpetrators, causing them poor performance, immorality, school dropouts, and early marriages. Also, the underlying alarming poverty among parents, leading to failure to afford girl child needs and school materials, lures them into student-teacher affairs (Kurgat et al., 2023).

c) Peer influence and Immorality

Peer influence and immorality was also revealed as one of the most important factors contributing to declining girl child education (41% agreed). However, these results are contrary to what happens in other areas. For example, Peterson & Skiba (2000) reported that peer mediation is a negotiation-based technique that instructs student mediators in how to mediate disputes between their peers (Peterson & Skiba, 2000). Therefore, these researchers were looking at the positive side

of peer influence. However, in the study area of Bugweri community, peer pressure contributes to moral degeneration by encouraging students to engage in more antisocial behavior and drug abuse. This has consequently led to a decline in academic performance among girls. It was also revealed that peer pressure has made girls prioritize social activities over their academic work. For example, skipping classes to hang out with their friends and ending up engaging in risky behaviors such as fornication injuring academic performance and hence poor grades thus school dropout. In an interview with a headteacher in Makuutu sub-county, it was revealed that peer pressure has forced girls into unhealthy sexual relations and has contributed to increased school dropouts, especially the girls. In this interview, he narrated:

“...the peer influence amongst girls is one of the strongest factors hindering girls from achieving their education...given the fact that our parents in Makuutu are poor and can’t provide every need to the girls, peer pressure has always taken them easily...girls who have boyfriends that give them money influence others that are starving at school whose parents are unable to provide food to find boyfriends that will give them money...”

He added that:

“...as an end result, they engage in immoral acts and hence get pregnant, and these girls have never come back to school again...we have had several cases of that nature in our school and other neighboring schools too...” *(Makuutu Key Informant interview dated 28th December 2022)*

In agreement with the above report, a study by Ochen et al., (2019) that investigated the factors associated with teenage pregnancy among girls aged 13-19 years in Lira district Uganda, found out that peer influence was the main cause of girls engaging in risky behaviors like unhealthy sexual relations, drug abuse that led to pregnancy cases and dropping out of school (Ochen et al., 2019). It was added that the economic deprivation of the parents and poor socio-economic status of the teenage girls made it easy for the girls to be influenced negatively by their peers. Girls were lured to have relationships with older men who could provide their daily needs like food, clothing and hard cash which could not be met by their parents. Therefore, poverty in the study area has exacerbated the negative impacts of peer influence among the school going children.

Moral decline was revealed as another factor that has hindered girls' education and this was greatly influenced by peer pressure which led to immoral acts. In an interview with a head teacher in Idudi Town council, cases of immorality were rampant in secondary schools and the major cause of this upsurge was the internet and poor parental guidance.

The Headteacher narrated that:

“...the internet has both good and bad influences on the students but unfortunately our students are tempted to consume the negative information...we do not allow phones in our school, but you find that many students especially the girls have them...these phones are mainly bought by men or boyfriends they are in love with...”

He went on and revealed that:

“... girls are always on Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp, and now the trending TikTok that has showed them a lot of immoral acts. These girls take more time on the internet than their academic work and in the end, they underperform with low grades thus getting demoralized and hence quit school...” *(Idudi Key Informant interview dated 27th December 2022)*

In line with the above thoughts, a study done by Samson & Allida, in Uganda, found out that moral decline amongst secondary students was attributed to poor parenting, media especially the development of various internet social platforms like Facebook, and being able to chat and google any information you want (Samson & Allida, 2018). The study went ahead and mentioned that the moral decline has increased cases of fornication amongst schoolgirls in that they enter all sorts of sexual immorality including the transactional sex activities that later leads to early pregnancies and school dropouts. In another study done by Sahin, it was also revealed that students' socioeconomic status, their relationships with parents, visual media, and the Internet increase immorality among pupils (Şahin, 2010). It should be noted that peer influence and immorality can also have more long-term negative consequences, with girls becoming disconnected from academic goals and opportunities. Girls who are constantly exposed to negative peer influence may start to believe that academic success is not worth pursuing, leading to a lack of motivation and engagement in school activities. However, a claim made by Walker and his colleagues that

schools can act as a focal point and coordinator in working with families and social service organizations to address the complex issues brought on by antisocial students is null in the context of a rural context like Bugweri district (Walker et al., 1996).

Relating the above findings with the theoretical framework, barriers to girl child education not only deprive them of their rights but also denies them of the opportunity to live a life that they can value. The rights-based framework highlights that every human being and all the children have a right to a decent education regardless of whether it will pay off in human capital terms (Craissati et al., 2007). This is because education prepares learners to live a valuable life in the future and expand on their opportunity set. Unfortunately, the findings in the study area show that girl education is still lagging. Denying girls education together with guidance and counselling deprives them of the opportunity to better their well-being in future. Sen in the capability approach puts more emphasis on the quality of life of an individual which is enhanced by removing all obstacles that infringe on their freedom and their ability to do different things (Robeyns, 2003). Given the situation discussed above, girls are faced with obstacles, for example, cultural norms, lack of school fees, forced marriages, long distances, child neglect, crime, poor parenting and so forth that deny them the opportunity of attaining an education. Moreover, denying girls valuable opportunities like education limits their potential functionings like being educated, being healthy, being well fed, having sufficient time with family and as a result, girls live in miserable lives having no choices to make but only conforming to rules and orders from their male counterparts (Robeyns, 2003; Sen, 2014; Sen, 1999).

4.4. Strategies to increase the importance of girl child education.

In a bid to increase girl enrollment for higher education in the area, it is important to address the barriers that prevent girls from pursuing further education. Results on the strategies put in place to increase girl child education are depicted in *Figure 9*. The strategies were categorized into three depending on the challenge it addressed namely (a) educational completion (b) growth of income and (c) breaking cultural gender stereotypes.

a) Educational completion

Most of the respondents underscored strategies aimed at enhanced educational completion among girls. These strategies included increasing girl enrolment for Higher Education (HE) (74%). In the

same lane, the community could support girls to enroll for the desired courses (59%). Introducing Universal Education System (UES) in schools (30%).

The increase in girl enrollment for higher education in Uganda has entailed a positive trend where more girls were enrolling in higher education institutions (Odaga, 2020).

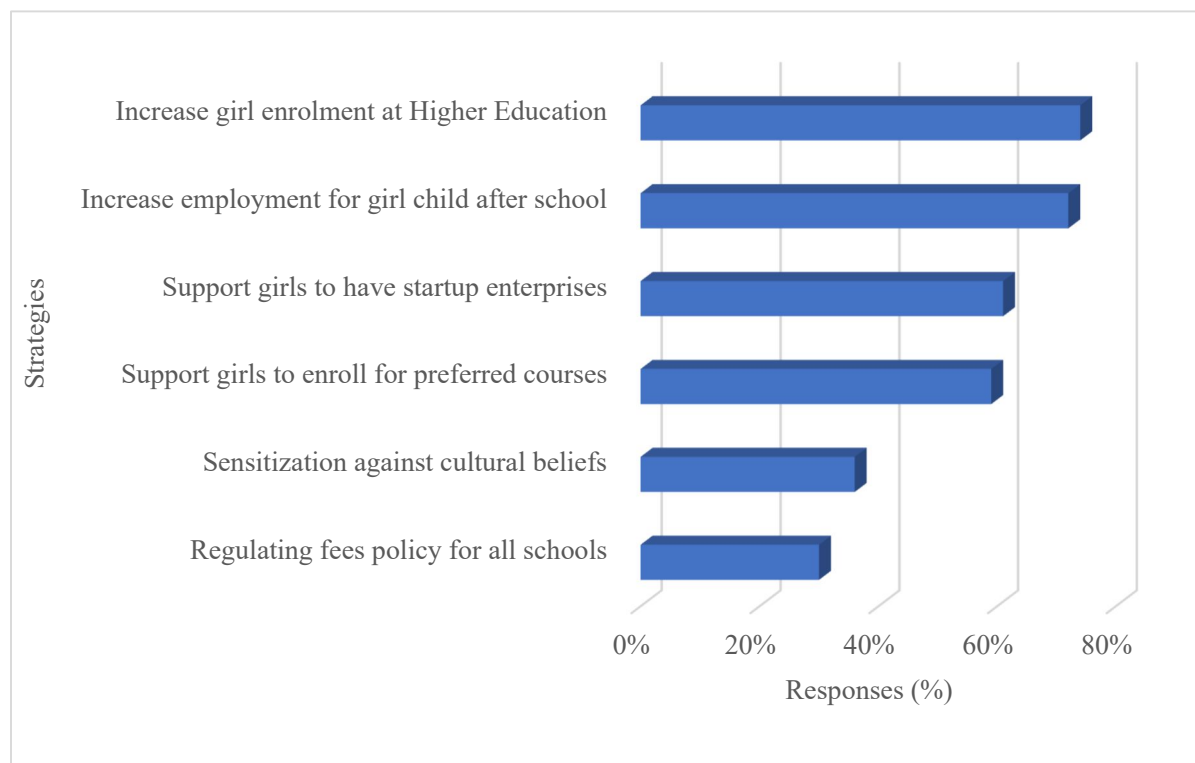


Figure 9: Existing strategies to enhance girl child education.

Source: Field survey data (2022)

This was because the government of Uganda came up with initiatives and developed plans to improve girl child education at national and at district levels. Some of these initiatives include, National Development Plan (NDPII), Education on Sports Sector Strategic Plan (ESSSP) a policy framework that was to guide the sector on how to achieve equitable and quality education for all, Gender in Education Policy (GEP) which was done in line with the ESSSP was developed to guide gender mainstreaming throughout the country in the education sector, and the National Strategy for Girl’s education (NSGE) was developed to narrow down the gender gap through promoting girl child education (MoES, 2013, 2016, 2017). All these policies were introduced to increase the quality of education that could translate into effective learning outcomes and empowerment for all (Nabbuye, 2018). It should be noted that through these policies, increased girl child enrolment was

realized, and it did not only promote gender equality and women's empowerment but also added up to the pool of highly educated female people in the area as also revealed by (Wells, 2009). As mentioned above, programs were also implemented at the district level and in Bugweri, participating in the district quota system was put in place to increase higher Education among girls (Wamani et al., 2004). The district quota system is a government initiative aimed at increasing access to higher education for students from disadvantaged areas with a higher likelihood of non-completion. Under this system, a certain number of slots in public universities are reserved for students from each district.

It was also revealed that the private sector has played an important role in ensuring girls have an education. Private schools included those built by entrepreneurs, community-founded schools, and faith-based schools mainly owned by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). NGOs like ABEK (Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja) and CHANCE Ministry are a few of the many NGOs helping to provide education services to the unprivileged (Focas Licht, 2000; MoES, 2017). In the study area of Bugweri, ATK International Ministries was a Christian-based organization that started with planting churches and as the need for educating girls rose, it also ventured into building schools. It was reported that ATK International came to the community of Nawansega Ibulanku sub-county in 2007 and ever since then, lives have not remained the same. In an interview with the DEO, it was revealed that this organization has helped many children, especially girls to attain an education. DEO narrated:

“...ATK International has played a very important role in providing education to the girls...I remember Nawansega village did not have a secondary school and students would move 8-9 KMs one way to school...many dropped out and others did not enroll in secondary schools due to the distance...

He further added on that:

“...now this has changed due to ATK High school in the community...we are seeing increased enrollment of girls and the school also performs very well within the district...the organization has also developed a program called ‘*Project Lydia*’ where mothers and girls can earn school

fees through making crafts like paper beads, baskets, bags and many other products...” (Idudi Key Informant interview dated 27th December 2022)

The DEO further revealed that recently many girls have now graduated. He also acknowledged the role of civil society organizations that have worked with the government to provide to all citizens and without the help of private stakeholders like ATK International, it would be very hard for the

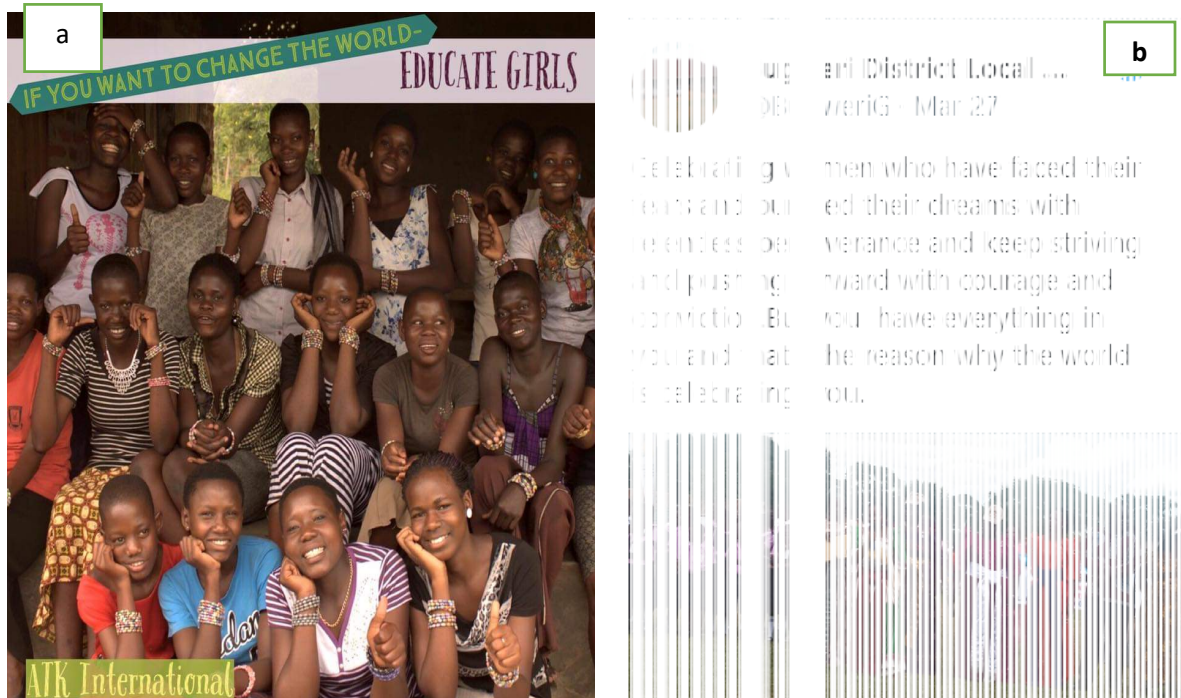


Figure 10: (a) Photo of girls showcasing the paper beads they have made to pay for their school fees, (b) the other is Bugweri district celebrating women as one way of creating awareness and breaking girl child stereotypes against their education. **Source:** Figure 10 (a) ATK International Facebook page; Figure 9 (b) Bugweri District local government Twitter handle government to provide every need to its citizens.

Therefore, as highlighted by (MoES, 2017) in the ESSSP, it is important to acknowledge that the role played by the private sector has been phenomenal in ensuring that girls study up to the higher levels. The introduction of universal education systems boosted girl’s education completion rates. Global Partnership (2018) notes that Uganda adopted the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997 and was among the first East African countries to adopt this policy. Increased enrollments were realized in the primary section but not in the secondary schools. This prompted the government of Uganda to think of another remedy and in 2007, Uganda was again the first sub-Saharan country to introduce Universal Secondary Education. It was reported that the increased need for an educated work force by the employers, the parental demand, and the need for votes for

the incumbent president at that time fostered in USE. Also, the need to provide education to all in line with the SDG Goal 4 was another fact for USE. Increased enrollment of students in secondary school was realized (Chapman et al., 2010; GlobalPartnershipUganda, 2018).

However, even when the Ugandan government has put all these policies to ensure girl child education completion, studies like (Nabbuye, 2018) still show that there are many girls that are missing out on these opportunities because they are not actively involved and engaged like the boys. It is argued that the NSGE, UPE and USE gave little attention to the equity and quality of the education services and opportunities (GlobalPartnershipUganda, 2018; Jones, 2011). Also, the enrollment was not equivalent to the infrastructure available; for example, there were less classrooms, teachers, textbooks and other facilities (Chapman et al., 2010). Nabbuye (2018) in her study, suggested that there should be increased use of the gender sensitive pedagogy as it is very important in ensuring that equity and quality education is available for all. She added and said that this gender sensitive approach is crucial in ensuring increased retention and completion rates and ensuring classroom participation by the girls in which they develop skills that later helps them to get employed (Nabbuye, 2018)

Elsewhere in Zambia, they introduced a 50-50 enrollment policy whereby all schools were commanded by the law to enroll equal numbers of boys and girls in grades 1, 8 & 10. With this policy, they wanted to give equal opportunities to all such that the gaps in the completion rates between boys and girls are reduced. Also, the Re-entry policy where previously pregnant girls are allowed to go back to school was introduced. This policy was very significant in increasing the completion rates of girls because it gave them another chance to attain their education. Furthermore, in another study, a campaign to convert all the single sex schools especially the boys' schools to mixed schools or co-education public schools was implemented (Nkosha et al., 2013). Also, in the United States at the Metropolitan University on the west coast, a mentorship program was introduced to help University students achieve their academic goals and graduate from the University. It was a program where students were assigned to mentors for academic assistance, especially those students from ethnic groups that were underrepresented. The finding of the study revealed that in relation to gender, ethnicity and GPA, the mentored students performed better than the non-mentored students and the program also led to lower dropout rate (Campbell & Campbell, 1997).

Therefore, from the above thoughts increased investment in universal education systems helped to raise education completion rates for girls. This helped to reduce some economic barriers to girls' education like payment of school fees. However, they didn't look at equity and quality of education services. The gender sensitive approaches and policies put in place by the government were very important in challenging any stereotypes and promoting gender equality. Also, the mentorship program that was used by the United States is a great strategy to support girls in schools to help them reach their academic goals.

Comparing the findings with theories, the government has tried to address the issue of girl child education with the introduction of various policies like NSGE, UPE, USE, GED among others. Uganda also adopted the Human-rights approach and recognizes that education is a right to all, and everybody is entitled to receive it. This has increased on the pool of educated girls in the study area and in Uganda at large. However, sometimes the commitment by the government to protect the rights to education is rhetorical and not effective. According to Jones (2011), the NSGE is just a wonderful policy to enhance girl child education, but it remains unimplemented which makes it *de jure* and not *de facto*. Many schools are lacking qualified teachers especially the female teachers, lacking girl facilities like changing rooms, which has affected girls from attaining their education. According to Robeyns, (2006), governments need to go beyond their roles when it comes to human rights-based policies such that actions are efficiently taken to ensure that every girl enjoys their right to education. Consequently, this will translate to a better quality of life and well-being of the girl's future (Nussbaum, 2004).

b) Growth of Income

Respondents also highlighted strategies aimed at enhanced incomes among women. These strategies included increasing employment for girls after school (72%) and supporting girl children to startup enterprises (61%). Financial growth for girls after school was enhanced and boosted by encouraging girls to become entrepreneurs through extending training services and mentorship in different areas, for example, in marketing, business management and networking. Also, it was reported that the district together with the other NGOs organized skill training programs for girls still in school, and girls and women that could not make it to higher levels of education. These skills included tailoring, hair dressing, sweater making among others. This helped them to create

and invent their own businesses after school, hence upgrading their economic status and contributing to the economic development of their communities.

To back up the above point, Uganda Media Center (2019) reported that 8,000 youths of which many were girls due to the skills ventured in, graduated in the first ever graduation ceremony in Bugweri district. These youths were passed out by the president of Uganda, and they had successfully finished skilling courses in different fields namely catering, bakery, chalk making, hair dressing and tailoring. It was a completely free and funded program organized by Mukono Life Care Development Coalition together with Bugweri District Local Government under the presidential initiative scheme. This instilled entrepreneurial skills to girls and women that helped them become job creators other than job seekers (UMC, 2019).

Also, economic growth for girls was enhanced by increasing their access to financial resources that could help them invest in their own business ventures. This was done through providing loans and grants and through the provision of financial education. The Ugandan government under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) introduced a Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) an initiative that was aimed at improving access to financial support and services for women and providing them with knowledge and skills for business growth, marketing, value addition that would make their products and services competitive on the market. This program was to extend empowerment to Ugandan women to enhance their financial and economic development. This was done by providing women with affordable loans that they could easily finance and also had access to other financial services that enabled their businesses to grow. (MGLSD, 2023). It was reported that on women's day in 2021, a total of 353,996,000 Ugandan shillings to 48 women projects amounting to 474 women beneficiaries was dispatched in Bugweri District to support women in setting up their businesses (UWEP, 2021). The availability of these financial services is very imperative in enhancing the economic growth of girls.

It was also revealed in the study area that other non-governmental organizations were also helping women economically. One of the organizations mentioned was BRAC (Bangladeshi Rural Advancement Committee) Uganda, that was offering women with affordable credit and financial knowledge to help them build their businesses. It was reported that recently, they had started training the girls that dropped out of school with skills such as tailoring. This organization would also teach women how to save. In an interview, a 35-year-old lady narrated that:

“...BRAC has helped us so much especially in giving us access to loans such that we can set up our businesses...it was by the help of BRAC that I managed to set up my retail shop here...actually, my husband lost his job and its only me supporting the entire family through this business...”

“...it has also taught us how to save money through a savings group that we have in our village every Tuesday...we are even lucky that BRAC is starting to train our girls who couldn't finish school in different skills...for now they started with tailoring...” *(Busoola Key Informant interview dated 29th December 2022)*

BRAC came with a goal of helping women especially those that have been stricken by poverty in the rural areas through providing them with loans such that they can create self-employment opportunities for women. In a study done by McClatchey (2013) on the impact evaluation of BRAC's microfinance program in Uganda, it was found that there were benefits that were accrued to the borrowers of the finance. For example, women's savings and assets increased, there was also improved consumption of nutritious foods and women had financial support to start up household businesses. It was suggested that providing access to financial services at affordable costs was a valid strategy to increasing economic growth in women and promoting development (McClatchey, 2013).

Furthermore, the Ugandan government in 2008 launched a formal implementation of career guidance and counseling services through the MoES in the secondary schools (Otwine et al., 2022). In connection to the above point, schools and other organizations have begun to offer career guidance and skill-building programs to girls who have completed school. These programs have enabled girls to identify their strengths and interests and guided them to choose jobs that suit them. Career guidance increases chances of being employed which eventually leads to financial and economic growth (Atwine & Guloba, 2021). However, studies also show that even when the Ugandan government has invested in the career guidance and counselling programs, implementation of the program was still at stake. It was revealed that counsellors lacked the necessary training and to make matters worse, there were inadequate training manuals which consequently led to inadequate capacity building. Lack of funds to implement the program was another challenge that was spotted out in the studies.

In an interview with the DEO, it was revealed that as much as the district is still new (5 years), there is increased advocacy to ensure that girls who have completed their education are provided with the same opportunities and rights just like their male counterparts. He mentioned that they started encouraging women to also apply when job vacancies become available at the district. This was done by making a note like ‘only women are encouraged to apply’ in the job advertisement.

In line with the capability approach, education allowed girls to gain access to knowledge and skills that helped them translate their capabilities into functionings. Being educated paved the way for better jobs where they were able to earn money to better their lives and support their families. Robeyns (2006) commented that being educated can expand an individual’s capabilities and opportunities in life and allows them to flourish in their incomes and other aspects of life. For example, literate women are in position to say no and move out of an abusive marriage because they have the resources to take care of themselves and their children (Nussbaum, 2004). Education created more choices and options for girls were by they could live a life different and far better than that of their parents (Robeyns, 2006).

c) Breaking cultural gender stereotypes.

Sensitization against cultural beliefs (36%) was another strategy observed in the study area put in place to break cultural gender stereotypes. One channel that facilitated sensitization was through the faith communities which included the churches and the mosques. It was reported that religious leaders played a very crucial role in breaking the traditions that surrounded the girl child education. Most of the people in Bugweri community are Muslims however, it was noted that there were also many Christians with local and missionary churches too. All these provided an extensive platform to sensitize the benefits of educating a girl child and to break the cultural gender stereotypes that surrounded girl child education. Preachers and Muslim leaders would be requested and encouraged by the sensitization program leaders and organizations to emphasize that education is a human right to everyone including girls. The district and intervening organizations found it inexpensive and effective to use the faith communities and religious leaders as a channel for sensitization programs due to the trust they earned from society. Furthermore, it was reported that some intervening organizations that had a faith-based foundation played the biggest role because they owned churches. In a focus group interview with girls in Ibulanku sub-county, it was revealed that Advancing The Kingdom (ATK) Ministries International, a missionary NGO that owned 5 (five)

churches played an important role in promoting girl child education. Through this NGO, different speakers from the district and elsewhere could be invited to sensitize the church members and the community about different topics and one of them was educating girls. A 23-year-old girl narrated:

“...ATK has really helped to build a positive environment for us (girls) to go to school through different programs...it has fought for our rights and has provided protection to girls especially when it comes to early marriages...it would make sure that any child under any threat of being married off at an early age would be cared for and protected at their mission base...I was abandoned by my parents at 16 years old but ATK took me in and educated and now I’m a primary teacher...”

Furthermore, in an interview with the school administrator ATK schools, it was reported that the ministry sponsored a sensitization program on girl child education in which it collaborated with the education office.

“...I remember we did a sensitization outreach in 3 different villages in Ibulanku sub-county (Nsaale, Nakibembe and Namiganda) ...we noticed after we built schools, there were fewer girls than boys...when we inquired why it was this way, we found out that the community did not value girl child education and a lot of excuses were traditional beliefs...” (*Nawansega Key Informant interview dated 30th December 2022*)

She added that,

“...the director asked one of the educations officers to move to these villages and spread the news about the importance of girl child education encouraging parents to move away from the old traditions and cultural norms...we have noticed great changes ever since we began investing in education...girls would be married at the age of 13 and 14 but now this has changed...girls are in school at least until they are adults...” (*Nawansega Key Informant interview dated 30th December 2022*)

In agreement with the above results reflecting on a study done by Jailobaeva et al., (2021), it was found that religious leaders and communities play an essential role in providing a conducive

environment for the wellbeing of the children and a platform to speak against the practices that undermine children's rights. It was further revealed that they were very influential in altering beliefs, traditions and attitudes that deprived children of education, health services and care. This was because they were seen as a moral authority in society, and they trusted what these leaders would introduce to the community. However, it was also noted that it is not always easy to partner with these faith leaders unless it is one of their activities, they specialize in. But when they come on board, they are very strong influencers of the communities. Therefore, in the study area, sensitization against cultural gender stereotypes was broken easily with the help of faith-based organizations (Jailobaeva et al., 2021).

Sensitization was also done through community and school meetings led by representatives from the district education office together with the local leadership. It was done through talk shows on the local radio and television channels, and community drama. Sensitization helped to create awareness about the importance of educating a girl child and how this could positively impact the community which resulted in breaking the cultural gender stereotypes. It was reported that the sensitization in the community was mainly directed towards the parents and guardians due to their significant role in breaking the cultural beliefs that acted as barriers towards girl child education. In an interview with the Local Chairperson 1 (LC1) of Idudi Town council, he explained that the district team working in the education office through various community meetings did a great job spreading the relevance of educating girls and challenging the cultural norms around girls. He narrated:

“...previously, our community could not recognize the benefits of educating a girl child... parents were strongly still holding onto cultural beliefs and norms towards a girl child for example, girls were meant to stay home and do all the chores, care for their young siblings, also get married at an earlier age without an education among others...”

“...with the sensitization to promote girl child education, parents have slowly moved away from their primitive thoughts... they were motivated after the speakers citing some women role models like the speaker of parliament in Uganda, women members of parliament and also the immediate examples of our neighbors that have educated their girls and developed their homes...”

“...even when other parents are still holding onto their cultural beliefs about educating girls, at least the majority are waking up to educate their girls...parents are very crucial, and they are the immediate source for turning everything around...” (*Idudi Key Informant interview dated 27th December 2022*)

In line with the above thoughts, the Ministry of Education and Sports (2013) developed a National strategy for Girl's Education (NSGE) in Uganda that operated between 2015-2019 to identify, implement and coordinate interventions targeted to promote girls' education. This strategy was to guide national programming for girls' education and to be used as a tool for other stakeholders promoting girl child education. In this national strategy, one of the campaigns was to create the importance and the value of girl child education through sensitization of the community. The modes of doing this were regional dialogues, national campaigns, and community drama. This resulted in increased girl child enrollment and access to educational services (MoES, 2013). However, Nabbuye (2018) reports that the increased community sensitization through NSGE on the awareness and value of girl child education was only directed towards increased access and enrollment rather than measures of quality. It was added that guidelines for gender-sensitive pedagogy were only implemented in early childhood and primary curriculum and not adequately highlighted in the secondary curriculum and in-service training for teachers. This explained why we still have stereotyping in schools even when girls have enrolled (Nabbuye, 2018).

It was quite impressive to learn about this one strategy that was done in Zambia. In a study workshop done by Miles (2000) on resource barriers that were used as excuses for not promoting inclusive learning, the researcher confirmed that breaking the barrier of traditional attitudes and beliefs was possible when teachers taught democratic practices to the students. In her paper, it was noted that a teacher from Zambia commented that the children lived in a democratic world but didn't understand what this really meant. The traditional African lifestyle raises children in a way that they fear to express their opinions because it was considered indiscipline if they stood up to challenge the authority of the elders. However, this one teacher decided to boost the children's self-esteem and confidence by introducing democratic practices in his classroom. It was not positively welcomed by his teacher colleagues as they thought it would lead to indiscipline cases throughout the school. Nevertheless, this didn't discourage him as he went on including his students in the lesson planning activities. He was amazed at how brilliant these kids would reason

and pour out ideas. This built confidence and boldness in the children which consequently helped them to stand firmly and could demand their rights of education in case they were impeded upon. Also, the teaching became learner-centered, and the teacher just became a facilitator (Miles, 2000). Therefore, it will be of an added advantage if sensitization is done to the parents and teachers to take up the responsibility to remind the children of their rights.

Robeyns (2003) in her paper discussing the Sen's capability approach and gender inequality that one of the barriers in the ability to convert resources into capabilities are the social norms, customs, and traditions. She added that physical and mental handicaps, a country's public infrastructure could be the other issues limiting the functioning of an individual. Therefore, it is possible that some people may be educated but because of the social norms that still surround their communities makes it hard for them to translate their capabilities into functioning. The statement above imitates the reality in the study area where some educated girls are not working due to cultural traditions. Others never got access to any education and their lives and well-being are very poor. There is need for the government to provide solutions and ensure that these girls benefit from their education to better their lives. There is need of suppressing the traditional norms that are still hindering girls from developing and living lives that they value (Robeyns, 2003).

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary and conclusion of the study about the community perceptions on educating girl children in rural Uganda. It summarizes the perceived importance/benefits of educating a girl child and the barriers towards educating a girl child in Bugweri district. It also provides recommendations that can be followed by the community of Bugweri, the Local government, the Education Ministry department and suggests investments in further research.

The study was conducted in Bugweri district in the sub-counties namely, Makuutu, Buyanga, Idudi Town council and Ibulanku and it had three main objectives which included:

1. To identify the importance and the impacts of educating girls in the development of the community in Bugweri District.
2. To investigate the home/school environment barriers to the girl child education attainment in Bugweri district.

3. To explore the mitigation strategies put in place to increase girls' education in the Bugweri district.

A cross-sectional survey was conducted and an embedded mixed method where both quantitative and qualitative methods was used. Participants were recruited by purposive sampling and the qualitative data collected was analyzed through thematic and content analysis. For the quantitative part, statistical tools used were mainly percentages. The findings of the study were presented in line with the three main objectives and the research questions were answered by interpreting the findings in relation to the scholarly work from the local settings of the study area and validation with literature from elsewhere around the world.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

Salient findings were summarized according to the objectives of the study as stated in Chapter 1.

5.1.1 Benefits of girl child education in Bugweri District?

There are four main benefits that respondents of Bugweri community strongly agreed to educating a girl child and these were closely rated to each other in percentages to which they were perceived as important. The first was the increased literacy levels that had the highest percentage of 69%, followed by increased respect for the family of the educated girl with 56%, then educated girls getting jobs and supporting the family 55%, and lastly girl education leading to reduced infant mortality rate which had 44%.

However, it's surprising that the results show a very low score for increased value for girls (25%) even when they have attained an education.

5.1.2 Community/school environment barriers to girl child education attainment in Bugweri District.

The results of the study reveal three home/community barriers to girl child education in Bugweri with the first most pressing being failure to afford school fees which had the highest score of 48%. Results also revealed that poor parenting with 18% was another hinderance to girl child education. Society perception and cultural fallacies were closely rated to poor parenting with 15% which means that it's another challenge worth highlighting. These two factors kind of influence each other. And lastly long distance (12%) especially to higher institutions of learning is a critical finding to note in Bugweri community.

On the side of the school barriers, the results show a higher percentage of poor girl support with 62% where most of the schools did not incorporate gender sensitive practices and infrastructures. Peer influence and immorality 41% is also observed in the results as a critical barrier to girl child education in Bugweri community.

5.1.3 Strategies put in place to increase girls' education in Bugweri District

The mitigation strategies were classified in to three main categories namely, Education Completion (increase girl enrollment at higher education 74%, supporting girls to enroll for preferred courses 59% and regulating fees policy 30%), Economic Growth (increase employment for girls 72% and support girls to have start up enterprises 61%), and Breaking Cultural Gender Stereotypes (sensitization against cultural beliefs 36%).

The results highly show a great response by the authorities in supporting girl's Education Completion and Economic Growth and less effort in the Breaking Cultural Gender Stereotypes

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the salient findings pointed out in the study, the following conclusions were made:

Educating girls increased on the pool of educated girls within the community thus increased literacy levels of women. Also, educating girls brought respect to the entire family whereby people who thought it was a menace to take girls to school were left shocked at how educated girls would marry responsible men at the right time and bring development to their families. The findings still showed that educated girls are in position of competing for formal jobs just like their male counterparts in which they could earn better money to also support their families. Furthermore, educating girls contributed to reduced infant mortality rates in the study area. This was because girls were kept in school until they were mature enough to give birth and had acquired the knowledge to take care of their children, for example, feeding them nutritious foods and taking them for immunization. However, there is still low value attached to educated girls due to cultural beliefs and fallacies.

The concern for financial constraints by the parents, especially to pay the school dues for their children, was a critical barrier for girl child education in the study. Most parents were peasants with no formal employment and even when the government introduced UPE and USE, they still had costs like lunch at school, uniforms, scholastic materials, exam fees that parents could not

afford. Poor parenting was also revealed as a barrier to girls' education brought by low levels of education of the parents and this explained the high cases of child neglect and defilement reported at the police in Bugweri. Connected to poor parenting, was the cultural norms where it was deemed not important to educate girls but treating them as marriage materials for bride price exchange. Long distance was a challenge for girls in secondary schools and universities as explained in the earlier sections were more than 5 KMs away. Parents would not send them to school for security reasons.

When we come to the school environment, poor girl support for example inadequate toilets and changing rooms, few female teachers and inadequate guidance and counseling services were a great hinderance as per the findings. This explained the increased absenteeism of girls in schools, especially during their menstruation periods reported by the respondents. Also, peer pressure influence and immorality were another school barrier that stemmed from inadequate counselling and guidance services offered to the girls by the senior women teachers at school. In fact, other schools didn't even have the services at all.

The findings showed that the local government, the Education Ministry, and the private sector (NGO's) have employed stronger strategies to ensure that the girls complete school. This has been done through the introduction of free education programs like UPE, USE, the district quota systems, scholarships, also through policies like NSGE, GEP that advocate for girl education. Strategies to enhance girls' Economic Growth after school appeared to be stronger as per the findings. However, there was a lower response percentage on strategies to help break the cultural gender stereotypes. Unless these cultural gender stereotypes are changed, it will be very hard to realize gender equality in education.

5.3 REFLECTIONS

One of the key uses of the capability approach is to assess and evaluate the well-being of an individual and the well-being of a group of people or a community. The key concept of this approach is the substantive freedom it advocates to a person which entails freedom to be able to achieve important things in life. This includes freedom to participate in society and pursue your own goals and to a young girl, education is key. It also includes being able to participate fully in school life to gain a wide range of capabilities to flourish in life (Robeyns, 2006). From the findings under objective one therefore,

- It is revealed that education as a capability to girl children and expanded their opportunity to lead a life they could value and have a reason to value. Also, education empowered them to support their families to come out of poverty situations which resultantly led to the general development of society. Providing girls with education as seen in the findings widened their opportunities to get decent employment, married responsible husbands, hence having great families. We also noticed that educated women improved the well-being of the society. For example, there were increased numbers in the educated women who later led to the reduction in the infant mortality and raised the standard of health of the people through improved nutrition.
- On the other hand, denying girls access to education and other forms of knowledge through counselling and guidance impairs their quality of life which is defined in terms of functionality and capability in the capability approach. It also undermines their right to education as highlighted by the human rights framework (Craissati et al., 2007). This means that they will not be able to translate their capabilities into adequate functionings just like Amartya Sen says (Robeyns, 2003). Given the findings under second objective, it is revealed that lack of access to resources like school fees deprives girls of education which makes them unable to convert anything into a better life. Poverty was reported as the most pressing barrier to girl child education and as a result, they are forced into early marriage, abused sexually, hence living miserable lives. Additionally, cultural norms and traditions proved to be another barrier that deprived girls of their freedom to fully participate in school.
- To sum up my reflections with the findings under the third objective, Amartya Sen advocates for governments to go beyond just making education a legal right but also a moral right (Sen, 2014; Sen, 1999). This means that anyone in a position to assist in realizing this goal sees it as a moral obligation to contribute. And, not just providing resources but also follow through to see that policy implementations are done on ground. As discussed above, the Ugandan government has tried to introduce strategies to support girl child education. However, Robeyns (2006) writes that many countries have granted every child a right to education, but we still have millions and millions of children having no education. Services are not reaching out to the people that need them the most due to

poor policy implementations. For example, Uganda came up with the NSGE policy framework to support girl child education but it's a *de jure* document not *de facto* (Jones 2011). Issues like cultural norms and customs, lack of school fees that the NSGE was supposed to deal with were still the barriers to girl child education in the study. Therefore, the government needs to devise means of reducing the poverty levels in society and come up with resource centers for girls like Girl Centers. Girl Centers could be an important aspect when it comes to sustainable development and progression of society. They are a great resource in promoting girl child education especially in the rural contexts through the various roles they play including empowerment through skill building programs, mentorship through counselling and guidance, advocacy by protecting and promoting their rights and create awareness about the benefits of educating girls. All these will translate in building capabilities in girls and enabling them to improve on their quality of life.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 To the rural communities such as Bugweri District Local government

The community leaders especially the Chairperson Local Council 1, the local cultural and religious leaders are argued to increasingly raise the awareness of the value of educating a girl child. It was concluded that even when girls are educated, their value in the community is still low. Community dialogue practices, frequent meetings with the mothers, fathers, boys, girls, and faith leaders should be carried out to challenge the gender cultural norms and attitudes that are still in the community. These meetings can also aid in helping parents on how to become good parents to their girls. Also, Role models should be continuously brought out in these meetings such that they can motivate the young girls and sensitize the community about the importance of educating girls.

5.4.2 Local Government

With the financial constraint as seen in the conclusion, the local government should devise means of counteracting household poverty, which was a driver of early marriages, early pregnancies that leads to continuous dropping out of girls from school. Investment plans especially geared to mothers and girls should be put in place, for example cash transfers to mothers in support of their girls' education. This could look big for the local government; however, the solution could be collaborating with partners, especially NGOs with the same passion.

The local government should also ensure that public and private schools in Bugweri have girl support structures and an equal number of male and female teachers as this was also reported as a barrier. Also ensure that the senior women teachers have the adequate knowledge to support girls with great counselling and guidance. This will increase the retention rates and completion rates of girls.

5.4.3 Ministry Department

A strategy that the ministry department can invest in is building and encouraging private schools to construct boarding sections and creating more space for girls to stay at school. The reverse is also a great idea where the ministry can build schools in proximity to the residential areas. This will help with increasing more girl child enrollment in schools. It will also reduce the long-distance challenge to schools for the girls, especially in rural areas where girls walk through dark forests, valleys, swamps to go to school. In the rainy seasons, many of these girls skip school due to bad roads therefore, this challenge will also be dealt with.

In connection with the above point, the strategy of boarding schools should be accompanied by subsidized school fees, especially for the public schools such that they can be affordable for the parents. It will be very helpful to parents if the new policy regulating fees paid at school is passed by the ministry and implemented in all schools around the country. This policy will decrease the outrageous amounts of money being charged by private schools.

The ministry should also reinforce the strategies put in place to sensitize the community about the importance of educating a girl child. Girl centers can be built in every sub-county to allow girls to seek free counselling, guidance, protection, and support to continue with their studies. From the conclusions, cultural fallacies and stereotypes are still a strong barrier to girl child education and without immediate solutions, there will be no education for all.

5.4.4 Further Research

There should be further research on strategies to break the cultural gender barriers towards girl child education in Bugweri community as it still proves to be a strong barrier.

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Appendices

Appendix i: Socio-demographic profile of the interviewed households

Number of rooms	<2	16	26
	2 to 4	32	52
	>4	13	21

Child school completion	No	41	67
	Yes	20	33
households with school going children	No	3	5
	Yes	58	95
Sex of school going children n	Girls	14	23
	Boys	2	3
	Both	42	69
	None	3	5

Relationship with children	Father	15	25
	Mother	44	72
	Aunt	1	2
	Sister/brother	1	2

Source: Primary data

Appendix ii: Summary of the school requirements to promote girl child education.

Schools water source	Borehole	37	67%
	Well/spring	1	1.8
	Ponds	1	1.8
	Tap water	10	18
	Rain water	6	11
Number of female teachers	<10	46	75.4
	10-20	8	13.1
	>20	1	1.6
	Don't Know	9	10.0
Senior woman teacher	Yes	49	80.3
	No	2	3.3
	i don't know	10	16.4
Girls private room	No	39	65
	Yes	22	36.1
Source of water	No	12	19.6
	Yes	49	80.3
Consulted the senior women teacher	No	10	16.4

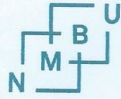
	Yes	38	62.3
	I am not sure	13	21.3
Involve girl child in School co-curricular activities	No	22	36.1
	Yes	23	37.7
	Drop out	5	8.2
	Not sure	11	18.0
Co-curricular activities that include girls	Games and sports	50	40
	Music dance and drama	43	34
	Scouting	9	7
	Students leadership	24	20

Appendix iii: Possible solutions to enhance girl child education.

Response	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Somewhat agree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
Special needs	11.5	11.5	14.8	41.0	21.3
Teacher student sexual relationship	9.8	14.8	44.3	21.3	8.2
Long distance	50.8	19.7	11.5	13.1	4.9
Peer influence	14.8	26.2	18.0	31.1	9.8
Immorality	9.8	26.2	29.5	26.2	6.6

Possible solutions	Frequency	Percent (%)
Increase girl enrolment at Higher Education	43	22%
Support girls to enroll for preferred courses	36	18%
Increase employment for girl child after school	44	22%
Support girls to have startup enterprises	37	19%
Regulating fees policy for all schools	18	9%
Sensitization against cultural beliefs	21	11%

Appendix iv: Field introduction letter



Norwegian University of Life Sciences
Faculty of Landscape and Society

Phiona Akwero
c/o Skogveien 27A, Ås
1430 ÅS

Not for everyone Offl §13
of Fvl §13

Our ref.
22/04409-3

Your ref.

Dato
19.12.2022

Letter of Introduction

To whom it may concern,

This is to confirm that Phiona Akwero is currently enrolled as a full-time student in the two-year study program: Master of Science in Global Development Studies, at the Faculty of Landscape and Society (LANDSAM) at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU). Students in this program are encouraged to go for fieldwork to conduct their own research and data collection for their Master's thesis.

Phiona Akwero's research will address the following topic: Educating a girl child in Uganda: The importance/impacts, and barriers to girl child education in Bugweri district. According to her research proposal, the fieldwork will be conducted in Uganda in early 2023. Her research proposal is approved by the Department of international Environment and Development Studies (Noragric) and her thesis will count towards 30 credits (ECTS) of her 120 credit Master's degree. Her supervisor is professor Darley Jose Kjosavik.

We kindly ask you to assist our student where necessary and appreciate your facilitation of her fieldwork. If you have any questions, please contact study administration at LANDSAM.

Regards

Skriv inn navn
Skriv inn tittel

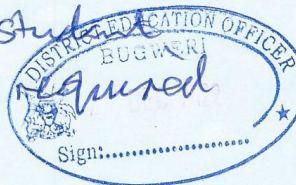
Beth Annwyl Roberts
Rådgiver

P.O. Box 5003
1432 ÅS, NORWAY
+47 67 23 00 00

Beth Annwyl Roberts
beth.annwyl.roberts@nmbu.no

post@nmbu.no
www.nmbu.no

*We have received this student
and provided data as required*



Appendix v: Consent forms



Norwegian University
of Life Sciences

Where can I find out more?

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

- Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) via phiona.akwero@nmbu.no (student), darley.kjosavik@nmbu.no (Thesis supervisor)
- Our Data Protection Officer: Hanne Pernille Gulbrandsen (email: personvernombud@nmbu.no)
- Data Protection Services, by email: (personvernjenester@sikt.no) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader
(Darley Jose Kjosavik)

Student (Phiona Akwero)

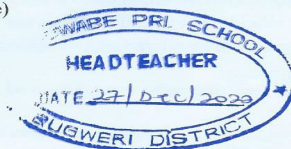
Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project 'Educating a girl child in Uganda: The importance/impacts, and barriers to girl child education in Bugweri district' and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

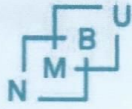
- to participate in paper-based questionnaire
- to participate in interviews

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. June, 2023

Nakasaga Jannawa PH 27th/Dec/2022
(Signed by participant, date)



0772468646
0758188822



Norwegian University
of Life Sciences

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- Data Protection Services, by email: (personverntjenester@sikt.no) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader
(Darley Jose Kjosavik)

Student (Phiona Akwero)

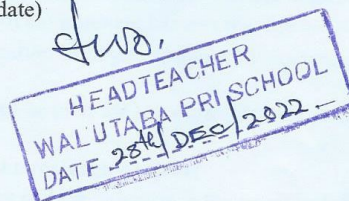
Consent form

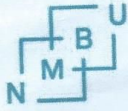
I have received and understood information about the project '**Educating a girl child in Uganda: The importance/impacts, and barriers to girl child education in Bugweri district**' and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in paper-based questionnaire
- to participate in interviews

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. June, 2023

OCHWA SAMUEL 28th/DEC/2022
(Signed by participant, date)





Norwegian University
of Life Sciences

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- Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) via phiona.akwero@nmbu.no (student), darley.kjosavik@nmbu.no (Thesis supervisor)
- Our Data Protection Officer: Hanne Pernille Gulbrandsen (email: personvernombud@nmbu.no)
- Data Protection Services, by email: (personverntjenester@sikt.no) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader
(Darley Jose Kjosavik)

Student (Phiona Akwero)

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project '**Educating a girl child in Uganda: The importance/impacts, and barriers to girl child education in Bugweri district**' and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

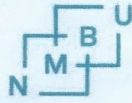
- to participate in paper-based questionnaire
- to participate in interviews

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. June, 2023

NTENDE PAUL Inspector of schools Bugweri

(Signed by participant, date)

0752324068 / 0782324068



Norwegian University
of Life Sciences

Where can I find out more?

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- Data Protection Services, by email: (personverntjenester@sikt.no) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader
(Darley Jose Kjosavik)

Student (Phiona Akwero)

Consent form

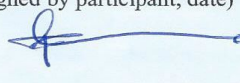
I have received and understood information about the project 'Educating a girl child in Uganda: The importance/impacts, and barriers to girl child education in Bugweri district' and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in paper-based questionnaire
- to participate in interviews

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. June, 2023

TILKAWALANA GEORGE DEO-BUGWERI

(Signed by participant, date)

 a 0772869448 / 0705714596.

Appendix vi: Data collection tools

Household survey questionnaire

“Community perception of the importance of educating girl child in a Uganda’s Rural context.

Dear Sir/Madam/Dr/

I am Akwero Phiona, a final-year student pursuing a master’s degree in Global Development Studies at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU). I am conducting research on the theme *“The importance of educating a girl child in Uganda: The Role of Household and School environment in Uganda, a case of Bugweri District”*.

You have been purposively selected to participate in this survey. We kindly request your valuable time to answer the following questions. Your views will be kept confidential and shall be integrated with other views that will be collected from respondents elsewhere.

Consent (tick appropriately)

Consenting statements	Yes	No
The researcher has explained to me, and I understand what the study is all about		
I accept to take part in the survey voluntarily		
I accept the overall information to be used for academics and can be made public		

Section A: General information:

A. 1 Sub- County_____ A.2 Village_____

B. Girl child status: 1. Successfully completed 2. Dropped out 3. Still in school 4. Don’t know.

Section B: Demographic Information

B.1. Sex

- a) Male
- b) Female

B.2 Marital status

- a) Not married
- b) Married
- c) Widow (er)

- d) Divorced/Separated

B.3 Education background

B3.1 Father

- a) Never attended school
- b) Primary level
- c) Secondary level
- d) Higher education

B3.2 Mother

- a) Never attended school
- b) Primary level
- c) Secondary level
- d) Higher education

B4. The major source of livelihood (Tick many)

- a) Peasantry/farming
- b) Formal employment
- c) Informal employment
- d) Business
- e) Bodaboda
- f) Fishing
- g) Cattle broker/dealer
- h) Others _____

B5. Which members in the household receive monthly salaries if any?

- (a) Household head
- (b) household head and spouse
- (c) Household head, spouse, and any other
- (d) None

B6. What is your relationship with children? (Please tick many)

1.Father	2.Mother	3.Aunt	4.Grandmother	5.Grandfather	6.Sister/brother	7.Adopted	8.Others specify
----------	----------	--------	---------------	---------------	------------------	-----------	------------------

B7. Distance from the nearby school (kilometers)

- a) Distance from nearby primary school 1. <2km 2. 2-5km 3. >5km
- b) Distance from nearby Secondary school 1. <2km 2. 2-5km 3. >5km
- c) Distance to the nearby University 1. <100km 2. >100km

B8: Age of the respondent

- 1. <18 years 2. 18-30 years 3. 30 – 45years 4. Above 45 years

B9: Father’s housing infrastructure

B91: Number of rooms on the house 1. <2 2. 2 to 4 3. >4

B92: House walls 1. Mud/unburnt bricks 2. Burnt bricks 3. Cemented/concrete

B93: House roof

1. Grass thatched 3. Iron roof

4. Iron/grass

5. Tiles

C: Impacts of education on the household development

C1: How many children are still in school?

C2: Has any of your children finished school?

a) Yes b) No

C3: Of these, how many are girls and how many are boys?

a) Girls _____ b) Boys _____

C4: Has educating your girls benefited your household and community?

a) Yes b) No

C5. How has educating girl children developed your household and your community? *(Please tick all that apply)*

Household	Please tick
a) Increased literacy levels among females at home	
b) Reduced early marriages	
c) Reduced food scarcity among households	
d) Representation in leadership	
e) Education among girl child reduce the infant mortality rate	
f) Poverty reduction- many get jobs and support their families	
g) Increased value for a girl child	
h) Increased respect for our family in the community	
i) Confidence and participation in decision making	
j) Others specify	
k) Others specify.....	

D: Household barriers to girl child education

D1: This section is administered to help collect demographic information on all the children in the household, starting with the oldest child.

Child	Age	Sex Female / Male (Answer F or M)	Enrolled in school (Answer Yes or No)	Attends school regularly (Answer Yes or No)
1				
2				
3				
4				

5				
6				
7				
8				

D2: If the child is not enrolled in school or does not attend school regularly, what is/are the main reason(s)? (Tick multiple answers that apply to your family)

- a) School is too expensive
- b) Child labor (Domestic)
- c) Dangerous walking to school (e.g., Due to long distance /dark routes)
- d) Loss of hope in education as a source of economic redemption
- e) Parents mindset
- f) Single parenthood
- g) Orphan
- h) Others, specify.....

E: School-related challenges

E1: How many female teachers do you have at school? (Specify the name of the school)

- a) <10
- b) 10-20
- c) >20
- d) None

E2: Do you have a senior woman teacher at school?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I don't know

E3: Have you ever been in any girls' seminar with the senior woman teacher or others at school?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I am not sure

E4: Do you have a girl's toilet at school?

- a) Yes
- b) No

E5: Does the girl's toilet have a changing room?

- a) Yes
- b) No

E6: Does the school have a water source? **1. Yes** **2. No** If yes, specify from the list below.

- a) Borehole
- b) Well/springs
- c) Pond
- d) Lake
- e) Tap water
- f) Rainwater

E7: Apart from academics, what other activities does the school involve a girl child?

- a) Games and sports
- b) Music dance and drama
- c) Scouting
- d) Students' leadership
- e) None
- f) Other _____

E8: Does the school allow girls that have been pregnant before to attend school?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I don't know

E9: How strong do you agree that the following school environment factors have contributed to school drop out in your area (1=strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Somewhat agree, 4=Agree and 5=Strongly agree)

No	Factor (Please tick appropriately)	Perceived level of influence				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Inaccessibility of services as a special needs student					
2	Teacher student affairs (sexual relationships)					
3	Failure to listen to our needs as girls					
4	Nearby schools are for boys					
5	Poor quality teaching in education					
6	Discrimination faced in schools					

F: Mitigation mechanisms put in place to increase girl child education

F1: What mitigation remedies have been put in place to increase girl child education? (Tick from the table and mention others if not reflected in the table)

No	Suggested strategies	Tick multiple
1	Promote girl child education to higher institutions of learning	
2	Preferably and desired courses such as Nursing/midwifery	
3	Increase employment opportunities for girl child after school	
4	Encourage/support girl child to have start-up enterprises after school	
5	Sensitization of the value of an educated girl child in schools	
6	Building of more schools in the area	
7	Advocating against discriminatory practices against girls in school	
8	Others specify	
9	Others specify	

F2: What have schools done to increase the girl child education in your community?

.....
.....

*******END*******

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR GIRLS IN SCHOOL

Home environment questions

1. Have any of your brothers and sisters dropped out of school? What were the reasons?
2. Do you know some other girls in your community who could not continue their education to the secondary level? What were the reasons for their dropout?
3. How do you get to school every day?
4. Are your parents/other family members supportive of your education?
 - a. In what way are they supportive?
 - b. In what ways are they not supportive?
5. In your community, generally, whose education is mostly supported, boys or girls? And Why?
6. What is the main source of income in your house?
 - a. Father's job
 - b. Mother's job
 - c. Both
 - d. Other

School environment questions

7. How would you rate the general quality of your school in relation to enhancing girl child education? I) Cannot tell ii) Poor iii) Slightly good iv) Good v) Excellent and Why?
8. Do you think your other friends or brothers/sisters are happy and learning in (their) school? How do you know?
9. Tell us about the homework that you have?
 - a. Are you able to easily do this homework?
 - b. Do your teachers support you if you have to do extra school/studies work?
10. How is your school fees covered? Do you receive any help from organizations or scholarships to attend school? (Definitions: scholarship are direct resources like books and uniforms that are given directly to you or the school)
11. What are the general barriers for girls not going to secondary school in your community?

Importance of educating girls

12. Do you think that what you are learning in school is important to your life outside of school?
13. What do you and your parents think about marriage and education?
 - a. In your community, are educated girls more in demand by the boys?
 - b. Do educated girls in your community ask for educated husbands?
 - c. Are girls allowed to study even after getting married? Until what grade?
 - d. What will be the attitude of your future husband if you have not completed secondary school?

- e. Is schooling more important for boys or for girls? Why?
14. What are the general benefits of educating a girl child?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR GIRLS WHO HAVE DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL

1. What is your age group range? 12-15 15-17 17-20 20+ (Note for the interviewer: ask about the age and then circle of the above ranges)
2. What was the last grade you attended in school?
3. How many sisters and brothers do you have? How many brothers and how many sisters currently attend school and what grades are they in?
4. Why did you leave school? Did your parents have expectations that you should be doing something else, other than going to school? What?
5. Do you know girls who dropped out of school? What do you think were the main reasons and what are they doing now? What is their social status in the community?
6. What are the main reasons that girls drop out of school?
7. Are you currently planning to enroll in a school? If so, what grade will you enroll in? Will your family (mother/father/other extended family) support you if you receive a scholarship to go back to school?
8. What did you not like about your school?
9. What did you learn in your school that helped you in your life outside of school?
10. Did you like your teachers? Did you feel that they were good teachers and taught you well? Why?
11. Did other girls/teachers treat you well in school? If the answer is no, why? What did they do/say that made you feel that they did not treat you well?
12. If you could have had something that would have made school easier for you and you would complete your education without dropping out, what would it be?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

1. What is the status of girls' education in Bugweri community?
2. What do you think are the home/community barriers to girl child education in your community?
3. How much do you attach crime to limiting girl education in your community? Mention some examples of crime.
4. What are the school environment barriers to girl child education?
5. What strategies have been employed by school administrators to attract girls to schools?
6. Are there benefits accrued to educating girls in your community? What are these benefits in relation to the girl, the family of the girl, and the community at large?
7. What has the education ministry done to increase the enrollment of girls in schools?



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