*The transformative role of education sponsorship program among*

*female Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Uganda*

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Makerere University, June 2017

# DECLARATION

I, Xiuzi Zhang, hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and has never been submitted, either in whole or in part, to this or any other university for any academic award.

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# APPROVAL

The dissertation has been submitted with the approval of my supervisor Justus Twesigye, PhD and Firminus Mugumya, PhD

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# NON-PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the Dissertation titled 'The transformative role of education sponsorship program by Concern for the Girl Child (CGC) among female orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) in Uganda' submitted to the Erasmus Mundus Master's Program in Social Work with Families and Children:

• Has not been submitted to any other Institute/University/College

• Contains proper references and citations for other scholarly work

• Contains proper citation and references from my own prior scholarly work

• Has listed all citations in a list of references.

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Date: 12th June, 2017

Signature:

Name: Xiuzi Zhang

# ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| **CA** | **Capability Approach** |
| **CGC** | **Concern for the Girl Child** |
| **NGO** | **Non Governmental Organization** |
| **OVC** | **Orphaned and Other vulnerable Children** |
| **UBOS** | **Uganda Bureau of Statistics** |
| **UPE** | **Universal Primary Education** |
| **UPPET** | **Universal Post Primary Education and Training** |
| **UNAIDS** | **United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS** |
| **UNESCO** | **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization** |
| **UNICEF** | **United Nations Children's Emergency Fund** |
| **RIATT** | **Regional Interagency Task Team on Children** |

# ABSTRACT

The purpose of the current study was to explore the transformative role of education sponsorship program provided by Concern for the Girl Child (CGC) to female orphaned and vulnerable children in Uganda. The specific objectives of this study were (i) to explore aspects of OVC's agency that have been developed by the education sponsorship program; (ii) to evaluate how the CGC education sponsorship program has facilitated the development of OVC's agency; (iii) to assess the challenges that OVC experienced which undermined the development of their agency. Data were collected by the means of in-depth interviews with current and past Concern for the Girl Child (CGC) beneficiaries and with key informant interviews with CGC staff members as well as contact teachers in the program schools. Data analysis was facilitated by inductive coding and the Capability Approach (CA) theoretical framework. Concern for the Girl Child (CGC), is a local Non Governmental Organization (NGO) that operates in Kampala city and Luwero district, Uganda. The study findings show that the CGC education sponsorship program had developed their personal agency that manifested in increased self-esteem; the ability to explicate alternatives of choices; being responsible for their personal choices and family; and taking actions to make changes for others. CGC facilitated the development of agency among the sponsored female OVC by encouraging them to make critical choices; assigning challenging tasks to beneficiaries, allowing and welcoming beneficiaries' voices in decision making, and cultivating positive relationships with beneficiaries. However the CGC education sponsorship program experiences some challenges which undermined the full development of their agency. These findings suggest important implications for social work practice, social work education, policy development and further research.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background to the Study

Because of multiple reasons such as HIV/AIDS, poverty, food insecurity, wars, children in Africa are adversely affected in a number of ways (UNICEF, 2006). Social adversity among children is characterized by for example, being exposed to a higher risk of missing out schooling, suffering from anxiety and depression, and contracting HIV and other diseases (UNICEF, 2006). Many children become orphans due to HIV and other causes. The total number of orphaned children in the Sub- Saharan Africa reached 48.3 million at the end of 2005 and the number is still increasing (UNICEF, 2006). Compared with Asian, Latin America and the Caribbean, where 6 percent of all children were orphans, in sub- Saharan Africa, orphans constituted 12 percent of the total number of children (UNICEF, 2006). In addition, orphans are exposed to more risks and tend to be more vulnerable than fellow children.

Figure 1 Number of orphans aged 0-17, by region between the years, 1990-2010
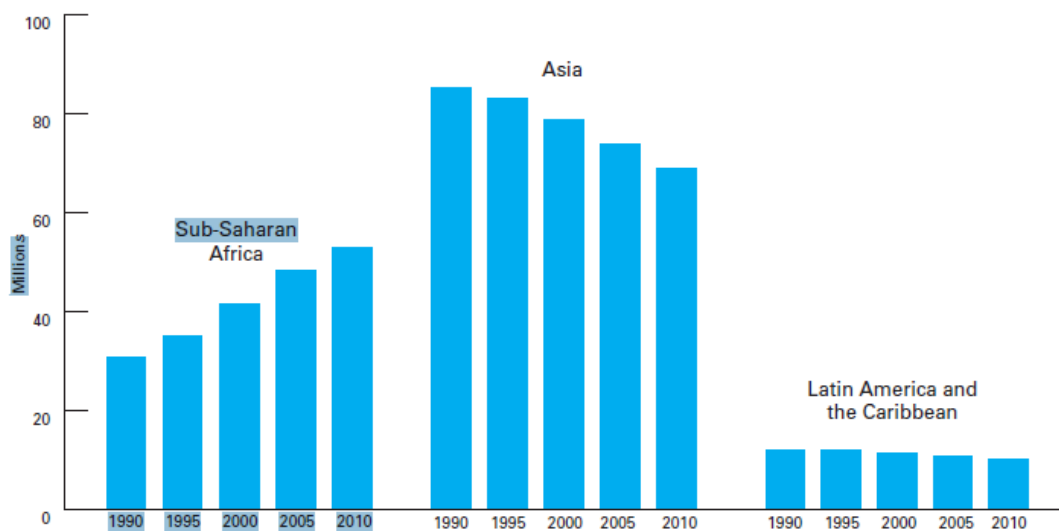


Source: UNAIDS and UNICEF estimates

In Uganda, the number of orphans reached 2.7 million in 2012 (UNICEFF, 2013). The HIV/AIDS and armed conflicts in northern Uganda left many vulnerable children, especially young girls, at a high risk of poverty and exposure to disease (Ssewamala & Ismayilova, 2008). In 2010, approximately 8 million of 17 million children in Uganda were categorized as Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) (Kalibala et al, 2010). OVC often lack basic needs for survival, growth and development (UNICEF, 2006). When children become OVC, their rights to education, health care, and adequate standard of living are undermined; especially their right to education is always sacrificed first (Heart for Uganda, 2014).

One of the most important tools for breaking the poverty situation is education (Kasente, 2003). Providing OVC opportunities to further their education increases their future life chances and opportunities (Curley et al, 2016). In Uganda, there has been great progress on getting majority of children into primary school after The Universal Primary Education (UPE) was introduced in 1997. The UPE abolished all official tuition fees which led to a great increase in enrolment (UNICEF, 2015). However, the enrolment rates for secondary school are still much lower than those of primary school due to the higher school fees and all the school- related expenses in the former category (UNICEF, 2010).

In addition, Uganda is a sub- Saharan African country where gender inequality is significant (Ministry of Finance, Uganda Government, 2005). The inequality in laws, norms, traditions and codes of conduct toward women constrain their full development of their capabilities (Elu, 2013). When women do not get the opportunities to further their education and to develop skills in order to become self-reliant, they will continue live in poverty (African Union, 2004). Compared with boys in Uganda, dropout rates among girls are much higher due to limited family resources (UNAIDS, 2006). When choosing between a boy and a girl to send to school, the former is usually given the priority over the latter in poor families (Kasente, 2003). Early marriages and early pregnancies also become the main reasons that cause girls to drop out of school

(UBOS and ICF International, 2012). Because girls usually become wives and mothers eventually, their education is not always the priority in many families (Atekyereza, 2001).

However, the significance of education is recognized in many aspects. In a basic level, education provides literacy and numeracy--- being able to read and count. Beyond the basic level, education is argued to not only help the development of individuals, but also for communities, and for the development of a nation (McMahon, 1999). At individual level, education is seen as a means to empower girl child to be actively participate in their societies (UNESO, 2016). Evidence is found to show that education affects individuals' overall life chances (Brannlund et al, 2012). Education is also recognized as a means to increase individual's political awareness and involvement (Wealiem 2002). Higher educated people are more likely to give more liberal views on political issues (Hall et al, 1996). Education extends human capital such as one's knowledge and capacities (Wielers, 1995). At a community level, education is thought to be the pathway to success for disadvantaged groups(Bobbitt-Zeher, 2007). At a national level, education is one of the primary factors for increasing development for a country (Muedini, 2010). Education can be of key importance in contributing to a wide range of positive changes, including higher income, life satisfaction and social cohesion (Healy, 2001). The development is also a key element for the success of economics (Morris, 1996). Higher education is assumed to be linked with higher production and national economic growth (Brannlund et al, 2012).

As it showed in figure 2, the Ugandan education system is similar to British education system because of colonial influence in Uganda. After Uganda gained independence in 1962, its government adopted the education system that the British colonialist had introduced in the country (Venture Uganda, 2006). The Ugandan education system consists seven years of primary school and then students are provided a range of options in the tertiary levels which also include public and private institutions depending on students' own visions, aptitude and ability to afford related fees.

Figure 2 Ugandan Education System
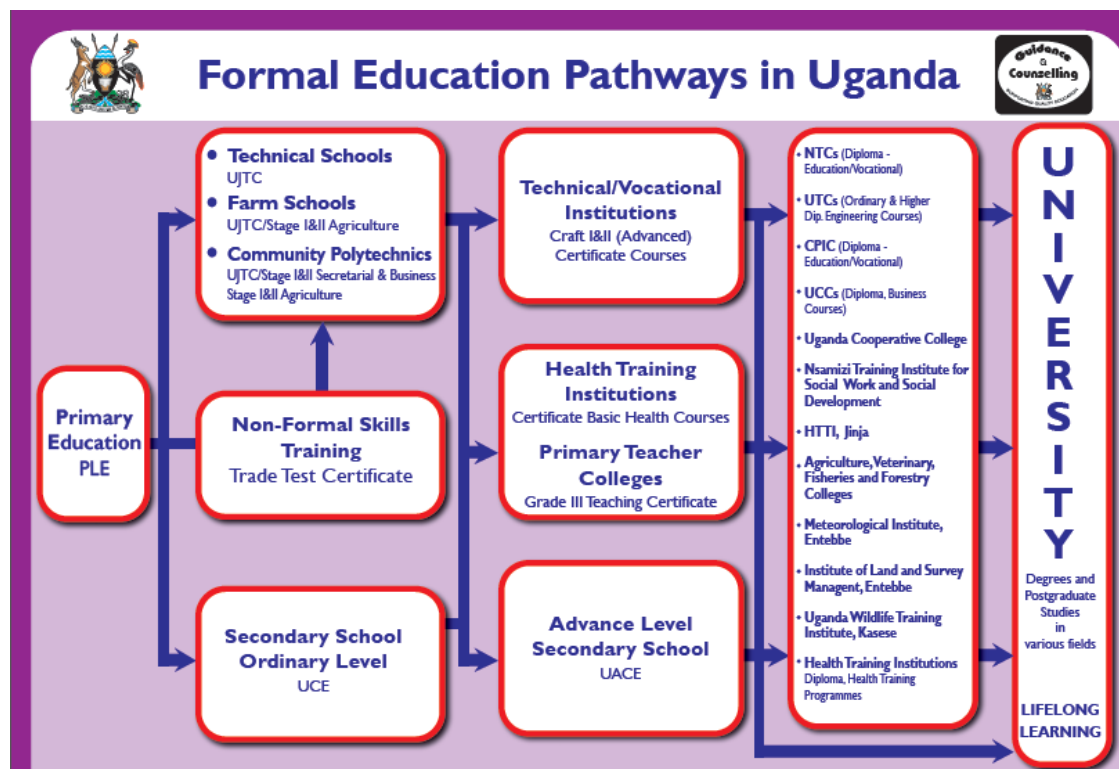
## 1.2 Problem Statement

Poverty is recognized as the main barrier to access to educational opportunities. As a consequence of poverty and related challenges, the current educational situation in sub-Saharan Africa is characterized in general by low enrolment, low attendance and low success rates, with a high drop-out rate of students at the secondary level; it is also characterized by a huge gender disparity (UNESCO, 2006).

Even though the Universal Primary Education (UPE) increased enrollment from 3.1 million pupils in 1996 to 8.4 million in 2013 (UNESCO, 2013), this success seems to be unsustainable considering that approximately 68% of children in Uganda who enroll in primary school are likely to drop out before completing seven years (UNESCO, 2013). In practice, UPE is not completely free; parents still need to meet the cost of pens, exercise books and uniforms. For many families in poor resource countries such as Uganda, the cost of educating their children is beyond their reach. For secondary

schools, the expenses and scholastic materials are far beyond most families' financial capacities. Recognizing the need for children to acquire secondary schools, the Government of Uganda introduced the Universal Post Primary Education and Training (UPPET) policy which took effect in 2007. This policy includes a small number of selected government aided secondary and private schools; only a small population can benefit from this program; meanwhile, many other eligible youth do not attend secondary school due to the associated high cost (Curley et al, 2016). In addition, considering the complexity and diversity of the needs presented by OVC, not a single agency can have the resources to meet all their needs. There is a need for collaboration between the Ugandan government, communities, NGOs and individuals to ensure that the education needs of OVC and other children are effectively met.

Concern for the Girl Child (CGC) is one of the NGOs that collaborated with the government of Uganda and provide education sponsorship programs aimed at promoting education of the girl child in Uganda. The education sponsorship is their core program (see figure 3) which targets selected female OVC in different partner Secondary and tertiary institutions; the education serviced provided range from tertiary, vocational, secondary and university levels. Except for the school fees and scholastic materials, the program also helps schools provide supplied such as safe drinking water and sanitation. Psychosocial support is also provided to the CGC sponsored OVC. Which CGC has been in operation for over 15 years and many OVC have since been supported to attain the much desired education at the secondary and tertiary levels, the educational outcomes caused by the CGC education sponsorship among the beneficiaries have not been assessed. The ways in which the CGC contributes to positive educational outcomes among the sponsored female OVC and challenges that may hinder the effectiveness of CGC sponsorship program have not been systematically examined. This research is aimed at filling the research and knowledge gap by evaluating the impact of the CGC education sponsorship program.

Figure 3: Education Sponsorship Program Outline
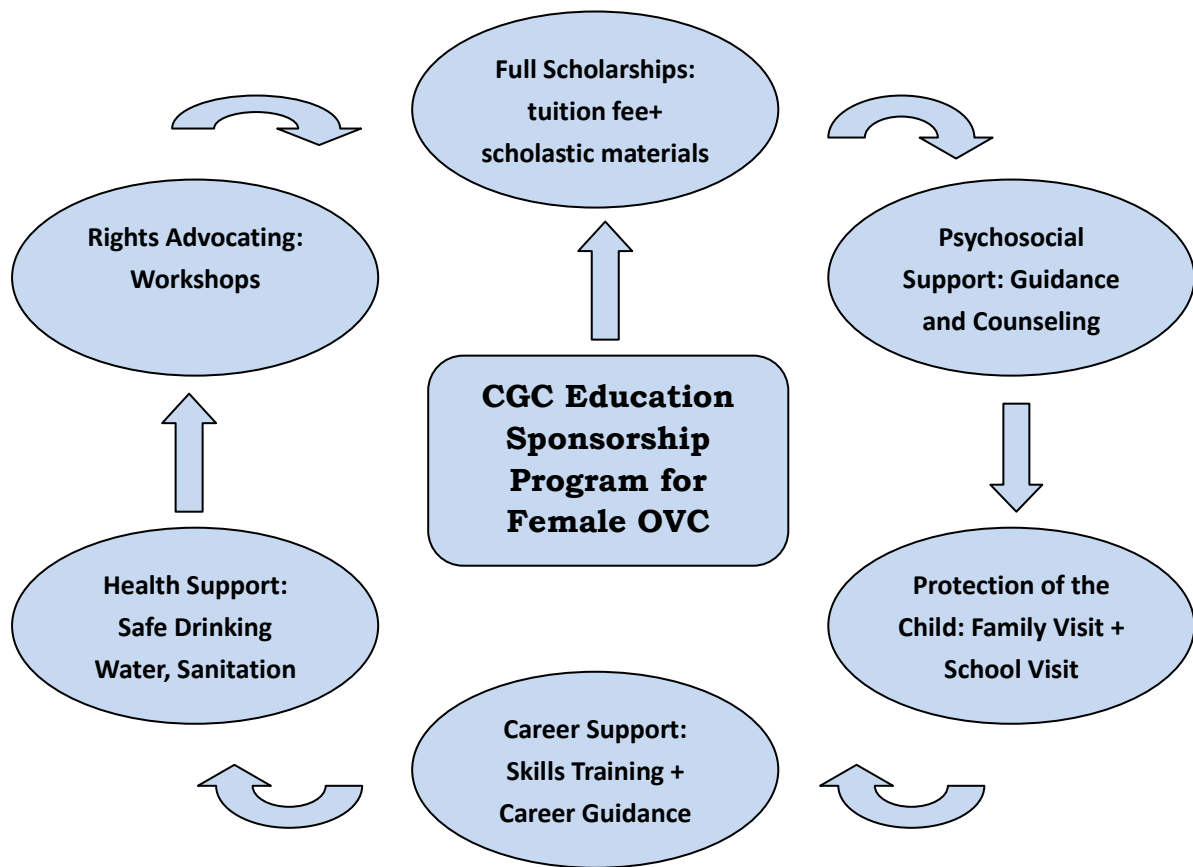


Source: Author's illustration

As we can see from the figure, education sponsorship program offers much more than just school fees. It focuses on a girl child's needs and provides services to meet the needs. Therefore, the evaluation of the education sponsorship program is based on all the services included in the program.

## 1.3 General and Specific Objectives

The general objective of this study is to evaluate the transformative role of the CGC education sponsorship program for female OVCs in Uganda. The specific objectives are:

(1) To explore the aspects of female OVC's agency that have been developed through CGC education sponsorship program.

(2) To assess how the CGC education sponsorship program has facilitated the development of OVC's agency.

(3) To discover the challenges that OVC experienced which undermine the development of their agency.

## 1.4 Research Questions

During the study, the following research questions will be examined:

(1) What aspects of agency among female OVC have been developed by the CGC education sponsorship program?

(2) How has the sponsorship education developed the female OVC's agency?

(3) What are the challenges or obstacles that female OVC are facing in the process of developing their agency?

## 1.5 Scope of the Study

This research was conducted in Concern for the Girl Child, an NGO that operates in Kampala city and Luwero district, Uganda. Four groups of participants namely (i) current beneficiaries, (ii) past beneficiaries, and (iii) staff, as well as (iv) contact teachers were selected as participants of this study. The study focused on assessing the development of the agency among beneficiaries of the CGC sponsorship program.

## 1.6 Justification and Policy Relevance

The CGC education sponsorship is a program which aims at providing educational opportunities for girls and young women in Uganda. Given the low secondary school enrollment among girls in Uganda and the weak policy towards improving enrollment rates at the national level (Curley et al, 2016), it is important to have alternative programs to give young girls opportunities for education. This study attempted to contribute positively to following areas:

(1) Social Work Practice

The evaluation of the sponsorship program through capability approach could help social workers to use a new framework for the design of the programs and also provide a different way of viewing the role of education for female OVC in Uganda. The study provides an opportunity for social workers in NGOs and governmental institutions to

reevaluate the effectiveness of the educational services provided and the extent to which they facilitate development of beneficiaries' capabilities.

(2) Social Policy Development

The study facilitates an understanding of transformative role of CGC education sponsorship for female OVC; it is thus likely to attract policy makers' attention to put more effort on reducing gender inequality in education and creating opportunities for female OVC to promote the realization of outcomes such as productivity and gender equality.

(3) Social Research

The Capability Approach has been profoundly influential in a range of disciplines such as Economics and Politics, but it remains underdeveloped in Social Work (Curley et al, 2016). This study adopted the Capability Approach as the theoretical basis for conceptualization and data analysis. The use of this framework, especially with emphasis on agency which is a core element of the Capability Approach is a new development in Social Work research.

**1.7 Theoretical Framework: Capability Approach**

This study is conceptualized based on the Capability Approach which was first proposed by the Nobel – Prize – winning Economist Amartya Sen (1999), and further developed by feminist ethicist Martha Nussbaum (Gupta et al, 2014). The Capability Approach provides a theoretical framework concerning human development and social justice that has been widely used in different disciplines such as Economics and Politics, but is still underdeveloped in Social Work (Gupta et al, 2014). The Capability Approach evaluates human development based on individuals' capabilities instead of economic wealth (Tikly & Barrett, 2009). In the context of this study, the Capability Approach offers new perspective to evaluate the role of education in improving life outcomes among female OVC. Some core concepts to the Capability Approach outlined by Gupta (2014) include (a) the resources available to a person (means), (b)

what the person is and does (functioning), (c) the individual and social contexts that affect this person's ability to transform means into functioning (conversion factors), (d)the freedom to achieve what the person values (capabilities).

One of the most essential concepts of CA is freedom. Freedom and Capability Approach cannot be separated (Walker, 2005). According to Sen (1999), the capability refers to 'freedom in the range of options a person has in deciding what life to lead.' Freedom refers to what a person is actually able to do and achieve, and the ability to choose a life that has a reason to value. The range of opportunities one can have affect the degrees of the freedom (Baxen, Nusbuga &Botha, 2014). The freedom is affected by factors such as how well the person is functioning. Examples of freedom include being well-fed, being healthy and having a sense of belonging (Sen, 1992). How much resource the person can have to be able to use and the ability of making use of the resources also contribute to the much of freedom a person can have. Nussbaum (2011) developed this idea of 'freedom' into 'combined capabilities'. She argued that personal abilities are the characteristics of a person, such as personal traits, intellectual capacities, as well as state of health. Combined capabilities are freedoms created by the combination of personal characteristics and social contexts that support these capabilities. For Sen (1999), the capabilities highly depend on one's social arrangements.

Capabilities needed for a person to fully participate in a modern democratic society may be considered fundamental (Anderson, 1999). That is to say, agency is a central element of the Capability Approach. Personal agency means the ability to govern one's life independently (Lozano et al, 2012) and the capacity to be an agent for one's and other's development (Brannlund et al, 2012). Sen (1999) argued that personal agency is a key dimension of human wellbeing. Agency and human flourishing are interlinked and also instrumental for democratic participation. Within educational research, personal agency is not a new concept. Agency was inferred in the rights for students to vote and participate in discussions (Mitra, 2004); students were recognized to have the

ability to exert personal agency (Sabri, 2011). Lozano (2012) proposed three claims to show that concept agency is especially relevant for the depicting educational outcomes. Thus (1) it is possible to educate people to make choices; (2) it is possible to enhance people's capacities to reflect critically on the environment; (3) capacities can be cultivated. People are understood to be active participants in development, rather than passive spectators (Walker, 2005). Personal agency is important for freedoms and through education opportunities, people can learn to practice our personal agency individually and in cooperation with others (Walker, 2005). Agency is also crucial for advancing human well- being and in ways that are worthwhile.

The Capability Approach recognizes inequality in social arrangements and suggests the creation of an environment that supports the development of human capacities and gives opportunities for people to be able to achieve their goals in accordance with these capacities. The Capability Approach is an influential framework for addressing poverty, inequality and human development (Clark, 2005). It focuses on the individuals' potentials and what they are able to do and to be (Babic B et al, 2010); the approach also focuses on freedoms of individuals in terms of how much freedom a person can have to lead a life he or she has reason to value. The Capability Approach is of great value in evaluating of services provided vulnerable children and families. In accordance with the above, the CGC education sponsorship recognizes the need to address gender in equality in the Ugandan context and to provide opportunities for girls to develop fully to their potentials. Education is particularly important for developing people's potential by cultivating abilities, interests and dreams; by giving girls a chance to pursue education and acquire relevant skills, values and knowledge, they are well equipped for their life journeys. It is in view of these considerations that I find the Capability Approach to be a suitable theoretical basis for this study.

# CHAPTER TWO:

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

A critical examination of literature relevant to my study objectives and theoretical ideas was conducted in order to understand what is already known and what is unknown about the area of interest to avoid "reinventing the wheel" (Bryman, 2012, p98). In this section, literature was reviewed under the following themes: i) orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC); ii) the role of education; and iii) educational support. I consider of these below.

## 2.2 Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC)

The definition of the concept orphan and other vulnerable children (OVC) always differs in different contexts such as countries, institutions and organizations due to varying considerations. According to UNICEF (2013), an orphan is a child who has lost one or both parents. In the Ugandan context, a vulnerable child is one wo is suffering or is likely to suffer any form of abuse or deprivation and is therefore in need of care and protection (The Republic of Uganda, 2011). There are some criteria such as poverty, prevalence of the infection, food insecurity, conflict situation, and family status of the child that are considered in assessing child vulnerability (RIATT, 2008). The vulnerable children can be also identified among the following categories of children: children affected by HIV, children involved in child labor, domestic workers, children who are victims of trafficking, street children, children involved in prostitution, and children who are victims of war and conflicts (UNICEF, 2008).

In the sub-Saharan African context, there are many factors that cause vulnerability among children. These include acute poverty, poor performance in the area of education, health and nutrition, conflict and post-conflict situations which affect many countries in the region and undermine child protection systems (UNICEF, 2008). The

definition of a vulnerable child is based on the indicators of basic needs. Whatever situation that deprives a child of the basic needs also causes vulnerability. Therefore, the definition of OVC cannot be standardized; it highly depends on the domestic context such as epidemiological situations, social economical environments and political influences and situations. In this study, female OVC included but were not limited to the orphaned girls and other; female children who were affected by other categories of vulnerability such as living in poor households, and being out of school, having the disability and living with HIV/AIDS (Concern for the Girl Child, 2016).

## 2.2.1 The Situation of OVC in Uganda

Being raised in the extended family context is often a common occurrence for OVC in Uganda. One in every four families in Uganda fosters at least one orphan by providing shelter, food and other basic needs (Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development, 2004). Moreover, extended families are usually overburdened and lack capacity to effectively provide adequate care. In more extreme cases, OVC sometimes are forced to live on the streets, and exposed to the risks of sexual abuse, violence, child labor and other forms of abuse (UNICEF, 2012). They usually struggle with responsibilities such as taking care of their younger siblings (Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development, 2004). Therefore, it is important to support extended families to meet their basic needs and to receive support from communities, organizations and the state for their enhanced functioning.

Formal education for OVC is always sacrificed because of the poverty and other challenges associated with the education system. This is all surprising considering that existing policies in Uganda suggest a commitment on the part of the Ugandan government for ensuring realization of the right to education of all children. in the sector of education, the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development 2004 in its National Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children Policy has noted that "Education as a means of fighting poverty and reducing vulnerability is one of the top priorities for intervention. Based on this, the Ugandan government has given considerable attention

to providing basic education, which has resulted in substantial increase in primary school enrolment, particularly for the poorest quintile and the girl- child." Article 18 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995) provides that: "the state shall promote free and compulsory basic education; the state shall take appropriate measures to afford every citizen equal opportunity to attain the highest educational standard possible; Individuals, religious bodies and other nongovernmental organizations shall be free to found and operate educational institutions if they comply with the general educational policy of the country and maintain national standards." The continued high dropout rates suggest that the above impressive policy documents are not being fully implemented. Moreover, high dropout rates are common in both primary and secondary schools (Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development, 2004). The factors that result in dropping out of school by orphans and vulnerable children include the lack of school fees and basic scholastic materials. It is in this context that CGC introduced a sponsorship program to enhance enrollment and retention of OVC in secondary schools in Kampala city and Luwero district.

## 2.2 The Role of Education

The importance of education in transforming lives has been recognized worldwide. For example, Robeyns (2006) reported different roles that education can play which range from the intrinsic to the instrumental roles. Robeyns (2006) used a modified version of Dreze and Sen's (2002) typology to explain that knowledge itself can be fascinating and can bring the person intrinsic satisfaction by possessing it. Additionally, education's instrumental roles on a personal level help people to achieve personal goals and to have a improved standards of living; it also opens up people's mind and facilitates acquisition of skills and making life choices. Moreover, the instrumental role of education on a collective level can help to promote economic growth of a nation as well as create a more tolerant society (Robeyns, 2006).

In this section, the role of education is specifically analyzed from two traditional perspectives, namely the human capital approach and the human right approach as well

as the emerging alternative perspective, namely the Capability Approach (CA). Contributions and critiques of each perspective are also discussed based on a special focus on gender issues. In the end, the role of education is explained specifically in the context of Uganda.

A great amount of literature has been accumulated on the human capital and human rights perspectives with regard to debates on the role of education (Baxen, Nusbuga & Botha, 2014). Berker (1993) first introduced the human capital theory with a reference to education. Human capital is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "the skills the labor force possesses and is regarded as a resource or asset." It considers investments in individuals and as a result, the investments increase an individual's productivity (Goldin, 2014). In this case, education is considered as an investment in order to equip individuals with skills and knowledge for the purpose of economic productivity (Robeyns, 2006). Knowledge acquired through education can help individuals to develop other abilities for labor productivity. The model of human capital makes a great point especially for people in poor areas; the role of education can give individuals opportunities to get job and make a living. The human capital perspective views each individual as a contributor to economic growth for the nation (Berker, 1993). A major weakness of human capital perspective is the fact that it suggests that education is only beneficial within the realm of economical and material dimensions. As a consequence, it disregards other human dimensions such as cultural and social development that are also similar influenced by education (Robeyns, 2006). In addition, the human capital perspective views education as an instrument for personal achievement and national economic growth. However, it does not emphasize the intrinsic importance of education for beneficiaries. The perspective simply views individuals are means and factors for economic growth of a nation. Consequently, the human capital perspective cannot for example, explain why a person may enjoy learning Italian without any purpose but simply because he or she is fascinated by how it sounds. Similarly, the perspective cannot explain why a person reads Bible only for religious belief, and not for money-related purposes. In summary, it is commonly

acknowledged that education offers more to educated people than economic benefits.

The human rights perspective views education as a right of each person which should be guaranteed to all people. The right to education for children is especially endorsed by the United Nations. Article 28 of the UNCRC states that "each state shall recognize the right of the child to education, and shall achieve this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity" (UNCRC, 1989). In the African context, Article 11 of African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990) states that "every child has the right to education, to develop his or her personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their full potential" The human rights perspective recognizes the intrinsic importance of which is not the case with human capital perspective, human rights perspective (Robeyns, 2006). The human rights perspective also has omse limitations. Especially in the African context and other developing countries, because of poverty and other social adversity, there is general incapacity to provide education to all children despite the presence of legally binding conventions and policies. As a consequence, millions of children are out of school and dropout rates are high. Therefore, considering rights-based discourses at the global level is not appropriate.

In general, the human capital and human rights perspectives make great contributions to assessing in the role and importance of providing education to the citizens despite their obvious limitations as states above.

## 2.2.1 The Role of Education from Capability Approach

The Capability Approach (CA) is believed to have so much to offer in the field of educational theory and practice (Lozano et al, 2012). From the capability approach, intrinsic value and instrumental roles of education are both recognized. The capability approach suggests that evaluation of education should be based on not only the input such as the resources but also the support to expand individuals' capabilities and freedoms. According to Sen (1999), the level of education affects the expansion of human capabilities and freedoms. Furthermore, Sen argues that: "the ability to exercise

freedom may, to some extent, be directly dependent on the education people receive, and thus the development of the educational sector may have foundational connections with the capability approach" (Sen, 2003, P.12).

Some capabilities are prerequisites for being educated. Terzi proposed seven basic capabilities for educational attainment and functioning: (1) literacy, (2) numeracy, (3) sociality and participation, (4) learning dispositions, (5) physical activities, (6) science and technology, (7) practical reason (Terzi, 2007). These prerequisites have been further developed by Walker who has proposed eight basic capabilities for education, namely: (1) practical reason, (2) educational resilience, (3) knowledge and imagination, (4) learning dispositions, (5) social relations and social networks, (6) respect, dignity and recognition, (7) emotional integrity and (8) bodily integrity (Walker, 2006). These capabilities are considered the core requirements for educational process that seeks to effective influence people's agency. There is consensus among researchers that education should serve to expand learners' sets of capabilities mentioned above. Recognizing the development of capabilities that contribute to learners' well-being should be an area, for investment by stakeholders in education. in addition, people should pay attention to the "conversion factors", that is, education should help learners to remove the obstacles that prevent them from achieving their desired goals. In this regard, Redeyns (2006) has stated that "the capability approach's most important strength is that it views persons as ends rather than as means, and is less interested in educational resources and rights in themselves than in what people do with them" (Redeyns, 2006). Because of its strengths, many researchers have adopted the capability approach as a framework for evaluating education and designing educational programs. For example, Godbole (2015) used capability approach to examine how effective opportunities or contextual capabilities influenced educational outcomes of girls in India.

## 2.2.2 The Role of Education in the Ugandan Context

The human capital perspective views education as an instrument to equip individuals with skills for them to earn a living. Yet, one of the criticisms for human capital perspective is that it does not suit developing countries such as Uganda where gender inequality is significant. As Dreze and Sen (2002) write for India, "the gender division of labor tends to reduce the perceived benefits of female education." Robeyns (2006) also argued that social rules and norms lead to the expectation of woman to be responsible for child care and unpaid household work. Additionally, women face persist discrimination in the labor market due to subtle stereotypes (Valian, 1998). Considering the social norms, cultural and unequal law based on gender in Uganda, girls are normally expected to take responsibilities at home. Consequently, within the realm of the human capital perspective, educational investment is viewed better spent on boys than girls, in order to achieve better outcomes and thus, girls' educational opportunities are reduced.

In contrast with the human capital perspective, human rights perspective view education as a right of each human being. In Uganda, there are some key interventions for meeting the educational needs of OVC. To ensure the right to education for children is realized, a number of laws and sector specific policies have been developed. For example, the government of Uganda ratified the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC) in 1990. Uganda has committed to the full realization of children's rights as enshrined in the UNCRC. Similarly, In the *Education Act* (2008) suggests that the provision of education and training to children in Uganda is a joint responsibility of the state, parents, guardians and other stakeholders; basic education should be provided and enjoyed as a right by all persons; financing of education should be via fees, grants, donations; education tax, and any other means as deemed appropriate by the Ugandan government. Despite the generally favorably policy environments aimed at protecting children's right to education, many children in Uganda do not access education because of practical barriers such as poverty. Moreover, many children drop out of school (UNICEF, 2006). While the Ugandan

sector is often evaluated based on the human rights perspective, evidence on the actual process about if the right to education is effectively granted and exercised is missing (Robeyns, 2006). It appears that once Ugandan government agrees to ensure that each child right to education is necessary, then it sees its mission as done. Because of the shortcomings of the human rights and human capital perspectives, it is important that a new integrated perspective known as the human capital approach be considered for evaluating the role of education in Uganda. It should also be noted that while the capability approach has tried to deal with evaluating social arrangements, is still a not so concrete framework when it is evaluated on specific cases. Therefore, there is a need to apply the capability approach in specific cases, in order to give a language that is well-known to policy makers and other stakeholders in the education sector.

## 2.3 Educational Support Programs

Because of the important roles that education plays in transforming an individual's life, opportunities to access the various educational resources are necessary (Godbole P, 2015). To understand the impact educational support programs have on OVC, existing literature related to evaluation of educational support programs were reviewed. Research has shown that interventions aimed at reducing cost contributed to an increase of enrollment in schools (Angrist, Bettinger & Kremer, 2006). In addition, scholarships and block grant programs made a great contribution to reducing the dropout rates in Kenya (World Bank, 2001). Even though a great amount of literature has shown that external financial support increases the attainment of schools for OVC, there is lack of focus on the impact educational support programs can actually have on OVC (Brooks, 2014). The quantitative study conducted by Brooks et al (2013) indicated that educational support programs in secondary school for OVC in Uganda and Tanzania can make a different in educational outcomes, both for boys and girls. Curley (2016) has also suggested that financial support for female OVC has the potential to negate the effects of gender inequalities and to help provide a path for young girls to move forward. Apart from the financial support, research has also shown that investment in school activities can help girls to develop their capabilities

(Addabbo, Tommaso & Naccagnan, 2015).

## 2.4 Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined the situations of OVC in Uganda that necessitated external support to facilitate especially female OVC access education. I have also considered three perspectives, namely the human capital, human rights and capability approach that are used in evaluating the role of education in transforming people's lives. The Ugandan context is also described and ways in which the three perspectives may influence decisions regarding educational investments in the educational sector. Finally, I have reviewed literature on the impact of educational programs in the context of Africa and how they impact on the lives of OVC.

# CHAPTER THREE

# METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the research design, sample selection techniques, data collection methods and data analysis method that were adopted. I also discuss ethical issues that were considered.

## 3.2 Research Design

I adopted a qualitative evaluation case study in conducting the current research. An evaluation case research is concerned with the evaluation of real-life interventions in the social world. Evaluation is an important component of refining programs and documenting impacts (Higginbotham, 2011). In this study, I evaluated if the sponsored education help to expand the female OVC's capability, specifically, their agency.

A qualitative approach was adopted in undertaking this study in order to present an understanding of a particular phenomenon within a certain context. Qualitative research is a research strategy that empathizes on words rather than quantification (Bryman, 2012, P.308). My research interest was on the girls' experiences of the education sponsorship provided by CGC, and to understand its transformative role based on the capability approach. Qualitative is beneficial in providing rich descriptions of the phenomenon, because it allows triangulation of multiple data collection methods and data sources.

## 3.3 The Study Area/ Context

Concern for the Girl Child (CGC) is a Non Government Organization which started in 2001 with the aim of increasing life opportunities of vulnerable children in Uganda, with a special focus on girls. CGC supports five main program areas which are education, child Protection, reproductive health and HIV/AIDs, livelihood, and organizational development. The mission of CGC is to protect, respect and fulfill the

rights of vulnerable children and young people, through provision of education and skills development, health, child protection, economic empowerment and psychosocial support in partnership with communities, government and civil society in Uganda. Under their sponsorship program, CGC provides full scholarship for female OVC to enable them attend secondary schools, tertiary, vocational institutions and universities. So far, many girls completed their education with degrees, diplomas and certificates in different fields ranging from Business Administration, Social Work, Entrepreneurship, Nursery teaching, to Counseling. CGC has headquarters in Kampala, Uganda.

## 3.4 Study Population

### 3.4.1 Current Beneficiaries

Current beneficiaries refer to girls who were still benefiting from the CGC for sponsorship at different education levels; they were enrolled at 4 partner secondary schools, 7 tertiary and 3 vocational institutions and universities.

### 3.4.2 Past Beneficiaries

Past beneficiaries were the girls who previously benefitted and had graduated from the CGC education sponsorship program. The girls had attained some qualifications and many of them were working in different areas; some were pursuing master degrees, and or doing personal businesses.

### 3.4.3 CGC Program Staff

These were members of the CGC staff particularly those involved in implementing the education sponsorship program.

### 3.4.4 Contact teachers

Contact teachers were teachers in the CGC partner schools who were the first line of contact for CGC in those schools.

### 3.4.5 Selection of Participants

In this study, 5 current beneficiaries at different educational levels were selected as follows: 3 participants were selected from three different Secondary Schools, and 2 participants were selected from Makerere University. I enrolled students with different profiles in order to have a better understanding of how different education institutions expanded their capabilities. I selected the participants with the assistance of social workers in CGC who are familiar with the girls and they were aware of that they could effectively speak English and willing to participate in interviews with me. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to enroll participants in my study. Past beneficiaries, those who had graduated from the education sponsorship programs were also enrolled in the study by the means of purposive and snowball sampling. In total, 3 past beneficiaries who were by the time of the study were actively supporting young girls were selected because I believed that they had interesting experiences to share. In addition, 2 members of the CGC staff who were working with the education programs were selected to have a better understanding of their views about the role of education and their values. Lastly, 2 contact teachers who were responsible for two partner secondary schools were selected for my study.

### 3.5 Data Collection

Data were collected using qualitative methods, namely, key informant interviews and in-depth interviews.

### 3.5.1 Key informant interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted with members of the CGC staff and contact teachers; the key informant interviews were intended for generating and overview of CGC and the education sponsorship programs; Members of CGC staff and contact teachers at different positions and who were closely working with the education sponsorship program were interviewed using a key informant interview guide. (see Appendix 1 for ease of reference).

### 3.5.2 In-depth Interviews

In- depth interviews were conducted with the current beneficiaries and past beneficiaries of the CGC education sponsorship program. In- depth interviews are often used when researchers are interested in obtaining detailed perspectives on social issues and people's experiences of such issues (Natasha et al, 2005). The research questions can be a basic guideline for the interview and do not have to be very structured. The format of asking questions can be very flexible and the open-ended to allow the researcher to ask more specific questions based on the answers got. The content of the in-depth interviews were focused on experiences of the current beneficiaries and past beneficiaries of the education sponsorship. The in-depth interviews guide is included as Appendix 2.

### 3.6  Data Analysis

Key formant interviews and in-depth interviews were transcribed verbatim and the transcripts were read multiple times prior to coding or categorization into themes. The transcription of data was done using the denaturalize method. Based on the concrete contents from in-depth interviews, denaturalized transcription was of great advantages for this study with focus on the informational contents and less attention to the depicting accents or involuntary vocalization. In denaturalized transcription, the substance of the transcript together with meanings and perceptions were taken into consideration carefully and strictly in order to connect closely with research questions (Oliver et al, 2005).Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. In the process of coding, inductive coding system was used. The themes that emerged were data-driven. Significant phrases pertaining to each research question were identified in the data, formulated into meaning and classified into themes.

### 3.7 Ethical Considerations

### 3.7.1 Gaining access and informed consent

The approval to access to CGC from authorities was sought before entering the study site. An introductory letter was obtained from the Department of Social Work and Social Administration at Makerere University to explain my purpose of study as well as my background. After entering the organization, a series of documents were signed such as the guidelines of organization, the rules of conducting research at CGC, and a contract in order to protect both participants and the researcher. I sought the approval of the guardians of the participants, for them to know the purpose of the study so that they could choose whether their children could or could not participate in my study. Before conducting the research, I explained my personal identity to all selected participants.

### 3.7.2 Confidentiality

The confidentiality of the information collected from the study participants was ensured. A confidentiality was well explained in the consent form (See Appendix 3) signed between each study participant and me. The participants were anonymous if needed. In addition, I ensured that the identities and personal information of participants were not shared more than with my academic supervisors. The audio records of in-depth interviews and key informant interviews were only taken place under the permission of the participants. The audio information was only used as personal research purpose and will not be publicized online or on other social media.

### 3.7.3 Well-being of participants

All the interviews were conducted among the participants on a voluntary basis. Participants were free to drop out the research at any stage. The in-depth interviews were conducted at the place of convenience for each participant. No physical nor mental injures to the participants occurred during the data collection process. Participants were told they were guaranteed under no pressure of sharing personal information and they had rights to choose what to share and not to share.

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## 3.8  Evaluation and Limitations

### 3.8.1 Reflexivity of the Study

My previous study has introduced me to Capability Approach, which I was extremely fascinated about and always wanted to apply in my own research project. My previous range of work experiences have led me to work with orphans and vulnerable children as my target groups. My belief in others' voices and their right to education became my source of knowledge. As a woman, I believe that female deserves the same opportunity to education as male, especially those who are from disadvantaged background.

### 3.8.2 Trustworthiness for the Study

*Reliability* and *validity* are the important criteria in assessing the quality of quantitative research (Bryman, 2012, p389). However, qualitative research should be assessed according to different criteria. Guba (1985) propose four criteria for the evaluation of a trustworthy qualitative research which are *credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability*. Even though new definitions have been emerging for the evaluation of qualitative research, Guba's proposals have been accepted by many (Shenton, 2004). Therefore, in this study, these four criteria were used for the assessment.

According to Guba, to ensure credibility is the key step in establishing trustworthiness. This concept deals with "how congruent are the findings with reality?" (Shenton, 6, 2004). There are several possible provisions made by researchers, one of them is "adoption of appropriate, well recognized research methods". In this study, an evaluation case study was adopted, in order to assess the impact of the CGC education sponsorship program. Case studies have been widely used for evaluation of programs. One of the strengths of case study is that it allows greater latitude in seeking program impacts (Albright, 1998). A case study is regarded to be more effective than traditional evaluation designs that use quantitative measures (Albright, 1998). Another provision is "development of early familiarity with culture of participating organizations". I was in the organization for three weeks before I actually started my data collection. During

my stay in the organization, I got information from staff about the beneficiaries and I read many official documents published by the organization. Additionally, through my daily interaction with the staff, I got familiar with their work, values and visions.

The transferability refers to "the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations" (Merriam, Albright, 39). Since this is a particular case of one organization, the findings cannot be applied perfectly to a wider population. However, I believe that within the context of Uganda and other countries with similar situations, the findings are likely to be an example for others to learn from. In order to set an example for a broader group, I demonstrated the study background in details in order for other researchers to apply in further studies.

In addressing the issue of *dependability*, some researchers have argued that if the work were repeated with same methods and participants, similar results would be obtained. In order to do so, a detailed description of methodology is provided to allow study to be repeated.

Confirmability means that the researchers' own bias should be minimized and the findings should come from the experiences of participants instead of the preferences of the researcher. In order to achieve this, data-driven analysis was conducted to show how the data led to the results.

Provisions that are made by a qualitative researcher wishing to address Guba's four criteria for trustworthiness are summarized below:

| *Quality criteria* | *Possible Provisions* |
|---|---|
| **Credibility** | Adoption of appropriate, well organized research methods |
| | Development of early familiarity with culture of participating organizations |
| | Random sampling of individuals serving as informants |
| | Triangulation via use of different methods, different types of informants |

| | and different sites |
|---|---|
| | Tactics to help ensure honesty in informants |
| | Peer scrutiny of project |
| | Description of background, qualifications and experience of the research |
| | Member checks of data collected and interpretations formed |
| | Thick description of phenomenon under scrutiny |
| | Examination of previous research to frame findings |
| **Transferability** | Provision of background data to establish context of study and detailed description of phenomenon in question to allow comparisons to be made |
| **Dependability** | Employment of "overlapping methods" |
| | In-depth methodological description to allow study to be repeated |
| **Confirmability** | Triangulation to reduce effect of investigator bias |
| | Admission of researcher's beliefs and assumptions |
| | Recognition of shortcomings in study's methods and their potential effects |
| | In- depth methodological description to allow integrity of research results to be scrutinized |
| | Use of diagrams to demonstrate "audit trail" |

### 3.8.3 The Study Limitations

There were still some limitations which could have undermined the quality of the study findings. These limitations relate to the inadequate time within which I conducted the study. I addressed this study limitation by working hard and extending my working hours beyond the usual limits.

In addition, I experienced some languages barriers when I had interviews with the girls who were in secondary schools. Even though they were able to speak English, I felt they were more comfortable speaking their native languages. Since I intended to capture their detailed experiences, however, when they talked in English, their expressions were very simple. I addressed this challenge by being patient and trying to create an easy environment for them to talk freely. I also encouraged them to share

more of their experiences with me.

Very limited time was given before the data collection process, as a result, I did not have enough time to be familiar with all the participants to gain enough trust in order for them to open up. I had some opportunities to interact with some participants for some time before I started the interviews, and I noted that this was extremely helpful for the in-depth interviews, those participants were definitely more relaxed and they understood my purpose clearer and more willing to give details. For those I started interviews at the first meeting, the process of interviews were challenging, especially for the girls who were in secondary school, I understood they may got confused by having the interview. After I realized this challenging process, I became more active contacting with potential participants before the actually interviews.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# FINDGINGS AND DISCUSSION

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of this study. The discussion and flow of sections in the chapter is largely informed by the specific objectives of the study. Thus, the chapter examined the effect of the education sponsorship program on OVC agency and the factors that seem to undermine development positive agency of the OVC as reflected among others in their own expressions. To place the discussion of the findings in context, the chapter first discusses the socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants.

## 4.2 Social-demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

The socio-demographic characteristics of participants examined included their age, level of education, school/university they attended. The results are presented in table 1.

Table1: Social-demographic characteristics of beneficiaries

| Beneficiaries | Age | School | Educational Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Dolly** | 17 | Kalinabiri Secondary School | Senior Five |
| **Reba** | 19 | Kalinabiri Secondary School | Senior Six |
| **Hope** | 17 | Mazze Secondary School | Senior Five |
| **Rebecca** | 17 | Luwero Secondary School | Senior Five |
| **Vivian** | 22 | Makerere University | Second Year |
| **Sally** | 24 | Makerere University | Third Year |
| **Joyce** | 27 | Vocational institution | Diploma |
| **Brandy** | 25 | Vocational institution | Certificate |
| **Caroline** | 26 | Vocational institution | Certificate |

Table 2: Social-demographic characteristics of key informants

| Contact Teachers | | School | Subjects |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kelly | | Kalinabiri Secondary School | Religious Teacher |
| Paul | | Mazze Secondary School | Math Teacher |
| Staff Members | | Office | Position |
| Cathy | | CGC Head Office | Executive director |
| Maggie | | CGC Head Office | Program manager |

Through the in-depth interviews, this study identified impressive expressions of the enhanced agency from all the girls that participated in the study. In addition, barriers to the development of OVC agency and strategies to promote it were also identified and are here discussed.

I identified four expressions of the enhanced agency which are *developing self-esteem; explicating alternatives of choices; being responsible for her choices and family members; taking actions to make changes for others;* four strategies presented by CGC to promote the agency of the girl child which are *assigning challenges and tasks to beneficiaries; allowing and welcoming beneficiaries' voices; cultivating positive relationships with beneficiaries and organizing inspirational activities.* Last but not least, two main barriers to the development of agency which are *social adversity* and *cultural prejudice*.

## 4.3 Expressions of the Enhanced Agency

Four expressions of the enhanced were identified in this study namely developing self-esteem, explicating alternatives of choices, being responsible for one's choices and family members and taking actions to make changes for others. These are examined further.

**4.3.1 Developing self-esteem**

Participants reported that increased self-esteem among the CGC beneficiaries was the most significant change they observed. Participants generally stated that they way they see themselves became much more positive than before. Some started to develop their self-esteem through the recognition of self-worth as a female;

For example, Sally, a 24 year-old, 3<sup>rd</sup> year University student stated:

*"It has made me realize the importance of me as a person. Because when I was a little girl, I did not understand, and I did not like being a girl. But right now, I can think for myself and I really see myself going somewhere. I feel I recognize my value and worth so much and I can see the future is bright."*

And Reba, a 19 year-old Senior Six student similarly commented on enhanced self-esteem among the CGC sponsored girls. She stated:

*"Right now I am proud of being a girl; you know there are some girls who are out there; and they are not proud of themselves; they do not love themselves……CGC gives us courage to let us know why we live, the reason why we are on this earth. "*

The quotations above suggest that the CGC sponsored girls previously considered themselves as generally disadvantaged because of their female gender. Their sense of self-worth was generally undermined in their younger ages due to the perceived inequalities based on gender in their respective communities. Such gender-based inequalities are influenced by cultural norms, traditions, practices that unduly affect the full development of the girl child in many developing countries such as Uganda. It is remarkable that perceptions of self-worth among the CGC sponsored girls had significantly changed and for the better. The positive descriptions of themselves as girls show that the opportunity for education sponsorship had led to the breaking up of barriers to recognition and development of self-worth and consequently, self-esteem among the CGC sponsored girls.

Some participants reported that CGC sponsored girls started to respect and love

themselves because of being respected by other members of the public.

For instance, Lina, a 17 year- old, Senior Six student stated:

*"Now they (community members) see me as someone who is educated; so they listen to me when I speak. If there is something to do or they want to decide on something, they include me and ask me whether it is fine and I also give my opinions about how to do it. "*

Viola, a 22 year-old and 2nd year University student similarly commented on the development of self-esteem among CGC sponsored girls. She stated:

*"I felt so big because when my uncles adopted my idea; it made me feel that I am someone special; who am I that my uncles could call me for my opinion when they had such big conflicts? They could have thought that she is just a kid, you know? How will she help anyway?"*

The above quotations suggest that the CGC sponsored girls' voices on important family and community matters were being solicited and respected. Because such girls' opinions were regarded as useful by community members, it is significant to see that the education which they received had greatly improved their reasoning and judgment capacity. Additionally, community members valued educated members from the community irrespective of their gender. Involvement of girls in decision making on critical matters such as resolving family conflict also promoted the development of their self-confidence. It also served as recognition to the girls' unique experiences, views and concerns.

Previous researchers have similarly found self-esteem to be a valuable trait for individuals. In particular, having a high level of self-esteem is important of individuals' health and well-being throughout the life span (Harter, 1999). Self-esteem is also positively correlated with students' academic performance (Baumeister et al, 2003). A great amount of literature also shows that people with higher self-esteem tend to have better interpersonal relationships, that is, they have higher quality friendships than

people with low self-esteem (Keefe & Berndt, 1996). Literature also supports for the idea that higher levels of self-esteem predict more positive outcomes in relationship-building, school performance and happiness (Baumeister et al, 2003). In summary, the benefits of self-esteem are manifested in different aspects of an individual's life and include positive life outcomes.

The relationship between self-esteem and self-agency has been examined by many researchers. For example, Tafarodi and Swann (1995;2001) reported that self-esteem is a product of beliefs regarding one's own agency. Research has revealed the role of agentic traits such as personal determination and dedication in shaping self-esteem. Emotions of pride such as being confident and feeling proud are ways of showing one's self-esteem. In the in-depth interviews, participants showed a great sense of pride when they talked about their own worth. Pride as one of the most frequently experienced positive emotions (Basch& Fisher, 1998) is closely associated with agency. Expressing pride also increased agency perceptions (Brosi et al, 2016). In summary, the positive emotion such as feeling proud expressed by CGC sponsored girls suggested increased self-esteem and manifested the developing sense of self-agency among the girls.

### 4.3.2 Explicating alternatives choices

Participants reported that CGC sponsored girls developed the ability to effectively make alternative choices in order to get closer to their preference. Their lives did not overly depend on other people and this marked the development of self-autonomy among CGC sponsored girls. The education sponsorship by CGC afforded the girls many life possibilities. For instance, the sponsored girls were able to choose favorable options when they faced the situations warranting making choices.

For example, Vivian, a 22- year old and 2nd year University student stated:
*"I remember that when I was in high school, I used to do laundry for people to get my school fees. It is better you do something and get it through than thinking of a boyfriend or marrying someone. We were told the things we could do to help ourselves*

*as alternatives to being with boys and men."*

The above quotation suggests that CGC sponsored girls regarded undertaking hard work to be more relevant to meeting personal needs than seeking material favors for the same purpose. While seeking casual employment in itself might be insufficient in addressing needs of the sponsored girls, the acquired mindset was the more important development for sustainable empowerment. Because of the acquired mindset that the sponsored girls could work to meet their needs, they were predisposed to take advantage of realistic and available resources and opportunities in the community. In other words, the girls were directing their own personal lives and becoming independent rather than seeking to become opportunistic and dependent on men for meeting personal needs. Moreover, poverty was viewed as key risk for the girls to be forced into early marriage. Because they recognized that poverty was a risk factor for early marriage and had developed a mindset of overcoming it through personal effort, e.g. Work, they were likely to gain freedom from being entangled in dependency associated with early marriage.

Sally, a 24 year- old and 3rd year University student similarly stated:

*"What I have learnt from CGC is that CGC puts you in a situation that helps you provide alternatives. For example, my mom cannot support me and I am not working, but what is the way forward?"*

She further stated:

*"Sometimes they (CGC) provide those things that girls may want from boys. They teach us life skills, in case you need things, then there are alternatives to choose from. "*

Thinking of the way forward is to make use of the resources one has and to put effort to improve situations. In order to expand the capabilities of the CGC sponsored girls by offering better options, CGC considers the resources which girls may need to seek from men and provides and in addition, imparts among the girls, life skills to enable them develop and utilize other better options for meeting needs. Because of having

alternatives to choose from, the CGC sponsored girls subsequently have freedom to choose a life they prefer to live. Moreover, the widened possibilities enable CGC sponsored girls to have control over her personal life, and then become active decision-makers.

Researchers have similarly found that the availability of alternatives often enables people to come closer to getting exactly what they want out of any situation (Markus & Schwartz, 2010). Having an alternative choice is what enables each person to pursue the outcomes that best satisfy his or her preferences within his or her resources (Markus & Schwartz, 2010). However, when choices are limited, people are deprived of chances to pursue personal needs. Having choice is viewed positively for the development of individuals because each person has his or her own abilities, attitudes and goals; it is also consistent with the idea of the "free" individual who is able to pursue achievements with regard to one's full potential (Markus & Schwartz, 2010). Having an alternative choice is essential to the development of personal agency in many ways. For example, the study presented by Barlas (2013) showed that agency was affected when the number of action alternatives was manipulated. Accordingly, a high degree of choice was linked positively with the sense of agency among young people. The sense of agency was highest when participants had the maximum number of alternatives and lowest when they had no choice. The degrees of freedom to choose an action correspond to increasing levels of personal agency. The ability of the CGC sponsored girls to direct their own lives had improved; thinking of new possibilities or other potential of situations manifested the enhanced sense of personal agency among the CGC sponsored girls (Engetrom & Virkkunen, 2007).

### 4.3.3 Being responsible for her choices and family members

Participants reported that CGC sponsored girls were becoming more responsible for meeting their personal family members' needs. Some girls stated that first became independent before considering getting married and producing children.

For example, Joyce, a 27 year-old and now a business woman stated:

*"I am looking at myself right now; I could have produced children but I have not yet*

*done so. Why I do not have children because I know I am not yet capable; I do not want any of my children to go through what I went through."*

This quotation suggests that CGC sponsored girls considered issues such as getting married and raising children as serious responsibilities they could assume only when they were ready. Giving birth to children in particular affects the mother and her children in many aspects of their lives such as socially, physically, emotionally and financially. As a consequence, Joyce thought it was important to produce children if she felt more competent to effectively provide adequate care for the children. Such care was also considered to be an improvement in the care situation she had experienced as a child. It is sensible to state that the social adversity that Jane experienced as a child motivated her to make a difference for her own children because the CGC education sponsorship has enabled her to do so.

The finding suggests that some CGC sponsored girls were capable of delaying marriage until they were ready is remarkable considering that nearly 49% of girls in Uganda are married by the age of 18; moreover, over 15% of girls in Uganda marry by the age of 15(UNICEF, 2016). In 2013, Uganda was ranked 16th among 25 countries with the highest rated of early marriages (World Vision, 2013). Limited access to education, social norms and early pregnancies often contribute to early marriages among girls in Uganda (UNICEF, 2016). Unfortunately early marriage leads to serious consequences such as dropping out of schools, lack of life skills, and the inability to provide adequate care to children. Child marriage also perpetuates and results in intergenerational poverty in some families. t is such undesirable consequences that the CGC sponsorship had contributed to prevent in many ways. CGC education sponsorship has helped to prevent its beneficiaries from early marriages and unwanted pregnancies by keeping girls in school and equip them with useful knowledge.

Similarly, Sally, a 24 year-old and a 3rd year University student commented that girls needed to delay getting in marital relationships until they were ready. She stated:

*"At this stage, I don't have much interest in boyfriend stuff. There are a lot of things that I need to fix by myself before thinking of a boyfriend. I think there are still many things that I want to do to improve myself and to be ready for marriage."*

This quotation suggests that CGC sponsored girls often developed clear life goals and set targets for measuring success towards achieving those goals. Such life goals were not only for safeguarding personal interests but also the interests of others including their anticipated personal family members such as children. The girls developed enhanced sense of taking responsibility which could benefit themselves and their close associates such as spouses. Because of such developments, the girls stood a better chance of finding responsible marriage partners than if they were irresponsible. Additionally, setting realistic life goals motivated and directed girls conduct and increased their abilities to overcome difficulties they encountered along the way.

Participants reported that CGC sponsored girls were concerned with impacting positively their own siblings.
For example, Vivian, 24 year old and 2nd year university students stated in this regard:
*"I know I have to be settled, but if I do not fight for my siblings, who is going to fight for them? I really want to see a future in them, in case we have a problem, at least we can handle it together. "*

She further stated:
*"You know I also want to impact changes on my siblings, and also my family is large; so I want to make myself as an example, and they will say, 'you see, she went to study and she can make a difference, and see how good you can be'. "*

The quotations above suggest that the CGC sponsored girls considered it strategic to build personal and family capacity to be able to address challenges that they faced. Because they were willing and capable of investing in their close relationships such as siblings, they were likely to eventually boost the wellbeing of their families. Moreover,

CGC sponsored girls served as role models of their siblings suggesting that the sponsorship program was far reaching in its impact.

Increasing access to education and school attendance for females is important not only to the health and well-being of the individuals, but also to their future children, families and communities (UNESCO, 2011). When a person is taking responsibilities, this person is therefore actively participating in his or her own role in the family. By acting in a way that is guided by such sense of responsibility, an individual makes herself into an agent (McDonald, 2010). The sense of being responsible enables a person to organize and guide one's behaviors in order to attain the desired outcomes (Katric & Luzzo, 1999). Participants expressed that CGC sponsored girls believed it was important for them to take the responsibility for their siblings, families as well as for the future generation. The sense of responsibility is actually their perceived capacity to reach their desired goals. Additionally, the responsible thought actually helps individuals to motivate themselves when they encounter difficulties and they are more likely to find the best way to achieve desired outcomes (Synder, 2002). The CGC educational sponsorship program supported its beneficiaries to take responsibility through providing resources to expand their capabilities.

### 4.3.4 Taking actions to make changes for others

Participants reported that CGC sponsored girls were very grateful for the education sponsorship opportunity they received and also wished to help other people.

For example, Brandy, 27years old stated that:

*"I want to have my own organization to help people because whenever I walk alone, you see there are people who really live in miserable life. That always got me think back, maybe if I was not helped, I could be like them. Some people are living in such a life just because they are really not getting help in life, if I can have my own organization, then at least I will be able to help those people."*

Dolly, a 17 year-old Senior Five student also made a similar statement:

*"CGC has inspired us and encouraged us a lot. As a girl, when you see what has been done in your life, you also wish that it is done to other girls, you know, for them to be happy."*

As it can be seen from the above quotations, because of the support CGC sponsored girls have got from CGC, they empathized with fellow girls they considered as experiencing similar predicaments as they did before they acquired sponsorship. Because of comparisons that they made with non sponsored girls, the CGC sponsored girls felt grateful for the help they had received from CGC. CGC has inspired its beneficiaries to consider helping disadvantaged population. CGC sponsored girls developed their compassion towards unprivileged groups such as vulnerable girls which they consider who may need more support. It is no wonder that the sponsored girls wished to help fellow girls who they considered to be needy and deserving of assistance.

Furthermore, participants reported that they developed their compassions and were willing to take actions to change other's lives.

For instance, Caroline, a 26 year-old student and now pursuing a master degree stated that:

*"Whenever I look at these children, I said to myself if I can find a way to get helped then I can help them. I want an organization where children can sleep there, live there, to give some resources to the families where they come from, a place where there will be a health center, a school."*

And Hope, a 17 year old Senior Five student also commented:

*"You feel like you study and you get a nice job, you change let me say your background. If you have siblings, you can also pay for their school fees. Even you can also do the same things that CGC did for us. Open up an organization and help more girls."*

As these quotations indicate, Caroline and Hope both expressed their plan regarding to

helping other people. Especially Caroline, she has recognized the benefits she received and therefore developed an idea about building an organization to provide resources for needy children. She has identified several needs that vulnerable children may have such as shelter, health care and educational opportunities.

Previous research has shown that people who received help were usually inclined to helping other people.(Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006). Helping other people manifests a sense of gratitude experienced by those who previously received help (Grant, 2010). Gratitude is important for both personal and relational well-being. People who experience more gratitude are more satisfied with life, less likely to experience depression. The CGC sponsored girls wish to take actions to make changes for others which indicate their increased ability and confidence. They see themselves as someone who will be able to support others, influence other's lives. This sense of responsibility is essential for the girls to feel in control of their own life and to believe in their capacity to influence not only their own life but other people's lives.

## 4.4 Strategies to Promote the Agency

Participants reported that CGC has offered various activities to contribute the development of female OVC. Through the understanding of CGC's activities, four strategies were identified to promote the agency of female OVC. The strategies were: i). assigning challenges and tasks to beneficiaries; ii) allowing and welcoming beneficiaries' voices; iii) cultivating positive relationships with beneficiaries; iv) organizing inspirational activities.

### 4.4.1 Assigning challenges and tasks to beneficiaries

Some participants reported that they were often given tasks and challenges from CGC which added to their confidence level.

For instance, Rebecca, a 17 year-old Senior Five student stated that:

*"At first place they take us for workshops, at the workshops they can make you speak, talk and assign you something then you do it, and when you do it, there is credit. It means someone who cares you, someone who trusts you. In which it was not that case. "*

Hope, 17 year-old student also made a similar statement:

*"You know we used to be in camps, CGC used to select you and give you a task and trust you. I called that pride. What can I say, change in my life. Because who would have thought about me"*

These quotas suggest that when these girls were provided with tasks and real challenges from CGC, for example, they were given chance to speak in public, they were actively engaged in a meaningful activity which added value to their sense of achievement. They were offered a sense of being useful in something bigger than themselves.   This contributed to their self-esteem and therefore enhanced their agency. The CGC sponsored girls started recognizing their own worth and became more competent and confidence when face challenges. The challenges and tasks enable them to feel capable when they have a sense of power, competency and control over their lives, believe that they can handle challenges and that they are able to make contribution to their environment. When they feel pride in their accomplishment, their self-esteem and sense of agency will increase.

One of the key element of Sen's (1999) capability approach is the conversion factor which refers to the individual and social context that affect this person's ability to transform resources into capabilities. The orphaned and vulnerable girls grow up in an environment where being a girl is less valued than being a boy. Girls are told by their parents or wider community that there is no need for them to pursue education because education for girls is not valued to contribute to household work that girls are supposed to be responsible for (Sen capability appraoch). Consequently, girls are not encouraged to participate in real tasks outside household space and they are not challenged to discover their abilities. This kind of social customs can significantly shrink girls' capabilities; female OVC may then lose self-confidence and fail to build their self-esteem. Assigning CGC sponsored girls with tasks and challenges can not only empower them to discover

their worth, but also help to build their confidence when they discover that they are able to complete a task and this can lead to the development of personal agency and expansions of their capabilities.

### 4.4.2 Allowing and welcoming beneficiaries' voice

Participants reported that CGC has put a great effort on creating an environment where its beneficiaries can feel free and confident to express their views.

For instance, Cathy, the executive director of CGC stated that:

"We provide psycho-social support, in terms of counseling, sometimes we simply listen to them, we allow them to walk in our office any time and share their stories and their issues."

And the program manager of CGC Maggy also commented on the same issue:

"We want them to open up, to be our friends. When they come, we make sure that we create an environment where they can freely express themselves."

The quotations indicate that CGC sponsored girls' voices were welcomed by CGC and the staff members were willing to give their ears to beneficiaries for them to express their views, concerns or simply share their stories.CGC sponsored girls were seen as friends and treated as they are valued. CGC put effort to promote child-participation in decisions that are relevant to sponsored girls. Child- participation was one of the essential rights that identified by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which specifically acknowledged that children have the right to participate in all matters that affect their lives (art.12). Even though it is quite challenging when put this article into practice, however, we can still see the effort put by CGC to fulfill the girls' rights. The will to listen and welcome the voice of the child is promoting the child's confidence and help her to recognize her views matter then further enhance her agency.

When children are able to not only express an opinion or a choice, but have that

opinion or choice honored and have an impact, they see themselves as someone whose views and opinions matter. Capability approach recognized that fostering capabilities can be done through a wide range of issues such as facilitating participation in decision-making process and giving voices (Robeyns, 2006). Research has shown that speaking up has changed how children feel about themselves and their confidence has improved and become more competent through speaking up for themselves (Teitelbaum, 2010). The opportunities for female OVC to be heard by adults are very valuable in terms of the confidence that added to the female OVC.

### 4.4.3 Cultivating positive relationships with beneficiaries

Participants reported that CGC treated it beneficiaries with respect and love. Positive relationships were observed between female OVC and CGC.

For instance, Joyce, 27 years old stated that:

*"When CGC received me, they accepted me and they made me feel like someone which I didn't receive before. I was respected and loved. They gave me the courage that you can do it, you can do it! It helped me to discover what is in me which was not discovered before."*

The quotation above suggests that the acceptance, respect and love received by Joyce enable her to have courage to achieve her goals. She felt valued and important when received the care and the positive interactions encourage the girl to flourish. Imagine the environment where a vulnerable girl grows up, since they have been through tough situations, they doubted their worth and even grew hatred towards other people. However, when they received by CGC, they felt touched when they first time being listened and respected. This gives these girls courage to discover their abilities and worth within themselves.

Many CGC sponsored girl participants reported that the way they viewed CGC as their family and home instead of as an organization.

For instance, Joyce stated that:

*"CGC is like a home. Whenever you go to CGC, you know CGC is yours. For me, CGC became a home for me. CGC became a mother for me because whenever I go there, I will be welcome, it always gives me courage because I know that there is someone who cares. "*

She further added:

*"Even today, I don't have any opportunity to call anyone father. I don't have that someone can call me daughter. We have people in CGC who call us daughters. That added something on my confidence."*


Brandy also made a similar comment：

*"To me now CGC is not an organization, it is a family because it has been there a lot in my life. You always get advice from them; if you have a problem; you can go and talk to them; they can give you advice on what to do. It is a family. Whenever I think of something, I always think of them first. "*


From these quotations, we can see these girls are treated as daughters rather than just beneficiaries. This suggests that they are being educated within a supportive environment in which they feel a strong sense of belonging.


In addition, CGC also help to connect the beneficiaries with each other so they gain friendship to support each other:


For instance, Sally, 24 year old University Student stated:

*"CGC used to counsel us and make us feel like we are one. What CGC does is to bring us together, like make us like a family. That is also the way I treated the new girls who just came to the program."*


She further stated:

*"Through what I had with CGC, they come together, and they make us unite, it is a girl*

*thing, you are troubled but you always remember what you used to talk about in camps and it helps you to move forward."*

The quotations above suggest that CGC has put effort to build a network among its beneficiaries. CGC recognized that net work resources provided support for female OVC especially when they came from a disadvantaged background, network resources greatly contribute to individuals' well-being. Research has showed that high quality relationships contribute to mental and physical well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). A growing body of research comes to a point that positive relationships help to develop resilience (Bari Walsh, 2015). "Resilience depends on supportive, responsive relationships and mastering a set of capabilities that can help us respond and adapt to adversity in healthy ways," says Shonkoff, director of the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard. Relationships are the foundation to any other further cooperation. Thus, good relationships with adults are essential for female orphaned and vulnerable children.

CGC wants to develop children's potential by cultivating their abilities, interests and dreams. This goal implemented through the positive interactions CGC has with the beneficiaries. CGC is a place where the girls can find someone who is always willing to create a relationship, listen and communicate with them. Furthermore, the capabilities in each person are also constructed by interaction between individual and their environment, specifically their social relationship. Therefore, by forming relationship with these orphaned and vulnerable girls, the organization has awakened capabilities and resilience within each child.

According to Gupta et al, "a person's capabilities are significantly shaped by their environmental and social circumstances – both past and present" (Gupta et al, 2014). By emphasizing the positive factors of children in current situations that can help the children prepare for a more stable future. Particularly, acquiring knowledge and pursuing education are seen as the most ideal ways.

**4.4.4 Organizing inspirational activities**

Participants reported that CGC exposed its beneficiaries to various inspirational activities.

For instance, Dolly, a 17 year-old Senior Five student stated that:

*"CGC used to bring us speakers, those people who have made it. They also share part of their stories. So if someone share part of his story and you see he is powerful, what do you expect, you also get encouraged and think yeah I am going to fight. "*

Rebecca, a 17 year-old Senior Five student stated that:

*"In the camps, they also bring role models to talk to us, to inspire us. So that motivates me, because when you hear some of their stories, you want to be like them, so when they talk to you, you would listen and ask questions, because you want to be like them. "*

The quotations suggest that successful speakers and role models inspired the sponsored girls through sharing stories. The experiences roles models have been through awakened sponsored girls to new possibilities in life and helped to push them to their limits. Inspirations transformed the way CGC sponsored girls perceived their capabilities. CGC exposed its beneficiaries to various inspirations which provided an opportunity for female OVC to view themselves differently. When female OVC are motivates and inspired, they are likely to work harder and perform better. The expectations sponsored girls have for themselves increased which motivated them to become more competent.

The executive director of CGC stated that:

*"We started to do some small activities to become light bulbs for the girls, and they accumulated, they are able to open the girls' mind. Sponsored girls see themselves in a place different than before….During the camp, the girls are exposed to a variety of people that are gifted with so many skills… in the past, we were able to teach them soap making, art and craft, hairdressing, fashion and design. We hope to expose them*

*to poets, to artists, to sport athletes who made it to a career, to comedians, can you imagine, the comedians who are richer than people who do banking. "*

This quotation suggests that various inspirational activities organized by CGC not only equipped sponsored girls with new skills, but also opened their mind. It was not easy for sponsored girls to encounter with people from different professions with different skills on a daily basis; therefore, it was important to expose them to varieties in order to expand their freedoms of choosing a life they prefer.

Research has shown many benefits when people are inspired. Inspired people are more open to new experiences, and more intrinsically motivated to master their work (Kaufman, 2010). Role models provide learning and inspiration which helps individuals to define themselves, according to Gibson (2003). Individuals choose their role models and the qualities which they wish to emulate. Individuals admire the qualities of the role model and learn from the role model. They are provided with opportunities and skills to transform or grow cognitively, emotionally, and socially.

**4.5 Barriers to the Development of Agency among CGC sponsored girls**

**4.5.1 Introduction**

The results of this study indicate that social adversity and cultural prejudice constitute the main barriers to the development of personal agency by CGC sponsored girls. This section examined how various social adversities and cultural prejudice have been found to affect opportunities for CGC girls to develop and expand their agency.

**4.5.2 Social Adversity**

Participants reported that social adversity such as poverty; risks of early marriages and unwanted pregnancies; living conditions are the barriers to their development of agency.

For instance, Reba, 17year- old and a secondary school student stated that:

*"If you do not have something that keeps you busy like here in our country, these are*

*things that may happen to you. You either get pregnant, or you go to marry at an early age. You get distracted when you don't have anything that keeps you busy.*"

Girls could marry prematurely when they were out of school and also lacked meaningful work at home. Their parents could marry such girls off to get some income and wealth in general. Keeping in school in contrast prevented girls from marry prematurely.

The contact teacher Kelly also stated that:

*"Some girls stay with very tough parents and relatives. The situation at home is very tough. Then the conditions are bad, lack of food and they do not even have safe drinking water. Someone comes in the morning without having breakfast because at home they cannot afford. Then moving long journeys, the long distance from school is one of the challenges.*"

The above quotation suggests that CGC sponsored girls often did not meet basic needs such as feeding and housing. As they were often desperately needy, they were unlikely to concentrate on their studies at school.

Brandy, 25 year-old and now doing business explained the damage to the mind of a girl child who is in a vulnerable situation.

*"Because if you are growing in an environment where you are surrounded by people who do not think the way you think or who only think within their box, children keep on seeing that. They cannot think more than that.*"

Adversity affects multiple aspects of development in children. When children are exposed to a certain kind of mindset, he or she will then takes it as a norm and develop the same mindset. Limited possibilities and lack of exposures will narrow a child's mind. This can reduce a child's confidence and then fail to enhance the personal agency.

Adversity has been defined as 'the experience of life events and circumstances which may combine to threaten or challenge healthy development' (Daniel et al, 1999). It refers to negative life experiences or risks such as disasters, wars, poverty, domestic violence, abuse and neglect. There is a substantial body of research on the harm of these threats can have on children's development. For instance, poverty makes parenting harder and children are more likely to be exposed to abuse and care deficits (Gupta et al, 2016). Children's developmental pathways may be affected by a range of circumstances. Children in conditions of economic hardship face a wide array of dangers and simultaneously lower access to supportive environments (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). The effects of material and psychosocial hardships on children's development are often severe (Blair & Raver , 2012).

From Capability Approach, functioning is fundamental for further expansions. Walker (2006) argued that social adversity significantly prevented female learners from achieving desired functioning. Capability Approach not only requires to provide resources and ensure the functioning of individuals, but also to remove the obstacles to the development. The obstacles may originate from children's individual characteristics or from their social, cultural context (Tikly& Barrett, 2011). Various social adversities are the obstacles and barriers for female OVC to achieve functioning and expand capabilities. For instance, think about a girl comes to school without breakfast and she is tired because of overburdened housework and she is anxious because she did not have time to finish her homework. The freedom to concentrate in class was deprived. She cannot achieve desired functioning and therefore fail to develop sense of agency.

### 4.5.3 Cultural prejudice

Participants reported that some CGC sponsored girls in secondary school did not express their opinions in contexts such as their homes because they were afraid to do so. For example, the executive director of CGC reported that cultural prejudice and

norms towards children especially girl child actually constrained their participation on family issues and their voices were not easily heard. They are not treated as competent individuals who were capable of giving views and opinions.

She further stated:

*"In terms of encouraging them to make decisions, I think it is still a touching area, and it has to do with the culture. The culture requires that the children should not speak to the mothers or to the fathers."*


The cultural pressure that CGC sponsored girls experienced limited their social and emotional development. When girls were afraid to give opinions on issues that concerned them, they were thus unable to influence how such issues were addressed. They were also overly dependent on their significant others for addressing basic issues of concern. The cultural prejudice has limited the girl child's development and also reduced her confidence. When she is afraid to give opinions and issued related to her then her voice is not heard. Her life will depend on other people to decide. Even she has something that she feels more desirable, her preferences cannot be achieved. Therefore, this cultural prejudice limited the development of the child's agency. Since she cannot make her own decisions and express her preference, she will not be able to direct her life. Especially, when female children have constraints such as being forced to do excessive amounts of domestic labor or to care for siblings and they are told by their parents that there is no need for them to go to school, either because they will be married at a young age or because education for girls is not values. Social norms and cultural prejudice shrink girls' capabilities and freedom of girls are reduced; hence their sense of agency is undermined.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, conclusion, and implications for (i) social work practice; (ii) social work education; (iii) policy development; and (iv) further research.

## 5.2 Summary of the Findings

The present study provides additional understanding of the transformative role of education sponsorship for female OVC in the Ugandan context. The CGC education sponsorship program provides an opportunity for needy orphaned and vulnerable girls to obtain access to education and scholastic materials. With a number of other activities such as health support services, career guidance, psychosocial support, child protection services etc., CGC sponsored girls have benefited from the program in various ways. The findings are summarized as follows.

From the analysis of data, the findings are summarized below.

Through discovering the development of personal agency, the important role the education sponsorship program has played in transforming a vulnerable girl child's life was observed. The findings from this study reveal that beneficiaries' agency was enhanced through different experiences and it emerged in various aspects. Self-worth recognition was fostered through education, care, love, support the beneficiaries had received from multiple services provided by CGC. Respect and recognition from family, community and society also helped to transform beneficiaries' attitudes regarding how they viewed themselves. CGC sponsored girls therefore developed their sense of self-esteem. Additionally, beneficiaries expressed that they were able to consider alternatives choices concerning circumstances and situations they faced.

Participants reported that the resources and support given by CGC provided options for beneficiaries to choose from and in turn offered freedom for making choices that were closer to their preferences. Moreover, beneficiaries indicated that they wanted to offer support to their younger siblings for them to get education and become independent. The sense of responsibility was enhanced through the expanded capabilities. Many beneficiaries have expressed the gratitude towards the sponsorship opportunity and therefore they also want to do something to make a difference for others' lives.

Several strategies to expand CGC sponsored girls' capabilities and to enhance personal agency of beneficiaries were observed during the data collection. Through in-depth interviews with beneficiaries and key informant interviews with staff and contact teachers. Four main strategies used by CGC were identified. Firstly, participants generally reported that in an annual camp each year where CGC gathered all the current and past beneficiaries, CGC assigned challenges and tasks to beneficiaries for them to complete. CGC sponsored girls explained that they felt trusted and this strongly strengthened their confidence within themselves. Secondly, CGC allowed and welcomed beneficiaries' voices and staff members created an environment in the offices where girls were welcomed to express their views and opinions; they were encouraged to give suggestions about the programs and sometimes they were simply listened about their experiences and stories. This has strengthened CGC sponsored girls' sense of self-autonomy and independence. Consequently, beneficiaries developed the ability to give opinions and speak up for themselves. Thirdly, I observed a close relationship and a strong connection between beneficiaries and staff members from CGC. The interactions between the girls and staff were very positive and they both showed a strong willingness in communication. CGC was seen as a family instead as an organization by its beneficiaries. Therefore, cultivating positive relationships was counted as another strategy for promoting agency among the CGC sponsored girls. At last, CGC put effort to expose its beneficiaries to various inspirational activities and role models. Beneficiaries expressed that these activities were very inspiring and helpful for them to direct their own life in a way as they wish.

Participants reported that CGC sponsored girls experienced various barriers that undermined the development of personal agency. Such challenges were considered as, for instance, bad living conditions, domestic abuse, overburdened household work, long distance to school, risks of forced early marriages and unwanted pregnancies. According to the data, various social adversities affect female OVC's functioning and became the obstacles to the development of personal agency. In addition to various social adversities, cultural prejudice based on gender inequality also constrained the development of a girl child to her full potential.

## 5.3 Conclusion

It is evident that CGC sponsored girls have developed their sense of agency through the services and strategies used in the education sponsorship program. Therefore, I would argue that the education sponsorship program by CGC made considerable headway in trying to narrow the gender inequality gap in education. Addition to that, the strategies CGC used were apparently very supportive to the development of sponsored girls' agency. This provides support and implications for the implementation of broader education sponsorship program in other developing region where gender inequality is significant. However, to ensure the success of the education sponsorship program, barriers to the development of the female OVC should be focused for further improvements.

## 5.4 Implications of the Study

The findings from the study suggest important implications for following aspects: i) social work practice; ii) social work education; iii) policy development and iv) further research.

### 5.4.1 Implications for Social Work Practice

First and foremost, there is a need of creating opportunities for meaningful female OVC involvement. The findings of this study have suggested that opportunities create resources and female OVC are in great need of the resources. For instance, various activities aimed at teaching life skills; workshops aimed at prevention of HIV/AIDS or

other diseases; conferences aimed at advocating for children's rights should be organized to equip female OVC with knowledge to choose a life they prefer. Second, in order to provide a more equal environment for female OVC to flourish, social workers should also work with parents, schools and communities to give knowledge for other people to understand the benefits of supporting a girl child to develop. Last but not least, social workers should put effort cultivating positive relationships with female OVC for them to feel trusted and worthy which enables them to develop to their full potential.

### 5.4.2 Implications for Social Work Education

In order to meet the needs of female OVC requires social work educators in Uganda to have a clear understanding of the current situations and experiences of orphaned and vulnerable children in this country. International researchers have noted that many social work graduates feel unprepared for work with vulnerable children due to the complexity and unfamiliar with their real needs (Clare & Mevik, 2008). Social work as a practiced-based profession (IFSW/IASSW, 2014) requires a combination of theoretical and practical knowledge. Thus it is essential social work students are given opportunities to do practical work in between of their studies. In field learning process, students are able to build their values, practice their skills, improve their knowledge and become competent social workers with awareness of ethical considerations.

### 5.4.3 Implications for Policy Development

Looking at the transformative role of education for an orphaned or vulnerable girl child can give some insights to education policy designers and reformers in Uganda to come up with an education system that is more affordable and could address the needs of the girls in Uganda. Girls should be given more opportunities; for instance, governments should offer more scholarship opportunities that target on female orphaned and vulnerable children; education policy makers should advocate for the rights of female OVC in order to create an equal environment for girl child to develop to their full potential. In addition, education should come in as an instrument to enhance people's capabilities. People have individual aspirations about what they want to achieve in

their lives. The system should support and provide education with knowledge and certain skills to assist its people to achieve their goals. Moreover, it is important to respect the diversity and to offer a system that could promote the diversity. Only by recognizing the diversity within each human being can a nation help its people to flourish. So it is important to have a broader curriculum for students and expose them to more opportunities to open their minds.

### 5.4.4 Implications for further research

There are definitely many limitations due to the short time of the research process. However, despite the limitations, this study offers promising new perspectives for future research. First of all, longitudinal research tracking beneficiaries' views, study performance, enhanced agency, attainment of competencies and other outcomes related to education sponsorship program can be beneficial. And beneficiaries' perceptions of the program design and their experiences could be examined more specifically. Therefore, the whole development of a vulnerable girl child will be captured and status of each stage can be identified. The transformative process will be clearly presented. In addition, a broader sample can be selected including guardians of the children, community leaders, principles of schools and policy makers could add a crucial perspective to this topic. Moreover, comparative studies could make comparison among situations in different African countries, or even within a global context, in order to get some references and learn from each other. Last but not least, more research is needed under the framework of capability approach to determine the best fit of the program features to expand beneficiaries' capabilities.

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# Appendix 1

## Key Informative Interview Guide
## (CGC Staff & Contact Teachers)

**Preparation for the interview**

1. Explain the purpose of the interview

2. Address issues of confidentiality

3. Explain the format of the interview

4. Indicate how long the interview may usually take

5. Ask them if they have any questions

**Conducting Interview**

6. Check if the tape recorder is working

7. Ask questions

**Interview Questions:**

(a) What is your position at CGC?

(b) What are your responsibilities?

(c) Tell me about the CGC education sponsorship program?

(d) What has changed among the CGC sponsored girls through the education program?

(e) How do you see the role of education in a girl's life? Especially those who are in a more vulnerable situation?

(f) What has changed most in terms of their capabilities?

(g) What are the activities that CGC do to promote girl's participation in family issues? Does CGC do family visits? For which group of girls? How often? Does CGC evaluate its visits?

(h) In terms of career guidance, what activities are provided to these girls?

(i) Does CGC respect the girls' choices about their professions and future career? How does CGC support their choices? Do you think CGC is able to support their choices?

(j) As early marriage and unwanted pregnancy are increasing in this country, what does CGC do in order to prevent the girls from early marriage and unwanted pregnancy?

(k) How does CGC evaluate itself in terms of these strategies and activities?

(l) What are the challenges or difficulties for CGC at this moment?

(m) The needs of different girls are different? Do you think CGC is able to meet different needs?

**After the interview**

8. Verify if the tape recorder worked throughout the interview
9. Write down observations

<p style="text-align: center;">**Appendix 2**</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">**In-depth Interview Guide**</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">**(Girl participating in the program)**</p>

**Preparation for the interview**

1.    Explain the purpose of the interview

      Personal research & Master thesis & my major

2.    Address issues of confidentiality

      Only personal use, will not publish online or any other social media,

3.    Explain the format of the interview

      In-depth interview, I will lead some questions, feel free to give answers, examples, stories, opinions, comments. If you have any difficulty understand the questions, feel free to ask me again, I will try to explain in different ways.

4.    Indicate how long the interview may usually take

      1 hour or more

5.    Ask them if they have any questions


**Conducting Interview**

6.    Check if the tape recorder is working

7.    Ask questions


**Interview Questions:**

**Background Questions:**

    (a)Please tell me more about yourself? Your name, education level, major, relationship with CGC

    (b)Can you tell me about your family background?

    (c)How did you feel when you first knew you were selected for sponsorship?


**Research Q1: What capabilities of female OVC have been developed through CGC education sponsorship program?**

**Participation in family issues:**

(d)What has changed the most being selected as a sponsored student by CGC?

(e)What has changed in terms of your capabilities?


**Research Q2: How has the sponsorship education expanded (or restricted) the female OVC's capabilities (self- agency)?**

(f) How would you be like if you were not selected for sponsorship?

(g)How do you find the sponsorship program?

(h)How do people view you as a CGC sponsored girl? What informs such people's perception of you?

(i)Do you think your voice has been raised after you are in the program? How has it happened?

(j)What do you want to do in the future? Do you think you will be able to achieve what you want?


**Research Q3: What are the challenges or obstacles the female OVC are facing in the process of developing their capabilities?**

(k)What do you find difficult to be at school?

(l)How do you deal with the difficulties?

(m)Who do you usually turn to find help when you have difficulties?

(n) If CGC could do more to help your situation, what do you expect them to do for you?

(O)Do you have any suggestions for CGC to improve the quality of education sponsorship program?


**After the interview**

8. Verify if the tape recorder worked throughout the interview

9. Write down observations

**Appendix 3**

**Consent Form**



Dear Sir/ Madam,

You are being invited to participate in a Erasmus Mundus Master thesis research project about *The transformative role of education sponsorship program by CGC for female orphans and vulnerable children in Uganda.* You have been chosen as the potential participate since you are or you were beneficiaries (contact teachers, staff members). You would be asked some questions related to your experiences with CGC education sponsorship program. The information below is to inform you the idea about this research project. Please read it carefully and feel free to ask me questions if there is anything not clear. Once you agree to participate in this research process, please sign at the end of the form.

**1. Research Purpose**

The purpose of the current study was to qualitatively explore the transformative role of education sponsorship program provided by Concern for the Girl Child (CGC) for female orphaned and vulnerable children in Uganda. Through interviews with past and current beneficiaries, contact teachers and staff members, to understand the experiences of this program from different perspectives. Therefore, further identified the importance of education for female OVC and indicate their needs for the recommendations of the program.

## 2. Research procedures

Once you agree to be part of this research, you would be expected to engage into an in-depth interview will last around 60 minutes. This interview will take at a place that is most comfortable for you.

The interviews will be recorded under your permission. You will have the rights to skip any questions that you do not feel comfortable to answer. You also have the rights to ask for stopping the records at anytime you want.

## 3. Confidentiality

The research will use pseudonym in the project instead your real names. Personal identities and information of participants will not be shared more than with my academic supervisors.

## 4. Voluntary participation and withdrawal

The process of participating is voluntary; you will be free to withdraw at any time in the process, for whatever reason.

## 5. Statement of Consent

I have read carefully the contents of this consent form and I agree to participate in this study on a voluntary basis.

**Signature/ Dates**

**Study Participant Name:**

**Study Participant Signature:**