

# International Institute of Social Studies



## **PROTECTING EDUCATION RIGHTS FOR ADOLESCENT MOTHER SCHOOL DROPOUTS: A CASE STUDY OF KAMPALA DISTRICT, UGANDA.**

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List of Appendices	v
Acronyms	vi
Acknowledgement	vii
Dedication	viii
Abstract	viii
Relevance to Development Studies	ix
Keywords	ix
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.0 Background	1
1.1 Debating student mother's education	1
1.2 Framing the Research Problem	3
1.3 Relevance and Justification	4
1.4 Research Objective and Question	5
Research Questions	5
1.5 Methodology	6
1.6 Organization of the Paper	6
<b>Chapter 2 : Process of Data Collection</b>	<b>7</b>
2.0 Introduction	7
2.1 Overcoming Obstacles to Fieldwork	7
2.2 Research Site: The Righting the Future Project	7
2.3 Methods of Data Collection	8
Sampling	8
Source of Data and Methods	9
Focus Group Discussion	9
Key Informant Interview	9
Ethical Consideration	10
Subjectivity and Positionality	10
2.4 Conclusion	11
<b>Chapter 3: Policy context and Conceptual framework</b>	<b>12</b>
3.0 Introduction	12
3.1 The Wider Policy Context	12
3.2 Adolescence and the Gender Schooling Gap	13
3.3 Social Exclusion	14
3.4 The Right to Education as a Form of Social Justice	15
3.5 Conclusion	15

<b>Chapter 4: Perspectives on Student mothers: exclusion and inclusion</b>	<b>16</b>
4.0 Introduction	16
4.1 Student Mother’s View on Exclusion in Education	16
Insecurity and Belonging	16
Loss of Education Opportunity	17
Social Norms as Barrier to Education.	18
4.2 Student Mother’s Views on Inclusion in Education.	19
4.3 Other Factors Impacting Education Exclusion for Student Mothers	21
Household Factors	21
Institutional Factors	22
Social Cultural Factors	23
4.4 Conclusion	23
<b>Chapter 5: Education Sector Protection Response for Student Mothers</b>	<b>25</b>
5.0 Introduction	25
5.1 The Need for Government Protection for Student Mothers	25
5.3 Education Sector Response Policies for Student Mothers	26
5.4 Non State Actors: Retaining and Enabling Re-entry for Student Mothers	28
5.5 Protecting Education in a Post Conflict Context	29
5.6 Conclusion	29
<b>Chapter 6: Conclusion and Implications for Protecting Education for Student Mothers.</b>	<b>31</b>
6.0 Overview of Findings	31
6.2 Lessons Learnt about Protecting Education Rights of the Student Mothers	32
6.3 Last Thoughts	33
Appendices	38

## **List of Appendices**

Annex 1: List of study participants.

Annex 11: List of Key informants

Annex 111: Pader Girls Academy

## **Acronyms**

ASRH	Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health
C C F	Christian Counseling Fellowship
EFA	Education for All
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationist
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
MVF	Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation
NRDO	Nascent Research and Development Organization
P G A	Pader Girls Academy
P.L.E	Primary Leaving Education
R T F	Righting The Future
U.A.C.E	Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education
U.C.E	Uganda Certificate of Education.
UNEB	Uganda National Examination Board
UNESCO	United National Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USE	Universal Secondary Education

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## **Dedication**

This piece of work is dedicated to my dear parents Onadra Richard and Ocokoru Mary, and to my sisters Desire, Martha, Sonia, Diana and Keturuah.

## **Abstract**

This study focuses on the experiences of student mothers and highlights their experiences and the efforts of the non-state intervention programs that works to protect their education rights in a context where there is no official re-entry education sector policy for them. Data was collected from student mothers, parent or caregivers, and program staff within a non-state project being implemented in two urban poor locales (Kasubi and Nakulabye in Rubaga Division of Kampala District in Uganda) to universalize education for urban poor girls. The study highlights the perspectives of the student mothers bringing out the intersecting barriers to their education and ways in which the project is shifting norms and transforming their social and educational contexts thus providing lessons for a more protective policy. Therefore, the key findings indicate that there is need to consider re-entry for adolescent mothers since many still value the benefits of the education in their lives. Dropping out from school due to early pregnancy doesn't mean an end to education hence the government needs to look into the re-entry policy in the country.

## **Relevance to Development Studies**

Adolescent student mothers face intersecting forms of exclusion from the education system especially in a context where there is no education sector policy such as Uganda. This study foregrounds the experiences of student mothers and their caregivers who are benefiting from a non-state intervention program providing education to urban poor girls. The study takes a social justice perspective and highlights the importance of protecting the educational rights of marginalized groups including student mothers. The study points to the role of different actors including the government, and non-state actors in ensuring that student mothers have access to education.

## **Keywords**

Adolescent girls, Drop-out, Gender, Exclusion, Re-entry, Right to education, Student Mothers

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.0 Background

This study investigates the underlying factors hindering and enhancing the continuation of student mothers' schooling in Uganda from their perspectives, with a specific focus on poor urban settings in Kasubi and Nakulabye neighborhoods of Kampala district.

The right to education is a fundamental human right. Under the Ugandan Constitution, every individual is entitled to the equitable and successful completion of education, regardless of nationality, religion, gender, social origin or ethnic, race, age, disability or political preference (Constitution of Uganda, 1995: 25 (XIV)). The right to education is also stipulated in a plethora of international human rights declarations and instruments. These include Article 11 (6) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and Article 26 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The strongest protections under law are in Article 10 of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), under which Uganda reports annually on progress made.

According to Eloundou-Enyegue (2004:510), early pregnancy accounts for 18% of all female drop-outs in secondary schools and more than 20% in nine countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Uganda has been identified as one of the countries with the highest adolescent pregnancy rates in Sub-Saharan Africa (Muhanguzi & Ninsiima, 2011: 56) with 24% of the girls aged 15-19 years having either had a child or pregnant (Wallace, 2011: 3). Okwany and Kamusiime (forthcoming: 3) note that Uganda ranks 5th in Africa in pregnancy-related exclusion. The highest rates of adolescent pregnancies in the country occur in East Central region amounting to 31.6%, Eastern at 30.1%, Karamoja with 29.7% as well as West Nile with 26.4% (Muhwezi et al., 2015:115). In general, adolescent pregnancy contributes to high exclusion rates for female students affecting the participation of the student mothers in education and limiting their life chances. Research suggests that many of these pregnant and parenting students' return to school depends on the national education policy responsiveness to adolescent pregnancy in the different country contexts.

## 1.1 Debating student mother's education

The World Declaration on EFA (Education For All) at the Jomtien Conference in 1990 implied that the increasing rate of pregnant adolescent found among the children who are out of school indicated that the girl-child education was necessary prerequisite needed to have social justice project at the global level. Two-thirds of children that are without education and that lacks literacy comprised women. The educational exclusion of women and girls was one of the main challenges to be addressed by Education for All. Including both women and girls has been identified as part of the solution that are to be buttressed by universal access policies. Similarly, there was a concern to utilize a wide variety of diverse methods of delivery, likewise fortify the international solidarity that would validate

a shared and worldwide human responsibility (UNESCO, 1990). The significance of education precisely for girls has called much global attention and curiosity due to a cumulative attentiveness in issues concerning human rights. Thus, education can be debated to be a tool for development, growth and success and development at the level of individual and society. Education can as well improve the actualization of democracy and freedom among individuals. This is the rationale behind the conception of educational deprivation specifically for student mothers as social injustice and violation of their fundamental human right. The education of girls, for example, the student mothers does quite a number of roles that could be beneficial at several levels. The benefits of providing education for student mothers and pregnant adolescents can be felt at personal, family and national levels. The Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW, 2007), notes that education constitutes an important support that decides one's status both in the health and legal dimension. Education empowers individuals to be self-aware or be knowledgeable of their rights and possess sufficient knowledge of rudimentary health care skills comprising improved child health and reduced infant mortality, conforming with therapeutic prescription as well as the observation of rudimentary hygienic standards, pursuing medical services such as antenatal and postnatal. Furthermore, the report reveals that education boosts rational or logical thinking and makes available opportunities for student mothers that will make them to learn and know their rights. Consequently, it is easier for them to identify laws and social attitudes hindering them enjoying their rights. The same report sees education as a significant instrument in the liberation of adolescent girls who are pregnant and student mothers from the grips of historical discrimination and shortcoming hence assisting them to guide the coming generation about the advantages of education.

Maluwa-Banda (2004) opines that, the education of girls denotes an investment that creates way or opportunities to accomplish education for all children irrespective of age and status. He further adds that education remains a powerful instrument needed for fulfilment and self-advancement of development results for now or present and coming or future generations of children. Bhana et al. (2010:871-883) agree that helping pregnant adolescents to stay in school and go back after putting to bed is said to be important in stalling her giving birth for the second time as well as permitting student mothers to have an increased opportunities to acquire education and improve the enhancement of their capabilities.

Therefore, Formal education is a good channel to raise the status for girls contributing to their empowerment (Muhangi 2016:51). The student mothers who are out of school may miss out on many opportunities including getting a proper job. The lack of resources should not be an impediment in acquiring education but prioritizing is most important aspect to be considered (Muhangi 2016:51)

Education of pregnant adolescent girls and student mothers should be acknowledged by the families, communities, schools, and as well as the nation. This is because it is the only way that student mothers can be transformed in every aspect of their lives.

## 1.2 Framing the Research Problem

Uganda has played a significant role in the facilitation of the international goals on the rights to education such as the declaration of UN Literacy Decade 2003-2012, the Education for All Declaration (EFA), Millennium Development Goals 2 and 3 that focus on the realization of Universal Primary Education (UPE) and gender parity and women empowerment. Against the backdrop of the above, Uganda proceeded in 1997 to declare Universal Primary Education (UPE), and ten years later in 2007 declare the Universal Post Primary Education (UPPET) which is indicative of the rights of all and sundry to education (Ahikire and Mandada, 2011:1).

Undoubtedly, Uganda has registered some achievements regarding the education of girl child. These achievements can be attributed to the implementation of UPE, which has led to the exceptional increase in the rate of primary school enrolment. In fact, girls' and boys' enrolment at primary education level has more or less reached the 50/50 mark. The increase in enrollment is not limited to primary school level; both secondary and tertiary level has also witnessed a substantial increase in girls' enrolment (Ahikire and Mandada, 2011:2).

Despite this achievement, many girls that enrol in primary and secondary school levels later become excluded, which means they cannot realise their fundamental rights to full basic education, as provided for under the Ugandan Constitution. The difference is not great, but it is significant. For example, the data of Ministry of Education shows that 51 out of 100 girls complete their primary education compared with 56 of 100 boys, after initial enrolment (Ahikire and Mandada, 2011: 2). Some factors have been identified for this phenomenon of not completing education after initial enrolment, this includes but were not limited to social, physical, economic, and psychological factors. Amongst the social factors is the early pregnancies related obstacles. For instance, a total number of 8,116 girls dropped out of school because of pregnancy in 2002 and 8,201 in 2001 when compared with 3,966 in the year 2000 (Ahikire and Mandada, 2011:2). The girls concerned are accorded different labels such as teenage mothers, adolescent mothers, child mothers or a combination such as adolescent student mothers. All these labels point to the undesirability of the phenomenon.

Available research has attempted to interrogate and debate developing countries' school re-entry policies and the situation of student-mothers. In most cases research has focused on three major broad areas. Firstly, the literature tends to concentrate on the responsiveness of the policies that aims to address the student-mothers multifaceted realities (Chilisa 2002, CSA 2008). Secondly, the impact and enormity of early childbearing on the education of girls, and in turn how this hinders their participation in the learning, process, is also a focus of some studies (Eloundou-Enyegue 2004, Lloyd and Mensch 2008, Mensch et al. 2001). Thirdly, some researchers have explored how to encourage girls within the school setting where they already find themselves (Chigona and Chetty 2007, CSA 2008). This debate is considered further in Chapter 3.

This study by contrast, focuses on the determinant factors of school re-entry for student mothers, especially considering the family or household level. These household-level factors are seen as crucial since the majority of developing countries, like Uganda, do not have social protection programs that can protect families and enable them to provide support for the schooling of student

mothers. Against this backdrop, since the student mothers have a well-established right to finish their education, it is imperative to examine how re-entry policies can contribute to their inclusion or exclusion as student mothers. Some of the key conceptual discussions around these themes will be elaborated on in Chapter 3.

### 1.3 Relevance and Justification

Education policies in Africa for pregnant and parenting mothers exist in three forms, namely: expulsion, continuation and re-entry policies (Chilisa 2002:24; Birungi et al., 2015:6). In the case of Uganda, Okwany and Kamusiime (forthcoming: 2 &4) noted that there is no official re-entry policy when students get pregnant, the usual practice is to expel any student that is pregnant. Although, there are “goodwill pronouncements and circulars from the Ministry of Education to schools” and yet “...suspension and expulsion practices [remain]...the prevalent education practice in place” (Okwany and Kamusiime, Forthcoming: 4).

Among the first policy instruments to get gender equality in enrolment, was the National Strategy on Girls’ Education 2000.<sup>1</sup> which aimed to promote enrolment. This had some success. Later several governmental policies have been put in place since then, to address the issue of exclusion, among them the Gender in Education Sector Policy 2009.<sup>2</sup> This policy was little different from the 2000 Strategy, but was meant to reduce drop-out rates further. It was meant to implement and monitor gender sensitive and responsive education systems by inspecting schools in Uganda from time to time; but schools were warned in advance of inspections. This policy did not achieve its aim because the target of equal enrolment levels for boys and girls was not met. Also the policy did nothing to tackle the root causes of adolescent pregnancies, which include poverty, family structure and cultural values, including forced marriages. For this reason another policy was designed in 2011, the Non-formal Education Policy<sup>3</sup>. This policy was explicitly put in place to support the re-entry of children who had dropped out of school, girls and also boys. This did not apply to registered school institutions.

Despite these various policies in place, there are therefore still groups who are marginalized educationally, especially girls in rural area and those from poor families or without parents to support them. In the current context where there is no specific re-entry policy for the education sector for student mothers, adolescent girls who become pregnant are expelled immediately. This happens once it is known they are pregnant, and regardless of the type of school, and whether it is urban or rural, rich or poor (Ahikire and Madanda 2011:23). The problem of early pregnancy is worse for adolescent girls in poor households in rural and poor urban areas.

This contributes to the prevalence of gender inequality and social injustice for many adolescents. According to Okwany and Kamusiime (Forthcoming:2) despite substantial progress in education in Uganda after “re-institution of tuition-free primary and secondary education, gendered exclusion persists for girls.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.unicef.org/uganda/Re-entry-of-pregnant-girls – brief - 20\\_10\\_2014.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/uganda/Re-entry-of-pregnant-girls – brief - 20_10_2014.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [www.education.go.ug/files/downloads/POSITIONPAPERformainstreaminggenderineducation.pdf](http://www.education.go.ug/files/downloads/POSITIONPAPERformainstreaminggenderineducation.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [www.unesco.org/iiep/PDF/pubs/2008/Hoppers\\_Uganda.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/iiep/PDF/pubs/2008/Hoppers_Uganda.pdf)

They note that enabling student mothers to continue in school and their education after their pregnancy ‘not only protects their rights to education but also promotes their capabilities’ (Okwany and Kamusiime forthcoming:2). Due to the failure of the government, to put in place comprehensive policies and programs in Uganda some non-state actors have stepped in to help protect student’s mothers’ right education enabling some student mothers to re-enter school despite the lack of policy successfully. This study will examine the gaps in the policy to protect the education rights of student mothers in Uganda and state and non-state action as a pathway through to reduce gender disparity.

My family story is an example of how the protection of education rights of adolescent mothers can happen at the individual household level. This study examined the experiences of student mothers and the efforts of their households and intervention programs in these areas in protecting their education within the context of a lack of national policy in Uganda. The selection of this topic thus has a personal motivation in that I come from a family of 6 girls, and three of my siblings got pregnant during adolescence and school going age of 14, 17, and 19 years respectively. This phenomenon really hurt my father and he initially resisted paying school fees for them to resume school after bearing children and they also had no support from the fathers of their children. All the responsibilities fell on my parents but when my father realized that their dependence on him for everything would not be the solution, he opted to send them back to school so that they can become independent in future and be able to provide for their children.

The idea underlying this study was that pregnancy of adolescent girls and student mothers should not be tantamount to the end of their academic journey. The problem of early pregnancy is a societal one that requires appropriate interventions rather than victimizing the girls who already victims of the dearth of societal protection. This study therefore aims at establishing the views of key stakeholders on retention and re-entry of pregnant girls in both primary and secondary schools. The results of the study will offer a robust basis for germane policy formulation actors to be able to assess the degree of acceptability as well as to identify major areas that requires advocacy and intervention

## **1.4 Research Objective and Question**

The study objective was to examine how the right to education and re-entry into school, of student mothers, was protected or not. The choice was made to study an NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation) project in a poor urban context in Kampala. This choice was made within the broader context of no existing education sector policy for student mothers in Uganda. The research therefore aims to investigate the views of student mothers themselves, together with those project staff and parents who also analyse their exclusion experiences, as well as efforts to enable student mothers to re-engage with schooling and the factors that may hinder or help this process.

### ***Research Questions***

- What are the educational experiences of leaving and re-entering school for student mothers from households located in poor, urban context in Kampala?

- How are the intervention programs able or not to protect the right to education of such student mothers in these poor urban contexts?

## **1.5 Methodology**

The study sought to understand how one set of NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation) intervention programs were protecting – or not – the education rights of student mother. With this in mind, special attention was paid to stories of student mothers. The study was approached using mainly qualitative methods, and data was collected using Focus Group Discussions (FDGs), key informant interviews, and through listening to individual stories of student mothers about their experiences of leaving and seeking to re-engage with schooling. This will be elaborated on in the following chapter.

## **1.6 Organization of the Paper**

The dissertation paper is organized into six main chapters. This first chapter has served as an overview of the research topic, and laid out questions to be addressed. The second chapter will frame the research within the broader context. Chapter three provides a conceptual framework that serves as a critical lens for analysing lived experiences of student mothers in their local community and school settings. Chapters four provide an analysis of research findings, especially highlighting the educational exclusion of student mothers. Chapter five on the education sector looks at protection response in relation to student mothers expelled from school, or seeking re-entry. The concluding chapter draws out some implications for policies and institutions aiming to protect the education rights of student mothers in future.

Therefore, this chapter has elaborated about the introduction, the research problem and questions that helped the researcher to understand an overview of the problem under investigation. The next chapter will explain the research site, process of data collection and methods used in the study for gathering information.

## **Chapter 2 : Process of Data Collection**

### **2.0 Introduction**

This study was conducted with adolescent mothers in a poor urban context. The case study selected was part of a project known as “Righting the Future: South–South collaboration and Capacity Building for Universalizing Secondary Education for Girls in Africa” (hereafter referred to as the RTF Project). The goal of the RTF project has been to facilitate retention and re-entry of girls into school following pregnancy and birth. A core aim is to support the transition back towards and retention of such young women in secondary education. This chapter will explain how the project was selected, describing the research setting.

### **2.1 Overcoming Obstacles to Fieldwork**

At the beginning of the interview with the student mothers, it proved rather difficult to encourage them to start talking about their life experiences with me. However, I did anticipate that some experiences would be traumatizing and hard for them to talk about. For this reason, a familiar research site was selected and the researcher concentrated on creating a conducive and enabling environment that would enable the student mothers to talk in a safe space.

The student mothers who were out of school were very difficult to reach, since they were often outside the household or out of regular contact with others. Some went to work in other urban areas, and others stayed at home, with few social contacts outside the household. This obliged the researcher to make numerous site visits to different households within the village areas of Kasubi and Nankulabye, in search of these student mothers, to find those willing to talk about their experiences.

The researcher faced the problem of language barriers from the very start, since some student mothers preferred to express themselves in Luganda rather than in English – Luganda being the dominant language in the capital city of Kampala. In this case, the researcher used an interpreter to ensure that she could get a proper understanding of what the student mothers were saying in their narratives. The need for an interpreter also applied in FGDs (Focus Group Discussion), where some of participants were also illiterate, and this had to be allowed for.

Another challenge was the difficulty of making and keeping appointments with key informants at specific dates and times. Most people involved in the sector were very preoccupied with work in their various offices. The researcher had to reschedule appointments several times before being able to succeed in obtaining information relevant to this research.

### **2.2 Research Site: The Righting the Future Project**

It was decided to conduct this study in the poor urban areas of Kasubi and Nakulabye ‘villages’ in Kampala District of Uganda, near the capital city of Kampala. According to Kamusiime and Ngutuku (2016:1), the project contexts are

defined by, “material poverty and vulnerability of unstable single-parent female-headed households, and marginalization from social services” The population of the slum also focus on the survival needs hence tend to sacrifice the basic social need together with that of their children. In their study, Kamusiime and Ngutuku (2016:1-2) also noted that, the competing needs and the lack of social services in the poor urban context exceeds the socio-cultural norms that may be hostile to girls’ education. Usually this is foregrounded for the girls encountering more intersecting social difficulties as well as being poor. For adolescent mothers, the situation is more challenging because their roles as mothers is viewed as hard to reconcile with their role as young female students.

The selected project, Righting the Future, is a three-year project which was implemented in two selected slums of Kampala (Kasubi and Nakulabye). This project also drew lessons from the successful experience of MV Foundation a non-governmental organization in India to a context of similar, though not identical, situation in relation to girls’ education to the situation in Kenya and Uganda. This project was purposively selected because it highlighted how non-state actors respond to the lack of state provision in implementing programs that help protect the right to education of marginalized children, including student mothers’ education.

Data was collected from girls who are targeted by a project that is seeking to ensure that girls’ access to and re-entry in secondary school in poor urban contexts in Uganda is promoted and protected. According to Kamusiime and Ngutuku (2016:10) The RTF(Righting The Future) project ‘was grounded in a strength-based approach’ and adopted an asset-based philosophy of using resources ‘within one’s reach’ in order to stimulate conversations around schooling for girls, as a useful starting point for intervention. These researchers noted that a key asset identified was the use of social sanctions by community members to encourage community members to take their daughters to school while some community members volunteered to mobilize girls who were out of school either working, married or student mothers (Kamusiime and Ngutuku, 2016:10; Muhangi 2016:18). The project recognized that girls who had been out of school for a long period would have problem of re-entering school and so two bridge centres were created, and here girls could be re-oriented into schooling. They could attend preparatory classes and receive some life skills training. The bridge centre was a safe space where student mothers could attend class along with their children. Community volunteers also visited the bridge centres to motivate girls to prepare for being mainstreamed back into formal schools.

## **2.3 Methods of Data Collection**

### ***Sampling***

In this study, the researcher employed purposive sampling and selected student mothers who were among girls targeted to benefit from the education the RTF(Righting The Future) intervention project. It was easier to reach them as I went during a period when they were still at school and had not broken off for holidays. From the start, the study brought forth voices of student mothers and this involved listening carefully to their stories and their past educational experiences. This was an example of biographical research, which concentrates on personal life experiences of research participants (Denzin 1989, Erben 1998 in

Curtin and Clarke ,2005:199). The advantage of this method of working with interviewees is that they are more able to narrate their experiences in their own words and can attribute to their experience their own personal meanings and significance. This study targeted adolescent girls in the age bracket of 11 – 20 years old,

As well as girls in upper primary which is the key drop-out point. Although, the time of they dropped out from school and the duration they have spent outside school differs, all together, a total number of 14 students mothers participated in the focus group discussion (see Apendix 1 for details of participants). However, the purpose for selection of student mothers was to allow them to express their educational experiences of being out of school for a long period of time and then re-entering through the RTF project that gave them a second chance, another opportunity to complete their education. The life story telling was required since it meant that the student mothers could give me as much information as they wanted to, and without limitations as to what they should talk about. Each interview with the student mothers lasted 40 – 60 minutes.

### ***Source of Data and Methods***

In order to get clear information from the student mothers, I chose 14 student mothers out of which 8 student mothers had given me explicit sources of information I needed. The 6 (six student mothers) did not allow me to record them due to their concerns. The 8 others did allow recordings to take place, once I had asked for their consent.

### ***Focus Group Discussion***

The researcher conducted two focus group discussions FGDs; one with community members which included parents and community elders, student mothers and they also participated in the Focus group discussions. The majority of those in the community FGD were female (6 women and 2 men). These focus groups entailed 6- 8 members selected because they had information on the experiences of student mothers in households and community. The second Focus group discussion was conducted with adolescent mothers out of school who shared their life experiences and challenges of dropping out.

### ***Key Informant Interview***

I conducted five semi structured interviews with selected key informants, the two teachers of the Kasubi bridge center, RTF (Righting the Future) staff including the monitoring and evaluation officer, the program manager, and the for the state the education commissioner. These stakeholders were purposively sampled as they were knowledgeable about the education experiences of student mothers specifically in the RTF project and marginalized girls generally and how the education rights of student mothers can be protected. Purposive sampling was employed much in this study because it is a method that enables acquiring satisfactory evidence across a wide range of the study sample. The key informants help in provision of expert knowledge, pertinent information that can be beyond private experiences (O’Leary 2014:191Secondary Data

The secondary data was collected from a review of documents including project reports such as the RTF project reports including the final formal evaluation of

the project as well as research studies and reports on student mothers. For example, reports from FAWEU (Forum for African Women Educationist) which included findings from the study of the Pader Girls Academy as a model for protecting education rights of student mothers was useful for data analysis and also articles including books, government publications and others.

### ***Ethical Consideration***

Before leaving for data collection in Uganda, I was given a letter from the TLST (Teaching and Learning Service Team) that introduced me to various respondents. The availability of the letter made it possible to gain entry easily in various offices such as Ministry of Education, Project sites and the community. This formal support eased my data collection.

Ethics is one of the key aspect in conducting research. It means that the ethical behavior of individual researchers is under unmatched scrutiny (Best & Kahn, 2006). Ensuring that the rights and safety of the participating student mothers is taken into consideration, I informed them and explained ethical considerations like voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity.

In this case, I was introduced by the Teachers of Bridge Centre to the student mothers and I informed them that I was a researcher and I explained that my research was intended to find ways to help shed light on their situation. I also told them to feel free to participate voluntarily and withdraw at any time that they felt they wanted to. I also gave these explanations and held these ethical standards with parents, teachers and RTF project staff.

Confidentiality deserves serious consideration in any research with vulnerable individuals as informants or interviewees (Cohen&Manion 1994). During my research, I made sure to seek participants' full consent, take notes, and solicit their opinion on my Research. I also ensured that I did not use their real names unless they agreed to this, and I have agreed to destroy the original recordings. Under these conditions, most of them agreed to be recorded. A high degree of trust was maintained and they were reassured that no information would be released other than for research purposes. It was agreed that this was a sensitive research topic, carried out with a vulnerable group.

Confidentiality and anonymity are usually related but the two are somewhat different. Grinyer (2002) suggests that participants may be keen for their voices to be acknowledged and happy to have their identity known alongside their contribution of research. For instance, some participants in the study were happy when I recorded their voices upon asking their consent. I made sure to maintain their anonymity by using pseudonyms.

### ***Subjectivity and Positionality***

When I was conducting this study, I reflected back on the practical experiences of student mothers in school and those out of school, that I physically observed and watched in the community I come from and where I live. It came to my notice that student mothers are found everywhere in every part of the country meaning the magnitude is huge. In my own village Ambala, Vurra sub county of Arua District, I have seen that the education of adolescent girls can be disrupted by domestic tasks which girls are socialized to do as females, from a tender age. These forms of work include cooking, fetching water and often require walking

long distances to collect firewood, to wash clothes, to dig fields, whilst at the same time studying and also walking long distances to school. This can be exhausting for young girls. Most girls thus tend to perform poorly in relation to boys because they have constrained time to study and do homework. This happened to one of my cousins in the village, as she tried to balance work and study, it was difficult to progress academically and she eventually stop going to school and got married at the age of 16 years when she was in primary six.

Additionally, early marriage still exists in many communities. An example is depicted from another niece of mine whose father is a Congolese. she chooses to come to study in my village because of the war of 1998-2003 that interfered with the education in DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo), unfortunately her study was put at stake as she got pressure from her father to marry at that age. And many other factors like economic factors that has driven most adolescents out of school such as lack of support. Much as there is free education, there is some money that parents are supposed to pay and not all can afford.

Each of my participants had unique stories about their experiences of being in and out of school. The stories were very touching. I choose to call them 'student mothers' throughout my study because these were adolescent girls who were keen to rejoin school and they were devoted to learn much as they had dropped out of school because of pregnancy. I was impressed with their positive attitudes towards education.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter established the process in which data for the purpose of this study was gathered, what was gathered, the importance of the data collected as well as the credibility of the data collected. In the chapter, the challenges and difficulties associated with the data collection process were identified as well as the solutions to the challenges. Ethical issues such as subjectivity and positionality were brought to the fore and also the rights of the participants and key informant were carefully considered and respected. Having said that, I am confident that the process of data collection follows the standard research ethics, useful and fulfil the expectation of adopting the approach to the study. The next chapter entails the conceptual framework that was used in the study for presenting the ideas.

## Chapter 3: Policy context and Conceptual framework

### 3.0 Introduction

This research seeks to examine how the education rights of the student mothers is protected in a context where there is no policy, Therefore, in order to achieve this, it is imperative to give a conceptual framework which will help as a lens through which experiences of student mothers can be viewed and analyzed. This involves the use of the concepts of Adolescence and gender, Social exclusion and Social Justice.

### 3.1 The Wider Policy Context

According to Lawrence Summers, Chief Economist at the World Bank in 1993, opined that female education yield far-reaching gains for girls, women, their families as well as the societies in which they reside. Mothers with high level of education can afford quality nutritional delicacies for their children, thus have children that are healthier than children from less educated mothers. They are also less fertile. Educating their children is also of significant importance to them. The report shows that educating female is pivotal to the reduction of poverty and thus must be included in a country's health strategy just like immunization programs and health care access (World Bank, 1995: 110). The provision of education for student mothers should be conceived as their fundamental human right. Education for mother child should not be seen in the light of economic advantages only; the future of the student mother should also be put into consideration. It is paramount for student mothers to be adequately educated. It is therefore necessary to decompose the social norms hindering female adolescent who are pregnant to carry on with their educational pursuits. This validates the assertion of Wekesa (2010:29) that gendered norms serves as a limitation for student mothers to re-enter the school. It is important that student mothers attain a standard educational level as it adds value to them, their families, their communities and nation at large.

This perspective is similarly reinforced by the then Secretary General of United Nations Kofi Annan in UNICEF (2003: iv-93) report that, "...there is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls".<sup>4</sup> In other words, giving education to adolescent girls may mean educating the entire family. What is in the family is the same as in the community and the whole country. Educating Pregnant Adolescent girls increases the economic productivity, decreases infant and maternal mortality. Education is also seen as a development tool for improving nutrition as well as promoting good health which involves prevention of Human Immune Deficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune deficiency syndrome.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.unicef.org/sowc04/files/SOWC\\_04\\_eng.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/sowc04/files/SOWC_04_eng.pdf)

Bank (2007a) points out that girls' education is mentioned in numerous international conferences. The agreement held since 1990 is to bring about the national progress and exposure of democratic world. According to King and Hill (1993:1-32) and Unterhalter(2005:1-249), the global policy like economic growth and social development can be noticed by gender equality in education. Zajda et al (2008:17-39) noted that the gender inequality in schools in the developing countries has obtained recognition globally.

A study done by the African Population and Health Research Centre (2007) showed that education as the secondary level is seen as being essential for the economic development as well as poverty reduction among countries within the Sub Saharan Africa region. Similarly, CREAW (2007) report shows that education is power and there should be equal access to it in all regions without any form of discrimination. Thus, government should establish target regarding the minimum educational level women should attain. They should also make sure that all educational institutions serve as safe place for the girls. Positively, girl-child education is necessary for development in the social and economic dimension. The low level of school enrolment of girls found in many developing countries shows the presence of social injustice and gender inequity in the educational sector. Solving this requires an increased accessibility to education via the promotion of re-entry policy for pregnant Adolescent girls after putting to bed. This is a sure way of establishing social justice and equity in education in Uganda and other developing countries.

### **3.2 Adolescence and the Gender Schooling Gap**

Adolescence is a gendered concept and affects girls different from boys because when girls grow up their social and physical development is viewed differently from that of boys. This is a period when girls' socialization into their gender roles especially domestic roles such as housekeeping, cooking, washing and child bearing increases. Pregnant and parenting adolescents take on the adult role of mothering when they are still physically and emotionally developing and these adult roles, mean that adolescent mothers occupy the grey area between childhood and adulthood (De Boek and Honwana 2005:4) and are both students and mothers.

The term adolescence is defined as the transitional period between childhood and adulthood (Christiansen et al. 2006:9-28). The Ugandan Government defines adolescents as those aged between 10-19 years (NAHP 2001:1) meaning they are active age young people. However, this study includes student mothers above the age of 19. Many student mothers drop out at school age going and fail to return to school immediately. Like Wekesa (2010:2), this study will use the word "student mothers" referring to the school going adolescent mothers. According to Beneria et al (2015:59), "Gender conveys what it means to be born female or male in a given society, at a given point in history. As such, gender differences shape the experience, options and outcomes of individuals." These elements include, subjective identity, normative concepts that set forth interpretation, culturally available symbols, social institutions and organisations (Scott,1986:1067-1068). While gender equality is increasing in most parts of the world, however great disparities still exists in many contexts including many Af-

rican contexts. Women including adolescent girls, experience 'endemic and substantial gaps in the division of household responsibilities and limited access to educational opportunities' Inglehart and Norris (2003:4).

Gender refers to socially constructed roles and socially learned behaviors and expectations associated with females and males. Thus, "being male or female carries few meanings in and of itself; its most potent meanings come from social and cultural meanings attributed to it" (World Bank 2001, Biklen and Pollard (1999) cited in Adusah- Karikari, 2008:35-36). An adolescent girl can be isolated from the initial stage of childhood right into adulthood. Adolescent girls are considered as inferior in ways that are always undermining their self-esteem in most societies in Africa and around the world (Kelly 1994; Gwaba and Namalambo, 2005 in Mwansa 2011:5). Adolescent girls are seen as source of prestige in some families, they are meant to perform house chores like cooking, fetching water, looking after the siblings. These role make them believe that they are mature enough like mother that makes most of them to for early marriages hence conceiving so early that has prompted many to leave schooling. Some families see them as source of bride wealth (Mwansa 2011:5-6). In this study, its depicted that many factors such as social norms inflict with female adolescent's ability to attain the education that needs to be addressed at households and community level.

### **3.3 Social Exclusion**

Social exclusion may be seen as denial (non realization) of the civil, political, or social citizen's right' (Jones 2011:64). Social exclusion can be defined as a way through which some groups and individuals are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live. (European foundation 1995:4 in De Haan 2000 :26).

School dropouts can be excluded from unemployment or employed in precarious jobs with low payment, less educated and possess little political power De Haan (2000:27). Social exclusion can also be an intergral part of capability deprivation and instrumentally a cause of diverse capability failure (Amartya 2000:5). This means that certain groups lack access and entitlement to services hence these groups of individuals need to be targeted for inclusive measures (Sayed and Soudien 2003:10). In this study, student mothers have been excluded from education services and need social justice.

Exclusion of adolescent mothers from school has continued to be an hindrance to the development of the country (Uganda). When adolescent mothers get pregnant at earlier stage, there is possibilities that their education is affected. This has further intensified by the number of years they take to stay home after delivery. Some take like two to three years to re-enter schools while others leave school permanently. This means that their education outcome can be affected. More evidence of social exclusion is seen in employment attainment; many go for low paid jobs as they have no qualification. Another research by Hayes (1987:126) suggests that, "because of the time and energy that raising children require, which interfere with the time and energy required to study and attend classes", "women who bear a child during the school years often leave before they can complete their schooling". Klepinger et al (1995:27), also in their study, used instrumental variable approach to estimate the effect of adolescent fertility

on education which portrays “that, early child bearing has large negative effects on young women’s year of schooling after accounting for the endogeneity of the fertility”. In this study, Social exclusion of the adolescent mothers from education can be seen in different ways like delay in re-entry or taking long to go back to school, job exploitation, unable to make formal decision and participation, student mothers’ loss of education and no hope for better future. This thus calls for solution from the government, community to address the problem of exclusion.

### **3.4 The Right to Education as a Form of Social Justice**

This study takes a rights-based approach to social justice, as advocated by Tickly and Barret (2011:4). The aim is to examine education quality with a focus on the dimension of inclusion and capacity enhancement. The inclusion dimension emphasizes the accessibility of high-quality education to all children. For my study this includes adolescent mothers. The concept can help inform us about the importance of good quality education and inclusionary policies to ensure lower drop-out rates and higher rates of re-entry for adolescent mothers.

A lack of provision for these aspects of policies directly infringe on the rights to education of student mothers. Therefore, Tickly and Barret (2011: 4) point out the inclusion, relevance and democracy dimensions as a social justice perspective to convey that good quality education prompts learners like the student mothers to become economically productive and to have a sustainable livelihood contributing to a peaceful and democratic society. I will use their concept of inclusion and quality education to examine the exclusion and injustice in the lack of educational rights of student mothers in Uganda. In relation to education, most conceptions of social justice refer to a society which is based on ‘principles of equality’ and ‘solidarity which understands, values and human rights and recognizes dignity of every human being’ (Zajda 2006:1-2)

### **3.5 Conclusion**

In this study, the conceptual frame work has been examined as a way of explaining the issues that will be addressed in this research. This chapter has highlighted the key concepts to be used and the focus of the study on adolescent mothers. In this review government has to take a part in making the student mothers understand their rights to education. This can be done through addressing the issue of the policy implementation. The next chapter depicts data analysis and presentation on the perspective of student mother’s exclusion and inclusion in education and as well as other factors that the research thought can contribute to exclusion of adolescents from schools.

## Chapter 4: Perspectives on Student mothers: exclusion and inclusion

### 4.0 Introduction

The education in Uganda both in primary and secondary school has a gender gap as a result of dropout rates among the female students due to adolescent pregnancy. Where there is no proper school structures or lack of nearby schools, religion and culture can become impediments to adolescent girls' education, and attitudes<sup>5</sup> can affect the education of many students. In poor urban contexts with high levels of poverty and exclusion, slum dwellers often focus on survival sometimes at the expense of their children's' education. This can make it difficult for the adolescent mothers to go back to school (Kamusiime and Ngutuku 2016:1).

Student mothers who still desire to rejoin school usually have barriers that confront their education and are hence excluded from the education system. These challenging factors have affected them negatively in that, some easily give up on education and resort to doing petty jobs like housemaids, bar attendants, others due to competing needs have gone into prostitution for less pay. In this chapter, I first present the perspectives of student mothers' targeted by the RTF project on the exclusion and inclusion in education and their experiences of re-joining school. After that I analyze the key factors influencing exclusion and inclusion, paying attention especially to household, institutions and cultural factors.

### 4.1 Student Mother's View on Exclusion in Education

Exclusion of pregnant adolescent girls and student mothers still remains a big challenge in Uganda and the problem is still acute especially where there is no official government re-entry policy. The literature shows that some countries have put measures to address the issue of exclusion of these pregnant adolescent girls by putting into practice policies that allow them to remain in school and for student mothers to go back to study. During my interaction with the student mothers that I met, some of them with children mostly of 2- 3 years while others were pregnant. They shared their different perspective on exclusion in education.

#### *Insecurity and Belonging*

For many student mothers, exclusion from education rejection by their families, school, and community. According to Lall (2007:227), girls who have put to birth always have the feeling of being isolated or secluded by colleagues, since they are managing their babies and have also missed school. Some have left home thus there are no reintegration and child care facilities that can allow them to return to school and complete their education (Lall 2007:227).

“I came out of school in 2009, after delivery of my baby, I stayed home, looking after her. Life was not easy at all. I still wanted to go to school but there was

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<sup>5</sup> [www.unevoc.unesco.org/e-reform/lewis-lockheed-chapter1.pdf](http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/e-reform/lewis-lockheed-chapter1.pdf)

no fees, no support and even my grandmother could not do much to help. My parents sent me to the village, my friends isolated me, not even an uncle or aunt came to my rescue to say that here are fees, go back to school. The day I joined bridge Centre was like an excitement because where am studying now, I found students like me who have children, At least here friends didn't isolate me, we were all the same and since I didn't have school fees, I got this opportunity. I'm all filled with happiness" (M.S Primary Six Student Mother, interviewed on13/7/2016).

In order for these student mothers to go back to school, they equally need support from parents, teachers, and the community in which they live. However not many of them receive such support. Majority are left to figure out life on their own especially with the continuation of their education. Lall(2007:235) points out that in spite of changes in policy, pregnant adolescents or student mothers still jettison the idea of school because they lack extra help and support. This means that, parents need to be sensitized about rights of student mothers' education. As many desire to go back to school, they will always need support from their parents, teachers, and the community they come from.

### ***Loss of Education Opportunity***

To some student mothers being excluded in education is the end of their educational dreams. Some never knew that they would ever get an opportunity to come back and study again in their life. Early adolescent pregnancy is both a cause as a consequences of dropouts (Stoebenau et al., 2015: 9). Several pregnant adolescent mothers often do not return to school after dropping out. This means that educational exclusion does not merely implies leaving school but also being excluded from having the needed requirements for learning and surviving under condition insufficient for healthy living and wellbeing for example insufficient housing, food <sup>6</sup>.

"When I stopped schooling due to pregnancy, I was not aware and I did not imagine that I would ever go back to school because of shame and my parents refused to pay for me but now I sit with students who are pregnant in class, and some with their babies, giving them food, milk. When I received information from bridge Centre that I have been given a place in senior one to come and study, I was the happiest. I was too lucky among to get this opportunity. This kind of opportunities come once, once you leave school because of pregnancy it's the end of life because no one is willing to re-educate you yet life without education is hard. From here I believe I have a future and hope" (B.A, Senior two student mother, interviewed on13/7/2016).

Student mothers are also excluded from regular and continuous participation in school and education program. For student mothers, they could not pay for participation in education when everyone withdraws support from them, and were also unable to spare time to attend school because of other life demands, like looking after their children, involvement in domestic chores since they are now mothers, they are expected to take up motherhood roles which involves cooking, fetching water, washing. The need to balance education and house cores is challenging. Some of student mothers are forced to drop out completely from education to look after the child and the family.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002170/217073e.pdf>

### ***Social Norms as Barrier to Education.***

The student mothers living in these two urban slum areas noted that some parents do not take education as a serious matter. In most cases the girls would be seen as marriage material and doing household chores at home. This has heavily contributed to their poor performance in education and excluded them from education. This is also supported by the finding of Kamusiime and Nagutuku (2016:6-7) in the RTF(Righting the Future) pilot project, where they noted that the project was implemented in areas where the majority was a young population, with precarious livelihoods. During the project baseline survey, education was not given a priority by households. Girls' worth was seen in terms of marriage but not in relation to education. Sometimes student mothers neither married nor completed their schooling. In such cases, the Bridge Centre played an important role:

“I come from a poor family, where sometimes even eating three meals a day is a problem. We are very many in our family yet the house we sleep in is so small with 6 children and two other relatives who are also studying. The problem is that we all have needs including books, fees, and other things. Most times I cannot even afford to buy sanitary towels that makes me feel uncomfortable to go school. My parents will just give you fees and books, and the rest is yours. Sometimes I wake up very early to do house chores before going to school. When I return from school, I continue with the same work especially cooking and looking after the young ones. In other words, I have no time for study and homework. Sometimes my father used to tell me I should get married. The lack of enough money to buy my needs like sanitary pads forced me to get a boyfriend who impregnated me later. Coming to study in bridge centre saved me from not going ahead with learning in my life and I now have hope of completing my studies” (N.S 20 years old Student mother,interviewed on 18/7/2016)

This shows how an apparently small problem, like girls being unable to buy sanitary pads, can help make them feel so uncomfortable about going to school when they have their periods, that they may even drop out. They may also that staying home can make them more vulnerable to sexual abuse by predatory men in the community. Therefore, RTF project therefore tackled social norms, which interacted with poverty to influence the education outcome of young mothers in these contexts. Exclusion of pregnant Adolescent girls and student mothers contributes to the gender imbalance in the education sector. According to the student mothers, when they are excluded in education, they lose a lot in terms of education while boys even those who impregnate girls will progress with their education uninterrupted. There are very few chances of completion of education by pregnant adolescents and student mothers.

“It was in form 3 last year that I was in a relationship with a boy in the same class and became pregnant., I was dismissed from school and I have been staying with my mother in Kasubi at Kawaala. I did not continue with school after giving birth but the boy is now in senior four. I feel bad because I only had one more year to sit for Senior four national exams. The RTF project has been a blessing and a second chance because a teacher at bridge Centre recruited me and I joined senior three so I feel lucky unlike many girls out who lack this opportunity, yet they want to study. It is important to give students who have babies a chance to go back to school”. (N.K Senior three, student mother, interviewed on12/7/2016).

From the above interviewee, it is depicted that the more student mothers are excluded from education, the more the gender gap. As observed, not many of the adolescents who get pregnant have equal chances to go back to school and fulfill their education requirements. So, this means that the number of boys completing full education may be higher than the girls.

Lall (2007:219) suggests that girls who jettisoned because of pregnancy are not often captured in official statistics. The report by UNESCO (2013) established that gender gap in the rate of completion of primary school education is higher than 10% and this implies that many more girls leaving school than boys each year. It is seen that policies for provision of free primary and secondary education have also helped in closing the gender inequality for poor families but much of this has not shown results (Birungi et al 2015:28). The need for the government to strengthen policies on re-entry and retention for pregnant adolescent girls is important as it will help to close the gap. The education and health sectors should be in position to work together to formulate, legislate and enforce retention and return policies such that adolescent girls continue with their education this will help to solve the problem of the gender gap in the country (Stoebenau et al. 2015:12).

## **4.2 Student Mother's Views on Inclusion in Education.**

In this study, inclusive education means that student mothers regardless of their status as mother should be able to learn in an environment, which should not discriminate on differences but rather focus on integration as an opportunity for change. The student mothers see inclusion in education as an important aspect in life. From their testimonies they feel that being educated does not only equip them with knowledge and skills but contributes to personal development. quoting from the student mothers.

“When I came to the bridge center and to this school, I felt happy to be back in school because I still wanted to study. It's a great opportunity in my life, I don't think I would ever get it. I found there were other students like me who could come to study. The fear in me disappeared, I know when I complete my studies, I will establish a business, be able to get money to buy things for myself and my child and look after myself, and also support my child in education in future”. (W.J , Senior one student mother, interviewed on 13/7/2016).

Education plays vital roles in the lives of individuals including the student mothers. In the interviews held with the student mothers in Kasubi, revealed that by giving a second opportunity to complete studies, education enhances better chances of job attainment. In reference to Robeyns (2006:70), She suggests that education helps in job finding for a person and to become “less vulnerable on the labour market”, be informed like “a consumer”, ability to discover instruction on economic chances.

“It feels good coming back to study, I have been just staying at home with my child. I still have hope. I want to study and become a journalist in future. At least when someone is in school she can do well and be employed to get a job, I lost hope in education but I have hope to come and complete my school education once again”. (K .Senior four, female student, interviewed on 18/7/2016).

Young people like the student mothers take time to get back to school after delivery at early stage. This may be because of the role of parenthood they undertake yet some still desire to study and complete their education in their different capacities. According to Furstenberg et al (1987:143), in their study claim that, leaving school at an early stage lessens 'but does not' rule out the 'young mother's' expectations to achieve upcoming schooling. In their study still, the interviewee showed that, more adolescent mothers returned to school after the 'youngest child' had gone to school.

“Education is good, I know it’s difficult to always balance studying and looking after a child and being a good daughter, but me I want to continue with my studies, complete senior four and go to nursing school. To me this was like a golden opportunity to once again come to study.”(N.M.K ,Senior three student mother, interviewed on13/7/2016)

The above quotes signify the desire of the student mothers in returning back to school to complete their education given that they have had a second chance to go and study through the help of the project Righting the Future. Based on above, it is also seen that the social justice has been achieved thus addressing the issue of exclusion. It is therefore vital for the government of Uganda to ensure that student mothers are included in education.

This has been supported by Gonski ( 2011) in Zhank et al( 2014 :24 ) who found out that, many researchers established that, higher level of education is associated to 'positive life out come-not only improved employment and earnings but also health, longevity, successful parenting, civic participation and social cohesion'. I will argue, in a positive perspective that there should be a concern by the parents, community, school and government to ensure that justice is availed to student mothers because education is their right. Snow and Powell( 2012) in Zhank et al. (2014: 26) suggest that, inclusion in education can have the 'potential to break the cycle of disadvantages. For instance the vulnerable student mothers who are out of school still need to be in the education system so that they are able to complete their education and attain skills that that will earn entry into higher education and training for a livelihood. Inclusion in education enhances employability of youth and reduces inequalities in both economics (OECD 2010 in Zhank etall 2014:26) and social out come Wilkinson and Pickett (2010 in ibid :26). Girls should also be educated because of who they are young people with the right to education.

As one study suggested, in an OECD paper, economic there are several dimension to equitable education (Field et al 2007 in Zhank et al 2014: 24-25). One dimension is fairness, which specifies that social circumstances like gender, ethnicity, social and economic status should not be an obstacle to educational achievement and inclusion. The aim is to ensure that all individuals should obtain a minimum standard of education. Other studies emphasizes inclusion of disadvantaged groups like student mothers in education as a means to enhance capacity development, attainment of livelihood, and wider goals like democracy (see for example Tikly and Barret, 2011:4). This means that regardless of the status of student mothers of bearing children at early age, social circumstances should not hinder them from progressing with their education.

## 4.3 Other Factors Impacting Education Exclusion for Student Mothers

### *Household Factors*

My research findings showed that household factors have an impact on schooling for girls. This finding reflects during one of the Focus Group Discussions held with the community members. All the categories of the discussants including women and men articulated their anxieties about their daughters getting pregnant prior to the success in academic endeavors. This justifies the preference of men to invest in educating the boy instead of the girl-child. This is an unfortunate social reality as majority of the parents hinged their preference boy-child education on the disastrous consequences of girls getting pregnant prior to the completion of her academic pursuit. One of the male participants of the discussions stressed that;

“Majority of the male parents will ensure they invest in the education of the boys. There is no crime in educating the girl but the problem lies in her getting pregnant before she reaches S4. This implies that all the money spent on her is a waste. This is one of the rationales behind parent’s loss of interest in educating the girl-child. A pregnant girl will have to drop out of school and this is likely the end of her educational dreams. However, the reverse is the case when it concerns the boy. Even if he drops out of the school system in S3 which is tantamount to squandering his parent’s money or resources, he can still get to do what he desires at home” (FDG, Male Participant, interviewed on 28/7/2016)

Similarly, student mothers also have related opinions like the male discussion participant. They submitted that some parents decline enrolling their girls in school because they are afraid of them (the girls) getting pregnant. They view this as a very factual risk. “School girls are made pregnant in S 1. As a result, they completely drop out of school”. (FDG, Student mother, interviewed on 28/7/2016).

Most girls construct pregnancy and motherhood as the death of their educational dreams and experiences. This is because pregnant girls who desire to remain in school are not adequately supported by their significant others let alone student mothers craving to return to school. Their case is worse “Your getting pregnant is tantamount to the ending schooling” said a 17-year-old student mother. Some of the student mothers observed that remaining in school was possible, mainly through the support of trusted adults coupled with the girls’ willpower to overcome massive impediments in following their educational pursuits. A 15-year-old student mother noted that, “some of the adolescent girls who become pregnant are in P6 thus, missing out the continuation to P7, the grade where entrance exams to secondary schools are written”.

However, some of these girls are courageous by returning to school after delivery of their child.’ A 14-year-old student mother who went back to school attested to this assertion. She emphasized the significance or the importance of mentoring support: “All the girls who became pregnant stop studying. However, I did not put an end to my academic pursuit. I actually opted for an abortion but later jettisoned the idea when the senior teacher counseled me against aborting my baby. She gave me support and encouraged me to go back to school. During

the course of my return to school, I was jeered at by some of my school colleagues. However, I endured and persisted in pursuing my dreams of getting a formal education. I did not allow their jests and mockeries to get at me”

Secondly due to financial constraints with competing needs, some parents find it difficult to resend their parenting children to school (Wekesa, 2012 :6-41). According to Mokgalabone, (1996:55-66) pregnancy is among the most critical causes of school disruption among Adolescent girls. It is difficult to balance between schooling, work at home and parenting. For instance, in a survey conducted in West Nile Region of Uganda, 28% of the girls excluded from school noted that that household chores interfered with their schooling (Stoebenau et al .2015:6).

### ***Institutional Factors***

Stigma and discrimination against pregnant female adolescents and student mothers are widespread in the society. This makes student mothers to feel unwanted, unwelcomed and not accepted. In order to cope with the many challenges associated with motherhood and learning at the same time, some student-mothers’ learner device their own coping strategies. For those who cannot handle the stigma, ridicule and prejudice from the school community, they leave school altogether never to return. However, those who opt to continue with education resort to a range of measures to enable them to cope. Such measures include hiding their pregnancy or skipping school for some time and then re-engaging again. Countries like Kenya have heads of schools who are adverse to permitting student-mothers to enrol back to school due to the labelling and stigma connected with having mothers in a school environment (Omondi, 2008 in Wanyama and Simatwa, 2011:1384). For the case of Uganda, most student mothers return to a different school than where they were before.

“Usually those Pregnant Adolescent girls who have registered for Primary leaving certificate (P.L.E), Uganda Certificate of Education (U.C.E) , Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education(U .A. C.E) examinations are allowed to sit for exams but those below that especially from Primary 6 and senior 5 and 3 below, are given suspension and in most cases they don’t come back. Those whose parents can afford taking them back, do it at an individual level. (Assistant education commissioner for Basic Education, interviewed on 15/08/2016)”.

According to Shaningwa, (2007) teachers also see student-mothers as adults who do not conform within the environment of the school.. Chigona & Chetty, (2007:1-17) support the idea that student mothers experience stigma, noting that hurtful comments can make the student-mothers feel isolated and not supported as learners. They are often viewed as a bad influence and preferred are “persuaded” or pushed to go to another school (FAWE, 2004). Wanyama & Simatwa, (2011) argue that student-mother were often shunned by other learners when they attempted to socialize with them. This was as a result of being warned against associating with the student-mothers community-based discriminatory at large.

“ After delivery of my baby, my mother asked permission from the school whether I could join in senior three, but had to endure, fellow student calling me names like ‘maama wa abaana’ meaning (mother of children) wayononeka(wasted) and because of that I stopped going to school and sat at home for some time. but when I came to study at the bridge Centre, (RFI project) I

got a second chance to come study because here you find only students who have babies, who are pregnant, you feel at peace and therefore no one can tease you". (N. Z, 17 yrs old Student mother, interviewed on 13 /7/2016).

This implies that it is important to provide a conducive environment for student mothers to feel comfortable so as to progress with their learning such that more confidence is built in the achievement of education. This can only be achieved when the government works with the institution to allow pregnant girls in school.

### ***Social Cultural Factors***

The attitude of the society towards student mothers is often negative thus it becomes difficult to accept them in the community. In relating to the finding of Okwany and Kamusiime (Forthcoming:9) many household and community members often view student mothers as having the ability to 'contaminate' and 'spoil' the innocent ones especially younger siblings and other girls as well.

'My 20 year old first born, a girl got pregnant when she was in senior six vacation, I thought, she would listen to my advice not to do the same having given her advice, I sent her back to school but in the first year, she conceived again. People around me told me I was wasting my money and why don't I just surrender. It pains because she is showing a bad example to the rest'. (Joyce 45, parent, interviewed on 15/7/2016)

From the narrative of the above parent, it is evident that the knowledge, attitude and practices in the community are critical to the decision concerning educating pregnant adolescent girls or giving them another opportunity to go back to school. community sensitization should therefore be a key aspect considered by the stakeholders and government so that the communities are aware of the importance of educating pregnant adolescent girls since education is a human right.

Religion is another factor that can be used in the discrimination and stigma of student mothers and may include the isolation of the family of the student mother on moral grounds. For many sociocultural and religious contexts, girls who reaches puberty is viewed as ready for marriage. As noted by the program manager of the RTF project, "Cultural, norms and beliefs are one of the main challenges that shapes the discrimination and stigma around student mothers' education."

From the above quotes, looking into the aspect of social norms and culture in the communities is important. Social norms have also greatly contributed to the hindrance of the continuation of the education of the student mothers. This further is supported in the findings of Kamusiime and Ngutuku (2016:7) who argued that a number of households in the urban poor context support to the social norms and do not take girls' education seriously.

## **4.4 Conclusion**

As seen from the above discussion, Adolescent mothers feel positive about inclusion in education as it tends to be their right and of benefit in their lives. In their opinion, second chance to re-enter school should be availed to others who have no opportunities. Secondly, the narratives of the student mothers, exclu-

sion from education entails a number of things like discrimination and stigmatization, increasing of gender gaps, loss of education opportunities. It is important to take into consideration that educating a student mother would contribute to the personal development of the student mother, it would also raise contribution to the government in terms of labor and planning.

Other factors such as household, institution and social cultural have contributed to student mothers' exclusion from education that needs to be dealt with such that student mothers realize their right to education. The government needs to put mechanisms that will address the issue of exclusion of student mothers from education. However, having looked at the data analysis, the next chapter explains the education sector response for adolescent mothers and non-state actors that are protecting education rights of adolescent mothers. The views from the community, and staffs are presented in this session.

# Chapter 5: Education Sector Protection Response for Student Mothers

## 5.0 Introduction

This chapter elaborates education sector protection reaction to the student mothers through various intervention programs. To get an insight of this I will discuss the education sector policies that promotes education sector responses to early and unintended pregnancy among student mothers as one of the key aspects that also contributes to the protection of education rights of the student mothers in the poor context of Kampala district. I will also focus on the intervention programs initiated by the non-state actors that are filling the gaps of protecting the education rights of the student mothers at individual level, in doing so I will focus only on the aspects of the intervention programs for the student mothers. This is drawn from Interviews with staff of intervention projects targeting marginalized girls and student mothers to find out how they are protecting education rights in a context where there is no official re-entry government policy.

## 5.1 The Need for Government Protection for Student Mothers

The increasing number of adolescent girls who get pregnant and leave school at an early school age in Uganda is an increasingly serious exclusion problem. The government has tried implementing inclusive programs that benefits these student mothers, but what they are doing is inadequate. For instance, the National adolescent health policy 2004 speaks about enrolment and retention of adolescents in school to increase the numbers.<sup>7</sup> This policy however, does not clearly spell out at what age and when they are supposed to report to school. Even though the issue of retention and readmission of adolescent mothers is captured in the policy practically this has not been implemented (Semambo et al .2016:2) and there is no education sector policy governing the education of student. In both boarding and day schools, pregnancy testing of the female students has been mandatory in school, as well as ‘periodical check-ups’ are arranged throughout the year of the school (Chilisa 2002: 23). When they are pregnant, adolescent girls are expelled and readmission happens at an individual level not in the same school but often in a different school. This calls for the need for implementing an inclusive education policy.

“As I said, those days girls were seen as source of wealth, they were forced to marry early may be these days things have changed. It’s only those pregnant students who have registered for UNEB who are allowed to only sit for exams. The government needs to put in place policies that will allow student mothers to go back to school”. (B.A ,30 years old parent, interviewed on 19/7/2016).

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<sup>7</sup> [www.youth-policy.com/Policies/UGAYouthpol2004.pdf](http://www.youth-policy.com/Policies/UGAYouthpol2004.pdf) The national adolescent health policy 2004:15-16 spells out the implementation targets , one being the Girl child enrolment and retention, and pregnant girls to continue with education system after giving birth(Adolescent mothers to be readmitted within the education system)

Based on the above quotes of the interviewee, there is clear indication that what the government has done is not enough through implementing inclusive programs, there is need to put in place official education policy that will ensure that all pregnant girls are retained in school. In this way, the government will have protected education rights for all the student mothers who are out of school as a result of expulsion.

The advocates for education for all acknowledge the need for political will in education policy reform is different from analyzing it, thus for policies to be formulated and implemented there is need for the role of politics, political systems, policy elites and stake holders to be in place (Little 2011:499).

### **5.3 Education Sector Response Policies for Student Mothers**

Policies that are in support of student mother's access to education after dropping out of school due to early pregnancy are not only important to the Ugandan government but are of global concern. During year 2010, the UNFPA discovered that 36.4 million women who fall between 20 and 24 years found in developing countries gave birth before they clocked 18 years (UNFPA 2013:3-7). What is of utmost concern is on aggregate, developing nations contributes for 95% of the births to student mothers (UNFPA 2013:3-7). Consequently, there is the need for policy makers or formulators to strive to remove the social, economic, and cultural obstacles that limit the re-enrolment of adolescent mothers in school after birth. Some countries of the world allow student mothers to study after putting to bed. This because these countries have formulated policies that operate on a continuous basis.

These policies also consider the personal development, future economic opportunities and empowerment. Apart from being viewed continuation policies, they are also seen as feminist policies (Chilisa, 2002: 24). These policies help pregnant girls, breastfeeding mothers and adolescents who are married to continue schooling without any form of interruption. This policy can be found in countries like Cameroon, Madagascar, Namibia and Sierra Leone (Okwany and Kamusiime forthcoming :4). In countries like The Cameroon and Madagascar, pregnant girls are allowed to go back to school straightaway after putting to bed. They do not need to have maternity leave. This therefore minimizes the time spent out of the classroom walls (Okwany and Kamusiime forthcoming :4-5). This is unlike what is obtainable under Uganda's expulsion policy where girls are excluded from school. This can ultimately result to massive loss of educational opportunities for student mothers.

“In Uganda, there is no clear policy or re-entry policy for girls who drop out of school because of pregnancy but the schools accept them, if this girl goes back, though they will have to go back to another school, and most time when this girl is pregnant and at school, because of the attitude and perception they will eventually drop out even before the school chases them. They make decision to go out but they can always rejoin. The decision to go back to school mainly depends on the child and the family” (K.A, Project manager, Righting the future, interviewed on 21/7/2016).

This is a clear indication that many pregnant adolescent girls are excluded in both primary and secondary school. Since there is no official government policy,

re-entry for many of student mothers is done at individual level. There is need for the government intervention to include them in the education system through the implementation of return policy.

The common occurrence of expulsion of pregnant girls from attending schools was obtainable during the colonial period. This persists in countries such as Mali, Mozambique, Liberia, Nigeria, Togo, Tanzania and Uganda (Chilisa, 2002: 23; Mapuri, 1994, FAWE, 1997). The Christian missionaries viewed pre-marital pregnancy as being sinful and immoral therefore, those who fall victim of adolescent pregnancy were expelled from school. It is compulsory to undergo medical check-ups to define if girls are pregnant or not. Similarly, periodic and routine check-ups was done all through the school year (Chilisa 2002: 23). The punishment for a girl that test positive to pregnancy test is immediate and forceful expulsion (Chilisa 2002: 23).

“The act of expelling pregnant student cannot address the incidence of adolescent pregnancy, girls should be given opportunity to continue with education even if they become pregnant or after giving birth. They are ready and determined to learn when motivated”(N.M, A teacher at the Bridge Centre, RTF project, interviewed on 26/7/2016).

The above quotes indicate that, there is need to consider inclusion of the student mothers in education. From the interviewee’s experience, it shows that student mothers have had hope to continue with education given the chance and if they are motivated. Coming out of school is not an end story of their lives. Social justice should be attained for the student mothers so that they achieve the education outcome.

The re-entrance of student mothers to school remains a challenging social issue. Several countries found across the African continent still struggles re-entry policies. It is only few countries such as Kenya, Botswana, Zambia, and South Africa that have put in place policies that can ensure student mothers go back to school after putting to bed. In Uganda, what is challenging remains the combination of diverse notions and practices concerning pregnancy in schools that countless times harass the girls. In principle, there is absence of legal or policy position that forbids pregnant girls or student mothers to continue their educational pursuits.

However, in practice, what is obtainable is the expulsion of most girls gets pregnant in schools and the failure of student mothers they to return to school to continue their education. The lack of mechanisms to make sure that student mothers finish their education do not afford them the opportunity to enjoy their educational rights (Okwany and Kamusiime 2016: 8) Within Uganda’s Ministry of Education and Sports, there is the presence of a ‘silent policy’ that permits pregnant girls to go back to school but there is problem with its enforcement. Its enforcement by educational institutions is questionable as by its silence status. It is not popular to the girls, their parents, or leadership in the community. This makes the fate of the girls to be molded by norms, values and beliefs upheld in the society that comprises parents, the teachers and the school managers.

## 5.4 Non State Actors: Retaining and Enabling Re-entry for Student Mothers

Student mothers in most of the regions of Uganda suffer disproportionately from unequal and restricted access to quality education due to early pregnancy caused by a number of factors which has led to suspension and expulsion from various schools thus exclusion from education system. Under the international human rights law, education is seen as absolute human right not service or commodity<sup>8</sup> The overall level of protection afforded to student mother's education by the government of Uganda is still inadequate and this is evident by increasing number of the adolescent pregnancy, expulsion in the country and the rate of dropouts. This has become more challenging because not many of the students at adolescent age who dropout from schools have a chance of returning to study. This is an issue to be tackled by the government. Non state actors based in the central region and in the northern part of Uganda provide examples of implementing programs to ensure that there is retention and re-entry for student mothers.

The RTF (Righting the future) project located in the urban poor slums of Kampala was developed to adapt good practice in universalizing girl's access to retention and completion of secondary education from a successful experience of MV foundation non-governmental organization from India (Kamusiime and Ngutuku 2016:3, Muhangi 2016:1) . The project aimed at increasing access to and retention of girl's in secondary school in selected urban poor slums of Kampala. According to Kamusiime and Ngutuku (2016:4-5) using a range of strength-based strategies including preparing girls who have been out of school for a period through a bridging program to help in mainstreaming them into formal schooling. A total of 538 girls were mainstreamed through formal schools and 253 girls were stopped from dropping out of school (Kamusiime and Ngutuku 2016:4-5). This project has helped to shift norms and change conversations about the schooling of student mother (Muhangi, 2016 :11-13).

“One of the key informants from this project noted that, when these student mothers are motivated, they can easily reintegrate in school, learn and progress with their education successfully. Their role as the staff is to motivate, counsel and also help girls to re-engage with formal education” (Tr. K.L Bridge Centre, interviewed on 27/7/2016).

The above quotation entails that motivation helps adolescent mothers to get back in the learning process in the academic environment. Not only teachers do the motivation, but the parents, community, should also be guided to motivate adolescent mothers. This in one way can draw several adolescent mothers who want to continue with their education thus curbing total exclusion from the education system.

“This program tries to sensitize and identify mothers even when they are married provided the children are provided some support to help them go back to school and we do a lot of motivation for the parents and the girls as well as. we provide counseling services. the fact that pregnancy is not end to the career of the girl and the fact that girls fails like adults also fail, girls are not perfect and there are things that they do which are very wrong but pregnancy is a wrong

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<sup>8</sup> [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/pages/RighttoEducationMinorities.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/pages/RighttoEducationMinorities.aspx)

like any other wrong and it is forgivable. So we have been able to mobilized the community members, local leaders, cultural leaders, religious leader and sensitize to them, even if they student mothers have gone wrong they can still get back to schools and still learn. For me it takes a lot of sensitization, mobilization and campaign so that people can look at them as children” (K.A, Program Manager, RTF project interviewed on 21/ 7/2016).

This implies that the non-state actors are putting much effort in protecting education rights of the student mothers in these urban poor context area. This is done through motivation, sensitization and provision of formal and vocational education. Although their coverage is small, it can be a lesson learnt from them so that other student mothers who have been left out in other regions are as well catered for.

## **5.5 Protecting Education in a Post Conflict Context**

Yet another project of this kind retaining and enabling the re-entry of student mothers is Pader Girls’ Academy (which was established in 2007. This was a project implemented by Forum for African women educationist (FAWE-Uganda) in partnership with Christian counselling fellowship in post war region in Northern Uganda. According to Sempebwa et al (2016:8), it is the only school in the East African region that is, inclusive of pregnant and student mothers with their children in the same environment. PGA is a model for protecting the education rights of the pregnant and student mothers in the northern region part of Uganda. It further eased education for student mothers through establishing early childhood care, development Centre and nursery school education for the babies of the student mothers. Pader Girls’ Academy installed Vocational training, Accelerated learning and formal secondary education for the student mothers. Remarkable achievement has been registered with a total number of 300 students’ mothers’ enrolment in formal education in 2016, 50 girls are also enrolled in vocation training in the same year (Sempebwa et al: 6-12). while findings from FAWEU (2012), shows that there were 245 student mothers enrolled in vocational session in 2015. Despite this tremendous achievement. FAWEU in its survey in 2012 still found that there were some gaps that needed to be dealt with. Firstly, the community intervention to deal with the barriers that affect girls’ education in the society and getting to know about the existing policies for pregnant adolescent and student mothers such that critical decision can be taken to ensure that the government puts inclusive policies for them. Secondly, the ministry of health to improve on the dissemination of information on sexual reproductive health and practice. If all the above is sorted, then there would be a clear reduction in the number of dropouts and excluded student mothers from education, revealing that their education rights have been protected and providing critical lessons for protecting education of student mothers in Uganda and in the region.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

Many of the respondents revealed that there is no official re-entry policy for student mothers in Uganda apart from expulsion of pregnant adolescents from various schools. Therefore, it’s important for the government of Uganda to put in place and implement the return or re-entry policy to enable student mothers

to go back to school. Much as there are projects like RFI(Righting The Future), Pader Girl's Academy who are helping in protecting education rights of student mothers in some parts, not the whole country is benefiting. The only way to include the student mothers who are out of school is through implementation of re-entry policy. The next chapter comprises conclusion of the thesis thus pointing out findings and lessons learnt from the study.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion and Implications for Protecting Education for Student Mothers.**

### **6.0 Overview of Findings**

This study finding reveal a number of inferences that can be reflected upon in relation to the protection of the rights to education of student mothers. All through this study, the perspective to the rights of education of student mothers is important and I have endeavored to ponder on my biases and assumptions towards the research topic. The education right of student mothers bothers me. It agitates my heart. I had anticipated that adolescent girls studying in the city of Kampala would have a much better life compared to those ones in the village. I presumed that their better access to electricity and schooling would improve their standard of living.

In addition, I also observed a great percentage of adolescent pregnant girls who are excluded from schooling due to pregnancy in the village have had the opportunity to go back to school after putting to bed. A great number of those that return to school are opportune to have parents who are supportive and NGO, for example Pader girl Academy that protects rights to education of student mothers in Northern Uganda.

In this study the issue of policy inclusion was a major concern. The Lack of political power and poverty intersect to enhance the vulnerability of poor households and girls in Uganda. Despite progress in promoting for equal rights, there is a lot of effort needed to make progress. In order to achieve equal rights for girls, there is need for adolescent pregnancy to be handled through a holistic approach. This means that both preventative and progressive measures should be considered. In addition to that, a comprehensive approach to education is much needed which also includes a clear policy for pregnant and parenting students.

UNESCO also notes that, the wide-ranging sexuality education which “emphasizes a holistic approach to human development and sexuality” will make space for “children and young people to become equipped with the knowledge, skills and values to make responsible choices about their sexual and social relationships in a world affected by HIV” (UNESCO 2012). In order to embrace a Comprehensive Sexual Education (CSE) initiatives, the timing of implementation is key. Thus, the subject matter could be dispersed to age groups in a way that will not too early or too late. In addition, individual agency should be taught in the younger grades. Girls in pubescent grades should be shown and taught the essentials of contraceptives in order for students to combine the dual realms of knowledge as well possess a more comprehensive viewpoint or perspective about sexual activity. In addition, Comprehensive Sexual Foundation also works efficiently to lessen discrimination and stigma against student mothers who go back to school. It would be more successful to employ continuation policies. The Combination of continuation and CSE policies boosts the decrease of the disgrace connected with adolescent sexuality and the penalties. Thus, by containing a link between the education and health sectors would work to decrease the harmful health consequences that are experienced by pregnant girls. A good instance include the Youth Peer Education model employed by Planned

Parenthood Global. The program runs the idea that young people should not only have the understanding of contributing to the development, implementation and evaluation of health programs and policies, but also the right to partake in all decision making procedures that affect them health-wise (UNESCO 2014).

It would also be paramount for the males to de-construct some of their damaging cultural practices which allow them to possess some advantages over the girls on issues relating to sex. They should recognize that girls also have rights in making decisions that concern their lives. However, structural factors including widespread policies and lack of child sensitive social protection and child protection continue to perpetuate girls' vulnerability.

Besides that, findings also revealed that, most of the community members are not aware of inclusive education policy for student mothers. They only have knowledge on expulsion policy. It would be important to sensitize all the communities on the inclusion policies and programs so that, they can tackle the barriers that hinder student mothers to go back to school at community level, and also take part in decision making with the stakeholders concerning student mother's education.

Moreover, the finding revealed that, although there are non-state actors taking the role of the protecting education rights for student mothers in some part of the country, these projects provide examples of what is possible and these offer lessons for more inclusive policy. This implies that there is still gap that needs to be filled up especially where these services have not reached. There are so many student mothers in other districts of the country who were not able to return to school. Therefore, the government needs to step in or collaborate with the non-state actors in protecting the education rights of pregnant adolescents and the student mothers. Thus, it can be debated that if these identified socio-cultural limitations are dealt with more successfully, then the execution of the policy of re-entry to school could be operational and eventually be of benefit to the teenage parents.

The findings also show that the attitudes of parents the teachers, school managers are still obstacle to achievement of student mother's education. This implies that there is need to sensitize parents and communities on the importance of supporting pregnant adolescents and student mother's education as also suggested by Sempebwa et al (2016:1-18). The elimination of these social and cultural norms and values would also aid in making a friendlier schools and families and in a state to aid the teenage parents to finish their education. The RTF (Righting the Future) project displays that these values and norms can change and it is likely to engage with beliefs that present obstacles to the student mothers' education.

## **6.2 Lessons Learnt about Protecting Education Rights of the Student Mothers**

In this study, the RFT (Righting to the Future) project clearly brings out the aspect of protecting education rights of the student mothers in the two poor urban context of the capital on which lessons can be learned from. This has been supported by Muhangi(2016:49-50) who also suggests that, through the implementation of the RTF project, lessons have yielded for those involved including the project staff, volunteers, other partners and the community at large. "The

successful project sent the message that educating children may only not require a huge amount of resources but rather, learning to plan for, priorities and appreciate the importance of educating children' (Muhangi 2016:49-51)

RFT progressed in protecting education rights of student mother, through strengthening approach, the project revealed potential in communities to use resources and deconstruct norms that disadvantaged groups such as student mothers face (Kamusiime and Ngutuku 2016:22-25). Through the use of local structures, like local council members who were aware of children's education, it was easier for RFT to successful work with them to ensure that exclusion of student mothers cease. To achieve this, there was a lot of mobilization, sensitization, tracking of girls who withdrew or stopped to return through community mobilisers. All these efforts are being made to ensure that social justice for education of student mothers is achieved. Based on the above, another lesson c learned from RFT project is that protecting education rights of the student mother is essential in the community and other areas. This can be a second chance given opportunity for them to continue with their education. It has also caused positive transformation in the lives of the student mothers and the community at large. The student mothers who were already beneficiaries of this project also became agents of change for those out of school. Therefore, the RFT (Righting the Future) and the Pader Girls academy have offered some valuable basis in changing norms so that the student mothers are not excluded from education. These are the intervention programs in the region in some part of Uganda that allow student mothers to come study with their children and those who are pregnant but had no chance to return. This kind of intervention is exemplary to the communities, regions and nation as well that can be learned from. Therefore, exclusion of student mothers can be tackled at household, community, and at the national level.

### **6.3 Last Thoughts**

In conclusion, this study has been able to provide awareness on the experiences of the disengagement of student mothers' and re-engagement from schools. The prevalence of adolescent pregnancy is an issue that can be undertaken as long as a universal approach is employed, and tradition does not obstruct it. For Uganda to provide accessible education to girls as their fundamental human right, early pregnancy and early marriages among the adolescent girls must be addressed in respect to the girls themselves, and not customary patriarchy. Although steps have been taken to address this, more must be put in place to safeguard girls from accidental pregnancy, as well as from the other dangers connected with getting pregnant early. Thus, a comprehensive approach including a comprehensive curriculum, re-entry and continuation policies and the connecting of the health and the educational sector will eventually endow both women and girls to continue their educational pursuit. This study acknowledged and recognized intervention programs that are aimed at protecting educational rights of student mothers in some parts of the country. However, there are still obstructions and obstacles that need to be faced by the parents, community as well as the government in order to solve the problem of exclusion and marginalization among the pregnant adolescents and student mothers in Uganda (Sempebwa et al 2016:19). There is also the need to decompose the social norms and values that act as obstacles on the pathway to the girl's education.

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## APPENDICES

### ANNEX 1 LIST OF STUDY PARTICIPANT (STUDENT MOTHERS AT BRIDGE CENTRE KASUBI AND NAKULABYE)

NAME	BACKGROUND	Interview date
N S	17 years old, a student mother she is pregnant with the baby of 5months, she is in primary seven at Bridge centre Kasubi and wants to become a T.V Pre-senter.	Interviewed on 12/7/2016 The interview took 60 minutes
N T	She is 20 years, and has a baby of 1 month and 2 weeks. Apparently she is in Primary three, and wants to become a nurse or go for vocational training like catering or saloon.	Interviewed on 12/7/2016 For 45 mins.
NK	18 years old, she was studying at Kasubi Secondary School in senior three, last year at the age of 17, she became pregnant and dropout until she gave birth. joined bridge centre kasubi in 2016 .she is in form three.	Interviewed on 12/7/2016 For 60 mins
B A	16 years old, in senior two ,currently pregnant 6months joined bridge centre this year.	Interviewed on 13/7/2016 For 60 mins
N R M	She is 20 years, got pregnant when she was in senior 2, at the age of 16 years old. she has a son of 4years. Joined form three last year at bridge centre, she just want to complete form four and do a short course.	Interviewed on 13/7/2016 For 60 mins

W J	15 years old, got pregnant when she was 14 years old, in senior one. She is in form one.	Interviewed on 13/7/2016 For 45 mins
M S	19 years student mother currently in primary seven. she wants to go for catering studies after senior 4	Interviewed on 13/7/2016 For 55 mins
N Z	17 years old , currently in senior one. She has a child of 2 years.	Interviewed on 13/7/2016 For 35 mins
N S	20 years old, she got pregnant at the age of 14 yrs. in 2009, she has two children, 3 yrs old and one years old daughters, currently in senior three.	Interviewed on 18/7/2016 For 45 mins
K N	Currently she is 18 years old, got pregnant when she was 16 years old, she has 1and half year baby, before she joined bridge centre she was senior three at st Josephs Nasana .	Interviewed on 18/7/2016 For 60 mins
N B	17 years ,she is primary 7, she wants to become a teacher upon her completion of studies.	Interviewed on 22/7/2016 For 45 mins
P E	14 years ,student mother , currently in primary 5	Interviewed on 22/7/2016 40 mins
N R	11 Years old, an orphan , was studing in the vil- lage, got pregnant when she was in primary seven, did not sit for pri- mary leaving certificate. Currently in P.7	Interviewd on 22/7/2016 For 45 mins
N E	14 years old, Peer influ- ence made her get preg- nant, she came back to school last year, she is in primary 6.	Interviewed on 2/8/2016 For 57 mins

## ANNEX 11

### LIST OF THE KEY INFORMANTS

K.A	Programme Manager Nascent Research De- velopment Organisation	Interviewed on 21/7/2016 at the office for 45 mins
M.D	Evaluation officer, of- ficer Righting The Fu- ture Project /Lecturer Makerere University.	Interviewed on 24/7/2016 For 45 mins at the office, Makerere University.
N. M	Teacher, Bridge centre Kasubi	Interviewed on For 26/7/2016 at the Bridge centre(Righting the Future)
K.L	Teacher, Bridge Centre	Interviewed on 27/7/2016. For 45 mins at Bridge centre (Righting the Future)
L.M	Assistant Education commissioner, Basic Education , Ministry of Education	Interviewed on 15/08/2016 For 45 mins at the Ministry of Education office

**ANNEX 111 ACHIEVEMENTS OF PADER GIRLS ACADEMY  
AS A SUCCESSFUL MODEL IN PROTECTING EDUCATION  
RIGHTS OF STUDENT MOTHERS.**

PGA was founded in 2002 as a model function as reception Centre for young women and girls who escaped and rescued from Lord Resistance Army.

PGA fulfilled the desire of young mothers for formal education.

It created Early childhood care development Centre to cater for children and young mothers giving them a conducive environment for learning

Through PGA, Vocational training for the student mothers was also initiated, this targeted catering, hotel management and tailoring. With the assessment of students, 23 were taken in the first lot (8 for catering and 15 for tailoring), second lot (8 for catering and 38 for tailoring) and 50 student mothers enrolled in 2015.

Formal Education for the student mothers was implemented by PGA, whereby at first it started with 45 student mothers but now has increased to 300. With remarkable achievements, 2 student mothers obtained first grade in 2014, 15 achieved second grade, and 10 third grades and this increased as well in 2015.

PGA, created data management to track the learning outcome, Academic performance, dropouts and post graduate activities.

Adolescents Sexual Reproductive Health (ASRH) was tailored through PGA whereby, there training was organized for student mothers on reproductive health issues among young people. ASRH Club was constructed to enable reproductive health services was availed to student mothers

FAWE U and CCF also linked PGA to the community in Pader district to discuss how education can be enhanced for vulnerable girls in the community. Among the issues discussed was the negative attitude of parents towards girl's education, advocacy all aiming at achieving education for the student mothers in the community.

Source: (Sempebwa, et al. 2016:1-16)

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**Page**  
1/1

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Ms Afetia, Mildred (d.o.b. 28-05-1983) from Uganda is enrolled at this Institute's Master of Arts Programme (Development Studies) 2015/2016, which is being held from 1 September 2015 until 9 December 2016.

The Institute of Social Studies offers a full time M.A. Programme. Ms Afetia, Mildred is officially registered as a full-time participant in the ISS MA Programme (Development Studies) with the Major Human Rights, Gender and Conflict Studies: Social Justice Perspectives (SJP).

Ms Afetia, Mildred will be going to Uganda and is travelling for Field work from 1 July till 30 August 2016 in order to collect data for her Field Research for the Research Paper, which she has to deliver and hand in by November 2016 and which is part of her MA study programme.

The topic of her research is entitled: **Protecting Education Right of student Mothers in Uganda. A case Study of Kasubi and Nakulabye of Kampala District.**

It is therefore important and necessary that she will be able to collect data in Uganda.

All assistance you may give Mr Afetia, Mildred will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

  
  
Ms Susan Spaa  
Teaching and Learning Support Team (TLST)  
International Institute of Social Studies (ISS)

**Erasmus University Rotterdam**

