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## **“Key to Life”**

- A study of how students perceive secondary education in the slums of Kibera

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## **Minor Field Study**

This study has been carried out within the framework of the Minor Field Study (MFS) Scholarship Programme and the Travel Scholarship funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

The MFS Scholarship Programme gives Swedish university students the opportunity to carry out fieldwork in low- and middle income countries, or more specifically in the countries included on the *DAC List of ODA Recipients*, in relation to their Bachelor's or Master's thesis.

Sida's main purpose with the Scholarships is to stimulate the students' interest in, as well as increasing their knowledge and understanding of development issues. The Minor Field Studies provide the students with practical experience of fieldwork in developing settings. A further aim of Sida is to strengthen the cooperation between Swedish university departments and institutes and organisations in these countries.

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# Abstract

This is a study of high school students' individual perception of education in the slum area of Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya. A fieldwork in Kibera was carried out between February and March of 2015 consisting of individual interviews and focus groups conducted with high school students. The goal is to contribute with information and knowledge about secondary education in urban slum so that a deeper understanding about the issues and challenges students face can be established. The goal is however not to contribute with results applicable on the entire educational system. It will be shown that by examining individual perception it becomes possible to understand what actions are necessary to take to improve secondary education in areas of poverty. It is argued in the thesis that individual perception can work as a supplement to traditional methods of studying education and that understanding perception can be vital when working with international development goals. That the opinions and thoughts in the community and in the family shape and influence the perception of the individual will also be displayed.

*Keywords:* Individual perception, Education, Kibera, Urban slum, Human Capital, Human Rights, Community Building.

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# 1 Introduction

Kibera is located in the southwest of Nairobi, Kenya, and it is considered to be the largest slum in East Africa. The population in slum areas are in general young and the numbers of children and youths are high (Okaya et.al. 2013: 18). Therefore education is a vital part of their future and one's individual opportunities. The Kenyan government has for many years made efforts to develop education in the country and today about 90 percent of the children participate in primary education. The second *Millennium Development Goal* (MDG) about universal primary education has been of high priority in Kenya and it is likely that education will be on the political agenda also in the future. However reforms focusing upon secondary education have not had the positive effects that they were aimed to have. In many ways they are considered as grand failures on a national level with results such as dropouts and low attendance rates. For young people living in areas of urban slum or in poverty the problems are the greatest (Ngware et.al. 2012: 71, 86-87 & UNICEF 2015).

Little knowledge about education in the slums of Kenya is available and little research has been done on the topic. This thesis aims to contribute with knowledge, information and a better understanding of secondary education in the informal settlement area of Kibera. It will be focused upon the individual students and their perception of the education they receive. The thesis has the intention to examine in what ways individual perception can be used as a tool to analyse school systems in urban slum.

## 1.1 Purpose & Research Question

The thesis will analyse secondary education in Kibera from the perspective of the students. It has the purpose to examine how individual perception can be used to better understand education and the problems young people in a deprived area face in relation to the education they receive. However the thesis does not have the ambition to establish results that are applicable on the entire national school system but to contribute with information and knowledge about secondary education in Kibera so that a deeper understanding can be established. The goal is to examine the thoughts and opinions of the informants in order to obtain knowledge about how they themselves perceive the educational system they are a part of. The thesis hopes to show how perception can be a vital tool for improvement of education. Four research questions have been formulated as follows:

- 1. How do students perceive secondary education and what challenges do they identify?*
- 2. What has shaped and influenced the individual perception of the participants?*
- 3. How can individual perception improve our understanding of education?*
- 4. Can Educational Interventions shape student's perception?*

## 1.2 Thesis Structure

The thesis has been divided into six different sections including Introduction. The second section is Theoretical Framework where the theoretical aspects of the study as well as some findings in previous research will be presented. The framework is followed by Background which consists of information about the

field, topic of study and information from previous research about education in Kibera. It also includes a text about Wale Wale Kenya which is a Kenyan *Non-Governmental Organisation* (NGO) located in Kibera where I interned during the autumn semester of 2014. The background section is located before the methodological section because the time spent as an intern in Kibera has influenced and evolved the research design of the thesis.

Methodology, Methods & Ethics is the next section; here the methodological approach is presented and the methods of the research are being explained and argued for. This section also includes an ethical discussion about the methods and methodology of the study; the choices of method and the role of being a white student from the *Global North* doing research in a poor African country is discussed from an ethical perspective.

The fifth section is Analysis & Discussion where the data and findings of the research will be analysed and discussed on the basis of the purpose of the study. The goal of this section is to fulfil the purpose and answer the research questions. Then follows Conclusion where the concluded results and findings from section five will be summarised and thus highlight the answers to the research question. In the end of the thesis Reference List and Appendix can be found.

## 1.3 Terminology

*Conventional or traditional methods* of analysing education will be talked about a couple of times in the thesis. This refers to the methods previous research has used to study and examine education in Kibera and elsewhere. In general it is quantitative methods based upon statistics such as measuring pupil-teacher ratio, school transfers and attendance rates.

*Educational Intervention* is defined in this thesis as *Educational Support* provided by NGOs. It includes both targeted and directed support such as payment of school fees and homework assistance as well as more loosely defined

guidance such as tutoring and general talks about education. Both Educational Intervention and Educational Support will be used throughout the thesis.

*Personal Development* and *Human Development* are two terms that is used in the thesis. Personal Development refers to Sen's (1999) *Capability* approach where an individual's prospect to reach certain fulfilments in life that person regard as valuable is considered as a key aspect of development. Human Development can in simplified terms be explained as Personal Development on a national level, where you measure the collected Capability of the population. It is measured through Human Development Index (HDI) (Owour et.al. 2009 & The World Bank 2014).

## 2 Theoretical Framework

This section is aimed to put the thesis into a theoretical context. It is divided into two parts; The Importance of Education is the first and explains from a theoretical point of view the importance of education in terms of development. The second part, Individual Perception, is a text that clarifies the main tool of the study from a theoretical standpoint.

### 2.1 The Importance of Education

Education is on top of the international development debate; it is highlighted in the second MDG (UN 2015) and it is suggested to become the fourth *Sustainable Development Goal* (SDG) in the post-2015 development debate (Sustainable Development 2015). The purpose of this text is to contribute with a general framework about education from a theoretical viewpoint and thus explain why education is considered to be such an important aspect in the process of development. It will be explained from three different perspectives; *Human Capital*, *Human Rights* and *Community Building*.

#### 2.1.1 Human Capital

Human Capital is an economic approach to education. The term Human Capital refers to the gathered stock of skills and the level of education a population have and how that stock of knowledge can be capitalised in the economy (Pretty 2008: 167 & Zoomers 2008: 148). It is believed that education is an essential key for development since the population of an economy is the most flexible factor of

production and the most important resource endowment. The labour force has the advantage that it can be evolved and made more productive as time goes by. If the working population is more educated and better trained the stock of Human Capital is considered as larger than if the working population is less educated and less skilled. The education of the population is the tool by which a nation can capitalise technological and knowledge advancements and consequently generate higher growth rate in the economy (Cypher & Dietz 2009: 391; Sen 1999: 143-145, 260, 292-293 & Tikly & Barrett 2011: 4).

Human Capital is considered to be of great significance for countries since it is considered as an essential key to achieve economic growth and Human Development. A more educated population creates a more adaptable and flexible working force with the probable outcome of progress in the economy. Hence if a nation invests in education and therefore establishes a larger amount of Human Capital it can be seen as an economic investment (Cypher & Dietz 2009: 391, 405-406).

Both the quantity of education as well as the quality of education is vital for the development and growth rates of an economy. Together they are expected to create a larger stock of Human Capital since the balance between the two constitutes a more and better educated population as a whole (Cypher & Dietz 2009: 408-409). From a Human Capital approach it could be argued that great inequalities in the educational system is undesirable since it generates education that is of lower quality and consequently a smaller stock of Human Capital. This results in lower rates of economic growth and Human Development. Inequality according to this approach is; gender inequality, urban/rural inequality, economic inequality and regional inequality (Tikly & Barrett 2011: 4-5).

For an individual it is likely that by becoming more educated that individual will gain a higher level of income. By having a population of individuals that are better educated advancements in technology, medicine, production and so on will be created that are beneficial for the society as a whole because the well-being of the population improves. Hence, from this approach it is argued that the benefit of

education for the community and the society is greater than for the educated individuals (Cypher & Dietz 2009: 407-409 & Tikly 2010). The Human Capital approach has contributed with a rationale for politicians and policymakers to focus on education since it can be explained in economic terms (Cypher & Dietz 2009: 209 & Tikly & Barrett 2011: 4).

## 2.1.2 Human Rights

To emphasise that education should be founded upon the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations General Assembly 1948) is another approach to education. It is a perspective that is highly political but at the same time framed as a humanistic approach that stresses the significance of Personal Development. From this point of view Human Rights should be “fundamental, indivisible and integral” to development and incorporated in all aspects of learning and school system (Tikly & Barrett 2011: 5). Human Rights should be seen as the foundation of education. Both negative rights e.g. article 5 about protection from abuse and degrading treatment, and positive rights e.g. article 26 about everybody’s right to education which should be focused to evolve human personality, should be endorsed and its importance should be clearly stated in schools. Schools should be an institution where democratic ideas and structures are encouraged and where the children are in the centre of attention (Tikly 2010; Tikly & Barrett 2011 & UNICEF 2008: chapter 1 8-9 & 11-12). In school students should be included, healthy and safe and it is important that all relevant actors take this into consideration (Tikly 2010 & Tikly & Barrett 2011: 5-6).

Today the idea that education should be originated from Human Rights is more or less universal in the general political debate about global development (Tikly & Barrett 2011: 5). An example of that is the proposed fourth SDG about education. The entire fourth SDG uses phrases inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in sub-paragraph 4.7 it is clearly stated that Human Rights should be a basic foundation of education (Sustainable

Development 2015). However the practices in schools often fail to fulfil these aims; corporal punishment of students and undemocratic structures in school are just two out of many common examples of how Human Rights are violated in school around the world and in Kenya (Tikly & Barrett 2011).

The Human Rights approach puts Personal Development for individuals first and that it should be promoted by schools and the entire educational system. It is also focused upon what students themselves bring to education and the process of learning; the role student have in curricular activities, how safe and healthy they are, the effects that they have on education etc. (Tikly 2010 & Tikly & Barrett 2011: 5-6).

It is argued that a child and Human Rights based education is vital to achieve Personal Development and for individuals to realise their own Capability (Tikly 2010). Capability is an alternative to economic growth as the main measurement of development and it refers to the work of Amartya Sen (1999). In simplified terms Capability is the likelihood or opportunity individuals have to reach different fulfilments and purposes of life that he or she may value. The Capability standpoint seriously shifts the view on educational quality because it gives a long term perspective on the matter that is based upon individual's possibility to obtain necessary resources and Personal Development later in life. From a Human Rights perspective Capability is important since it focus upon individual development and the importance of Human Rights (Sen 1999 & Tikly & Barrett 2011: 7-9).

### **2.1.3 Community Building**

Schools are not an isolated part of society but an active part of the local community. Educational institutions are affected by the community just as the community is affected by educational institutions (UNICEF 2008: chapter 4 1-3). Previous research about education has shown that the situation in educational facilities can have effects that stretch outside the walls of these facilities and in to the local community; it is affected by the well-being of students. For example; a

positive environment in school can lead to better choices in private life and students thus might stay away from for instance drug abuse or criminality whereas bad environment in school can have the opposite outcome (Lehr 2004: 76).

The condition and environment of schools could have a bright impact for areas of great poverty. If education has a positive effect on the well-being and the level of knowledge children and youths obtain, then education can have a vital role to play in terms of Human Development in particular on the local level (Lehr 2004 & Okaya et.al 2013: 16). If the school environment is positive it is likely to result in progressive effects both for youths and for their surrounding and at the same time an undesirable school environment is likely to result in contrary consequences (Abuya et.al 2013: 754 & Okaya et.al. 2013).

Just as the situation in school can have impact on the local community, can the local community and one's family situation affect individuals' school results and their perception of education. A problematic situation at home e.g. high levels of violence or alcoholism, can have a destructive impact on education and even lead to dropouts. In addition a harmful surrounding in the local community could result in bad results in school and students dropping out. Whereas a positive and encouraging family can have the effect that students tend to be more focused in school just as if you live in a safe community it will be easier to stay and do well in school. A helpful and optimistic climate at home and in the local community can have positive effects on ones achievements in school, likelihood to stay in school and ones perception of education (Abuya et.al 2013: 743, 749-750, 751-752).

## 2.2 Individual Perception

Perception is the main tool to analyse the findings in the research and this text will contribute with the theoretical groundwork. The term perception refers to individual understanding and interpretations; how individuals look at their surrounding the opinions and thoughts they form regarding something observed, seen or experienced. Hence perception becomes the personal truth of how an individual sees the world (Oxford Dictionary 2015). Munhall (2008: 607) explains it with the following words:

“A common way of defining perception is “how we see things.” However, perception is a process involving not only the senses but also complex underlying mechanisms. Perception, which is mediated through the interconnectedness of mind and body, is an individual's access to experience and interpretation in the world. Perception of varying objects depends on the context in which they are experienced for interpretation and meaning.”

Individual perception is created and motivated by the context in which it is established. Traditions, history, surrounding, community etc. together creates a multi-layered outlook on how one interprets reality and experience things. (Munhall 2008: 608). One's perception of education is influenced and shaped by a large amount of factors and not only by personal background and individual assumptions. It is also influenced and constructed by elements and dynamics from within school as well as elements and dynamics that come from outside school; from the local community or family. However, perception is something that is highly individual and in a very strong sense influences and is a reflection of one's personal thoughts, opinions and choices in life (Munhall 2008: 607-608 & Tanase 2013). Hence, perception of education contributes with a broad overview and an overall understanding of individual opinions and thoughts. It is personally constructed but based and shaped by factors from the local society as well as from the educational system and circumstances in school. Perception can be regarded as an aspect of educational quality and a signal of success or failure for the school

system from an individual perspective (Okaya et.al. 2013: 10-14 & Tanase 2013: 6-8).

Previous research has shown that one's perception of education has direct effect on student's results in school and if they succeed or fail with their studies. The reason for this is that one's perception has a strong influence on ones choices and behaviour (Munhall 2008: 607-608 & Tanase 2013: 5). It is likely that if an individual perceive the education he or she gets as of low quality then that will have undesirable consequences for the individuals' academic results. Just as if a student has problems in school and grades that are low than it is likely that the individual will blame the education he or she gets and thus the individual perception is affected negatively (Okaya et.al. 2013 & Tanase 2013). An improvement in the situation in school will increase student's probabilities to achieve good academic results (Lehr 2004: 75-77).

People's perception of education is also influenced by the conditions of the school; the quality of the facilities, the level of hygiene and quality of sanitation. Also the educational environment has consequences on how students perceive their education. This includes both aspects from what the teacher contributes with; such as how they treat students and the atmosphere the teachers manages to establishes, as well as how other students behave, how students treat one another and the effect their behaviour have on the educational environment in the school (Lehr 2004: 76 & Okaya et.al. 2013: 15-17). How students perceive the quality of the education they receive is affected by the quality of the environment in school and the conditions of the facilities. If the school atmosphere is considered harmful it also has a negative effect on how an individual perceive the quality of the education (Okaya et.al. 2013: 16 & Tanase 2013: 4-5).

A negative perception of education has the effect that the tendency of truancy and absence from school increases which probably will lead to academic failure or at least lower results and reduced learning. It also increases the probability for dropouts and thus a certain educational failure. An undesirable perception of school can also have the effect that the individual student put less effort and time into school work which will have negative consequences (Okaya et.al. 2013). Hence, perception of education has direct impact on academic results and thus it also has long term effects upon life opportunity and Personal Development.

# 3 Background

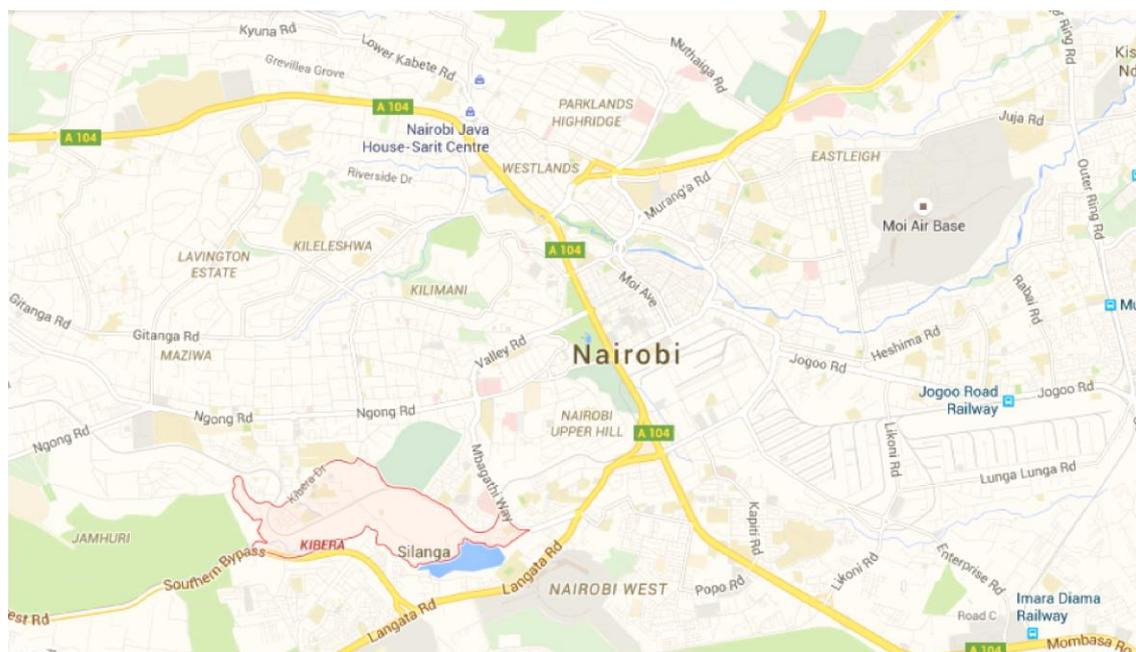
This section is divided into three parts that together serves the purpose of contributing with background information necessary to understand the thesis and the research. The first part, Kibera, aims to contributing with general information about the field. The second part, Education in Kenya, is about the educational system in the country. The final part, The Internship, is about the organisation where I interned during the autumn semester of 2014. That text is important because the internship influenced and helped me evolve the research design of the thesis.

## 3.1 Urban Slum & Kibera

UN-HABITAT (2006) defines a slum as an area with inferior housing where one or more of the following urban infrastructure and urban services are absent: durable and permanent housing, easy access to clean water, access to sanitation, tenure security and sufficient living space. In more concrete terms this refers to such things as sewages, electricity, plumbing, paved roads, toilets, conditions of houses etc. (Davis 2006). UN-HABITAT (2006) states that the slums in sub-Saharan Africa are the most deprived in the world since they tend to fulfil more of the criteria's than slums elsewhere. Other characteristics commonly associated with areas of urban slum are poverty, poor living conditions, malnutrition and violence and the Kenyan slums are considered to be among the worst in in all of East Africa (Okaya et.al. 2013: 18). The life situation and life opportunities for youths and children are thus very limited.

Nairobi is both the capital and the largest city in Kenya. It is a city with many slum areas and Kibera is the largest and most famous. It is hard to say exactly how many people that live there. Different sources give different estimations pending between one million inhabitants (Kibera Law Centre 2015 & Unger & Riley 2007) to about 200 000; making it the largest in all of East Africa (Fihlani 2015 & Karanja 2010). Furthermore Nairobi is the economic, the industrial and political centre of Kenya (Encyclopædia Britannica 2015). Thus it is a city with great inequalities where skyscrapers and areas of slum are located next to one another. Half of Nairobi's population is estimated to live in the slums and they cover 5-7 percent of the city (Owour et.al. 2009 & Unger & Riley 2007).

**Map 1: Kibera in Nairobi retrieved from Google Maps (2015)**



Kenya is in many ways the cliché of what people in the Global North perceive as a development country. It was ranked number 152 out of 177 countries on the Human Development Index in the year of 2006. Since 2006 Kenya has had a great economic expansion but poverty is still widely spread and 46 percent of the population are still estimated to live below the national poverty line and in the slums almost everybody is estimated to live in poverty (Owour et.al. 2009; The World Bank 2015 & UNICEF 2015).

## 3.2 Education in Kenya

For a long period of time education has been considered to be a key aspect of understanding poverty and life opportunities in Kenya. Many children and youths living in the slums and in great poverty are not enrolled in the educational system. However; the Kenyan government has from time to time taken political action to face educational issues. In 2003 Free Primary Education was introduced and today circa 90 percent of children in Kenya participate in primary education (Ngware et.al. 2012: 71 & UNICEF 2015). In 2008 the Kenyan government declared to take yet another step to develop the educational system in the country when they acknowledged that school fees in public high school were to be abolished (Oketch et.al. 2012: 3; UNICEF 2015 & UN 2014). There have been a couple of studies about the results and outcome of the reform. It has shown that during the first few years a large amount of students transferred from private schools to public school. However, during the years after the numbers of students in private school increased yet again and today the effects from it are foiled and the system is more or less the same as it were before 2008. A general explanation of why things have turned out this way previous research has failed to contribute with (Ngware et.al. 2012: 86-87 & Oketch et.al 2012: 4). Furthermore the reform has not resulted in a lower financial burden for households in poverty, which were one of the main arguments for the introduction of the reform (Oketch et.al. 2012: 4-5).

By the year of 2015 Kenya have failed to fulfil the second MDG of universal primary education since about 10 percent of the children are still not being educated (Ngware et.al. 2012: 71 & UNICEF 2015). The failure becomes even greater when you look at dropout rates: it is estimated that 10 percent of children participating in primary school do not complete it. The numbers in secondary education are even higher and the issues much more problematic (Abuya et.al. 2013: 741).

Previous research about education in Kenya has stated that parents in general tend to be positive to education and take an active role in the children's education

and they tend to value educational quality. An increase in a family's finances and an increase in socio-economic situation is often a key reason for student transferring to a school of higher quality from a school with lower quality (Oketch et.al. 2012: 11-12, 14).

Moreover; the seven decades of British colonial rule have had impact on the school systems in Kenya (BBC 2015 & ERP 2014). During this time the educational system in Kenya was structured and defined; it is still the core of Kenyan schools. For instance is the British tradition of school uniforms and proper haircut prevailing in Kenyan schools (Cunningham 2008: 38-40; Ethnologue 2015 & State University 2015).

### **3.1 The Internship**

Since Kibera is a large and famous slum it has become an area of great interest for aid organisations and philanthropy. There is a wide diversity of organisations in Kibera that works with different issues such as Human Rights, food security, HIV/AIDS and education. Wale Wale Kenya (2015) is an NGO with focus on youths and children in Kibera and between August and December 2014 I interned there. The aim of the organisation is to support youths and children in order to give them tools to take charge of their own lives and their own futures.

The core of the organisation is a youth center where sports and creative activities such as dance, music, moviemaking and football are being carried out on a daily basis. At the center everybody is welcome no matter their ethnicity, sex or age. The aim of the center is to establish a social forum where youths and children can hang out and have something meaningful to do on their spare time other than drifting, idling or hustling. The organisation has a core group of about 40 youths and children between the age of 10 and 23 but from time to time the group is larger.

Furthermore, Wale Wale Kenya also works with Educational Support, work support and tutoring. Educational Support refers to homework assistance and payment of school fees. About 2 years ago it was noted by the organisation that youths came to the center during the day time when they were supposed to be in school. The students said that they were being sent home because they could not pay for their school fees. All of the students facing these issues were in high school. Therefore the organisation started a programme to pay for high school fee, today 11 youths gets their education financed and a couple more have graduated as a result of the programme. These 11 youths are all participants of the fieldwork (see 4.2 Methods).

Work support refers to supporting the older youths at the center that have graduated from high school with employment and means to support themselves financially. A few examples of how this is being done are rent free micro loans to business and employment in a fruit shop owned by the organisation. Tutoring or mentoring refers to teaching and education of the youths and children. This includes workshops in Human Rights and lessons in the process of applying for jobs or scholarships. Tutoring includes being there and listening to their stories and supporting them in their day to day life and the struggles they face. It is also about building confidence and belief in oneself so that individuals can achieve Personal Development and reach their Capability.

The job I did as an intern can be categorised into two groups; office work and personal support. Office work refers to organisational work, bureaucratic work, fundraising and marketing. Personal support is the work that was done directly with youths and children. This part of the job was about creating relationships and thus be a part of the tutoring process.

During the internship I gained knowledge about Kibera and about education in the slums. I gained an understanding of the culture and the region that was beneficial during the fieldwork. I also established relationship with people in the community that proved to be useful during the research in the field. Relationships with key informants were also established. The internship and the time I spent in

Kibera has influenced and evolved the research design. It has made it stronger since it contributed with more information about the field beforehand and that has been very beneficial during the research (see 4.1. Methodology and 4.2. Methods).

The internship period is vital for the structure, the research design and the general methodology of this thesis. The first version of the research design was created before the fieldwork was carried out and during the internship information and experience from the field was obtained which has influenced and changed the general design, the methodology and focus of the thesis; thus this period has played a vital role in the making of the study.

# 4 Methodology, Methods & Ethics

This section has been divided into three parts; Methodology, Methods and Ethical Considerations. Methodology is a text about how the research has been positioned, from which methodological approach the research design has been formed. The next part is about the choices of methods and a discussion about the research design. Ethical Considerations addresses the ethical issues and moral dilemmas of the thesis and how these issues have been dealt with.

## 4.1 Methodology

The research design is vital for a research project; it is the explanation of how research is intended to be carried out. It is important because opponents, other academicians or anybody else who might read the study have to understand how the information was gathered and thus understand how the researcher ended up with the data and the results (Bryman 2001: 290-293; Cheek 2008: 762-765 & Mouton 2001). The research design of this thesis has evolved over time and there have been a few different versions of the research plan. The aim beforehand was to conduct more studies than what was actually carried out but due to unforeseen issues and problems in the field changes and alterations were made on the spot.

Historically fieldwork is a qualitative methodology used by ethnographers where researchers visit a group of people for a long period of time in order to understand their society. But today it is a broader used methodological approach, common not only in social sciences but also in natural and physical sciences. Today field research refers to research being done at a particular place, called a field, and that place defines the limits and purpose of the research (Bryman 2001:

290-293 & Linstroth 2008: 344). The fieldwork done in this thesis is a qualitative research inspired by ethnographical practices and structures, although it is not a strictly ethnographical study.

The research design and the information gathered in the field is based upon qualitative methodologies where what is being said is the most vital source of information and not the amount of people giving a specific answer. The qualitative approach has been chosen for this study since the aim and purpose is to analyse and research informants' perception of education; perception is commonly and most effectively researched qualitatively (Munhall 2008: 607-608 & Stewart-Withers et.al. 2014). The collected data also has to be analysed in a qualitative manner (Stewart-Withers et.al. 2014: 75-76)

Before the fieldwork I interned for Wale Wale Kenya (see 3.3. Internship). I got to know Kibera in general and I also became close to a group of high school students that were members of the organisation. When the research design of the study was created and planned it was realised that there was an opportunity to obtain more profound information about students' individual perception and the topic of the study through these relationships; this influenced the research design.

#### **4.1.1 Limits**

The thesis is limited by the field where the research was conducted, by the topic of interest and by the purpose of the thesis. It is focused upon secondary education in the urban slum area of Kibera in Nairobi. It is not an analysis of the whole national educational system in Kenya but only a study of high school education in Kibera. Furthermore it is only focused upon the participants own perception and interpretations of the topic of interest. Thus it is not a study aimed to be applicable to the whole school system in Kenya but rather a study of individual perception as a tool to reach a deeper understanding of education in areas of urban slum. As such the study is limited by the participants of the study.

## 4.2 Methods

In this section the methods used will be addressed and argued for just as the methods not used will be described and explained why they were taken out of the study. By doing so the full picture of the research will be accounted for; the research plan, the process in the field and the direction the thesis consequently has taken.

### 4.2.1 Population & Sampling

Defining the population of the study is the first thing that has to be done when to sample participants. All participants have to be a part of the defined population, no matter if they have been sampled based upon predetermined relations or if they have been randomly sampled (Morgan 2008(1): 800). In this study the population has been defined as all high school students who live in Kibera and who are also a student of a high school located inside Kibera. However since Kibera is a large area the population had to be narrowed down for practical reasons, therefore a sampling frame was created (Morgan 2008(2): 801-802). The sampling frame of the thesis is defined by the key respondents of the study thus meaning that the sampling frame is students going to the school where the key informants go; this is assumed to make sure that the informants are as compatible to one another as possible.

11 key informants have been individually selected for the study because of their previous connection to me and the trust they therefore are presumed to have in me. If a researcher creates relationship based upon trust with informants' qualitative information will be more easily obtained and the gathered knowledge will be more reflective and more insightful (Andersson 2005; Fetterman 2008: 289-293 & Sluka 2012: 137-138). In Box 1. you can find short descriptions of these participants.

**Box 1: Interviewed Individuals**

Sex	Grade	School	Type of school	Fake name
Male	Form 4	Langata	Public	Dennis
Male	Form 4	Langata	Public	Bosse
Female	Form 4	Olympic	Public	Eva
Female	Form 2	Olympic	Public	Hanna
Female	Form 1	Olympic	Public	Candice
Male	Form 1	Moano	Private	Peter
Male	Form 2	Raela	Private	Johan
Male	Form 2	Olympic	Public	Bran
Male	Form 3	Raela	Private	Menik
Female	Form 3	Raela	Private	Ada
Male	Form 2	Kibera Academy	Private	Erik

A structure for sampling participants for the focus groups was created before arriving to the field but like so many other things in this project the original plan had to be changed in the field. The plan before the fieldwork was to get in contact with the schools and ask them for the lists of the classes. From these lists five focus groups with five participants in each were to be randomly sampled. It was decided to be five focus groups since the 11 key informants are spread out over five different schools and as such it would be certain that schoolmates of each key informant would be included in the study. However in the field this proved to be impossible. The schools either had no interest in assisting with this or they wanted a bribe. For clear reasons I could not participate in corruption thus a different way to get in contact with informants were necessary. This will be addressed further in 4.3. Ethical Considerations.

The result of this was a shift in how the focus groups were sampled. The new way forward was to visit the schools in question and asked every 10<sup>th</sup> person if they wanted to participate. If they agreed they got informed about the place and time. When five people had agreed to partake the sampling for one focus group was done. Unfortunately it was only enough time to gather participants for three focus groups instead of the intended five; the three schools were most of the students from the individual interviews went were prioritised. Stratified sampling

means that the population is divided into different groups (strata) and from each stratum informants are sampled. The purpose of this is to make sure that participants from each group are accounted for (Morgan 2008(4): 470-471). Stratified and randomised sampling was the method of sampling and the stratum were defined based upon the schools the key informants went to (Morgan 2008(3): 725-727 & Morgan 2008(4)).

Three focus groups were conducted and five persons were invited to each. Not every invited person came resulting in one group with three participants and two groups with four participants. For more information about the focus groups see Box 2.

**Box 2: Focus groups**

Code name of informant	Number of Participants	Gender ratio	School	Type of school
B1	3	3 male	Langata	Public
B2	4	2 female; 2 male	Olympic	Public
B3	4	3 female; 1 male	Raela	Private

Kibera is a rough place and it is not many areas where white people from the Global North can walk around safely and therefore a *gatekeeper* was needed just to get into areas where contact with informants could be established (Reeves 2010: 319). The thoughts, values and friendships of the gatekeeper affect the research since he or she has power over the sampling process. If there is a good relationship between the gatekeeper and the researcher these kinds of issues will become easier to deal with (Banks & Scheyvens 2014: 172-174; Reeves 2010: 319-320 & Sanghera & Thaper-Björkert 2008: 544-545). For that reason a gatekeeper that I knew from the internship period was chosen. The gatekeeper used was graduated from high school two years prior and works with Wale Wale Kenya. He has a large social network; among the people I know in Kibera he is the best person for the job.

## 4.2.2 Individual Interviews & Focus Groups

Individual Interviews are viewed as the key method of the study and the Focus Groups as a secondary and complementary method. The aim of the focus groups is to function as a control study of the data gathered during the individual interviews. The reason for this is that the people being individually interviewed has been handpicked to participate since they are associates with me from beforehand and it is expected that such a relationship will result in more profound material and information (Sluka 2012: 137-142). This approach is however not without problems and criticism. It could be argued that the information gathered might be affected by the relationship and thus the objectivity is also affected (Sluka 2012). To use personal relationships produced in the purpose of friendship could arguably be seen as exploitation and thus ethically be problematic (will be addressed in 4.3 Ethical Considerations).

In this study the upside of obtaining more and better material due to previous relations is considered as a strong enough reason to use this approach. Nevertheless an additional study was considered to be needed in the research plan in order to somewhat deal with this tricky matter. The informants in the control study could not have any previous connection to me so that the issue of relationship between researcher and informants would be tackled and thus fulfil the aim of having a study that could verify and control what was being said in the interviews. Moreover; because of the difference in Educational Support between the two groups it is possible to examine if there is a difference in perception between the groups of informants.

Focus group is a form of group interview or group talk where the researcher leads a discussion with the aim to contribute with data for the study. Just like individual interviews it is a method that can be done in many different ways and altered based upon the purpose of the study. The data that focus group aims to contribute with is the discussion itself and what the participants talk about as a

group. Focus groups also have the advantage that it often becomes easier to talk to a stranger in group than individually (Morgan 2008(5): 353-355).

Both the individual interviews and the focus groups followed the same structure; the same questions were asked and the same topics addressed. That setup was chosen in order to get material compatible to one another so that the focus groups could work as a control study of the individual interviews.

Both the individual interviews and the focus groups were semi-structured, which refers to a method where the informants are asked open-ended questions that follow a given structure planned beforehand by the researcher (Ayers 2008: 811). Therefore it is likely that open-ended questions will in a better way reflect individuals' perception since the questions will receive answers that are individually interpreted. It is a qualitative approach to interviews and it is organised through a general framework that the interview should follow but that the researcher are free to do alterations to as time goes (Morgan & Guevara 2008: 470-471). The idea is that such an approach will give the interviewed persons the opportunity to interpret the questions personally and thus give answers based upon their individual perception. It is argued that such an approach will end up in answers that reflect the informants' thoughts and opinions more accurately and more individually (Roulston 2008: 583).

The down side to open-ended questions is that it can be hard for the researcher to have control over the interviews or focus group and make sure that the answers given are relevant for the study (Ayers 2008: 811-813). Therefore it is common that an interview guide is created in advance where the content of what is going to be addressed is described and summarised (see Appendix 8.1. Interview Guide). A guide for the interviews and focus groups can help the researcher to more easily gather information that is relevant for the study, comparable and analysable in a structured way. The guide is only for the interviewer to see and not something given directly to the informant (Ayers 2008; Morgan & Guevara 2008: 470-471 & Rubin & Rubin 2004: 144). Furthermore, what I noticed during the interviews was

that the interview guide made me more comfortable and confident in my own ability; I felt like a better interviewer which made it easier to conduct the research.

Moreover; Interviews based upon open-ended questions is always being defined by the informants' interpretation of the question and the answers he or she gives (Roulston 2008: 583-584). However, the setup puts pressure on the interviewer to be able to adapt the interview to what the informants' choses to address and talk about (Morgan & Guevara 2008: 470-471). In this way each interview and focus group are different from one another and therefore the structured interview guide becomes a 'tick of list' that narrates the interview and makes sure everything vital is addressed (Ayers 2008: 811-813). Thus; a semi-structured approach gives the researcher the advantage of being in charge of the interview but the informants the possibility to talk freely and as such give more elaborate information based upon their individual perceptions, thoughts and experiences.

### **4.2.3 Data Collection & Practicalities**

From each interview and focus group elaborate notes were taken and they were also audio-recorded. The plan in advance was that the recordings were to be the main information gathering tool and therefore the recordings were planned to be transcribed (McGinn 2008: 883 & Poland 2008: 885-887). However; in the field when the notes and the recording from the first few interviews were studied it was observed that the notes obtained most of the vital information from the recordings. This led to a shift and from then on the notes became the key information gathering tool and the recordings were used to fill in the gaps. Directly after each interview or focus group the notes were typed and then the recordings were listened to and additional information was added to the notes when necessary. It is these notes that will be the foundation of the analysis; they are the data of the study (Muswazi & Nhamo 2013: 13-15). I have done interviews multiple times in the past and am used to this method. Therefore no full length transcripts of the

recordings have been done. However some shorter parts from some of the interviews have been transcribed in order to make it possible to quote particularly interesting things said by informants.

Box 1. and Box 2. on page 23 and 24 give information about the informants. In this thesis the informants will be anonymous because it is considered important to protect the sources of the study. In 4.3. Ethical Considerations anonymity and protecting the sources is discussed. The first idea was to give every recording a code; the individually interviewed would be given the letter A plus a number and the focus groups the letter B plus a number. The focus groups will follow this setup but the interviewed individuals have been given fake names since it will make the text easier to read.

#### **4.2.4 Pilot Study**

Before the fieldwork a pilot study was done in Sweden. The aim of a pilot is not to gather information for the research but for the researcher to test the methods and the setup of the study so that the research design can be evaluated and strengthened in advance (Schreiber 2008: 625-626).

The pilot was carried out with two Swedish high school students; one boy in grade one and one girl in grade three. They were asked to participate in the pilot because they are neighbours of my parents and thus people I know; it was a matter of convenience and practicality. The test-interviews were aimed to be carried out in a manner as similar to the real study as possible (Schreiber 2008: 625-627) and therefore it was important that the participants were high school students. Afterwards the two participants were asked to come with feedback on the setup of interviews as well as on my role and ability as an interviewer. Based upon their feedback and things I myself noticed during the pilot study minor alterations to the interview guide and the research design were made. It also resulted in me being more confident in my capacity to conduct interviews and my ability to adapt the questions to the answers given.

## 4.2.5 Methods not used

Two methods that were planned to be a part of the research have for different reasons been taken out of the research design. Those two methods and the reasons they have been taken out will here be addressed. This episode has been included in the thesis because these alterations have changed the focus and the design of the thesis drastically and thus they are vital in order to understand the research and why the thesis has the focus it has.

Initially participant observations were planned to be carried out. Participant observation refers to an ethnographic method where the researcher participates in activities of the studied field with the informants of the research. By being a part and an observant of the field it is presumed that the researcher will gain a broader understanding of the particular field and the issues of interest which can enrich the analysis (Crapanzo 2010: 548 & Hannerz 2003: 406). However observations made will not contribute with any information about students own perceptions it will only contribute with my perceptions and interpretations of what I see in the field. Hence such a study will not be relevant for this thesis since it does not cope with the purpose and consequently it has no relevance analytically. It is also a method that is highly subjective which methodologically can be problematic (Crapanzo 2010: 549). In a community or a culture a multi-perception is created, meaning that certain things are commonly understood which creates a certain language where specific words or phrasings refers to specific things; by being at the field the researcher can cultivate the understanding of the field (Munhall 2008: 607-608 & Scheyvens et.al. 2014: 129-130). By being in the field beforehand I got to understand a lot of this which made the research easier to conduct; in a way we talked the same language.

Beforehand the intention was to conduct a survey among high school students in Kibera. The aim of the survey was to ask questions about perception to a large amount of high school student. Such a study would contribute with more information from a larger group of individuals and thus end up with more

generally applicable results (Julien 2008: 847-849). It was supposed to be handed out in high school classes which meant that contact with schools were to be established. However, this was problematic in similar matter as for the focus groups (see 4.2.2 Population & Sampling). In the field it became too hard and too time consuming to come up with an alternative approach and consequently the study never got carried out. The result of this change is less focus upon understanding high school education in Kibera in general and instead the thesis is more focused upon the perception of the informants and what perception can contribute with.

### 4.3 Ethical Considerations

Being white and from the Global North in an area such as Kibera is very special. Just by walking around you notice this because everybody addressed the fact that you are a white foreigner, or *Mzungu* as Kenyans themselves call it. People look at you, talk to you and touch you just because you are an Mzungu. It is obvious that in Kibera and Kenya Mzungus are being treated better than others. This is rooted in the colonial heritage and the post-colonial structures that still affect Kenya and many other countries around the world (Ball 2006: 44 & McEwan 2008: 124-128). This also relates to *Power over knowledge production* which is an academic term that refers to knowledge production as an institution of power. All knowledge is produced in a context and the producer of the knowledge has an advantage of power over those who do not produce the knowledge (Gaventa & Cornwall 2008 & Visvanathan 2001: 64-70). This project is an example of power over knowledge production since I travelled from Sweden as a student at Lund University to conduct research in Kenya. Hence knowledge is being produced in the Global North and as such the Global North owns the knowledge produced and not the Kenyans who are affected. This thesis aims to address this by giving the participants of the research an easily and obtainable summary of the findings and results of the study.

Moreover, the skin colour and being a student from the Global North also have effect on the personal meeting between researcher and informant. For the informants that did not have a relationship with me in advance this became an issue. During focus group B1 and B2 it was expressed by some of the participants that they were nervous to talk to an Mzungu and perhaps this was one of the reasons why not all individuals asked to partake participated in the focus groups. It is also likely that this made them talk less freely and be more restrictive in their responses to the questions.

This was not an issue with the informants where relationship was created in advance. Though; the pre-established relations can be considered as an ethical dilemma. The dilemma can be expressed through the following question: is it right of me to use contacts that were established in the pretence of friendship to obtain information for an academic study? To deal with these kinds of issues it was early on decided that the research would follow the *Ethnographers' Code of Ethics*. It is a set of guidelines of how a researcher in the field should behave in an ethically correct manner. The code stresses the importance that the researcher does not harm the people and the community under study (Fetterman 2008: 292). Because of this it was decided to let every informant be anonymous and that is why the individually interviewed informants have been given fake names and the focus groups code names (see Box 1. and Box 2. on page 23 and 24). It is also stated that informants must give consent to participate in the study (Fetterman 2008: 293); every informant was formally asked twice; first beforehand and then again in the beginning of an interview or focus group.

In addition every research session started with an introduction. The informants were told what the study was about and that the session would be recorded; the participants were informed that it would be anonymous and nobody but me would know their real names. It was after this introduction consent was asked for a second time. Additionally the informants were also told that they afterwards would get a summary of the result and findings of the study. There are two reasons for this. The first is to spread the results and conclusions among the participants. Secondly; it was considered important that the informants would

know what their personal thoughts would be used for so that they could trust me as a researcher. This is a way to respect the pre-established relations between researcher and informant.

More studies and thus more information could have been gathered if I would have participated in corruption. An additional survey and two extra focus groups could have been carried out if bribes would have been paid. On a personal level I am against corruption and consider it ethically and morally wrong; thus something I could never participate in. In addition; the study was financed by Sida through a MFS-scholarship and in the signed contract it is stated that the researcher is not allowed to participate in corruption. Hence it would not only be ethically wrong on a personal level, it would also be a breach of contract.

# 5 Analysis & Discussion

In this section of the thesis the results and findings from the fieldwork will be analysed and discussed. The text is divided into five parts and the first four are connected to one of the research questions; however there might be some minor overlaps. The first part is about how the participants perceive education and what challenges they identify. The second part addresses what it is that shapes and influence their perception. Part three discuss how perception can be used to improve our understanding of education. The fourth part is about Educational Intervention and what it can contribute with. The last section is not directly connected to a specific research question but rather a section that is related to the purpose in general; it discusses politics in relation to the topic. Together the five parts will fulfil the purpose of the thesis. The aim of the setup is to establish a structured and clear analysis that can satisfy the purpose of the study.

## 5.1 How do Students Perceive Education and What Challenges do They Identify?

This part has been divided into two episodes that each will answer one half of the research question. Perception of Education is focused upon how the participants perceive education in a broad sense and Challenges to Quality Education is a text that addresses the challenges the informants identify as problematic in regards to school work.

### **5.1.1 Perception of Education**

The participants of the study have in general a positive view on education; by looking at the answer the respondents gave to the first question of the interview guide it is possible to detect this. The informants in both groups of respondents clearly state that they perceive education as important; most informants used wordings such as “key to success” or “key to life” in their answers. All informants talked about it as a vital thing in order to change one’s life opportunities so that one can get a job or get into University. Dennis and Candice referred to education as power over ones individual future and Bosse said that “It opens your mind to what you can do”. Ada and Erik stated that education is more important in the slums because life is harder and thus ones opportunities in the future are more limited than elsewhere. The focus groups discussed education as the means to fulfil future plans such as employment. It is clear that the students participating in this study have a positive perception of education; they see education as a mean to reach Personal Development and fulfil ones individual Capability. The reasons the informants value education so much is because the life in a society without social safety nets and with a lack of opportunities for the future.

Furthermore; by looking at the participants opinions about private contra public schools it is possible to detect what factor they consider as the most import for good education. Peter and Ada were the only individually interviewed participants that though private schools were the best. In the focus groups there were a little bit of discussion about it but in all three groups the discussion ended up in a more positive view on public schools than private. The most common argument for public school being better among the participants was that they are cheaper. Erik and members in focus group 1B said that public schools are better because they provide more books and useful school materials, which is something students in private schools have to pay for in a greater extent. Accordingly what is perceived as a good school is the cost of the school. To define how good a school is based upon the cost of education the individual have to pay is something that is shaped by the poverty the informants live in. Thus; in a setting like Kibera where

poverty is widely spread the price for education becomes a factor that defines what individuals perceive as good or bad education; the cheaper it is the better it is. In addition; all participants in both groups said that they had been sent home due to failure to pay the school fees and that experience most likely shapes their perception of what they consider good since they otherwise would not get educated at all (will be addressed further in 5.1.2.). As a result the cost becomes essential in regards to the amount of education an individual receive. But that does not mean that it is the only thing that influence their perception of what is good quality education.

The informants were asked to talk about the characteristics they consider to be important in regards to good education. Johan, Erik, members in focus group 2B and 3B discussed the importance of a safe environment and that the school have a reputation of safety as key aspects of qualitative education. Focus group 1B also addressed the environment as an important aspect of education but they more thoroughly addressed the quality of the teachers and how well the school is administrated. The administrative part and the quality of the teachers was something that most of the interviewed individuals also spoke about. Another common characteristic was good facilities and access to educational materials. Bran said that if a school gives you a feeling of being a place of learning than it is a sign of a quality school. These aspects are normally used to measure educational quality and it is these kinds of aspects that previous research about education in Kibera has examined. Some of these characteristics prove that the private schools are better; for instance teacher-pupil ratio, whereas others prove that public schools are better; for instance better facilities. According to the informants the private schools are often more cramped with more students in smaller facilities. Hence; to some extent do the participants value quality of education similarly to how it is often analysed. But traditional methods fail to acknowledge finance as a sign of educational quality in Kibera. Poverty affects the education students receive and as such poverty and failing to pay for school fees have direct implications on the education one receives.

As a brief summary it can be said that in general the students perceive education as important and a valuable factor for success in life; they see it as a key to achievements in the future. The informants' value the financial aspects of education as the most important factor; that the public schools are cheaper is the reason most informants consider the public school to be the best. Thus; in a poor area like Kibera how cheap education is for the individual becomes a factor that defines perception of quality. Other characteristics they consider to be important for educational quality are: safety, good teachers, good facilities, how the school is administrated and access to school materials.

### **5.1.2 Challenges to Quality Education**

Analysing students' personal perception of secondary education in Kibera can add a layer of understanding and contribute with information about how the school system works. The respondents were asked to talk about the greatest challenges of being educated in Kibera. Five main challenges and issues were detected; school fees & finance, tasks at home, violence in school, sanitation and food. These five were general challenges most informants agreed upon and therefore they are regarded as the issues that are most problematic. However there were additional challenges individual participants addressed.

Throughout every interview and focus group it was pervading that the school fees were perceived as the greatest obstacle to education. In addition they also declared that other forms of payments and fees were very problematic; such as exam fees, certificate fees and material fees. All schools in Kibera no matter if they are private or public send students home if they cannot pay the school fees. Johan, Erik and Menik said in their interviews that other fees or payments can also lead to students being sent home, depending on the policies of the individual teacher or the specific school. The amount of time can differ from a few days to weeks or even months depending on the temporary financial situation of the family. Hence it is an issue that is defined by the level of poverty an individual or family lives in.

Furthermore; all participants claimed that almost every student in Kibera misses time of education due to school fees. Bosse, Dennis, Menik and respondents in all the focus groups said that they had experienced staying home for more than a month. One person in 2B and one in 3B had even dropped out and returned over a year later due to problems with the payment of school fees. The longer one stays away the likelihood of dropout's increases. Menik and Bosse stated that by staying home you become bored and that can influence you to "bad behaviour". Both of them have experienced this and even more so seen friends go that direction. Moreover; most of the informants said that bad company, drug abuse, criminality or other forms of negative behaviour for the community are common among people that dropout of school. What they say goes in line with what previous research has shown (see 2. Theoretical Framework). Thus; the school fees have a major impact on the quantity of education students receive.

Furthermore; fees and payment in the high schools in Kibera can also create other issues and problems for the individuals. Informants in 2B stated that failing to pay certificate fees can result in people not having high school certificate and thus they cannot apply for University and certain jobs. Erik and Dennis said that if you cannot pay for exam fees you might not get the results from the exams. Different school have different policies in regards to payments and fees but all policies have a problematic impact for the individuals either when they still are students or after they have graduated. It is also a matter of corruption by the schools and the teachers since these kinds of fees and additional payments are often not accounted for and therefore very hard to get knowledge about. Thus, talking directly to student's unknown structures and setups that have a negative effect for students becomes visual.

Many respondents talked about the tasks they have to do at home as something that affects their ability to do homework; task such as taking care of younger siblings, cooking and cleaning. It is common that the older youths in a household have to do most of the chores since many parents work very much in order to provide or for other reasons might be absent a lot. The consequence of this is either late night studies resulting in tiredness or not doing the homework at all.

Both of these therefore affect the quality of the learning the individual students obtain. Tiredness leads to less attentiveness in school whereas not doing ones homework leads to lower levels of learning. Ada, Bran and Johan stated that this issue has become easier to deal with since they became active in Wale Wale Kenya where they are offered homework assistance. Hence the situation outside of school has an impact on the quality of education an individual can be able to obtain.

Furthermore Bran stated that if you do not do your homework you might get physically punished by the teachers and Erik stated that if you are not attentive in school you might get beaten as well. According to Bran and Erik boys get beaten more often in school then girls and it is a matter of constant fear for many students. Other informants also talked about physical punishment as a major challenge. This is a violation of article 5 of the Human Rights. The fear of getting physically punished can result in students staying home if they for some reason assume they will get punished that particular day. By analysing perception it can in this way be possible to obtain information about concrete issues students face in relation to their education. Moreover, Bran and Erik stated that if the atmosphere in schools is bad it can result in students staying away from school or even dropout. Thus the practices of physical punishment from teachers and school personal are a great challenge in terms of the amount and the quality of the education students get.

Another example of an issue that becomes visual through analysing perception is sanitation and more particularly the lack of sanitation towels for women. Menik said that it is often a problem with lack of toilets, running water and well equipped sanitation facilities in Kibera in general and the schools are no different. This can lead to the spread of illnesses resulting in students not being able to go to school. Menik said that he thought it was a greater problem for girls than for boys due to menstruation. What he referred to is that it is common for girls and women in Kibera to not be able to afford sanitation towels or tampons and if there is no running water or good sanitation facilities it often result in girls staying home from school when they have their period. Eva, Candice and the girls in the focus

groups said that they have stayed at home from school multiple times because of menstruation; they also said that it is common for girl in general to do so. This has a huge effect on the level of learning girls obtain and as such it is harmful for the quality of the education they receive. Hence bad sanitation and lack of running water is a gender issue in an area like Kibera; it is a gender issue because of poverty. That sanitation is a greater problem for girls has an impact in their lives and opportunities later in life since they are more affected by this issue; it has long term impact. It also has the consequence of a smaller stock of Human Capital in the country since students obtain a lower amount of education and learning resulting in a less educated population in total.

The food situation in the schools is something that many of the respondents addressed as a major challenge. The way it works is different between the schools; at some schools it is paid for through the school fee, at others it is an extra fee students have to pay and at others individuals pay about 20 to 40 Kenyan shilling (2-4 SEK) each time it is lunch. No matter which system that is used it is a matter of finances which is problematic for many students due to poverty; it can have the consequence of students going whole school days without food. In addition Hanna and members of focus group 2B and 3B stated that it is the same dish every day and that dish is very bad; they often skip to eat many days because of the quality of the food. Bran, Dennis and Eva all wish that the food would be more various and more nutritious; they say it would make studying much easier. Moreover; Bosse declared that many students go home or leave the school ground during lunch breaks to get food. He claims that it is a big issues since many things can happen when one are out of school and one therefore might miss out on education; it is something he himself has experienced. According to Johan you might get sent home from school if you do not pay for the food.

The participants state many different kinds of issues with the food situations in school. It is obvious that many individuals do not get enough food when they are in school either because they cannot afford it or because the food is of low quality. This is something that affects their abilities to learn and thus it has a negative effect on the education students receive. The informants have experience from this

and they all know that lack of food or low quality of food have negative consequences on their ability to perform well. As such they fail to obtain as much knowledge and learning when they are in school than a better food system would provide. It is clear that the respondents perceive food as a very important aspect of education and that it is something they think has to be improved. In addition during numerous interviews and focus groups it was stated that they wanted to have a better food system in school that is cheaper for the individual, more various and more nutritious; they are aware that it would improve their own ability in school.

Individual participants addressed additional challenges they perceive as problematic in regards to education. Johan declared that he thought it was an issue that he had to walk on roads of low quality very far to school each day which made him tired and less attentive. Bosse said that pollution in Kibera in general and around the schools in particular are problematic since it makes it harder to study and be focused. Eva too talked about pollution as an issue; she also considered the noises around the school and at home as a tuff challenge to cope with. Hanna and Candice said that school uniforms could be a challenge since if one cannot afford it that person are not allowed to be in school. This is a few examples of challenges and issues that different participants perceive as hard to cope with but that are not generally addressed as challenges among the participants of the study.

In summary it can be concluded that school fees, tasks at home, violence in school, sanitation and food are perceived as the greatest challenges to education. They have negative effect on the amount of learning and the quality of education students receive. These issues can result in students being sent home or staying away from school. The issues are consequences of poverty in Kibera. Moreover; sanitation is a greater issue for women due menstruation. Mandatory school uniforms, pollution, noise and long distances between home and school are a few other challenges students face in relation to education. The issues and challenges students experience have negative consequences in terms of Human Capital and

many of the issues are clear violations of Human Rights. The issues can result in school dropouts with probable negative effects on the local community.

## **5.2 What has Shaped and Influenced the Individual Perception of the Participants?**

This part has been divided into three episodes and each episode address one main aspect that has influenced the perception of the informants; Household Level Factors, Community Level Factors and Political Aspects.

### **5.2.1 Household Level Factors**

Respondents in both groups of informants stated that their families have a positive view on education and they value it as important for their future. The informants live in different forms of families; some live with both parents others with only one, some live with grandparents and others with guardians. A guardian is an adult that takes care of an orphan or a youth that for some reason does not live with his or her family. No matter the family structure the participants stated that their family valued education as important. Menik, Eva and Peter declared that their parents work very hard to be able to pay for their education and that their family members often get mad if they miss out on school. In the focus groups there were discussions about their families and the efforts parents and guardians made to be able to pay for their education. Many informants also stated that they got strong support and encouragement from their families. Similar things were said by individually interviewed informants. Ada joked that if she would skip school for no good reason her father “would kill her”; it is a joke that is a sign of how she perceives her father’s view on education.

Combining previous research (see 3.2. Education in Kenya) and the results of the research it is fair to conclude that families in general have a positive view on

education. The positive family view on education influence and shapes the individuals perception and establish a positive view. Thus their perception has been influenced by their family members and it can be argued to be a reflection of how their family look at education.

## 5.2.2 Community Level Factors

Johan, Bran, Menik, Ada and respondents in all three focus groups talk about gossip amongst neighbours. They all claim that if they for some reasons stay home from school a day or so neighbour's will gossip about them and the reason they stay home. The informants' claims that neighbours always assume the worst; that they are thieves, are pregnant, use drugs etc. The assumption that this is what people gossip about is an example of how the informants interpret the situation. That people assume these things are probably because it is something they all have seen happening and thus a common 'knowledge' in the community. Almost every informant claims that most boys dropout due to drug abuse or criminal behaviour and most girl because of early pregnancies. This view on dropouts has been shaped through experience and through the common view on individuals that has dropout of school. Most informants have friends or know people that have left school for those kinds of reasons. For instance is Bran scared of falling into criminal behaviour since he each day meet old friends that instead of going to school sell drugs or take part in other criminal activities. All though he said he finds strength and thinks it is easier to resist because of his membership in Wale Wale Kenya. These kinds of experiences have an impact on the perception of individuals and thus it is the route for gossip among neighbours. In this way the gossip itself and the conversations in the community are something that influences the individuals' perception; if you constantly hear something then it sooner or later will become the 'truth' you believe in (see 2.2. Perception).

In addition; Bosse and Hanna said that jealousy is something they often experience. By walking around in school uniforms neighbours that cannot afford the fees become jealous. The gossip and the jealousy are signs of a community

that perceive education as vital, which influence ones individual perception. Thus the combination of seeing what many dropouts are up to and hearing what people in the community think about people that have dropout of school influence the individuals view on what it means to be educated; it shapes their perception.

The reputation of a school is a sign of how a community perceive that particular school. It is also an example how the perception of the community influence the perception of the individual. When the informants were asked which specific school they considered to be the best everybody said Olympic High, the largest public school in Kibera. Some said other schools as well but every answer included Olympic High. Thus it is fair to say that Olympic High has a good reputation. Furthermore when the students were asked why they choose the particular school they chose they said that the reputation or what they had heard people say about it was a key factor; thus they listened to what the community though about the school. In 2.2. Perception it is stated that one's individual perception influence the choices of a person. Therefore reputation and the perception of the community influence the choices of the individuals.

However, the research also shows that there are parts of the community where there might be a different perception. In focus group 2B and 3B it was stated that some parents take their children out of school so they can work and earn money. It is a sign that some people regard income as more important than opportunities in the future. But it does not prove that they have a negative perception on education as a whole; the jealousy Bosse and Hanna talked about is an example of that. Perhaps a study of perception among people who do not participate in the school system would show an alternative view. Nevertheless the participants of this study are all taking part of the school system and thus their perception is shaped by the fact that they are a part of a community that appreciate and value education.

In summary in can be stated that the general perception in the community influences the perception of the individuals. Gossip in the community about people dropping out of school or staying home from school is a sign of a positive community view on education. Reputation is a signal and an outcome of how a

community perceive a certain thing. That participants of the study state that the reputation of and what people say about a specific school influenced their choice of school is an evidence of how the community influence the decisions, behaviour and perception of individuals.

### **5.3 How can Individual Perception Improve our Understanding of Education?**

The challenges addressed in 5.1.2. are issues that are hard to obtain information about through conventional studies of education. All of them have negative effects on the amount of education and quality of education individuals receive. By examining individual perception an increase in our understanding of the school system in Kibera becomes visual.

The informants were asked to talk about what they would like to change, in regards to the challenges they themselves address (see 5.1.2. Challenges to Quality Education). This is a few examples of changes they argued for: improved sanitation, handing out sanitation towels, providing homework assistance, better food and a change in the use of corporal punishment. It is all examples of action that according to the theoretical framework should have a positive effect on how individuals perceive education. Analysing perception can contribute with information about the issues students face in school and as such add knowledge about important actions to take. By analysing the perception of the students it also becomes possible to get information about the actions they think are important to take. It is likely that the outcome of such knowledge would be that students tend to spend more time in school and accordingly it leads to more learning, better quality of education and a larger stock of Human Capital in Kenya. It is a matter of more effectively using the time in school and the time of learning.

Thus; perception can in this way be used to visualise the issues students face and from that information find ways to evolve the system of education. It is likely

that by understanding the challenges students face changes and improvements in the system can be made that would be appreciated by students. These hypothetical changes would reshape how student perceive the quality of the education they receive. For instance if improvement in terms of sanitation, in how the teachers treat the students or better environment in school were to be implemented then according to the theory their perception of the quality of education would be improved and additionally ones educational results would be enhanced. In this way the education itself shapes the perception of the students.

By analysing perception it becomes possible to obtain knowledge and better understand the issues facing education in Kibera. Through an analysis of individual perception it becomes possible to detect inequalities in education; the challenges identified in the research are examples of gender-, regional- and economic inequalities. Inequalities in education are harmful for the stock of Human Capital (see 2.1.1. Human Capital). Thus information that becomes accounted for through an analysis of perception can be beneficiary from a Human Capital approach; with assumed positive outcome for the economy and the country. The challenges the informants identified also show violations of Human Rights in the school system. For instance; they result in individuals having less access to education and not being safe from physical abuse. Thus perception can improve our understanding about how the school system can be improved from a Human Rights perspective.

The informants clearly states in both the interviews and the focus groups that staying away from school leads to more people, particularly boys, being part of bad behaviour such as criminality and drugs abuse which has depriving consequences on the community. Hence a study of perception can contribute with information about why students drop out of or miss out of school and that can contribute with knowledge about necessary action to take that will make the student stay in school. In this way the current policies and procedures at the schools are harmful for the community.

In addition; a study of youths not partaking in education could contribute with yet another layer of understanding. It is likely that such a study could detect a different kind of perception among that group of people. People that have dropped out of school are considerably different from the informants of this study since they are not students; that has an impact on how they perceive education and what they value as important. However; there are many different reasons for dropping out of school. In the study the informants named drug abuse, criminality, early pregnancies and the financial situation of the family as common reasons. Thus the reasons for dropping out can have an impact on how one perceives education. But based upon the research conducted it is not possible to conclude that dropouts have a different perception, we can only speculate. If a future study were to be carried out, to include people who have left the school system would be relevant. It is likely that by understanding their lives, perception and choices more knowledge and understanding would be visualised.

What previous research about education in Kibera has shown is that it is hard to obtain information and data; the 2008 year school reform is one such example. It is hard to measure the percentage of youths partaking in education and even more difficult to measure dropout rates and how many that stays away for longer or shorter periods of time. By analysing perception the issues become visual and the consequences it may have become accounted for; as such the negative affect it has for the individual and for the local community can improve our understanding. However perception cannot contribute with statistics about the issues but it can contribute with understanding and knowledge about the issues. Analysing perception could work as supplement to more traditional methods when studying education in Kibera and similar areas. Furthermore; a study of individual perception is also a way to include the students in the process of the school. It is a way to create a child-centred education which is based upon democratic structures. Thus analysing students' perception goes in line with UN policies and the development goals talked about in section 2.1.2 Human Rights.

Furthermore; most likely will the SDGs, which are about to be taken in to action, reshape the field of development for years to come just as the MDGs has

done until now. By analysing perception it is possible to see how successful the work with development goals is on a grass root level. Perception could be a way to examine the effects of the SDGs in an area like Kibera. The identified challenges and suggested actions to take are all relevant in regards to the suggested fourth SDG. Perception can add knowledge and understanding about what actions are necessary to take in order to be successful when working with international development goals. Hence; studying perception has the possibility to be a supplement to traditional studies of educational quality in deprived areas where it is difficult to obtain knowledge and data.

This thesis also concludes that perception can be useful in order to obtain information and analyse the successfulness of other development goals. In particular goals that focus on the well-being of people such as food and health can benefit from being examined from the perspective of individuals. It is likely that such studies would in similar ways to this one contribute with knowledge and understanding of how people affected interpret their situation, the challenges they face and what actions they think are important to take. By doing so it becomes possible to increase our understanding about what can be done to in a successful manner work with SDGs and MDGs.

In summary it can be said that by analysing student's individual perception it is possible to detect issues and challenges people face in relation to education. Thus; perception can increase our understanding of educational issues and in extent knowledge about necessary actions to take. In addition, the views about why individuals dropout of school become visual through individual perception; hence actions to keep students in school can be taken. Perception can work as a supplement to traditional studies of education and contribute with knowledge about issues and problems necessary to address. In this way perception can be beneficial when aiming to successfully fulfil the suggested fourth SDG. In addition perception can be a vital tool for other MDGs and SDGs as well. In particular development goals that are focussed upon the well-being of people, e.g. food security and health, can benefit from examining individual perception. Based

upon the findings in this study it is argued that perception should be used as a tool to become successful in regards to SDGs.

## **5.4 Can Educational Interventions Shape Student's Perception?**

The individually interviewed informants are members of Wale Wale Kenya and they get their school fees paid for by the organisation. The participants of the focus groups are not members of Wale Wale Kenya and their school fees are paid for privately. Every member of the three focus groups except one stated that their parents, other family members or guardians pay for their school fees. In focus group 2B there was one respondent who pays for school all by himself. In group 1B and 3B there were participants that sometimes worked a little on the side to help out to pay for the fees or get money to buy school materials they lack.

In addition to the differences in the finance the members of Wale Wale Kenya are active in an organisation that strongly emphasises the importance of education and that offers homework assistance and workshops about Human Rights, education etc. This is something that non-of the informants in the focus groups have access to. The implications of these differences are what this text is about.

Throughout the analysis data from the research has been presented and in the topics and issues addressed the information from the focus groups and the individual interviews have been presented simultaneously. The data from the two groups have together been the foundation of the discussion, the arguments and thus the conclusions. This is because they in general are rather similar; it is not possible to detect any general differences between the two groups based up the research.

For instance in 5.1.1. the respondents general opinions on education is discussed. In short they are positive to education; they see it as the “key to life”

and a way to create a better future. The two groups of informants have a similar perception in terms of the necessity of education. It is a perception based upon Personal Development. In 5.2. it is stated that their individual perception on education is formed by the community the respondents are a part of, through their families and by the fact that they are students. The similar view can be explained by the similarities in how their perception has been shaped throughout their lives. An example of the resemblance is that the individually interviewed respondents all have experienced not being able to pay for school fees before they got support from Wale Wale Kenya. Informants in both groups have also experienced comparable problems that affect their education such as lack of sanitation towels, getting physically punched in school and hunger. Their lives are rather similar except from the membership. Furthermore the respondents in both groups have stated that their families perceive education as important. Hence the participants of the two groups share many resemblances and their perception is shaped in the same context.

What does this say about Educational Interventions done by NGOs such as Wale Wale Kenya? Wale Wale Kenya's education programme is only two years old which can be considered a short period of time to have any great impact on one's mind. Except from the membership all informants have a comparable background through the life in Kibera and thus their view has been shaped similarly. Based upon the information given in the research it is fair to state that the Educational Intervention has not significantly changed the perception of the participants since their perception was already shaped in a similar context; they already had a positive view.

Nevertheless, there is a slight difference in the answers between the two groups. The answers and discussions in the focus groups tend to be less detailed than in the interviews. For instance; the individual interviews contributed with more challenges in regards to education than the focus groups did. Methodologically this can be explained through the pre-established relationship between researcher and informer talked about in section 4. Hence it is expected to be a difference in how elaborate and detailed the information is. Moreover it

becomes hard to detect the differences in perception between the two groups' because one group more elaborately contribute with information than the other. It could be a sign that informants that receive Educational Support are more reflective than others. Perhaps the difference in terms of individual perception between the groups would be larger if there would have been a pre-established relationship between researcher and participants in both groups and not only in one. Maybe there is a difference in perception but based upon the research that is something we only can speculate about.

However; what is clear is that the payment of school fees and provided homework assistance that Wale Wale Kenya contributes with has a positive impact for the education the members' receive. The participants have the opportunity to spend more time in school and thus obtain more education. They also get homework assistance which has a positive effect according to the informants. In addition the girls active in the NGO get sanitations towels for free. Based upon the research it is clear that concrete targeted actions have a positive impact on education for individuals. Educational Support is perceived as important. Therefore governmental actions that face these issues and challenges are necessary in order to successfully improve the educational system. It is through clear and directed actions real improvement can be made. But based upon history it is not likely that the government will take these kinds of actions anytime soon and in the meantime organisations that provide targeted support towards education has to fulfil this purpose.

## **5.5 Political Aspects**

In the background section it is stated that in 2008 the Kenyan government declared that the high school fees in public schools were to be abolished. Previous research has not been able to explain why this has not had any great long term impact. Analysing perception can actually explain the failure or at least contribute with vital understanding about the failure in Kibera.

Question 15 in the Interview Guide addresses this reform; the question asks if the respondents have heard about the political decision of 2008 and how it works in high schools in Kibera. Every single participant in both the individual interviews and the focus groups declared that they all knew about this reform but that it had never been implemented. All the participants stated that the public high schools still had school fees and also a lot of other fees and payments. Just by asking the students straight forward about it the explanation for the failure becomes clear. The school fees in public schools in Kibera still exist and therefore the reform of 2008 has failed to establish long term positive effects. However it is not possible based upon the information from this research to state that this explains the failure of the reform in the rest of Kenya since we do not know if it is the same all around the country. Neither does it add any information that can explain the transfers of students from private to public schools that happened in the first few years after 2008 (see 3.2. Education in Kenya).

From the answers given it is clear that participants do not know what have happened and why it never was implemented. Therefore theories and conspiracies appear to fill in the gap of knowledge. For instance; Dennis said that he thought the reform never was carried out since Kenya had changed government since 2008 and when they change government in Kenya these kinds of things tend to happen. Bosse on the other hand expressed a critical view of politicians in general as an explanation for it when he said that “the government just plays with citizens minds” and added that politicians in Kenya say these kinds of things because they just want to stay in power. Hanna referred to the reform as “empty words”. In focus group 2B a discussion about the level of implementation arose. Most informants in 2B said that nothing had happened but one person said that they did not take away the school fees but they had lowered them in public schools. He backed this argument up when he stated that the public schools are cheaper than the private, which all agreed were true. Ada also stated that she thought they had lowered the fees but not abolished them.

This is examples of the participants’ perception on the matter. What it shows is that when there is a lack of information people start to come up with their own

theories and explanations about what has happened. The theories are a mirror of one's perception and thus they become one's individual truth. The answers given by Bosse, Dennis and Hanna are clearly critical views of politicians in Kenya and in general the respondents seemed to have similar opinion on the matter. They all live in Kibera a deprived slum area and all respondents expressed a feeling of Kibera being let out by politicians in terms of failed promises and that is something that has affected their perception of politics. The informants voiced a feeling of Kibera not being cared for by politicians. Thus the life they live and the surrounding they are raised in create a critical view and as such they have a negative perception of politics. It is likely that this is not the first or the last failed promise by politicians they will experience. Thus experiences of politics and the actions of politicians in Kenya have created a critical view on politics in general among the informants of the study. In this way the perception of the informants is influenced by politics.

By studying individual perception it has been possible to show that the 2008 school reform has failed in Kibera because it was never carried out; the school fees that were said to be abolished still exist. It is not possible based upon the research to state that this is the case in the rest of Kenya. The participants of the study have different theories and explanations for this but no general explanation have been found in the research. The answers given by the respondents express a feeling and perception that Kibera and people living in poverty is being left out; as a result the informants have a negative view on politics and politicians.

## 6 Conclusion

The students perceive education as a vital factor for achievements in the future. The financial part of education is the greatest obstacle students' face because of poverty. Therefore the cost of education is a key factor of individual perception of educational quality; hence is the public schools regarded as the best. Other characteristics the participants perceive as vital factors of educational quality are: safety in and around school, quality of the teacher, quality of the facilities and the access to & quality of school materials.

The five greatest challenges to education are: school fees & finance, chores at home, violence in school, sanitation and food. The challenges have a negative impact on the amount of learning and the qualities of the education students receive. The challenges are all direct consequences of poverty. Sanitation is a larger problem for girls since they often cannot afford sanitations towels whereas physical punishment is more problematic for boys because they get beaten more. Other challenges identified are: mandatory school uniforms, pollution, noise and long distances between home and school. These issues all have a negative effect on the stock of Human Capital, Human Rights and Community Building.

The participants' individual perception is shaped and influenced by their families, the local community and the environment in school. The participants live in families with a positive outlook on education which influence their individual perception. The community the respondents live in have in general a positive view on education. Gossip in the community about youths not being in school is often negative, which is a sign of a positive view on education in the community. In addition the respondents state that the reputation a school has influenced their choice of school and as such how the community perceive education influence the behaviour and choices of the respondent.

Based upon the research it is possible to conclude that the 2008 school reform failed in Kibera because it was never carried out; the school fees in public high schools still exist. It is not possible however to conclude that this is the reasons it failed in the rest of Kenya. The theories the informants have about this is a sign of a negative perception of politicians. This view is influenced by previous experiences of political actions and thus is their perception influenced by politics.

The thesis has shown that a study of individual perception contributes with knowledge and a better understanding about challenges that students face in relation to education. Perception can therefore improve our understanding about necessary actions to take that can evolve the educational system in Kibera and in similar areas. Together with traditional studies of education perception can broaden the understanding of issues and challenges students face. Hence it can work as a tool to become more successful in the process of developing education. As a result perception can be useful when working with SDGs or MDGs. Based upon this conclusion it is argued that an analysis of individual perception can be beneficiary when working with other SDGs and MDGs, in particular if it is goals relate to the well-being of people e.g. food security and health.

The two groups of informants have a rather similar perception on education because their view has been shaped in a resembling context. Thus it can be stated that the research cannot prove that Educational Interventions significantly change the perception of individuals. What can be concluded is that Educational Interventions can improve the amount of education and the quality of learning individuals receives through targeted and directed support. Thus it is argued that if a significant improvement in the system should be possible the government has to conduct active and targeted actions in regards to the issues identified by students. Until that happens private NGOs has to provide Educational Support for youths in Kibera.

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# 8 Appendix

## 8.1 Interview Guide

1. What are your general thoughts about education?
2. What is a good school according to you?
  - a. What are the specific characteristic that creates a good school according to you?
  - b. *Make them specify their view on what characterises educational quality.*
3. What schools in Kibera do you think are the best and why do you think they are the best?
  - a. What do you think about your own school?
  - b. What are your thoughts about public contra private schools?
    - i. Which ones, public or private, do you consider to be the best and why are they the best?
4. Can you tell me about the process you went through when your high school was to be selected?
  - a. Who took the decision and what were the reasons for that decision?
  - b. Have you participated in a school transfer at high school level? If so what were the reasons for that transfer?
5. What do you consider to be the greatest challenges about being educated in the slums of Kibera?
  - a. Why are these the greatest challenges to education in Kibera?

6. Economic aspects of education:
  - a. Can you tell me about how your education is financed?
  - b. Except from school fees what do you have to pay for?
  - c. What is your opinion about it?
  - d. How would you like it to be?
  
7. What are you in need of in order to succeed with your studies?
  
8. Are there any great strengths of being educated in Kibera?
  - a. If so, what do you consider to be the greatest strengths with education in urban slum?
    - i. Why are these the greatest strengths of education in Kibera?
  
9. Food in school:
  - a. Can you tell me about the food system at your school?
    - i. *Make them talk about the economic sides, the quality of the food and the effects.*
    - ii. What is your opinion about the food situation at your school?
  - b. How would you like it to be?
  
10. Can you tell me about the time you spend in school and the time you spend doing homework?
  - a. What things are there that affect the time you spend studying?
  
11. Why do you think not everybody go to school?
  - a. What kind of people do thing you think dropout of school and why do they dropout?
  - b. Have you dropped out of school or have you had a longer break from school?
    - i. If so, could you tell me about it?

12. Is it different to be a boy or a girl in school?
- a. If so what and how is it different?
  - b. Do you think there are different reasons why boys and girls dropout of school?
13. Family:
- a. What does your parents/family/guardian think about your education?
    - i. Can you tell me about what they do for your education?
  - b. What do you think that parents in Kibera in generally think about education?
14. The social community/neighbours:
- a. What do your neighbours think about you going to school?
  - b. If you stay home one day what do they think about you?
  - c. What role does your neighbours and the local community play for your education?
15. In 2008 the government said that they would take away the school fees in public schools, have you heard about that?
- a. How does this reform work in the schools of Kibera?
    - i. What is your opinion about it?
16. As a final question I would like you to dream: If you were in charge of education in Kibera what would you do?