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FAWE – THE RIGHT WAY FOR RWANDA?
- A Case Study of Educational Strategies for Gender Equality and Development

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Permission to Research in Rwanda
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In spring 2010 we were granted a Minor Field Study (MFS) - scholarship from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), in order for us to carry out a field study in Kigali, Rwanda. During the period from 6th April - 6th June 2010 we were located in Rwanda collecting data for a thesis in educational science.

The background of our field of interest grew out of getting knowledge of an organisation called Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). We learnt that FAWE had created schools in different African countries and that they had formulated gender responsive pedagogy. Through the methodologies of semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews with teachers, students and FAWE representatives, in addition, studies of documents, we wanted to examine what the FAWE educational strategies were and how FAWE was perceived amongst teachers and students at FAWE girls’ school. Finally, we wanted to understand how or if gender pedagogy can help strivings towards gender equality and development. The study has a qualitative and inductive approach which implies that no theoretical framework was formulated prior to the field study. However, we have formulated a theoretical framework which has served as a tool for analyzing our findings. We have turned to postcolonial feminist theory and development theory on education and gender.

Our findings imply importance of understanding the uniqueness in the Rwandan society due to colonialism and genocide, especially when it comes to formulating definitions of gender. Further the Rwandan context is important to keep in mind for donor societies when formulating demands on Rwanda. For example we will note that international influences on the Rwandan educational system are immense, but what happens if the influences are not coherent with the Rwandan context? Since girls’ access to education has increased in Rwanda due to among others FAWE Girls’ School, we also underline the importance for government to meet the girls’ needs once they have graduated in order to minimise risks of brain drain. In addition we have detected a pattern of understandings amongst the students that financial support to girls is crucial to meet their definitions of gender and gender equality; the girls view financial support as a foundation in order to reach gender equality, or for girls to be able to access arenas that previously belonged to the boys.

Nyckelord: Postcolonialism, Gender, Gender Pedagogy, Development Theory, FAWE, Rwanda, Education
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Introduction

Education is a basic human right and is one of the most important tools in order to solve development issues regarding democracy, poverty, health matters and environmental problems. Gender equality in education is even more important for successful development. Africa has the highest gender inequalities against girls in secondary education compared to other regions.\(^1\) The United Nations Millennium Development Goals pushes developing countries to reach gender equality at all educational levels by the year 2015.\(^2\) Great efforts have been made in African countries from governmental policies but there are also many Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) fighting for gender equality in education.\(^3\)

In 1992 five female Ministers of Education, from different countries in Africa, founded the NGO, Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). FAWE have fought to increase the number of girls and young women in African schools and they are strong intercessors of gender equality as a tool solving development issues. In 1997 the first FAWE supported girl’s school was established in Rwanda. Thanks to FAWE Rwanda chapter, 1500 young women have accessed university studies during these years.\(^4\) The Rwandan government has since 1994 prioritized gender equality at all levels in the society. Gender equality has been recognized as a key component in development issues, politically and socially.\(^5\) Rwanda is especially interesting when it comes to gender matters, because of the recent civil war. The country is under structural, parliamentary and educational reconstruction. Gender issues have been on several agendas in this process and the gender awareness is high on many levels of the society.\(^6\) Gender pedagogy is an important part of the education in FAWE-supported schools.\(^7\)

We believe that education is the fundament of establishing confidence in children and the knowledge of human rights. Therefore we will in this case study examine the FAWE Rwanda organization and the gender pedagogy they aim to practise. Our general objectives are to investigate the strategies of the FAWE organization and understand how gender pedagogy is

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\(^1\) Sutherland-Addy, (Editor) *Gender Equity in Junior and Senior Secondary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa* World Bank working paper, no. 140 Africa human development series. 2008 p. XIV  
\(^2\) United Nation Development Program 2000 *Millennium Development Goals*  
\(^3\) Sutherland-Addy. p.XIV  
\(^4\) www.fawe.org  
\(^5\) Rwanda Development Gateway 2010  
\(^6\) Rwanda Development Gateway 2010  
\(^7\) www.fawe.org
practised in a post-genocide and postcolonial country, further how gender pedagogy can drive gender equality in a specific country.

Disposition of the Study

The structure of this study consists of four main block-chapters; Block I is an introduction of Rwanda in terms of Development, Education and Gender, which will serve as a background for our formulated research questions. The research questions will be highlighted at the end of part I. The following, block II presents methodological approaches in which we will explain and discuss our research methods. In Block III we will focus on the theoretical framework which later will be elaborated and used as a tool when analyzing findings from our field study. Finally, block IV consists of a presentation of findings and how they have been interpreted and understood in relation to the theoretical framework and previous research. The block ends with a final conclusion in which we will make a brief summary of the conclusions we made.
Introducing Rwanda – Development, Education & Gender
Political and Educational System in Rwanda

In this chapter we are introducing the political and educational system in Rwanda. Rwanda is formally known as a democracy, however NGOs and Multilateral organizations, such as EU criticize the Rwandan government and label the latest elections in Rwanda as lacking freedom and fairness. Freedom House\(^8\) does not define Rwanda as an electoral democracy. One also has to underline that the constitution highly restrains personal freedom in the name of preventing ethnic division.\(^9\)

Rwanda is situated in central Africa with borders to D.R. Congo, Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda. The population is 8 million and Rwanda is the most densely populated country in Africa. Most of the population lives in rural areas (83,1 per cent) and the majority are occupied in the agriculture sector (88,6 per cent).\(^10\) Rwanda was colonized by Germany in 1884 but after the First World War, Germany lost Rwanda to Belgium. In 1962 Rwanda became independent but the colonial era left the country devastated. There were conflicts in the county prior to the independence, however the conflict worsened after 1962 due to poor governance and the strong influence of the former colonial power. These conflicts culminated 1994 when the genocide took place and more than 900 000 Rwandans were killed.

Rwanda has made remarkable efforts to achieve several of The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Due to political commitment at the highest level and to various international supports, Rwanda has made progress. The government has made primary education free and compulsory which has led to equal gender distribution in primary school. In a political context, women have increased their power positions. In 2008 female participants in parliament were 56 percent, which is the highest rate in the world. Though Rwanda has made remarkable progress at different targets, there are still challenges for the country. \(^11\) The challenges that remain are mainly poverty; Rwanda is ranking 167 of 177 in the United Nations Development Index in 2006. Further, poor infrastructure, child and maternal mortality are other challenges. When it comes to Gender Development Index Rwanda is ranked 139 of 155 in 2007.\(^12\)

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\(^8\) Freedom house is an NGO who presents fact about the current democratic situations in different countries.

\(^9\) Devlin, C & Elgie, R The effects of increased Women’s representation in the Parliament: The case of Rwanda. 2008 p 242

\(^10\) Rwanda Gateway http://rwandagateway.org/article.php3?id_article=137


\(^12\) United Nation Development Program Human Development Report 2009
Rwanda Vision 2020

In the year 2000 the Rwandan Government published Vision 2020, a document with different development goals which are supposed to be reached by the year 2020. Due to poor governing, both during the colonial and postcolonial era, Rwanda is one of the poorest countries in the world and the fight against poverty is therefore an essential target. The purpose is to create long-term development for the Rwandan people in all parts of society. Six main targets are recognized and human capital development is central for the targets, which includes education but also gender. One target is named Human Resource Development and a Knowledge-based economy. One of the tools to reach the goal of a knowledge-based economy is education and in particular science and technology education. Vision 2020 underlines education for all children and at all levels; primary, secondary and tertiary, but it also takes notice of the quality of the education. According to the document, Rwanda is behind in terms of professional training in e.g. natural sciences and the government will promote teacher training programs and technical training.\(^{13}\)

Furthermore, three cross-cutting areas are identified which are important for reaching the development goals and Gender equality is one of them. The document point out that women plays the major role in agriculture and in childcare and thereby in the children’s elementary education. To reach gender equality the document suggests that Rwanda will adapt and modernize laws on gender. Rwanda will also support education for both girls and boys, since girls used to be a minority in secondary schools, and eliminate all types of discrimination. Another cross-cutting area is science and technology. Rwanda demands for more trained scientists and technicians to develop the national economy. To achieve this Rwanda has to increase teaching in sciences and technology at secondary and university levels.\(^{14}\)

Education in Postcolonial Rwanda

The Rwandan Ministry of Education has fulfilled a goal of nine-year education for the entire population.\(^{15}\) According to the Ministry, education is the most important tool to reduce poverty. After 1994 the educational system changed rapidly and any form of discrimination was strictly prohibited. The curriculum was changed and the most important step was to

\(^{13}\) Republic of Rwanda Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Rwanda Vision 2020, 2000

\(^{14}\) Rwanda Vision 2020

\(^{15}\) Republic of Rwanda Ministry of Education  http://.mineduc.gov.rw
underline the creation of unity amongst the Rwandan people in order to build new confidence after the genocide. The educational system was more or less torn down after the genocide and a new curriculum was needed since the old one often implied discriminatory elements which gave rise to ethnic divisions. Also, it should be mentioned that schools in Rwanda were arenas for genocidal acts performed by teachers, pupils and school faculties.

There are some problems with the current Rwandan education system. One problem is the large classes, an average of 70 pupils per teacher. There is also the lack of textbooks and other equipments. Another issue for Rwanda is the large amount of drop-outs from education. Though the primary school is free and compulsory, only 39 percent complete compulsory education. In upper secondary school, only ten percent of the students graduate and few students have the opportunity to continue to university since the school fees are rather high. The government provides top students with scholarships but the competition is hard and far from every capable student gets this opportunity.

**International Influences on Education in Post-Genocide Rwanda**

Michele Schweisfurth is writing about the role of education in post-genocide Rwanda, in the article *Global and Cross-National Influences on Education in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, and how education is influenced by international ideas on the educational agenda. Schweisfurth recognized three aspects of the international influence, which are: *The global and bilateral pressures* related to foreign aid to education; *The effects of migration arising from national and regional conflict*; and the *Conceptualization of genocide as a global tragedy.*

First, Schwiesfurth point out that there has been a change in terms of aid to education. Rwanda has changed its bi-lateral partners from France and Belgium to, among others, the UK, especially concerning finances to education. All these countries have their own historical relationship with Rwanda and each partner country has brought its view on education. Today, new donors focus on the internationally-agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and in particular the target *Basic Education for All*. In the article Schwiesfurth is arguing that the focus on *Education for All* may not allow “[…] sufficient attention to be paid to the

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16 UNESCO http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001330/133051e.pdf
17 Hodkinson, M Reconciliation in Rwanda: Education, History and the state 2006. pp 2
18 Länder i fickformat http://landguiden.se.lt.ltag.bibl.liu.se/ 2010-01-09
19 Schwiesfurth, Michele Global and Cross-National Influences on Education in Post-Genocide Rwanda. 2006 p.698
contextual realities of Rwanda, including the imperatives of sustainable peace as the prime development goal”. The aforementioned should be understood in relation to the special context in which the schools in Rwanda served as genocidal arenas and the education as a tool for nurturing racial hatred.\textsuperscript{20} Another example of problems regarding national interest and donor interest when it comes to education in Rwanda is that the Ministry of Education earlier favored a triangulated language use in education (French, English, Kinyarwanda), in order not to favor discrimination. However, donors (mainly UK) were concerned about the quality of education with low learning skills as an outcome of usage of several languages.\textsuperscript{21}

Second, Schwiesfurth discusses the influence from neighboring countries. After the genocide in 1994, Tutsi refugees, who had fled before and during the genocide to Tanzania and Uganda, came back to Rwanda, and through this migration in the region Rwanda has been influenced by the educational norms of these countries. Further the refugees often were well-educated persons who as migrants got employment in important positions in their exile – countries, some of them in the educational sector. When returning to Rwanda, they had new influences and got key-positions in the progress of rebuilding Rwanda. Both Tanzania and Uganda were colonized by the British and their models of educational policy are thereby under the impact of the British system. Schwiesfurth name this ‘second generation colonialism’.\textsuperscript{22}

The third influence Schwiesfurth points out is the conceptualization of genocide as a global tragedy and how this has been used in education. Trying to understand ethnic conflict and how to use education to prevent it is central and can be practised through teaching materials and educational genocide memorials. International NGOs have worked hard to promote this approach in Rwanda and often it is linked to other countries in Africa and Europe that have experienced ethnic cleansing and genocide.\textsuperscript{23}

As shown above, the global and regional influence of Rwanda’s educational system is immense. However, Marian Hodgkin states that international donors tend to forget to fully analyze how the Rwandan government formulates education and its consequences. International donors seem to focus on the MDG and its formulations about education. In line

\textsuperscript{20} Schwiesfurth, M pp.698
\textsuperscript{21} Schwiesfurth, M pp. 698
\textsuperscript{22} Schwiesfurth, M pp. 698
\textsuperscript{23} Schwiesfurth, M p.700
with Schwiesfurth, Hodgkin states that only viewing education in Rwanda in relation to the MDG’s may neglect the specific historical context of Rwanda. As an example, Hodgkin discusses the government’s decision on banning the subject of history, since it may give rise to divisionism and hamper the development of a national unity. History would not be included in education until there was a historical narrative which was approved by the government. Hodgkin argues that this could be seen as a purely negative aspect of education, since Rwanda earlier experienced education being a tool for giving rise to hatred.\(^{24}\)

**Women in Post-Genocide Rwanda**

Rwandan women, regardless of ethnicity and social strata, were at risk of being subjected to severe sexual and non-sexual violence during the genocide.\(^{25}\) Especially upper class women were targets of violence. The social stigma of rape and sexual violence was causing the victims a great deal of shame. There is a preconception amongst Rwandan people that women survivors used their bodies and freely provided the soldiers with sex.\(^{26}\) There is also a pressure on young women to reproduce to compensate for lost lives during the genocide.\(^{27}\) In other words, women have been expected to give birth. The genocide also countermined the close local friendships amongst women who in the past used to help each other on a day to day basis.\(^{28}\) One of the consequences of the genocide is the large number of orphans. This has led to a pattern of family building called extended families. This simply means that family building includes providing for those without parents. It has been women’s responsibilities often beside the burden of providing for big families without a husband. A large number of women became widowers and husbands were imprisoned, a fact that has been a big problem for the Rwandan women. Since a majority of the Rwandan population lives in rural areas and the households are self-providing, women are faced with small opportunities to education and money generating jobs, due to these family patterns.\(^{29}\)

**Women and Politics in Rwanda**

In May 2003 Rwanda adopted a new constitution. The main purpose was to prevent future genocides. Parties are prohibited to identify themselves as groups based on religion, clan or

\(^{24}\) Schwiesfurth, M pp. 698
\(^{26}\) Baldwin, H & Newbury C p. 3
\(^{27}\) Baldwin, H & Newbury, C p. 5
\(^{28}\) Baldwin, H & Newbury, C p. 3
\(^{29}\) Baldwin, H & Newbury, C p. 3
gender, because it may give rise to discrimination. The legislative Assembly consists of two chambers, the Chamber of Deputies (lower chamber) and the Senate (upper chamber). Women are guaranteed a minimum of 24 seats in the Chamber of Deputies which means 30 percent of the seats. Since the genocide, effort has been made to increase the number of female politicians in a hope to create a more peaceful and solid society. This has however been subject to discussions; to what degree do women change the society with their political representation? Of course, one can argue that this is a way of creating equal opportunities for men and women and it suggests a strong democracy. Regardless of the outcome of the high representation of women in the parliament, Jennie E Burnet, researcher at Oxford University, states that Rwanda, even before the genocide, had a culture of strong women’s movements. Even today, besides a high representation of women in parliament, the women’s movement as in NGOs is vibrant. Burnet continues by underlining the importance of the political changes within the field of gender equality. Especially important for the Rwandan democracy building is the fairly recent change of the inheritance law in women’s favor and the annulment of the law which forbade women to do commercial trading.

**Research Questions and Objective**

The background presented above, aim to give the reader an understanding of the contemporary situation in Rwanda regarding our field of interest, in other words it should be viewed as an introduction to our field of study. With this background and our general aim of the study in mind, namely, trying to identify strategies of the FAWE organization and understand how gender pedagogy is practiced in a post-genocide and postcolonial country, further, how gender pedagogy can drive gender equality in a specific country, the research questions of this project are as follows;

- What are the FAWE organizations’ strategies on education?
- How is gender and gender pedagogy defined and practised in this specific context (FAWE Rwanda)?
- How do pupils and teachers perceive FAWE’s function in the Rwandan society in terms of development and gender equality?

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30 Länders i fickformat
32 Burnett, J.E p. 183ff
To examine the research questions we went to Rwanda and met pupils, teachers and other responsible people at FAWE Rwanda. The methodological approach used in our field study will be more thoroughly presented in the next chapter.
II

Methodological Approaches
Methods

In this chapter we aim to explain and shed light on our inductive research method which consists of qualitative interviews. Further we also discuss different potential problems with our method and ethical considerations.

Methodological Considerations

Research in foreign cultures may pose ethical problems and it is important to reflect on issues, such as, how much attention should be taken to foreign traditions and ideas of knowledge. It is also important to consider how to meet other cultural demands, so that research does not become part of a cultural imperialist project that threatens the foreign culture’s individuality and independence.\(^{33}\) Britha Mikkelsen writes in her book *Methods for development work and research* about ethics when formulating research questions in post colonial countries. At first one should consult the participants on how the research should be implemented to benefit their own situation. Take notes on their preferences and their opinions as regards the best way to get answers to the formulated research questions. In this way the researcher and the participants create a project together whilst minimizing the gap between the privileged researcher and the non–privileged participants.\(^{34}\) Pia Laskar also underlines this approach and states that this approach may create emancipating knowledge in a postcolonial country.\(^{35}\)

A Qualitative Case Study in a Postcolonial Country

There are different kinds of case studies, but two aspects characterize a case study regardless of academic discipline. First, the number of aspects included in the case has to be limited. Second, what lies beyond the focus area of the research should be clear and a thorough description of the defined case has to be made. Important is that these two aspects underline the uniqueness of the specific case. In other words, a case study, implicates that the researchers have collected a large amount of information and data, using different methods of a specific field to give a trustworthy picture.\(^{36}\) In our case this includes interviews, and studies of documents and previous research results. Generalisability is not seen as a goal in itself in a case study when for example formulating hypotheses. In our specific case, we have chosen to

\(^{34}\) Mikkelsen, B. *Methods for development work and research: a new guide for practitioners* 2005 pp. 335
\(^{35}\) Laskar, P in Tulpade, Mohanty, C *Feminism utan gränser* 2006 p. preface
underline the unique historical context of our case, or as Roger Gomm puts it; *it is difficult to imagine a human activity that is context-free.* In other words, it implies that the results of the research cannot be applicable to other cases, but the generalization rather shows how the theoretical framework can be used when analyzing the same objectives in other contexts. Since the case study does not impose generalisability, an *inductive* approach is used in the data analyses. An inductive method implies that no hypothesis has been formulated. The collection of data will serve as a generator of theories or conclusions regarding the specific case. A case study can be used as a comparative body of knowledge in future research regarding similar objectives. Hence, when comparing several case studies with similar objectives one could detect or underline differences and/or similarities in patterns.

**Procedures**

We started our study by making observations. This meant that we participated and observed different lessons given at the School and visited the teachers’ staff room, in order to place ourselves in the context and familiarize ourselves with the teachers and pupils. After one week we began collecting data. Since we wanted to uncover and understand how education is practised in FAWE Rwanda and how pupils and teachers understand FAWE and gender pedagogy we used qualitative methods.

**Semi-structured Interviews and Focus Groups**

Two interview methods were used, namely A) semi-structured interviews and B) focus groups. The first mentioned was implemented with the teachers and with the FAWE Rwanda National Chapter at the Ministry of Education, and the last-mentioned was implemented with the pupils. We recorded all the interviews.

A) Prior to the semi-structured interviews we had formulated an interview guide which contained a structure of questions in relation to our research questions and objective. However, since we could not foresee the outcome of answers, the guide was not followed strictly. Thereby we also had possibilities to formulate follow up questions.

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37 Gomm, R, Hammersley, M and Foster, P *Case Study Method.* 2000 p. 31
38 Yin, R.K. *Case study research* 2009 pp. 15
39 Bryman, A. *Samhällsvetenskapliga metoder* 2002 pp. 21
B) Focus groups imply structured group interviews. In qualitative research focus groups are used to get data which are rich in meaning, diversity and depth. The method underlines the dialogue and discussion between informants and the interviewer and not only the informant’s answers. The interviewer should act like a moderator rather than a strict interviewer. Further, the participants should have a common denominator regarding the objectives of the research. The groups can be small or large. In our case we used five informants in each group and altogether we had two focus groups. However, the interviews in focus group tended to be more like group interviews. The students rarely discussed questions in the group but rather answered questions one by one.

**Transcription**

An important aspect of the method is transcription of the interviews. All interviews were transcribed verbatim. Our goal was to carry out the transcriptions as soon as possible after the interviews to ensure not having to deal with problems of losing the context in which our informants were interviewed. Also, when making transcriptions immediately after the interviews we had the opportunity to return to the informants if needed. After the transcription we have chosen the most relevant answers in accordance with our research objectives and organized them into themes in line with our interview guide and theoretical frameworks.

**Participants and Setting**

Participants in this study are pupils, teachers and other important persons involved in FAWE Rwanda. Besides, one representative from FAWE Rwanda National Chapter was interviewed. The selection of student informants was made with help from a student representative who was recommended to us by the teachers at FAWE girls’ school. We explained our project to the representative and asked her to form two groups of students over 18 years of age who spoke fluent English. The selection of teachers was simply made by asking five teachers of different sex and age if they would like to participate. The official language in the educational system in Rwanda is English and therefore all the information about the study and the implementation of the study was done in English. All the interviews were performed in the informants’ daily environment at the FAWE Girls’ School in Kigali, Rwanda.

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41 Johanessen, A & Tufte, P-A. pp.101
Ethical Considerations

Being sensitive in our research project has been an important goal. We have formulated some guidelines in order to gain confidence amongst our informants. First of all the intention of our research project is to gain knowledge and understanding about a foreign culture and learn from experience made by our informants and transforms it into knowledge. To fulfill the above mentioned approach, also advocated by Laskar and Mikkelsen, we have consulted our informants about our idea of the project and what kind of knowledge we would like to achieve. At first we consulted the headmistress at FAWE Rwanda and asked her about our ideas and what she thought was the best approach to reach this goal. We also presented our preliminary research questions whereupon she gave us their opinions and suggestions on how we could reformulate our approaches. One of the recommendations by the headmistress was to use focus groups instead of individual interviews among the pupils. She believed that the pupils would feel more comfortable in a group rather than one by one since we were two persons. Secondly, we have informed our participants, pupils, teachers and FAWE-workers, about our intention to bring their experiences to a Swedish context and that our goal was to understand pedagogy in a postcolonial country. Thirdly, we emphasized that our project is to learn and not to evaluate what we see.

In all scientific fields, it is important to be aware of the ethical dilemmas a researcher might come across. In research that involves people, there may always be a risk of any involvement and therefore awareness of the risks is necessary. In the research of human and social sciences there are four ethical key requirements identified. These are the information requirement, the consent requirement, the confidentiality requirement and the utilization requirement.\footnote{Bryman, A pp.440} We informed the participants that taking part in our study is voluntarily and that they had the option to say no to contributing also during the interviews. All informants we interviewed for the study were 18 years old and above. This was a deliberate choice since they are, in a Swedish context, major and we did not have to get their parents’ permission.

The Swedish Research Council (SRC) (2007) has given instructions on how researchers should handle sensitive material in a report. The report is primarily intended for medical research but we found it relevant, since our study is based on material that certainly can be sensitive if it gets in to the wrong hands. Furthermore, it is important, no matter what kind of
research, to reflect on issues affecting the researcher's ethics. The SRC believes that the requirement for open records can for example get into conflict with the requirement of protection of privacy of the participant. Openness is important for scientific research but the researcher's interest in finding and presenting new knowledge may get into conflict with the participants’ interest in protecting their privacy. The SRC describes four basic concepts in ethics research, often seen as synonymous, which are privacy, discretion in keeping secret information, anonymity and confidentiality. The concepts should be kept separate since they have different meaning. In our case anonymity and confidentiality are valid. Anonymity assumes that the link between statements made by informants and a particular individual is eliminated, so that no unauthorized person or the researchers of the study can restore it and then combine e.g. a specific task with a given individual's identity. Confidentiality means, in short, protection against unauthorized access to the data. 

According to the SRC, a researcher cannot promise that no one else but the researcher will have access to the material or the information that he/she has collected during the research process. If there are ambiguities in the findings, the raw data should be investigated which means that a person other than the researcher will gain access to the material. However, this does not mean that the researcher cannot promise anonymity. In our study, the participants’ identities are not of interest since we examine a number of pupils and teachers' views. We can therefore promise anonymity. Confidentiality can also be promised and according to the Article 21 (2000) of the Helsinki Declaration, participant’s privacy should always be respected and scientists must avoid damaging the participants of a study, both physically and mentally. The scientists should for that reason declare what he or she has done to reduce the risk that sensitive material is disseminated in the wrong way. There are some risks when truthfully telling the participants about what kind of research a scientist does and how the material will be treated. One risk is that the participants do not want to contribute.

**Critical Reflections**

As mentioned earlier, we chose our student informants by help from a student representative. Hence, the informants were chosen by the representative on the premise that the informants should be over 18 years and spoke fluent English. Needless to say, this may have posed

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43 Vetenskapsrådet. *Hantering av integritetskänsligt forskningsmaterial* 2007 p.3
44 Vetenskapsrådet pp.4
45 Vetenskapsrådet p.5
difficulties in terms of a broad selection of informants. This meant that we gave a student power to select the participants in our study. On one hand, we would like to argue that the power of the student representative was something positive. Hence, we explained our goal and the representative got the opportunity to influence the outcome of our study. As Laskar and Mikkelsen states, this should be seen as a possibility for us as researchers being able to minimizing the gap between the privileged researcher and the unprivileged participants. On the other hand the reader should note that the informants may not give a representative picture of girls at the school per se.

Since we have used interviews as the main methodological approach, some problems regarding language barriers have emerged. The interviews have mainly been carried out using the English language, but the informants also had the possibility to use French if they preferred that. To solve issues regarding language we informed our informants, especially the students who were interviewed in groups, to help each other out. In the beginning of the interviews, we told them that they should not feel embarrassed or stressed if they could not find the right words or phrase their answers correctly. When using this approach we hoped that the students would not feel uncomfortable using a language other than their mother tongue. This was also one of the main reasons why we decided to use group interviews. The methodological approach used when performing field studies has also been combined with a defined theoretical framework which will help us understand our results. The theoretical frame work will serve as an analyzing tool. A presentation of the theoretical viewpoints is made below; we start the presentation by entering the world of postcolonial feminist theory and end it with contemporary development theories on gender and education.

\[46\] See; Laskar, P p. Preface & Mikkelsen, B pp. 335
III

Theoretical Framework
Gender and Postcolonial Feminist Theory

This chapter aims to present different theoretical viewpoints which have been used in the research project. What follows is an introduction to different postcolonial feminist theories which presents with the concept of gender in postcolonial contexts.

Definition of Gender

Traditionally the term gender was formulated to describe the social aspects of the notion of being a women or a man. It differentiates social behaviours from biological behaviours and focuses on social construction of these notions. However, gender is not something which is static and independent of time, historical context or culture. On the contrary, gender and social constructions of the meaning of being a man or a woman differs from time to time and from culture to culture. Traditionally, gender studies have focused on male domination and female subordination. Nowadays, scholars also underline the importance of class, ethnicity, culture and sexuality when analyzing gender relations. 47

Agency

In the book Gender and Agency: reconfiguring the subject in feminist and social theory, Lois McNay states that simplified models or notions about male domination and female subordination tend to undermine female agency. McNay argues that these simplified models cannot be used as a ground rule when analyzing gender relations. 48 According to McNay, agency can be described as something that “(...) is required to explain the differing motivations and ways in which individuals and groups struggle over, appropriate and transform cultural meanings and resources.” 49 In other words, individuals who are ascribed as lacking agency have no power or resources to act. Therefore one has to examine and presuppose that, in this case, a woman’s decisiveness and ability force exists within a specific social context. When doing so one can understand and conceptualize actions by individuals that could be described as something which catalyses social change. This is however, according to McNay, not possible when viewing women as merely victims under male domination.

47 McNay, L Gender and agency – reconfiguring the subject in feminist and social theory 2000 p. 2
48 McNay, L pp. 4
49 McNay, L pp. 4
Gender and Postcolonial Feminist Theory

It is not easy to shortly describe the essence of postcolonial theory and how it is linked to gender aspects due to the wide variety of theories and ideas. Basically, gender in postcolonial thinking has its origin in critical feminist ideas, although the criticism is not only addressed towards patriarchy but also towards eurocentrism, racism, and the lack of an analysis of north-south class relations in contemporary gender theories. Of course, postcolonial thinking also includes an analysis of the consequences of imperialism and colonialism, both in postcolonial countries and within former colonial powers. Also, feminist postcolonial thinkers are critical to the idea of a universal women’s experience.

“Under Western Eyes” – Women Without Agency?

One of the leading postcolonial feminist theorists is Professor Chandra Talpade Mohanty. Below we will try to give a short introduction of the crucial ideas of Mohanty’s postcolonial theory. In Mohanty’s classical work, the essay “Under Western Eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses”. She criticizes contemporary feminist scholars for reducing women in postcolonial countries as passive and monolithic. Mohanty argues that western feminism tends to forget that the postcolonial countries and its female inhabitants have different historical and cultural contexts, which must be understood in order to analyze its gender relations. Furthermore, Mohanty expresses criticism towards the arbitrary western feminist conception of western gender relations as universal. According to Mohanty, women in developing countries are described merely as victims, or as women without agency and it is in terms of victimization that they are described in western feminist theory.

Dual Colonialism

Dual colonialism or double colonialism is a term widely used by postcolonial feminist theorists. The term can be described in two ways. First, it aims to explain a male centred definition of gender which can be found both amongst former colonialists and the national liberty movements. The colonialists accentuated men as active beings with abilities to conquer and subordinate women and men. They have also had the power to subjugate women into...

50 Laskar, P  p preface
51 Laskar, P  p Preface
53 Talpade Mohanty, C pp. 50
54 Talpade Mohanty, C pp.50
passive mothers and house-keepers in their motherlands as well as in the colonial countries. One can argue that the colonialists forced western-centred gender relations upon their colonies through deceiving interpretations about the lives of the original inhabitants implemented in stories and tales. In addition the colonists tore down the internal social relations in which native women had a high social status. Moreover, the male-centred national liberty movements seldom fought to reset these precolonial social gender relations.  

Secondly the term describes how women were neglected in postcolonial countries. In Colonialism/Postcolonialism, Ania Loomba, states that women in postcolonial countries rarely are described as main subjects in neither discourse of postcolonialism nor in feminism. Loomba continues by insisting on the necessity of bringing postcolonial women’s experience as a main source of understanding colonialism and history. In addition, it will also underline the importance of analyzing gender relations in a historical context.

Gender Relations in Nation Building

Under this headline we will present theories regarding gender relations in nation building since our study is a specific case study of a postcolonial country. Professor Nira Yuval–Davis has studied gender and nation building within the field of political science. In the book Gender and Nation Yuval-Davis suggests that nation building and the surrounding elements of it, such as politics, social structures, security and welfare of the citizens rely on gender relations in the society. Yuval-Davis underlines the notion that gender relations must be understood as something which cannot be reduced to focusing only on women. Worth mentioning in this context is that nation building is the western origin of nationalism and the concept of a nation. However, Yuval-Davis is well-aware of these circumstances and tries to give examples from non-western societies which have been influenced by the idea of nationalism, for instance in the progress of independence from former colonial powers.

Men and Women - Different Roles in the Nation

One of Yuval-Davis’ conclusions in her work is that men and women are given different roles in the society which can be identified as culturally and biologically rooted. These roles are
important for the reproduction of the society. Women’s memberships in a nation are traditionally based on their ability to give birth and therefore somehow secure the future of the nations.\textsuperscript{59} Meanwhile the role of men in nations can be described as citizenship givers to their offspring.\textsuperscript{60} These different roles for men and women are essential for the traditional division of a private and a public sphere in a nation. These different roles or responsibilities are however not equally valued in terms of aspects such as economy, education and power to influence the law structure.\textsuperscript{61} The following simplified figure explains gender roles and their intertwined relationships with nation building.

**FIGURE: TRADITIONAL GENDER DIVISION IN A NATION**

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|}
\hline
\text{Public sphere} & \text{Private sphere} \\
(Men) & (Women) \\
\downarrow & \downarrow \\
\hline
\text{State} & \text{Society} \\
(\text{politics, decision-making}) & (\text{culture, biological reproduction}) \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

(Inspired by Yuval-Davis pp.26)

Despite the division of gender, one cannot exclude women’s opportunities of affecting the society when it comes to other aspects than politics and decision-making at a state level. Yuval-Davis argues that women, especially elderly women, play a normative role in the society, for example regarding appropriate behavior in social contexts.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{59} Yuval-Davis, N p. 26-27  
\textsuperscript{60} Yuval-Davis, N p. 27  
\textsuperscript{61} Yuval-Davis, N pp. 26 & 39  
\textsuperscript{62} Yuval-Davis, N p. 37
Women and Gender in Development Theory

Under this headline we introduce some current theories on gender and development and why it is important to have a gender view in development theories. Within the field of international relations and development studies, Gender relations are nowadays counted as an important element in developmental progress. Even though scholars have viewed women as playing a central role in development\textsuperscript{63} for a long period of time, women’s situation and foremost gender relations fairly recently became a concrete field of interest. A gender perspective on development issues is necessary due to the fact that poverty and economic polarization usually strikes hardest on women.\textsuperscript{64}

Women, Gender and Development

During the 1990’s women’s international networks influenced the global arena and made important gains at different UN conferences on issues like environment, human rights and population. The UN International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo 1994, for instance paid attention to issues like abortion, violence against women, fertility and women’s access to education. The conference led to progress in international norm-setting.\textsuperscript{65} The influences of international contexts and shifts in international politics have created both challenges and opportunities for women’s movements, as will be seen below.

WID - Women in Development

In the 1970’s, much effort was made to put women on the development agenda. Feminists involved with development issues started to use the term women in development (WID). They confronted the development theories of the time, and thought that modernization would not automatically improve gender equality. Moreover, WID advocates demanded more exact data and information about women’s situation, like work, property, credit, access to education, in order to improve women’s access to development. They campaigned for women’s integration in development projects and implementation. This WID was influenced by liberal feminism and the proponents did not pay attention to structural analyses of women’s subordination.

\textsuperscript{63} Todaro, P. M & Smith C. S \textit{Economic development} 2009 p.22
\textsuperscript{64} Pettman, J J. “Gender Issues” in Baylis, S and Smith, S (Editors) \textit{The Globalization of World Politics. An introduction to international relations.} 2005 pp.676
\textsuperscript{65} Jaquette, J & Staudt, K. “Women, Gender and Development” in Jaquette, J and Summerfield, G (Editors) \textit{Women and Gender Equity in Development Theory and Practice. Institutions, Resources, and Mobilization.}, 2006 pp.32
Women’s inequality was viewed as a consequence of discrimination, as there were different barriers for women in issues of education and employment, and new laws was one of the suggestions to improve women’s situation. In the 1980’s critical voices against WID were risen. Some of them criticized WID for supporting a development discourse that preserved the western world’s dominance in the capitalist order.

**GAD - Mainstreaming Gender**

Carolyn Moser with her work “Gender Planning in the Third World” is considered by many researchers as one of the founders of the GAD, *Gender and Development*. Moser took notice of the term gender and requested a deeper analysis regarding women’s and men’s roles - how they are social constructions and therefore vary by culture. The GAD activists claimed that WID had not done enough effort to improve women’s material situation and that WID saw women as one homogeneous group. If WID was influenced by liberal and Northern feminism, GAD responded to the postcolonial feminism and Women’s movements in developing countries. GAD pointed out the diversity amongst women and that women are more than just mothers. They also observed the gender power relations that blocked women’s progress. Further, GAD criticized WID for involving women’s issues in small scale projects. GAD wanted to integrate gender in all parts of development policies and practices and included men in the term gender. They wanted to change focus from women to gender relations. In other words, GAD went from women-specific projects to mainstream projects. With Moser at the front, confronting gender roles became a new approach for GAD. Training women in “male” skills and guaranteeing women their rights to own land were two examples that GAD worked for. They also involved women in developing countries in the planning and in some decision-making.

**Women’s Neglected Capabilities**

A central aspect of development is the question of world poverty. Of the world’s poorest inhabitants, women and children make up the vast majority of those living in deprivation in world societies. Economists Michael Todaro and Stephen Smith underline different explanations of this phenomenon in their book *Economic development*. First, Todaro and

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66 Parfait, M, Foud, M and Giroux, S in Baker, D and Wiseman, A. *Gender, equality and education from international and comparative perspectives* 2009 pp.6
67 Jaquette, J & Staudt, K, p. 28
68 Jaquette, J & Staudt, K pp.25
69 Jaquette, J & Staudt, K, pp.29
Smith highlight the issue of the big number of female-headed households in poor countries, due to factors such as men working in urban areas or women who lost their men in wars. These women have a low earning capacity or no access to their husbands’ economy. Women also tend to have lower opportunities to access education. According to Todaro and Smith, women living in urban areas seem to be culturally banned from higher income employments and are therefore working in informal low-paying sectors or in different types of illegal sectors, with no social security. Todaro and Smith are also talking about Gender biases in families and households from an economic perspective. This simply implies that boys tend to get more physical attention, education, food, health care and support than girls because of the economical benefit a boy may supply to the family.70

**Women’s Empowerment**

Empowerment can be discussed in general terms, although one of the most regular meanings of the term is women’s’ growth in capacity to make choices. Sylvia Chant is writing about women’s economic empowerment and argues that women’s access to material resources, for instance education does not have a major influence on women’s empowerment. Chant holds that there cannot be any impact of importance without changing social, cultural and legal structures of gender inequality. Resources such as education might help women to reach a greater ability to choose and are steps in the right direction, but according to Chant this is not a guarantee that women will gain power.71 Furthermore, Faranak Miraftab is arguing about women in decision-making position in the developing countries and underlines that they have no “real” power. She states that there is an important division between access to and control over resources when it comes to women in decision-making. According to Miraftab women can have access to institutions and resources as long as they do not defy the status quo and control over them. The reasons behind the discrimination may be that decision-making is a male arena and when women enter this arena they are often seen as a threat to male colleagues.72

70 Todaro, P. M & Smith C. S pp. 239-240
Toward a New Development Strategy for Women

Jane Jaquette and Kathleen Staudt (Women and Gender Equity in Development Theory and Practice) discuss what WID and GAD have done over the decades and what they think should be done to improve women’s interest in practical and strategical issues. They recognize four issues of power that must be pointed out; Bureaucracies, Civil societies, States and Markets.

Regarding the first arena, Jaquette and Staudt define bureaucracies as both donor and knowledge generating, for example UN agencies, Governmental foreign agencies and NGOs. They believe that new efforts have to be made within these agencies and they request rethought and reform. Mainstreaming is one example of what has to be improved. According to Jaquette and Staudt gender issues are still a low priority and mainstreaming has not been implemented well enough in donor institutions; instead gender issues have been based on weak grounds as individual commitments. If mainstreaming is to work there must be incentives such as promotions, salaries and respect. Further, Jaquette and Staudt point out that many bureaucracies believe in participatory development since WID and GAD succeeded through small-scale projects supported by women’s’ organizations and through microcredit projects. However, local participation does not automatically empower women. In development projects including both men and women, which are desirable, women are involved on “male sufferance”. Further, Jaquette and Staudt believe that bureaucracies have to adopt larger perspectives on gender issues and not only with a poverty focus. For example today policies of trade and debt influence more than those of aid, and feminist amendments of macroeconomic models merit a wider discussion.

In the second arena, civil societies, Jaquette and Staudt focus on civil society organizations, such as NGOs, trade unions, faith-based organizations, labor unions and women’s movements. These organizations have the power to set agendas and make new expectations. Jaquette and Staudt suggest that feminist activists should be more aware of cultural constructions and pay more attention to the interaction between the civil society and the state, since the cultural context influences how something is interpreted. They also request women’s organizations that are both independent from and influential on governments. However, Jaquette and Staudt underline that lack of local traditions of charity, low rates of growth and sustained class distinctions make it hard to found influential civil society organizations that

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73 Jaquette, J & Staudt, K pp. 40
are completely independent in developing countries. Further, they believe that feminists need to create a balance between NGOs, grassroots organizations and governments, which might imply that feminists have to collaborate with organizations that they disagree with.\textsuperscript{74}

The third arena of power is the state itself. The state has different functions, like regulating markets and offering welfare. In other words, the state provides meaning to citizenship. Not all states are well functioning, and corruption may be a barrier for development. Many search for the solutions of empowerment strategies on the local arena and believe that decentralization is good for women. However, this does not have to be positive and according to Jaquette and Staudt, local governments can reinforce local hierarchies. To create commitment by local communities in terms of time and money is needed, which few donors are willing to supply. Jaquette and Staudt suggest that more attention be paid to the local political context and how to empower women from the inside. They also believe that an effective state needs progressive political involvement.\textsuperscript{75}

The last and fourth arena that Jaquette and Staudt point out is markets. According to the researchers, in most cases it is easier for women to influence governmental policies which form markets rather than influence the markets directly. Many feminist economists have claimed that women’s involvement in markets increase the production of services and goods and that discrimination actually deforms markets. Nevertheless, there has not been a main concern for affirmative action in employment for women in developing countries and discrimination among women in the formal sector is still wide-spread. Even if women have access to education or other resources they will still be disadvantaged when they entering the markets. There are disagreements whether feminism and economy analyses are compatible. However, there are feminists who support microcredit projects or fight for women’s unpaid labor being identified in national economic statistics. Jaquette and Staudt agree and suggest that men’s and women’s unpaid labor should be more marketized and not less. However, Jaquette and Staudt question how this should be done.\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{74} Jaquette, J & Staudt, K p.43
\textsuperscript{75} Jaquette, J & Staudt, K, pp.44
\textsuperscript{76} Jaquette, J & Staudt, K pp. 46
Education and Gender – Gaps and Inequalities

In this chapter we introduce some current theories about gender and education and foremost why gender equality is important in educational contexts, why it exists, and finally, we present some strategies to increase girls’ access to secondary education.

Why Gender Equality in Education Matters

The most successful investment when it comes to developing a country is education, since education facilitates obtainment of other development targets. Education promotes, among others, progress in health, nutrition and life expectancy, factors that are important for economic growth and social development. “Its graduates enter labor markets that increasingly demand modern knowledge and skills, readiness to take initiatives, and ability to solve problems”. In other words, education builds human capital, and according to a paper from USAID’s Office of Women in Development; Education from a Gender Equality Perspective, countries that improve literacy rates by 20-30 per cent also increase their gross domestic product (GDP) by 8-16 per cent. Countries that have educated citizens also tend to be more democratic and politically stable. Further, it has also been proven that educating girls leads to even greater results. Girls who have gone to school tend to wait to get married and they give birth to fewer and healthier children. They also bring more money to their families and national productivity. Female schooling gives better yield than other investments in developing countries.

Several reports prove that gender equality in education is essential for different significant development goals, such as reducing malnutrition, fertility and child mortality. Further, according to a report from the World Bank The Costs of Missing the Millennium Development Goal on Gender Equity, gender inequality in education will reduce economic growth and will reduce the possibilities of well-being for the whole society. In other words, there is a link between gender equality in education and economic growth. Inequality in education lowers the average of human capital which can impact the rate of investments.

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77 EQUATE Project: Achieving Equality in Education for USAID’s Office of Women in Development. Education from a Gender Equality Perspective. 2008 pp.1
78 Sutherland-Addy, E Foreword p.vii
79 USAID’s Office of Women in Development. p.3
80 Abu-Ghaida, D & Klasen, Stephan. The Costs of Missing the Millennium Development Goal on Gender Equity. 2002 pp.4
81 Abu-Ghaida, D & Klasen, S pp.4
**The Importance of Secondary Education**

The United Nations’ *Millenium Development Goals* (MDGs) promote education for all, both girls and boys and by the year 2015 gender inequality is expected to be erased at all educational levels.\(^{82}\) There has been significant remark at the primary level, in improving access and quality in the educational fields, however there are still things to improve at secondary level, in particular for girls.\(^{83}\)

According to a study from the World Bank, *Gender Equity in Junior and Senior Secondary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*, whose purpose is to document and analyze the gender disadvantage in junior and senior secondary education and the causes of this disadvantage, economic growth is connected more strongly with participation rates in secondary level than in primary level. Secondary education is also one of the main tools for social development, since it is essential for young people to become productive and healthy citizens.\(^{84}\) The USAID paper, mentioned above, also marks the importance of higher education and states that women perceive an 18 per cent economic return on secondary education compared to 14 per cent for boys. Further, there are benefits beyond the economic gains since educating girls at secondary level is more linked with increased decision-making and mobility for women than educating them at primary level only.\(^{85}\)

**Why Gender Gap in Education Exists**

Africa has the lowest number of participants in secondary education compared to other regions. The region has also the highest gender inequalities against girls in secondary education. There are different reasons why the gender gap in secondary education still exists and the barriers of girls’ access are complex and varied. A country’s economic policy and sociocultural norms affect the supply and demand of education for young women. Further, policy and direction of aid flows at the international level, family level economic decisions affect the participation of girls in secondary school. In the study, *Gender Equity in Junior and Senior Secondary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa* the reasons that affect inequalities in Secondary education are dived into two parts, the *demand side* and the *supply side*.\(^{86}\)

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82 UNDP, *United Nation Development Goals*
83 USAID’s Office of Women in Development. pp.1
84 Sutherland -Addy, E p.22
85 USAID’s Office of Women in Development.pp.1
86 Sutherland -Addy, E p.35
Demand Side
The demand side includes *social and cultural factors* such as the pupils’ and their parents’ attitudes towards education. Religious and/or traditional values affect the families’ willingness to send girls to school. The society may favor boys before girls when it comes to education.\(^{87}\) It has been shown that parents are more unwilling to send girls to school when the culture advises early marriage and in countries where married girls move to their husband’s families.\(^{88}\) Further, early pregnancies and girls who have lost their parents affect negatively the demand of secondary education. Other influences of the demand side are the level of the parents’ education and literacy in other words *family factors*. Beside cultural and family values, it can be a question of money, *economic factors*, e.g. school fee, transport, uniforms and school materials. The labor market also affects. Girls may be needed for domestic work or labor tasks which, means that sending a girl to school may affect the family’s economic situation in a negative way. Finally, HIV/AIDS affects whether girls go to school or not.\(^{89}\)

Supply Side
The supply side, according to the study, *Gender Equity in Junior and Senior Secondary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*, first includes *political factors*. For instance, political factors can be policies which only pay attention to primary education and including the budget of the country. Further, political stability and lack of uniformity in educational policies are also political factors which affect the supply side of secondary education. A second factor is *bureaucratic factors* and the study points out that the further down gender issues are in the bureaucratic chain the weaker the formal commitments get. Thereafter, the study mentions *institutional factors*. Examples of institutional factors are that the school may not be gender sensitive, and that teachers may lack knowledge in gender issues. The majority of the teachers can be men which may influence. Safety issues as gender-based violence (sexual violence and corporal punishment) also influence girls’ access to secondary education. The two last factors which affect the demand side are *infrastructural factors*, such as long distance to schools and lack of sex-segregated sanitary facilities, and *contextual factors*. Contextual factors include

\(^{87}\) Sutherland-Addy, E p.35  
\(^{88}\) Abu-Ghaida, D & Klasen, p. 2  
\(^{89}\) Sutherland-Addy E p.35
poor quality of education programs and educational systems which pay no attention to local gender specific learning needs.\textsuperscript{90}

\textit{How to Eliminate the Gap}

Reasons which keep girls out of school are well-known and big efforts to increase the number of girls in school have been made. However, it is not enough to recognize the reasons. Quality of education and the society outside schools are also important. There are different strategies to improve quality in education and reaching gender equality and some of them will be introduced below.

According to the USAID paper \textit{Education from a Gender Equality Perspective}, there must be a focus on the quality of education so that the girls’ interest will be considered. Governments as well as private and public donors have concentrated on increasing the number of girls without giving attention to quality, the teaching and the girls’ performance have been left behind. If female access to education is high but the quality of education low, the expected benefits, like better health and more involved citizens may not be reached.\textsuperscript{91} Further, one of the purposes of the World Bank study, \textit{Gender Equity in Junior and Senior Secondary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa} is to identify strategies that may be effective in reducing or eliminating gender inequalities in secondary education. Like the USAID paper, the World Bank study request more high-quality education in national policies and directions, qualities which promote equality in the learning environment and equality of opportunity. Greater quality in secondary education would increase girls’ access and participation in education and lead to wellbeing and better life opportunities for adolescent girls.\textsuperscript{92}

Other strategies to reduce the gender gap in secondary education, according to the World Bank Study, are providing transport to school, providing single-sex learning environments, improving relations between school and home, lobbing for legal changes which will keep girls in school after pregnancy, training teachers in gender responsiveness, providing girls with positive role models and relating science and math contents and teaching methods to the everyday lives of both boys and girls, and the last one, demystifying myths, such as ‘women

\textsuperscript{90} Sutherland-Addy, E p.35
\textsuperscript{91} EQUATE Project: Achieving Equality in Education for USAID’s Office of Women in Development.
\textsuperscript{92} Sutherland-Addy, E pp xiv
scientists cannot find husbands”.³ The World Bank study requests more female teachers in schools and bilingual education in countries with plural languages.⁴ It also emphasizes the matter of physical environment of schools, for example separate toilets for boys and girls. Gender sensitive teaching methodology is also desirable, since insensitive gender teaching, such as ignoring girls depriving them of courage, has led to declining participation of girls. Further, girls have often been dissuaded from science, technical and vocational education.⁵

Besides quality in education and educational environment, the first priority, according to the World Bank study is to increase the demand of secondary education. The countries must also be able to meet the demands through financing since many families cannot afford school fees and therefore choose not to send their girls to school.⁶ The study suggests that governments have to reduce the direct, indirect, and opportunity costs for parents to increase the enrolment of girls in secondary education. Dropout rates are high due to lack of school fees and poor girls are overrepresented. In order to reach gender equality governments should, according to the study, cut school fees or supply scholarships and others incentives to help cover the costs. The governments may need donor support from the outside, especially in Sub-Saharan African countries, to be able to offer its citizens these privileges.⁷

Education, Not Enough?

“Education for all” is demanded from, among others, the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF and United Nations Development Program and its positive effects are presented above. However, Ashleigh Brilliant emphasizes that the economic growth in response to the last decade’s educational expansion has been unsatisfactory. He claims that if a state’s interest in investing in the future is missing the expanding education is not worth anything; “Creating people with high skill in countries where the only profitable activity is lobbing the government for favors is not a formula for success. Creating skills where there exists no technology to use them is not going to foster economic growth ”.⁸ Brilliant also underlines the brain drain phenomenon, a phenomenon which means emigration of people with technical skills, and refers to a current study of sixty-one poor countries. The study showed that people

³ Sutherland-Addy, E p.38
⁴ Sutherland-Addy, E p 23.
⁵ Sutherland-Addy, E p.27
⁶ Sutherland-Addy, E p 23.
⁷ Sutherland-Addy, E p.24ff
with secondary education were more likely to move abroad, in this study to the United States, than those with only primary education. Further, people graduated from university are even more willing to migrate than those with secondary education, in fifty-one of the countries. To sum up, Brilliant believes in education within the right situations but underlines that administrative targets, as increasing access to education, and rhetoric from international commissions do not by themselves generate incentive to economic growth.

The World Bank Study is arguing that gender-specific interventions on their own are not a guarantee to reach better education for girls or better situations for girls outside the school. Since education is created by factors linked to the society and sociocultural norms it is important to look further than the educational system, and therefore the World Bank Study advocates multiple strategies and intersectoral approaches, strategies which deal with all the major non-educational related issues which hinder girls’ access to education. It is important to tackle the difficulties for adolescent girls, such as HIV/AIDS, poverty and work, early pregnancy and marriage, sexual abuse and trafficking. Further, a successful strategy must also meet young girls’ needs, and through skill development, including science and technology, along with empowerment girls can be prepared for social and civil society and engage in work. Intersectoral strategies demand cooperation between, among others, government, international organizations, NGOs, business, religious organizations, teachers, parents, students and the local communities which will lead to educational opportunities.

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99 Brilliant, A p.80
100 Brilliant, A p.84
101 Sutherland-Addy, E p.58
IV

Findings & Conclusions
FAWE- Gender and Gender Pedagogy

In this chapter we will first present FAWE as a regional organization and its educational tools. Second, we will present our findings and analysis regarding gender and gender pedagogy. In other words we will present what the FAWE section at the Ministry of Education of Rwanda, the teachers and pupils at FAWE Girls’ School Rwanda has answered to our questions.

The World Bank Study, presented in the previous chapter, underlines multiple strategies and intersectoral approaches, strategies which deal with all the major non-educational related issues which hinder girls’ access to education. An example of multiple-process driven strategy that tackles all the main problems that keep girls from school is the FAWE Centres of Excellence;

The FAWE Centres of Excellence best represent the work that the organization has sought to do at the level of secondary education. This intervention seeks to create model schools and community environments in disadvantaged areas which are physically, academically, and socially gender-responsive. This is to ensure that girls from these areas have access to schooling and that once they are in school the gender constraints that could lead to dropping out or poor performance are either eliminated or minimized.102

FAWE and Educational Tools

The main goal of the Forum for African Women Educationalist (FAWE) is to reduce discrimination against girls and to promote young women and their opportunities to study.103 FAWE is active in 32 African countries. In order to create a gender sensitive environment in educational institutions, FAWE has made some guidelines for the educational work both at FAWE girls’ school and for schools that wish to incorporate gender responsive pedagogy. Below the main tools and guidelines are presented

Centre of Excellence

The idea of the centre of excellence is that the FAWE girls’ schools have to provide an outstanding educational environment. That includes teaching material as well as facilities at the school. The gender-responsive pedagogy is also included in the idea of the centre of

102 Sutherland-Addy, E (Edt) p.50
103 FAWE http://www.fawerwa.org/spip.php?article1
excellence. Even though a lot of the criteria of the centre of excellence have been fulfilled, there is still some work to be done. For instance; the schools are lacking adequate computer-centres. Although the centre of excellence is foremost an idea of curricula and theoretical frameworks, FAWE also underlines the importance of a good atmosphere amongst the students.  

*Mentoring Program*

The mentoring program is an important keystone at FAWE girls’ school. The mentoring program for example includes former students from the school who have proceeded to university studies. These former students are acting as role models for the pupils at the school to set good examples as well as showing them their opportunities in life. Also teachers and parents can be used as mentors for the girls.  

*Scholarships*

FAWE provides scholarships to students in primary and secondary school. The scholarships are primarily provided to girls but some scholarships are also given to boys.  

*Club Tuseme!*

Tuseme is a Swahili word which can be translated into *speak out*. Tuseme is a very important part of FAWE’s education. FAWE believes that girls in most African countries lack opportunities to speak out about their day-to-day problems, for example regarding their future, marriage and dreams. Club Tuseme encourages girls to speak out no matter what the issue might be. This teaches girls to speak in public and also to speak about matter which may be taboo. In that way a lot of taboo subjects eventually will become non-taboo.  

*FAWE - Gender Pedagogy Formulated in Postcolonial Countries*

FAWE has composed theoretical framework of the practice of gender pedagogy. To understand the basic conceptions of gender responsive pedagogy FAWE has made a draft of important parts in practising gender responsive pedagogy. A summary of these essential parts are presented below.

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106 FAWE Best Practices. S 5ff
Gender Responsive Teaching and Learning Materials

In order for the teachers to practise a gender responsive pedagogy the syllabus has to contain guidelines which make the teaching uniform when it comes to including gender responsiveness. FAWE advocates teachers encouraging students to participate actively in the classroom, therefore the teaching methods should be characterized by variety. Evaluations of the schools’ teaching materials are crucial to ensure that both boys and girls are included. The teaching materials have to be free from stereotypical portrays of women and men. More specifically, in the context of the culture of the country, FAWE states that the teaching materials have to be sensitive regarding the origin of textbooks. It is fairly common that foreign textbooks are used, often from western countries, and that may create problems. Since it may be difficult to find gender responsive textbook, related to economical factors, teachers should make their own additional gender responsive teaching materials. The use of both gender pronouns when giving examples is also crucial.

Gender Responsive Management on Sexual Maturation

Since a large number of girls in African countries come from poor families, the menstruation period can be a problem as the possibilities of buying pads and other sanitary products is limited. Furthermore, a common problem is that schools do not have the adequate infrastructure when it comes to the possibility of cleaning or supplying girls with sanitary bins and toilet paper, thus girls tend to be absent from classes relatively often for one period a month. According to FAWE some girls miss up to 30 lessons per year in each subject due to these problems.

FAWE Rwanda Chapter - Room for Experience-Based Definitions

FAWE Rwanda National Chapter is currently working with the Ministry of Education in Rwanda and they have implicit influence on the government’s educational work, in line with their mission to empower girls through education. We met with one of the special advisers on gender matters at the FAWE Rwanda Chapter at the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC).

107 FAWE Gender responsive pedagogy p. 10 In: Effective school and Quality improvement: Association for the development of education in Africa. Working paper B-5.2
108 FAWE Gender responsive pedagogy p. 11
109 FAWE Gender responsive pedagogy p. 12
110 FAWE Gender responsive pedagogy p. 15
When we asked her to define gender she talked about attitudes and that the meaning of gender changes over time and space and therefore it is hard to tell precisely;

*Gender is something that doesn’t have a fixed meaning. What would be the meaning today would not be the same meaning tomorrow because it is all about attitude. Gender is all about attitudes. It is attitudes that people have about people, about women, men, girls, and boys. And these attitudes are transferred to attribution of duties and the general behavior.* (Informant FAWE Rwanda)

This line of thinking can be linked to Professor Chandra Talpade Mohanty’s ideas when analyzing gender relations. First, when gender is understood as something being non-fixed it gives room for cultural, historical and context-based definitions which underlines incorporation of experiences. The concept formulated by postcolonial feminist theorists regarding a critical attitude towards the idea of a universal woman’s experiences is also being implied by our informant at FAWE. In other words, the FAWE Rwanda Chapter creates their own contextualized definition of gender.

FAWE Rwanda chapter explains FAWE’s gender pedagogy as follows;

*What FAWE (as the whole organization) does is trying to bring the woman up, not by suppressing men, but trying to show her that she is treated badly. […] in Africa, women and girls have been taken as the third class people. What FAWE is trying to do is to promote them […] it is just about making them (the girls) aware of themselves, that they have the capabilities because they have them immensely but we are also looking at the male counterpart.* (Informant FAWE Rwanda)

Since the informant states that they want to show women that they are treated badly one can ask if the conception of agency could be applied on FAWE workers’ attitudes towards women in Rwanda. McNay states that simplified notions about male domination and female subordination tend to undermine female agency. We ask ourselves if there may be a risk for FAWE, to reduce ordinary women in Rwanda to victims without agency, by saying that they are treated badly. Further, we believe, as argued by McNay, that reducing agency amongst unprivileged people may enhance their position in society. Is there a risk of self-

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111 Talpade Mohanty, C p. 49
112 Laskar, P p. Preface
113 McNay, L pp 26
fulfilling prophecy when FAWE wants to show girls and women that they are treated badly in the society? Instead of aiming to show how women in general are treated badly, in line with MacNay, we believe that FAWE and the society at different levels, should encourage girls and show them how is it possible to actually change their own situation. Nevertheless, the informant at FAWE has shown that the organization underline the importance of creating an understanding of gender that is based on their specific context.

FAWE chapter educates the teachers in gender teaching methodology and we asked our informant at FAWE to tell us how they mediate gender pedagogy to the teachers. The informant explained that they work with the teachers through workshops.

*FAWE workshops are more interactive, it is participating […] Because like I was saying in the beginning, everything that has to do with gender is dynamic, it keeps changing and no one is really an expert in gender, no one is, so we keep exchanging ideas and trying to get the idea of every person. So what we do, of course there are facts that are there that we get from books, but then we build on them from our own experiences from what we wish.* (Informant FAWE Rwanda)

The above statement reduces the risk of FAWE being subjected to western ideas about what gender should be defined as, because of the contextualized definition of gender. The statement implies that FAWE as well as teachers work to form the definitions together.

The informant states that FAWE Rwanda influences the Ministry of Education in their policies e.g. the Girls Education Sector Policy. Our informant mentioned a study that reviewed a number of problems that may be keeping down the number of women studying sciences at university level. Since science students need to have academic skills in order to get access to the labor market, it is important to increase the number of women studying sciences at universities. As a result FAWE chapter was lobbying the Ministry to increase the number of girls going to universities and doing science. This was done by demanding the Government to increase financial support for girls who wanted to study science and technology at university level.

Importance of science and technology education, agrees with the Rwanda National Development Goals, *Vision 2020*. According to the theory formulated by Jaquette and Staudt,

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114 Taplade Mohanty, C p.49
NGOs are part of civil society and thereby significant actors. They state that it is important that NGOs, concerned with women issues, are independent from and influential on Governments. The statement above shows that FAWE as an NGO and part of the civil society have influence on governmental policy-making, in terms increasing girls’ opportunities to study at universities. It is hard to tell if NGOs in general, have impact on the Rwandan Government since the current situation regarding democracy has been defined as unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, FAWE was established in Rwanda 1997 and Vision 2020 was formulated in year 2000. The aforementioned may imply that FAWE influenced the governmental policy-making.

**The Teachers’ Views - Gender, Culture and Responsibilities**

The teachers partly underline different definitions and practical approaches to gender responsive pedagogy. Since we want to separate the teachers’ answers we call them T1, T2, T3, T 4 and T5. None of the five interviewed teachers had studied gender as a specific subject at University, or during their teacher education. However, two of them had attended FAWE’s course on gender teaching methodologies, namely T1 and T5. When we asked why the other three had not, they all answered that is was due to lack of time. Further, the five teachers defined gender differently but there are also similarities in their responses.

Two of the teachers understand gender as something which is affected by their specific culture, and thereby open for change by questioning the culture and its influence on the relationship between men and women. The teachers underline the meaning of gender as something which cannot be reduced to a woman’s focus only, which Nira Yuval-Davis accentuates when it comes to understanding gender relations in a society. Below, T3 explains his view on gender:

> I define gender as looking at [pause] talking about feminine. I will say male and female and when it’s come to gender equality it means women, men, boys and girls being equal in all aspects, economically, socially and politically. We try to achieve it because our culture here does not favor gender sensitiveness because women are taken to be behind the man but today we are trying. (T3)

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115 Jaquette, J & Staudt, K pp.40  
116 Devlin, C & Elgie, R p. 242  
117 Yuval-Davis, N pp. 1
There is only one of the five teachers who explicitly define gender as social construction, a young woman (T5) is talking about how the society affects people’s comprehension of gender:

Gender, it is normally the picture that society gives someone depending on the sex whether they are a boy or a girl, the way you pass in the society that’s gender. But then the biological gender is male and female sex so there are two things now but in the normal context of gender […] in fact myself, I prefer call it gender equality rather than gender because when you are talking about gender you are not specific. (T5)

One of the female teachers (T1) defines gender as giving equal chances to both men and women.

Gender, many people don’t understand it and they say that gender is equality between men and women. You will never get two people equal. That’s not a good description. But gender simply means giving equal chances to both men and women, equal chances, equal opportunities and unlike in the past […] allowing both men and women to try their life, not like this is a woman so she is designed for such and such things. (T1)

T1 also mentions that gender means giving people equal chances to education and then later to the labor market. Another interesting thing is that she suggests that gender and responsibilities are linked. She is talking about roles, and that people have certain biological responsibilities depending on sex, and that men and women should accept these responsibilities.

Of course there are some responsibilities, no man will breast feed a child. A man cannot be pregnant so having equal opportunities that will not stop us from continue our responsibilities, natural responsibilities (T1)

However, she makes it clear that the different responsibilities will not stop women from competing with men on the market. If a man can ride a bicycle why can’t a woman do the same?

The responsibilities mentioned by the teachers are however linked to women and it is also the foundation of the division of gender relations. The responsibilities are mentioned by the teacher in terms of reproduction, an issue, which according to Yuval-Davis theories, shows that the idea of a traditional gender division is present in her reply, e.g., when T1 underlines
women’s responsibilities as natural. Yuval-Davis argues that these ideas are crucial for a nation’s gender division in which women are given a natural responsibility to reproduce. Although, the idea of a natural responsibility to reproduce can be linked to the history of Rwanda; the responsibilities may also emanate from pressure to reproduce due to genocide, as stated by Baldwin and Newbury.

A young man (T2), is uncertain about the term gender and he defines it as follow;

*Gender [pause] gender, what I know about gender is [silence] I don’t have any good idea of definition about gender but I know it is about man and female (T2)*

T2 states that he does not have a good definition on gender. Nevertheless his conception of gender includes both sexes. One of the female teachers (T4) says that women and men should have the same possibilities.

*I don’t know the clear definition when you say gender. It means man, woman, girls and boys how they participate in their job, in their school. […] every time, I understand gender in our country because they encourage the girls and the women to participate in all work in order to become also the important persons in the country. (T4)*

T4 highlights gender equality in the public sphere but she does not mention the private sphere. This may be an expression of the traditional division of private and public spheres where the public sphere is the norm since it is dominated by men. All the teachers’ definitions of gender appear to be about women entering the public sphere and their possibilities in this sphere. None of them discuss men entering the private sphere. One can ask if this is because the private sphere is linked to the conception of women’s natural responsibilities.

**Gender Pedagogy - Speak out! Role Modeling and Empowerment**

On the issue of gender pedagogy the teachers’ comprehension’s underline different approaches. T1 defines gender pedagogy as follow;

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118 Yuval-Davis, N pp. 26-27
119 Baldwin, H & Newbury, C p.3
120 Figure p.26
Creating environments that are fit for those people in need, for example if I am talking about gender balance, gender equality and you find that all textbooks, the characters used in there are men’s names. [...] I am changing the names in the books. Please, where you find James read Alice, because girls can do the same as James. (T1)

Furthermore, T1 explains the activities at FAWE Girls’ School. You know this school has the Tuseme (speak out) I think Tuseme, this time they haven’t been active, but it helps a lot. Girls, when they are finishing here they go out, you find them on TV-programs and universities. She also highlights the importance of having good relationships with her students. According to T1, a teacher has to interact with the students so the students do not fear to ask questions etc. The statements above show that FAWE invest in quality, such as Tuseme and good relationships among the pupils and teachers. According to Sutherland-Addy quality in education and educational environments, increases girls’ access and participation in secondary education and hopefully leads to well-being, more involved citizens and opportunities in life for adolescent girls.121

T3 also talks about quality and he views gender pedagogy as a tool for empowering girls.

Then the other way is that they have been developed in the policy of the school, the girls have learned to talk, to speak for themselves and they know their rights. They have been in all activities that enhance gender sensitivity, gender equality. So FAWE has created a very good environment for the girls to speak for themselves, to know their rights and to know about gender, empowerment and equality. (T3)

T3 points out that FAWE is teaching science and what that means for the students.

Then secondly, technology, girls here are having the chance to use computers, computers technology in this way women or girls can use a computer and they can get jobs of men. (T3)

T3 is aware of the importance of teaching young girls science and technology. This is in line with Sutherland-Addy who underlines that science and technology are important tools in order to prepare girls for social and civil society.122 When it comes to practising gender pedagogy, T3 gives us an example of how he practises gender pedagogy in his teaching.

121 Sutherland-Addy, E p. XIV
122 Sutherland-Addy, E p.58
I do encourage them, especially in sciences. When I teach I give them examples of successful women in some of my subjects. I give them examples of medical doctors, local ones that we have here, examples of female pilots. I give them examples of female chemists that we have female teachers and successful people who work in the sciences. (T3)

T5 also gives examples of successful women and she uses herself as an example when she tries to encourage the students.

If I teach biology I give them an example of myself so I tell them you girls you can do sciences like me because I also did. You find it is a matter of encourage them and tell them they can do as boys do. (T5)

It is interesting that they use female role models within the traditional male centred sphere to encourage the pupils of FAWE. This is probably of big importance in this context, since it is common that women in Rwanda are active in the informal sector within the private sphere. Also, Sutherland-Addy mentions that giving examples of role models for girls can be of importance when trying to eliminate the gender gap in education.

T2, who found it hard to explain the meaning of gender, describes gender pedagogy below;

FAWE as FAWE Rwanda supports girl’s education. Many of these students have benefit from it. If you look at the effects, many of them are coming to school because of the benefits in here [Kigali] or maybe outside the country […] there is girl power here […] I know that there is a program, a club on gender, I have heard of it and I believe in such clubs. They are talking about gender and gender equality. (T2)

When we asked him to give us examples of how he practises gender pedagogy he is once again uncertain about the terminology. What is gender pedagogy? As I told you I have never went to a gender related seminar. I have no education in gender. Once again, gender is hard to define but the teachers are aware of the positive outcomes of gender pedagogy. This also shows the importance of training teachers in gender responsiveness which gives them tools in their practice, as suggested by Sutherland-Addy.

123 Smith, C. S & Tudaro P.M p.22
124 Sutherland-Addy, E p.38
125 Sutherland-Addy, E p.38
T4 underlines that FAWE Gender Pedagogy is about promoting girls to study sciences and she stresses the importance of the school not being mixed but rather a girls’ school.

(...) here at FAWE, the girls have all freedom to do whatever they need to do. When they are mixed with boys they have fear for example in the laboratory, the biological laboratory or in physics laboratory. (T4)

As T4 mentions, single sex schools create good environments for girls to develop in educational terms. Sutherland-Addy emphasizes the importance of single schools as a strategy for girls to fully participate in schooling and further to eliminate gender gaps in education in general. 126

**The Pupil’s View on Gender – Balance and Equality**

Some pupils defined gender as something being distinguished from a biological definition; *What I know about the word gender is different sexes. But maybe I can put it in terms of gender balance. They may be different but they should have same potential.* Although the biological differences are underlined, they continue with; *think it’s almost the same that [name of the other student] says. Biologically we are different but I think that gender is the way that society should treat people. They should be equal.* Second, some of the students emphasize the boys’ and the girls’ potentials and the role of the society; *For me in this time I would define gender as power and to be equal in front of the law […] What I think about gender is wanting to put people at the same level and working together. That’s what I think.* Further, a student stated; *what I appreciate most about FAWE they fight for our country, they do not want girls to be on a high level and boys being at a low, girls can do what a boy can do, they are the same.* The most common definition of gender by the pupils is based on conceptions of equality between men and women. The reason why the students emphasizes *same capabilities* could be understood in terms of an essential equality question since Rwanda recently had law structures that discriminate against women. Even though the law structure has changed to benefit women, it may take time before the new law structure gains legitimacy amongst the population.

126 Sutherland-Addy, E p. 38
Gender Pedagogy - Financial Help and Opportunities

To the question how FAWE Rwanda’s gender pedagogy is practised, the students often replied with answers which can be linked to economical issues for girls. For example one student said; *They help people who are not rich- they pay for school fees they give scholarships.* In this sense gender pedagogy is intended to give girls opportunities to study. Also the students accentuate the opportunity for girls at FAWE to do science; *In this school they encourage women and girls to do sciences and before we knew that it was only for boys. So now we know that we can do it.* This can be interpreted as gender pedagogy meaning something that allows women and girls to do things they have earlier been excluded from.

Sutherland-Addy makes a distinction between the supply and demand side of secondary education. In Sutherland-Addy’s terms, the pupils represent the demand side and that may be one reason why they are stressing the financial aspects of education, in other words this underlines the immense importance of financial support.\(^1\) Sutherland-Addy points out that the demand-side of education is important in order to increase access to education, the demand-side has to be met by the supply-side, in our case the financial providers of education, namely the Government. In light of the latter we can argue that the supply-side does not meet the expectations of the demand-side.\(^2\) Another reason why they define gender pedagogy in terms of financial help may be linked to their understanding of gender as equality, in this sense gender pedagogy is understood as giving equal chances to both boys and girls to study and it has little or nothing to do with pedagogical approaches made by the teachers.

\(^1\) Sutherland-Addy, E p. 23  
\(^2\) Sutherland-Addy, E p. 23
FAWE, the Right Way for Rwanda?

This chapter shows the teachers’ and pupils’ thoughts about education as a tool to empower girls and how they relate development and education. In other words, how they perceive FAWE’s function in the Rwandan society.

Teachers’ Views - A Positive Spiral

T1 is talking about the importance of education as follows;

*So, with the beginning of schools like FAWE we train children in sciences. They attend to different universities and they are doing different jobs. And the gospel spreads. I think so. And these are girls who are going to get families and once you educate the woman, you educate the family and the whole society.* (T1)

According to T2, education helps the girls to develop themselves but also the country. T2 points out that women are in majority in Rwanda and that they should therefore be playing the major role in the economic development of Rwanda. According to T2, education is a tool for women to play a major role in the economics and politics and he adds that women who do not study end up getting married at an early age. T2 mentions the important role education plays for development and exemplifies with the current problem of overpopulation in many African countries and how this prevents development. T2 suggests that education can be one of the solutions.

*There is something which hinders development, for example the population growth. I assume that the girls we have here at FAWE will end to marry. Population of Rwanda will shoot on a very high level and once it is overpopulated it will hinder the development of the country. So education is very important.* (T2)

In the light of what Baldwin and Newbury state in their study about women’s life in post-genocide Rwanda and the cultural pressure on women to reproduce in order to compensate for family loss caused by genocide, the statement is especially important. Since Rwanda suffers from overpopulation and a high population growth, the cultural pressure to reproduce may be limited by education. This also shows how the consequences of Genocide still affect and hamper the development in Rwanda.

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129 Baldwin, H & Newbury, C pp 3
Teachers’ understanding of gender equality and education as something important and beneficial for a whole society, is suggested by all the interviewed teachers. Besides, the teachers’ view of a positive societal spiral is claimed by numerous organizations stating that education is one of the major investments for future development. Amongst others, USAID and the teachers underline the positive aspects of female education in terms of preventing early marriages and high fertility rates. The concept of a positive spiral for the society is also emphasized by the World Bank.  

According to T3 education is important because it will change old values that still exist.

*We grew up knowing that women belong to men so we need to remove that and to practice gender pedagogy so everybody knows that we have changed our minds […] So we need to learn that women can do more than housework. So it is really important, because of the culture you have to practise the other side, remove that belief in people.* (T3)

Once again T3 is questioning traditional gender divisions in the society. If we apply the conception of *dual colonialism*, stated by Talpade Mohanty, we could assume a gender division forced by western conceptions of gender. The culture being referred to by the teacher may in other words have emerged from the colonial era in Rwanda. This knowledge may help driving gender equality in the society, since it is a part of a continued work of creating a society free from colonial heritage. Loomba also states that it is important to analyze gender relations in a historical context. However, this may be overseen by the historical narratives since the teaching of the history subject is highly restricted by the government.

T5 points out the values of politics and laws besides the value of education to empower girls;

*The Parliament has set laws that give rights to women. Like now there is a law of inheritance like if I am a girl I can inherit the properties of my parents the same as a boy can do. […] you find that women in Rwanda are at a good level and the government is really supporting us and the laws. You can’t do anything when the laws*

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130 USAID’s Office of Women in Development. pp.1
131 Talpade Mohanty, C pp. 50
132 Loomba, A p. 140
133 Schwiesfurth, M pp.698
Above T5 seems to be aware that there cannot be any impact of importance without changing social, cultural and legal structures of gender inequality.

T4 believes in education as a tool for development. She exemplifies this with the students at FAWE Girls’ School.

Because almost all our girls’ success at the examinations Those girls are going to university when they are finished. I think when they are there they continue the sciences so they will try to develop our country because they are encouraged. So they will make differences in their leaderships, business women and so on. (T 4)

T4 is not the only teacher who claims that education is an important tool for development and as already mentioned this agrees with research from the World Bank. However, we cannot keep us from asking ourselves what happens when girls graduate from universities, if we look at what Jaquette and Staudt and others have found i.e. that education is not a guarantee for women to access the market. There is a risk of brain drain, and according to Brilliant the more educated a person is the more likely he or she is to move abroad.

The Pupils’ Views- Empowerment and Development

According to the pupils, empowerment is often linked to what FAWE wants the girls to achieve; FAWE wants us to speak out and they want for us development. Although it is not strictly defined by the students what empowerment really means, they continue to underline the importance of FAWE education;

FAWE in Rwanda encourage girls’ education so that we can become empowered. Here we study like in a mixed school, if it its mathematics we do it, if its sciences, we do it. If there are girls who come from poor families they help them, they give them scholarships. They encourage orphans, there are so many orphans, they give them hope so they can become the future doctors or important persons. You know, in some villages, the girls they cannot get good education but what FAWE did, they founded FAWE clubs in different schools, they become empowered.
Chant defines empowerment as capacities to make choices and access to material resources, such as education. Even though women could increase their capacities to make choices, it is not said that the choices per se will benefit women as in chancing iniquity in social and political contexts. ¹³⁷ (This concept will be elaborated further in the conclusion).

Further, students state that empowerment is linked to education because it allows them to compete with the boys, and that education itself is described as equal to empowerment; *I also think that the reason that FAWE came was to eliminate the gender roles, now we for example even can compete with boy schools and it teaches us to be empowered.* Students also accentuate the importance of girls doing science, which is seen by the students as something empowering; *In this school they encourage women and girls to do sciences and before we knew that it was only for boys so now we know that we can do it.* Science subjects were earlier something that only boys could do but now girls practise science subjects in the same way. ¹³⁸ It can be understood as something that is empowering girls and positions them along with boys and young men in the country. Because of the earlier exclusion from science and technology and that the definition of gender made by students includes an underlining of women being able to do what men can do; it is no surprise that this is viewed as a corner stone by the students, a corner stone in terms of Rwanda being able to reach gender equality. The Rwanda vision 2020 also emphasizes science and technology as a key-component for development in Rwanda. Another important part of the empowerment for the girls is the FAWE support Club Tuseme, which teaches girls to speak out.

The pupils state that FAWE, as an educational system fighting for equality, is important for the development in Rwanda;

> **FAWE is important because it cares of the development in the country. They say that the girls are the future leaders. Also what FAWE has done is to encourage girls to become job-creators. We learn how to create jobs. Here there are so many people looking for jobs once you have studied how you can create your own job. Also as more girls studying it will develop the country. We have the vision 2020, our target is development and FAWE helps us reaching that target.**

¹³⁷ Chant, S p.101
¹³⁸ Sutherland-Addy, E p.27
Moreover, education is seen as an important step for development and the students are underlining the positive spiral for the whole society;

Yes, but maybe not in some areas but the Rwandan government tries to consult local leaders. Women politicians help women in villages and they try to show them that they have rights. This started to change after genocide. What concerns people now in Rwanda is education, what they want is education. There are also schools which teaches old people to read and educate them, especially women, and when they finish, once they have learned to read and write they are going to bring it to their families.

One student underlines what she appreciates most about FAWE as follows:

[...] what I appreciate most about FAWE, they fight for our country, they don’t want girls to be on a high level and boys being at a low level, they want us to be equal […]

**Gender Equality – A Goal Fulfilled?**

When we asked the pupils about gender equality and why it is important for the development, the students replied with somewhat mixed conclusions. Some of the students meant that gender equality nowadays already was fulfilled due to recent changes in law structure or women’s high political representation; *If I may add something. In Rwanda for example in the parliament you’ll find more women than men that is what we [we as in students] are expressing, that in Rwanda, there is gender equality. It is more than one student who states that Rwanda is showing gender equality: You’ll find that by now almost everything is at an equal level. Although, as Miraftab discuss, one can ask if the actual changes in terms of gender structures has been achieved due to representative progress. As mentioned earlier, one has to examine whether women’s representation in different sectors allows them, not only access but also power to challenge structures and balance of power within the political context.*

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139 Miraftab, F p.184
Conclusions

In the chapter above we have shown how FAWE is perceived amongst students and teachers at FAWE girls’ school. We have also detected their beliefs and conceptions of gender and gender pedagogy. In this conclusion we will now present our thought on FAWE in terms of being the right way for Rwanda’s strivings towards development.

Education and Politics in Rwanda in Relation to FAWE

When analyzing Rwanda’s educational system we can see that the international influences are immense and that the United Kingdom plays a major role in financing education in Rwanda. Schwiesfurth criticizes that the donors of today mostly focus on the MDG Education for All since it does not contextualize the Rwandan situation. Education for All seems in our eyes to be more about quantitative measurements than quality and says little on the education for girls in the specific context. Rwanda has been successful in creating a compulsory and free primary education, but as in most developing countries focus from both donors and governments on the primary level regarding improvement of access and quality. The aforementioned is suggested by Jaquette and Staudt.

In accordance with the informants’ answers regarding FAWE, we believe that attention must be addressed to the specific challenges girls face. In the Rwandan context this can include, for example, domestic work, early marriages, early pregnancy or HIV/AIDS. In the view of the conception of gender biases shown in many developing countries, meeting young women’s challenges become utterly important. Quality in education is an important tool and since the drop-out rates in Rwanda are high (61 %) we believe that the educational system can make more efforts. The most urgent aspect is increasing the possibilities for girls to stay in school and increase the motivation amongst students and parents to study at secondary level. This could be done by economic support and geographic accessibility.

Jaquette and Staudt underline civil society as an important actor and ask for independent and influential civil organizations. As we can see, FAWE Rwanda Chapter has an impact on

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140 Schwiesfurth, M p.698
141 USAID’s Office of Women in Development. pp.1
142 Jaquette, J & Staudt, K p.40
143 Smith C.S & Tudaro, P.M pp. 239
144 Sutherland-Addy, E p.24ff
145 Jaquette, J & Staudt, K p.43
the Ministry of Education as regards, for instance, matters of girls’ access to universities. The
statement from the FAWE representative shows that FAWE as an NGO and a part of the civil
society, have influence on governmental policy-making, in terms of development goals. Another arena that Jaquette and Staudt identify is the State. They suggest empowering women from the inside and they also believe that an effective state needs progressive political involvement.\(^{146}\) FAWE is a good example of empowering girls from the inside and we hope that the collaboration between FAWE and the Ministry of Education will continue in the future. FAWE’s work is mainly about changing social and cultural structures of gender inequality and this is in line with Chant, who argues that there cannot be any real changes in gender relations without changing social and cultural structures. Chant also underlines legal structures\(^ {147}\) and we believe that gender sensitive laws are necessary in order to reach gender equality in Rwanda. The Rwandan State gives the impression of being aware of this since Vision 2020 suggests key components on how to reach gender equality in civil society through adapting and modernizing gender responsive laws.

Laws can also be of importance since the market discriminates women. Jaquette and Staudt point out that, even if women have access to education or other resources, they may still be disadvantaged when they enter the labor markets.\(^ {148}\) This is also highlighted by Smith and Todaro as they describe the phenomena of gender biases. They indicate that there are structures which are not directly visible and that changes in people’s conceptions of gender relations have to be dismantled in order to solve gender biases.\(^ {149}\) One way to achieve dismantlement of structures could be, as stated by our informant at FAWE, to work with attitudes amongst people, as a suggestion, through education.

Further, a vast majority of the population is occupied in the agricultural sector and there may be a risk of brain drain if the labor market cannot supply job opportunities for the newly graduated. If the labour market cannot absorb these educated women, they could get pushed back in domestic work in the informal sector. It is obvious, therefore that access to education, is not a sufficient tool. In accordance with our theoretical framework, intersectional approaches like FAWE are very important in order to contribute to long lasting positive effects on women’s access to markets. To summarize there is a need for bigger efforts from

\(^{146}\) Jaquette, J & Staudt, K pp.44  
\(^{147}\) Chant, S p.101  
\(^{148}\) Jaquette, J & Staudt, K pp.46  
\(^{149}\) Smith C.S & Tudaro, P.M pp. 239
the government in terms of tearing down obsolete structures and cultural preconceptions on
gender relations in the society as such. The government also has to liberate itself from
conceptions of western donors and aid givers in order to develop its own goals in education,
defined and formulated in the country’s own context.

**FAWE – The Right Way for Rwanda?**

The informants’ definitions of gender were of interest especially concerning the creation of
independent definitions of gender and equality. We find it positive that FAWE Rwanda
education and their practice of gender pedagogy are aiming to contextualize the definition of
gender. They create a definition which is free from broader influences of westernized gender
relations and therefore Rwanda may have bigger opportunities to reach gender equality since
it is applicable to the uniqueness of its society. However, we cannot help disputing the
underlining of the importance of gender divisions which is shown in the replies from teachers
and pupils. What consequences do this have for the strivings towards gender equality? If girls
and boys grow up learning that they have certain responsibilities tied to them due to their sex,
it may hamper the strivings to gender equality. We would like to strengthen this argument by
referring to the figure on page 26 of traditional gender division. The different arenas do not
have equal value in the society since the public arena traditionally has higher status. However,
we should underline that we are indeed aware of the problems in our view; our viewpoints
may not be coherent with the specific context of the Rwandan society. To further elaborate
this thought; the example of the phenomenon “pressure to reproduce due to genocide” (which
is closely linked to the traditional gender division) may be important for the Rwandan society
and its inhabitants due to its specific history, even if, according to Yval-Davis, it enhances
gender division.

Sutherland-Addy states that one of FAWE’s strengths is that they construct schools in
rural/disadvantaged areas\(^{150}\), which implies that they are bringing education where it is mostly
needed. However, since the school we visited was located in the capital, one asks what girls
have the opportunity to access FAWE Girls’ school in Rwanda? Since the school has limited
resources, a big number of girls are still lagging behind. How do the society and its
institutions cope with unprivileged girls, in the context of education, and how can the society
encourage unprivileged girls to actually change their own situation? If it is not possible to do

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\(^{150}\) Sutherland-Addy, E p.50
that through education in a traditional way, due to finical difficulties in the educational sector, a strategy could be to encourage girls though letting them know what kind of rights they have, as stated in the constitution and within the law. Knowing their rights might give room for manoeuvre and to change socially based structures that do not favor girls and women in general. The latter could be done by means of campaigning and implementations of informal mass-education.

We believe that FAWE is the right way for Rwanda in terms of encouraging young girls to take place in the society and in terms of gaining self-awareness. Although it is a good thing that girls learn to express their views of society and their views of gender relations, we cannot help asking ourselves; what happens with the boys? If there is no room for boys to discuss their viewpoints and experiences of the society, the struggle towards gender equality may be hampered. Hence, gender equality includes a reform of contemporary unequal gender relations and must include both male and female identity and experiences. On this matter, our thinking is in line with the GAD – tradition (see page 26), namely; the request for deeper analysis regarding women’s and men’s roles in society. This being said, the reader should note that in some FAWE schools there are male students, although this was not the case in Rwanda.

Finally, gender exists in the teachers’ and pupils’ conceptual world. Having said this, it is of significance that teachers are gender trained. Otherwise there is a risk that gender and gender pedagogy becomes empty phrases with no substance behind the words. In our interviews we could detect those teachers (T1 and T5) who had attended to FAWE gender pedagogy training, had more tools and ideas of how to practise gender responsive pedagogy. Since both pupils and teachers underline the importance of gender pedagogy, a general awareness of the term could probably be of help as regards shaping an understanding of gender that is of relevance in the FAWE context. Both teachers and pupils emphasize the non-educational issues, for example Club Tuseme and management of sexual maturation, in their definitions of gender pedagogy. These non-curriculum activities and other gender sensitive concerns, such as the possibility for students to continue school-attendance, after pregnancy appears to both minimize the drop-out rate and increase the quality of the education. Thus, we would recommend incorporation of these tools and programs in other schools and areas in Rwanda.
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