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# **Young Children's Opportunities towards Development and Attachment at an Orphanage in Uganda**

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The entrance of Sanyu Babies home and some of the children watching cars passing by.

# Abstract

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This study was performed at the orphanage Sanyu Babies Home in the capital city Kampala of Uganda and became possible with the financial support through the Minor Field Study (MFS) scholarship from SIDA. The purpose of the study was to view how the employees promoted children's attachment and development with the existing conditions at the orphanage. We used a qualitative approach in the form of semi-structured interviews as well as participant observations. Two different types of sampling were used, convenience sampling for the orphanage and purposive sampling for the employees. The theories we applied on the analysis was Maslow's Hierarchy, Erikson's Psychosocial Theory and The Attachment theory. In our conclusion we recognized deficiencies in the employee's fulfillment of the children's needs due to lack of knowledge as well as limited resources. The methods used at the orphanage were influenced by cultural values instead of evidence-based knowledge. Additionally, the extensive use of corporal punishment and special treatment affected the children's ability to develop and attach. Although, the desire to love and care for all the children were still present.

Key words: Orphanage, Uganda, Children's development, Attachment, Cultural aspects.

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# Abbreviations

ELDS - Early Learning and Development Standards

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

OVC - Orphans and Vulnerable Children

SBH - Sanyu Babies Home

UN - United Nation

UNCRC - The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund

# Table of Content

<b>1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT .....	7
1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY .....	9
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	9
<b>2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH.....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 EFFECTS OF STAYING AT AN ORPHANAGE.....	9
2.2 DISCIPLINARY METHODS .....	12
<b>3. THEORY .....</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 CHILDREN'S BASIC NEEDS .....	13
3.2 ERIKSON'S PSYCHOSOCIAL THEORY .....	15
3.2.1 <i>Trust vs. Mistrust: 0-1 Year</i> .....	16
3.2.2 <i>Autonomy vs. Shame/Doubt: 2-3 Years</i> .....	16
3.2.3 <i>Initiative vs. Guilt: 3-6 Years</i> .....	17
3.3 ATTACHMENT THEORY .....	17
3.3.1 <i>The Preattachment Phase: 0-2 Months</i> .....	18
3.3.2 <i>The Attachment-in-the-Making Phase: 2-6 Months</i> .....	18
3.3.3 <i>The Clear-Cut Attachment Phase: 7-12 Months</i> .....	19
<b>4. METHOD .....</b>	<b>19</b>
4.1 SAMPLING .....	20
4.2 INTERVIEWS .....	20
4.3 OBSERVATIONS .....	22
4.4 CODING .....	24
4.5 RELIABILITY/VALIDITY .....	24
4.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND CONFIDENTIALITY.....	25
<b>5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>27</b>
5.1 OBSERVATIONS .....	28
5.1.1 <i>The Classes in the Morning</i> .....	28
5.1.2 <i>Free Time in the Afternoon</i> .....	29
5.1.3 <i>The Evening Routines</i> .....	30
5.1.4 <i>Comments</i> .....	31
5.2 ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS.....	32
5.2.1 <i>Children's Needs</i> .....	32
5.2.2 <i>Development</i> .....	34
5.2.3 <i>Attachment</i> .....	36
<b>6. DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR THE PARTICIPANTS.....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE DIRECTOR .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE EMPLOYEES.....</b>	<b>46</b>

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Problem Statement

Uganda is a country with a lot of internal unrest that have affected the majority of the population who lives in poverty. The quality health care or even care at all is difficult to access and are mainly managed by non-governmental organizations. It is also confirmed through statistics that the treasured life of women and men are 55- respective 54 years (Globalis 2013; Landguiden 2016).

Because of these aspects, the amount of orphaned children that get abandoned in Uganda has increased the last few years. According to Bettman et al (2015) the definition of an orphan is a child suffering the loss of either one or both parents. Furthermore, the World Bank has termed Orphans and Vulnerable Children as OVC to define groups of children with negative experiences such as lack of educational options, morbidity and malnutrition. Child protection agencies in Uganda value it up to a few hundred orphan children, with half of them in the capital city, Kampala. Although, it is difficult to find statistics or more specific research about how many children that get abandoned annually. The most common areas where children get abandoned are at hospitals, bus depots or old pit latrines. It does not exist any actual research around the reason for why the children get abandoned by the parents. Furthermore there are some speculations about it and the usual ones are mother's circumstances and lack of moral character. They are portrayed as young and promiscuous women but also those who have given birth outside marriage (Cheney 2016, p.196; Bettman et al 2015, p.71).

Frankenberg et al (2013) mentions a conflict in how to view the child in the legal systems in sub-Saharan Africa. The child is either viewed as a resource for the family or as an individual with its own rights. However, it is still common to use the discipline strategy, corporal punishment. Uganda ratified The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in August 1990 (Frankenberg et al 2013, p.191-192; UN 2017). The UNCRC is a legally- binding international agreement, abiding 54 articles about children's rights. The purpose is to make the rights available to all children, regardless of their race, religion or abilities (UNICEF, 2016a). The convention concludes by four articles, called the general principles:

Article 2: The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.

Article 3: All organizations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.

Article 6: Children have the right to live a full life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.

Article 12: Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account. (UNICEF, 2016b).

Walakira et al (2014) mentions that the statistics about how many children that live in institutional care in Uganda is hard to establish, but it is approximately around 40 000 children. Abandonment, poverty or protections against violence are the most common reasons for children to be placed in orphanages. Children in orphanages can get delayed in their physical, hormonal, cognitive and emotional development. With the reason for limited interaction, exploring and risk-taking, the children's self-esteem and the possibility to develop healthy future relationships can be damaged. The Ugandan people have a strong belief in family and consanguinity. The country cherishes its culture and values the importance to share it with the children. Institutional care is therefore seen as a better alternative than international adoption, since the children get the ability to be a part of the culture and further on maintain it within the country (Walakira et al 2014, p.145-146).

These aspects evoke an interest on how the UNCRC, especially article six, is implemented at the orphanage. We wanted to review if the children's needs at the orphanage are being satisfied, as well as how their development get affected by the circumstances described above. Since we are interested in these aspects and international conditions for children, we chose to perform our study at the orphanage Sanyu Babies Home in Kampala, Uganda. Considering that the life course is influenced by how the development evolves in the early ages and affect every human being, we believe this field has high relevance according to social work. As well as the importance of gaining different cultural aspects and improve the awareness of various perspectives in life.



## 1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine how the employees at an orphanage in Kampala, Uganda, support the children in their process of attachment and development, based on the existing conditions at the orphanage.

## 1.3 Research Questions

- How are the working conditions at the orphanage?
- How do the employees describe the needs of the children they care for?
- How do the employee's work to fulfill these needs?

# 2. Previous Research

In the beginning our interest was to find previous research about how children's attachment and development affects by the method used at institutional care. However, we found it difficult to get enough research in this field. We have instead chosen to highlight previous research about institutional care; the use of corporal punishment and spanking as well as how cultural beliefs influence nurturing methods. These issues concern children's development and attachment in different perspective, we are therefore interested to view and gain an understanding on how it can affect children. To be able to find suitable research to our study we used the database Lubsearch and to make sure that the research was qualified we used peer-reviewed articles.

Key Words: Africa, Attachment, Care, Child care, Child development, Childhood development, Corporal punishment, Cultural aspects, Cultural values, Discipline, Method, Nurturing methods, Orphan, Orphanage, Resources, Uganda.

## 2.1 Effects of Staying at an Orphanage

Orphaned children are often cared for in their extended families but because of the high death numbers among adults, there are few families that have the economical ability to support them. The families that decide to care for the orphans often end up in poverty and as a consequence the children's basic needs become hard to satisfy (Roby & Shaw 2006, p.202).

As a result children placed in orphanages are vulnerable and consequently in need of more support than usual. Concern has been raised against institutional care and the possibility to meet the children's needs. Because of the belief that family's blood is of great importance within the Ugandan culture, adoption becomes rare (Walakira et al 2014, p.145-146). Roby and Shaw (2006) mention some critical opinions as well as fears against international adoption. Even if slavery officially was banned in Africa in the 1880's there are still cases of trafficking and child labor. A consequence of this is that few African countries are participating in international adoption (Roby & Shaw 2006, p.202). With the reason for the view on adoption in general, institutional care becomes more common for abandoned children (Walakira et al 2014, p.145-146).

Bettmann et al (2015) also highlights the knowledge about the consequences for children in institutional care, for example emotional difficulties, developmental delays as learning and cognitive functioning, as well as attachment disorders. Research also shows that personality functioning, intellectual processes and social relationships get affected negatively. These negative aspects are connected to children's ability to attachment within relationships and the quality of them (Ibid, p.71).

Moreover, there exists a connection between a child's attachment relationships in the early years and their future developmental paths. In order to develop healthy future paths, the relationships need to contain stability, consistency and trust. The ambition to create an attachment relationship for the child is driven by biological factors, regardless of the cultural background. A safe attachment provides the child a sense of security and the possibility to explore the world. Separation between the primary caregiver and the child might create a distress, anxiety or depression for the child, something that can affect their development. The children in institutions are exposed to separation daily as the caregivers often work in shift. The children are therefore at high risk for these consequences. It is also important for the child to have a warm and attentive caregiver, because without them, their development might get affected negatively. If the child has a warm and attentive caregiver, the possibility to achieve a healthy development increases (ibid, p.71-72).

Bettman et al (2015) discuss the result from a study performed at an orphanage in Romania, where the caregivers were trained to behave warm and responsive towards the children. Before the training the caregiver's barely communicated with the children and for this reason

the children showed signs of anxiety, impulsive behaviors and lack of eye contact. Later on when the caregivers started to act more warm and responsive, the children's cognition, language, motor development, but also their interpersonal skills and physical growth improved (ibid, p.72).

Furthermore, in institutional care, a common aspect is lack of time and knowledge of children's development. Due to this, the children's emotional and social needs become affected with the reason for limited attention from the caregivers. Moreover, the children's possibility to a healthy physical and psychosocial development can be at risk due to separations and inconsistencies in the relationship between the children and caregivers. The main reason for the absent caregivers is because of the deficient education, time, the amount of employees and the institutions opportunities. In order to promote children's development it is important to provide attentive and consistent relationships. However, the structural aspects within institutions have to be changed in order for the caregivers to have the ability to give every child the care they are in need of. In some institutions, the children are given one primary caregiver instead of different caregivers every day (ibid, p.77).

Malnutrition is a major health problem among children in Uganda and is associated with lack of knowledge, cultural aspects as well as social status of the primary caregivers. The field for complementary feeding is one area where the society's knowledge is deficient. Monitoring the child's eating habits is viewed as unnecessary until the child begin to eat solid food, during sickness or if the child started under eating or overeating. The existing knowledge in the society is influenced by cultural norms and advices from eminent members of the community with the reason for their wisdom in nurturing traditions (Nankumbi & Muliira 2015, pp.106, 108, 111).

Koletzko (2008) discuss how an ineffective nurturing can cause long term effects on growth, body composition and body functions as well as future diseases. Further on it will affect the child's cognitive ability and cognitive development. All children in young ages have different requirements according to the intake of food. Therefore, nutrition in the early years is important within the children's ability to grow and develop. In additionally the quantitative and qualitative nurturing generate future consequence within health (Koletzko 2008, pp.179-181, 184).

## 2.2 Disciplinary Methods

The definition of corporal punishment according to Chen (2007) is: “The use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control of the child's behavior.” (Chen 2007, p.105).

Corporal punishment has long-term negative effects, such as increased anger, aggression, tolerance for violence, low self-esteem, depression, increased drug-use, low achievement in school, delayed cognitive development, psychological illnesses, a tendency to act violently towards others and a deterioration in the relationship between the child and the parent. Anti-social behavior and abuse within relationships in the future are also significant consequences of corporal punishment. Chen (2007) highlights some alternatives to corporal punishment, as paying attention to the child, acknowledge and encourage the good behavior, ignore trivial or harmless misbehaviors, label the behavior rather than the child. Corporal punishment is most common on children in the age of two to three years old, but studies show how it is ineffective on them. The children do not realize that their behavior is wrong and will therefore with great possibility repeat it again (ibid, p.106-107).

Six reasons for why corporal punishment are used:

1. Poor knowledge about the damaging consequences.
2. Refuse to believe that spanking is harmful to children.
3. A belief that corporal punishment controls or makes the child responds.
4. The Bible supports physical punishment.
5. A belief that criminality occur because of children do not get spanked enough.
6. Certain cultural groups of children do not get as affected by spanking as other groups of children. Therefore, the cultural manners and customs might change if corporal punishment was to be banned (ibid, p.108).

There is no scientific evidence that show any credibility for these reasons to be effective; it is instead shown to create negative consequences on children's development (ibid, p.109).

A mild open-hand strike to the buttock or extremities is usually defined as spanking, noted by Ferguson (2012). Spanking is often included in corporal punishment, however these two disciplinary methods are not compatible. Although some of the negative outcomes are the same, for example aggression, low achievement in school and depression. Corporal

punishment often includes hitting with an object for example a switch, slapping the face, pushing or shaking, but never to the extent of causing injuries. As well as the research mentioned above, this study also noticed that there is no evidence indicating any positive outcomes with spanking or corporal punishment (Ferguson 2012, pp. 197, 203).

The primary intention with corporal punishment is to immediately prevent the children from misbehaving. Because the methods are usually used on children younger than 5 years old, the children rarely understand their wrongdoing in their behavior. Corporal punishment does not include communication and therefore it is hard for the children to understand why they misbehaved. It might instead cause desirability for the children to not get caught by the surrounding. The link between corporal punishment and children's aggression are a common debate within the present research. It is also associated with a tendency of aggression in adulthood, especially towards family members. The children can come to believe that aggression or violence is justifiable (Gershoff 2002 p. 540-542).

The ideology of the society includes the norm according to what people should think and act. The members in the society do not question the norm, instead it is seen as a natural approach. Cultural values are understandable through the ideology. How the morality is viewed within the families depends on the interactions and the values of identity. Accordingly, the form of nurturing is based on common sense created by the community. Ideologies might create difficulties in the values, because of historical aspects as well as changes by the society and in consequence it might affect the humans negatively. There is a difference between the two forms of ideology that Frankenberg et al (2013) discuss, lived ideology and intellectual ideology. Lived ideology includes common sense in the society's and how nurturing is practiced. Intellectual ideology on the other hand, includes thoughts inspired by professional thinkers, for example UNCRC (Frankenberg et al 2013, p.193-194).

## 3. Theory

We have chosen to apply Children's basic needs according to Maslow's hierarchy, Erikson's psychosocial theory and Attachment theory on our empirical data.

### 3.1 Children's Basic Needs

In order to develop healthy, the human has to fulfill the five basic needs according to Maslow's hierarchy, and through that, we want to highlight the importance of the connection

between the needs. Therefore, the following theory will help us gain a deeper knowledge to view how the employee's fulfillment of the needs affect the children.

According to Maslow's hierarchy the human have five basic needs; physiological needs, safety needs, belonging and love needs, self-esteem needs and finally self-actualization needs. To reach the higher levels of needs the human has to satisfy the lower level of needs. Unfortunately, the basic needs for children are affected by many difficulties and poverty is one of them (Prince & Howard 2002, p.28).

The first level of basic needs is the physiological needs, including essential needs such as food, shelter and clothing. If these needs are not fulfilled it can lead to consequences, for instance malnutrition and without any form of health care the children will probably suffer from illnesses. Accordingly, children in poverty have a higher risk of death than other children. Nevertheless, if the children in poverty are able to fulfill the needs, there will still be even more difficulties in meeting the needs of the second level, safety needs (ibid, p.28-29).

The safety needs stands for security, stability, dependency, protection, freedom from fear, anxiety and chaos. Many children in poverty live in an environment that is unsafe and unhealthy, therefore it becomes a challenge for these children to get their safety needs fulfilled. The poor living conditions the children are exposed to can create problem in the child's development. To be able to receive a healthy development a child need to feel safe (ibid p.29)

A child's brain can be affected by stressful situations and cause memory loss, anxiety, attention deficits and an inability to control emotional outbursts. With the reason for lack of control in their behavior they are more likely to fail in school than children that are not exposed to poverty. If the child succeeds to fulfill the safety needs, it will be even more challenging to meet their needs in the third level, the needs of belonging and love (ibid, p.29-30).

Humans have the need of belonging and love from the first moment of life. It is more common for the children to develop secure relationships if they receive these needs in the early ages. In families with economical difficulties it is more common for parents to be less nurturing and inconsistent in their use of discipline and punishment. The lack of nurturing in

the home leads to feelings of being unloved, therefore the children seek love and belonging in other places (ibid, p.30).

In the fourth level it is important to have a need of self-esteem, in order to create a motivation in life. A person with a belief in himself has a greater possibility to perform in the challenges he meets. Successful experiences promote your own understanding of your capabilities of handling the challenges (ibid).

In order to maintain the self-esteem, a person need to be what he or she are capable of being, described as the fifth level, the need of self-actualization. Having a job is no longer a solution to poverty and therefore many children having a negative attitude towards education.

Children in poverty, therefore have a hard time to maintain their self-esteem and reach the self-actualization need (ibid, p.30-31).

### 3.2 Erikson's Psychosocial Theory

The reason for why we have applied Erikson's psychosocial theory is because we want to highlight the interaction between the human and the environment. The theory explores how positive and negative experiences affect different stages in the child's life course. Due to the outcome of the experiences the life course takes different directions. Since the purpose of our study is to view how the employees at SBH work to promote the children's development and attachment, we see this theory as a suitable option.

Erikson created the theory in an attempt to describe the development through the life course with eight psychosocial crises reflecting a conflict between two personality characteristics, the personality development and the social/ emotional development. These two characteristics based on the epigenetic principle describe the assumption about how development is controlled by a genetic plan. The crisis cannot be prevented to occur, to change or to be forced through it. Although Erikson considered the crises as individual who made them occur differently to everyone. For example, individual circumstances affect the result of the crisis even if all children are going through a conflict between trust and mistrust during their first year in life. Erikson bring up the example about a child with warm clothes and food for the day comparing to a child who is left alone, constantly hungry and ignored by its family. Trust is experienced differently for these two children and therefore affects the

outcome of their development around basic trust in different ways. Erikson defines psychosocial stages and associates each one of them with a crisis. All the stages are influenced by the previous one and are affecting the following stage. The stages do not have to be enduring, it can be corrected by experiences later on (Martin & Fabes 2006, p.35).

As we mentioned above, Erikson's theory (ibid, p.36) includes eight stages. The following stages are Industry vs. Inferiority: 7-12 years, Identity vs. Identity Diffusion: 12-18 years, Intimacy vs. Isolation: 20s, Generativity vs. Stagnation: 20s- 50s and the last one Integrity vs. Despair: 50s and beyond. We are only going to apply the first three stages on our study, as the ages of the children at Sanyu Babies Home are zero to four years.

### 3.2.1 Trust vs. Mistrust: 0-1 Year

The first stage of development in Erikson's theory is about developing the basic sense of trust. This involves positive emotionality and personality. In the first year of life, trust develops both individually and towards others. The conflict the child face in this stage is either mistrust against the world or a belief that their basic needs will be satisfied. It is important to find a balance between trust and mistrust. This will then help the child manage disappointments in the future, and positive emotions can evolve. For children to develop a trust they need physical comfort and a minimal extent of fear as possible against the future. If this is fulfilled, the children will create a belief that the world is a good place to live in. Unpredictability, rejection and inconsistency in a child's caregiving can form negative emotions, such as mistrust and anxiousness about the world (Martin & Fabes 2006, p.206).

### 3.2.2 Autonomy vs. Shame/Doubt: 2-3 Years

During the late infancy and through the toddler years it is important for the child to face the conflict between autonomy versus shame and doubt. If the child develops a trust to the caregiver in the previous stage, they will create an awareness of their own behavior. Through this, they will claim their independence and autonomy, and at the same time, pride and independency develops in their actions. On the other hand the child can develop self-conscious emotions, such as shame, doubt and uncertainty if they are restrained or punished too brutally. In this stage the child can be aware of the emotions and might use them to be able to get what they want. They can also show signs of embarrassment when they are caught



violating their caregiver's rules. Erikson enlightens how important the second stage is for the child's emotional development (Martin & Fabes 2006, p.212).

### 3.2.3 Initiative vs. Guilt: 3-6 Years

In this stage a new psychosocial crisis evolves, initiative versus guilt. Initiative is the way to be willing to take responsibility and to develop new knowledge. Further on, guilt is when the child feels failure and anxiety while exploring new situations. Physical, cognitive and social skills improve for a child during this stage, thereby they can set goals and form plans to be able to reach them. Sometimes the goal is too hard to achieve which might end up with failure and as a result the child starts to feel bad. Thereby it is important to keep the balance between initiative and guilt. During these years the child's language and the control over their own body starts to develop and in order the child begins to interact more mature. If the child has a supportive social world that is consistent in the discipline they will manage to maintain this balance in order to not feel guilt. Without the balance the child might be associated with independency with negative behavior (Martin & Fabes 2006, p.299-300).

## 3.3 Attachment Theory

Attachment is an important aspect for children in young ages and can come to determine future relationships. Within attachment the children can develop a sense of security and create their own personal identity. Our interests are therefore to view, with help from this theory, how the employees at SBH promote children's attachment and how it might come to affect them in the future.

Attachment is usually described as the tie that develops between the child and the caregiver. Attachment is referred to as a long-lasting relationship and not seen as a comfort; therefore it is separated from bonding. Even if the first hours or days after birth are a sensitive period for bonding, evidence shows that it is possible to create a bond between the child and the caregiver a few years after the birth. For example, adopting parents still have an opportunity to form a tie with their adopted child. When the child feels secure with the caregiver they attempt to explore and learn about their world. Without this security the child becomes anxious and the curiosity against the world disappears. According to Bowlby, attachment includes a personal development, both individual and against others. Within the attachment, children learn about their own dignity and how they are available towards others, something

that future relationships will be based on. If a child's need is ignored or neglected in the early years, they will come to believe it will appear in the future, which can affect the trust to others and thereby avoidance to intimate relationships occurs (Martin & Fabes 2006, p.219).

A child's development of attachment relationships in the early years have been divided into four phases, based on Bowlby's theory and Ainsworth's observations of children in Uganda, Africa and Baltimore, United States. The first three phases cover a child's first year in life. Even if there are major cultural differences between the children in these countries, the development of attachment occurred to resemble to each other (ibid).

### 3.3.1 The Preattachment Phase: 0-2 Months

Both social and nonsocial stimulation produce a positive response, therefore children in this phase seldom protest when a caregiver leave. Neither do they react differently to different caregivers. There is a minimal amount of research that shows that the children would prefer the primary caregivers to others. With no attachment developed, it does not exist any discrimination in the child's response to the caregiver. Human faces and their voices are two things that children are drawn to, but they do not have the ability to associate these with a specific person. A child's responses are controlled by their reflexes rather than voluntarily actions, something that increases the bond between the child and the caregiver (Martin & Fabes 2006, p.219-220).

### 3.3.2 The Attachment-in-the-Making Phase: 2-6 Months

Direct responses towards familiar people are more common during this phase. The children begin to show reactions towards the people they recognize more often through smiling and/or direct looking. Something that does not happen often towards strangers. The child has not developed object permanence, meaning that they do not have the ability to understand that people and objects exist independently. Martin and Fabes (2006) choose to describe object permanence as "For a young infant, when a parent is "out of sight" the parent is "out of mind"" (Martin & Fabes 2006, p.220). Therefore children's attachments are not completely fulfilled in this phase.

### 3.3.3 The Clear-Cut Attachment Phase: 7-12 Months

In studies about children in foster care, it is shown that children before seven months adapt easily to the new caregiver, compared to children older than seven months. Consequently, the development can be affected by a disruption in their attachment. In this phase the child develop a clear-cut attachment towards their primary caregiver. Therefore, they develop object permanence and by that, the ability to create their own goals. The children begin to seek contact with the caregiver, for example by lifting up their arms when they want to be picked up, or through protest when they are separated.

Clear-cut attachment, as mentioned earlier, includes two characteristics; the stranger anxiety and the separation anxiety. These characteristics indicate the emotional tie between the child and the caregiver. It could also cause stress for the caregiver due to the child's awareness about the importance of a primary caregiver. After developing attachment, children begin to show wariness and also emotions of fear towards strangers. Nevertheless, it is possible for older children to establish stranger anxiety if they are in an unknown setting. On the other hand, stranger anxiety is not common in those cases where the children are used to several adults. The children with less experience might think of strangers with a negative approach. Children with separation anxiety feel insecure when the caregiver disappears, they would likely begin to protest. When the caregiver reappears again, the child will reveal signs of happiness and relief. The separation between the caregiver and the child can come to increase a stress between them (Martin & Fabes, 2006, p.220-221).

## 4. Method

Through the process of our thesis, we worked together during most of the parts since we believed we accomplished a more combined outcome from this method. Considering the fact that we are complementing each other, in a positive way, we are gaining a broader perspective. Although we divided the search for previous research between each other, in order to cover a more extensive area within the field.

To obtain our empirical data we used a qualitative approach in the form of semi structured interviews, as well as participant observations. The character of qualitative methods has its focus on the words and the relationship between theory and practice. It is important that the

emphasis on the research questions are general and that the participants' views and perspective are of value. The theory is based on the practical research results and furthermore, the method has its focus on interpretation and is aimed to understand the reality. In order to view how the participants interpret the surrounding environment, we can understand how their reality are created (Bryman 2008, pp.413, 340-341).

## 4.1 Sampling

SBH is located in an area called Mengo in Kampala, the capital city of Uganda. It is a Non Governmental Organization, with a belief of Christianity. SBH is funded by donations from different churches, volunteers, schools and other NGO's. There are 45 employees, for example manager, accountant, nurses, social workers and domestic staff, also called Mamas. The orphanage has the ability to take care of 50 children, although during our stay there were 47 children at the most.

The choice of the orphanage occurred through Bryman's (2008) description of convenience sampling since the coincidence of the establishing of the contact. The convenience sampling is aiming for the choice of the respondents or the field that is available for the researcher at the time (Bryman 2008, p.194).

For the choice of the employees we used purposive sampling, which is according to Bryman (2008) a strategic way to sample participants that are of relevance to the research questions in the study. In this kind of sample, it is important with a variety within the participants and that each one of them have different key characteristics, with the reason to keep the relevance to the research questions (ibid, p.392). We had the opportunity to interview and observe employees with different kind of professions, for example social workers, nurses and caretakers. Therefore we believe it gave us a good variety within the participants, one of the reasons for our choice of sampling. We have only interviewed and observed the employees at Sanyu Babies Home and are not interested to compare and generalize with other orphanages.

## 4.2 Interviews

In the first instance, we carried out interviews with the employees at the SBH. We performed ten interviews, based on the amount of employees as mentioned before, with the possibility to

speak English at the SBH. We interviewed one temporary director, one social worker, two teachers, four Mamas, one nurse and the primary director. The temporary director was the only male participant in our study; all of the others were female. In order to achieve as much empirical data as possible, the time frame of each interview was 20-40 minutes. Aspects that affected the time were the participant's ability to understand and answer the questions, as well as their interest in participating. All the interviews were recorded to make the transcribing easier. We performed all the interviews together, with the reason for the belief that it gave us different perspectives and input paths to the empirical data. It was also beneficial for us in the way that one of us could ask the question and the other one could focus on the notes.

We used semi-structured interviews considering the flexibility that we could change or add questions during the interview, but also because of the possibility to interview the participant more than once. Since we did not know how the situation would take place and how much empirical data we would gain, we saw this form of interviewing as a suitable option. At the same time, the structure could be kept in order to receive as useful answers as possible. We also believed that the possibility to interview the participants repeatedly could be beneficial for our empirical data. This also made it possible to get a second opportunity if we did not gain enough empirical data at the first interview session (Bryman 2008, p.413).

In a qualitative study it is important with a close relationship between the participants and the researcher, in order to create a possibility for the researcher to view the world through the participant's eyes (ibid, p.371-372). For us, it was important to retain the balance between a good contact with the participants and still maintain the objectivity. If the balance would alter it could influence our judgment and thereby affect our objectivity and thereby the study negatively. In order to retain this we did not visit the orphanage more than necessary, neither did we make any effort to bond with the participants beyond the purpose of the study.

One cultural aspect that affected our study and us was the participants' view on time. People were often late and lived by the adage "go with the flow". When we tried to confirm the interviews with the participants they often got postponed or moved to another day for various reasons. The interviews created different reactions from the participants, for example curiosity, honor and cautiousness. The location for them was always different, depending on where the participants were at the moment. Therefore it was common with interruptions by the sound from the traffic, other employees or children. This affected our interviews but not

in a negative way, due to the participants way of managing the interruptions. We believe this is another cultural aspect, since people seemed used to handling different situations at the same time.

We started to create an interview guide for the acting director, with the reason to gain a more general perspective of SBH. After having completed the interview with the director, we composed a new interview guide for the employees, influenced by the director's answers. We chose to have the last interview with the primary director to make sure that we had received enough information in all of the areas. The themes in the interview guides we composed were accordingly to Bryman (2008) affected by our research questions with the purpose to establish a positive outcome (Bryman 2008, p.419). We recorded all of the interviews and transcribed them in the extent it was possible. Because of the participant's lack of knowledge in the English language, we found some difficulties in understanding them and to be understood.

Before we began with our interviews we composed an information letter about the purpose of the study and asked the participants to read it through in the beginning of the interview. Considering the participant's lack of knowledge in the English language, we always asked if the information was understandable or if they had any questions before we went on with the questions.

### 4.3 Observations

In participant observation, observations occur as well as a form of interactions with the participants. We made observations within the entire area of the orphanage. The focal point was to observe how the employees interacted with the children, we therefore observed different parts of the day, which included, feeding, bathing, play time and as well classes for the two older groups of children (Bryman 2008, p.389). Since our accommodation was located at the same area we got the permission to observe at any time. Therefore, it gave us the opportunity to observe at several occasions and the ability to collect a big amount of material. The participant observations created an opportunity to form a good contact with the participants.

Bryman (2008) also reads up on how there may be contexts when the observer becomes a minimally participating observer. There can perhaps be a situation when the observer has to participate since it is unavoidable not to. In regards of respect towards the participants the observer can feel obligated to get involved. Otherwise it might be seen as a lack of commitment and respect, thereby it could lead to a loss of credibility among the members of the social setting (ibid, p.391). During our observations we had to participate in some chores concerning the children, such as washing, feeding, showering and teaching. It gave us the opportunity to observe how the employees work towards the children's basic needs.

Ahrne and Svensson (2011, p.90) discuss a form of participant observation called partial participation, implying that the researcher participate in some aspects, but not in others. The independence will therefore be retained. The participation will be affected by the extent of resources (among them social standing, gender and ethnicity), competency and the approval from the researcher. In some cases the moral in the society will influence the form of the participation. Partial participation is usually more common since researcher rarely participate completely. The benefit of keeping the character of being a researcher and not act like one of the participants is to gain information the members usually would not share with the others in the group. A negative dimension of this kind of observation is that the participants sometimes regarded us as volunteers at the Home. Therefore, we had to bear in mind the possibility that we ceased to be considered as observers at some occasions.

As we mention above, corporal punishment is used by the employees to discipline the children at the orphanage. We believe this method is damaging the children's development and attachment more than it is promoting it. Even if we understand the cultural aspect of corporal punishment, we had a hard time witnessing it, as well as the children's reactions. During the observations, it became difficult for us not to react when the employees performed corporal punishment on the children. We handled this through disconnecting our feelings and comforting the children. When it became too hard to handle, it happened that we stopped our observations and walked away for a while.

We have been taking notes during our observations in order to remember the actions and behavior from the participants. We used two kinds of field notes; mental notes are of use when it is inappropriate to take notes in the moment. Jotted notes used to hastily write down short notes, quotes or keywords preferably out of sight with the reason that it can make

people suspicious. When we performed participant observations, we preferred to use mental notes, as it was harder to take notes without being seen, with other people present. After our observations, we used full field notes in order to develop the earlier notes as detailed as possible. Full field notes are supposed to take place in the end of the day, but preferably as soon as the observations are done. To avoid losing any interesting parts we saw the importance in our study to use full field notes, especially to develop our mental notes. During the observations our notes had its focus on how the employees disciplined the children with corporal punishment, how they promoted the children with love, supported them in their development within walking and eating. Likewise, we took notes on their teaching methods in the classes for the children.

## 4.4 Coding

When the interviews were completed and recorded, we transcribed our empirical data to be able to process it through coding in accordance to the Grounded theory. We could thereby structure the empirical data into categories and concepts, to view connections and patterns. Accordingly, in the interpretation of our data, the coding proceeded partly before, during and after the empirical data was collected. We used a manual coding method in the forms of highlighters to be able to categorize the aspects we found most interesting. Through these categories we created new documents (Jönson 2010, p.56-57).

Bryman (2008) mentions Strauss and Corbin's view on Grounded theory and describes three forms of coding: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. During the process of our coding, we used all these forms but in different parts of the categorizing. In the process of breaking down, examine and categories our data we used open coding to be able to extract concepts and frame new categories. Further on, we used axial coding for the possibility to find connections and patterns of the interactions within the categories we created during the open coding. Finally, we used selective coding to choose the main categories we wanted to study further (Bryman 2008, p.514-515).

## 4.5 Reliability/Validity

Reliability refers to the question if the result is repeatable or not. Occasional conditions can affect the result of the study and thereby influence the reliability in a negative way (Bryman 2008, p.49). We are aware of the fact that it is impossible to generalize the outcome



considering that we did not know what population this sampling is representative for. To reduce this kind of consequence we established a good contact with the field and ensured that they met our requirements for the study.

Validity is a method that measure if the conclusions are connected with what the study claims to measure, in other words if it measures the study's research questions (ibid, p.50).

External validity is about the use of case studies and small samples, which can generate a minor problem for the qualitative researchers. We have used the internal validity with focus on the congruence between the researchers observations and the concepts. It is viewed as strength within qualitative research because of the prolonged attendance and participation within the social life in the group. Moreover, it will be possible for researcher to ensure a higher level of congruence (ibid, p.352). We have been spending eight weeks at the field where we performed our study and we therefore got the opportunity as researchers to create a good contact with the participants. There is also a high level of compliance between our observations and the concepts. We therefore believe that it is to our advantage to apply internal validity to our study.

As we mentioned in the section Observations, we were aware of the difficulties of keeping our role as a researcher, with the reason that we spend a lot of time on the field. Therefore it was easy to create a relationship with the participants because we were seen as members of the group. In order to counteract this, we tried to find a balance to create relationships with the participants but at the same time keep our role as researchers. We considered it as important to inform everyone about our study and its purpose. At the same time we tried to be free to participate during our observations, with the reason to create a good contact with the participants.

## 4.6 Ethical Considerations and Confidentiality

There are four different ethical principles we have had in mind during our study: informed consent, consent of requirement, consent of confidentiality and consent of use. We have according to the ethical principles been aware of the participant's vulnerable situation and therefore treated their information carefully in order to protect their identity.

As Bryman (2008, p.131) states, in the informed consent the participants have been informed about the study, the elements it contains and its purpose. Information that the participation is voluntarily given, also the right to end their participation whenever they want during the study. The participants have been informed about the following information before we began our study. We have only been using the empirical data we collected from the participants who gave their fully consent and completed the study.

The participants had the right to decide over their contribution in the study. If someone of the participants would have been underage the caregiver had to give their approval. An aspect, we did not need to consider as neither of the participants were underage (ibid, p.132). However, we believed it was good to be aware of this since there were children at the field, as their behavior, physical and emotional needs could have affected us and our role as researchers. To prevent this action we saw the possibility to reflect around different events between each other and were thereby able to cope easier with difficult situations.

In obedience to the consent of confidentiality the empirical data and the personal information of all the participants must be treated with absolute confidentiality and all the participants will be anonymous (ibid). We have been using pseudonyms instead of the real names, in order to ensure that the personal information in the study can not be recognized for unauthorized access. All the collected data were only used for the purpose of the study and the material was codified.

Nygren (2012) describes consent and how it can be affected by a position of dependence. For example, if a superior asked their employees to participate in a study the consent could be given with the reason for a position of dependence. The employee might choose to participate to reduce any form of consequences, for example lower salary. It can also lead to that some participants might choose to terminate the study later on. An advantage for the researcher to go through a superior in a specific field is to get in contact with relevant participants for the study. Although, if a position of dependence exists, the self-determination can be affected negatively (Nygren 2012, p.34-35). All the participant were assigned to participate in our study by the superior at SBH. Therefore, we believe the choice to participate could be influenced. However, all the participants completed the study and thereby it is difficult to take this into account.

Considering the facts that we are young white women from the western world, we had to bear in mind how it might affect the employee's behaviors at SBH. We wanted the employees to understand our intention with the study, as it was to view their methods and not believe that our purpose was to change the organizations with new western methods. However, we did not experience any special treatment from the employees and was at the first moment treated as members in the group.

## 5. Results and Analysis

Within this section we will present the result and the analysis of the observations as well as the interviews. In order to receive a better understanding, we will begin to describe the location we performed our study at. We will then continue to present our intentions with the observations and the interviews.

SBH is a big complex consisting of three connecting buildings. When you arrive to the area, you need to go through a gate where you meet the play area. A gravel walk directs you to the first building where the children's bedrooms are situated. The children are divided into three different bedrooms, according to their age. One for the babies, zero days up to six months. Another for the ones who are six months up to one year. The last bedroom is for the children between two and four years old. When you pass the bedrooms you arrive to the dining area and the shower area as the two older groups of children share. Furthermore, in a connecting building the orphanage has two classrooms where the two older groups of children get the opportunity to learn and develop together with a teacher. The children go to class Monday to Friday, four hours in the mornings. During the afternoon the employee's let the children spend time outside, where there were access to swings, a sandbox, green areas, one carousel and a gazebo.

In the section "Previous Research", the African culture is presented as well as its values, although our intention is not to discuss in general how the people in Africa or Uganda nurture their children. We will present and discuss, from our point of view, the existing cultural norms among the employees at SBH. In order to gain a pre-understanding about SBH and their working methods we began to observe the environment. We observed several occasions

during the day at several times. The classes during the morning, the free time during the afternoon, the feeding and showering during the evening. Our intentions with the observations were to view the environment at the orphanage and how it promoted the children's ability to develop. For example, the access to material supplies the employee's had in order to let the children learn with toys and through playing. We also wanted to view the methods the employee's used within development, attachment and discipline. Further on, the employee's behavior towards the children including any form of special treatment or, if and how they encouraged the children to develop.

After the observations we performed interviews with two directors, one social worker, two teachers, one nurse and four Mamas, with the intention to be able to receive a wide perspective of the employees and their capacity to promote children's development and attachment. Furthermore, we wanted to gain an understanding about the employee's knowledge about the children's needs, development and attachment. We also had the intention to gain an insight on their approach and behavior towards the children. In our opinion, these aspects were of value for the ability to gain a result related to our research questions.

## 5.1 Observations

### 5.1.1 The Classes in the Morning

The classroom for the younger children, between six months and two years, were a small room, approximately 20 m<sup>2</sup>. At the door we were asked to take off our shoes since the floor was covered with a broadloom. The Mamas used towels as diapers for the children and it was common that these leaked. At a few occasions we observed how the Mamas did not change on the children until most of them were in need of it.

Further on, the room had three windows on one side, some of them had painted pictures on animals and the walls were covered with colorful colors. The room contained a small changing table, four baby seats, one small TV and one CD player. The children also had access to toys, suitable for their age but some of them were broken. During the class, the teacher usually let the children interact with the toys themselves. It happened that the teachers used the CD player or played drums and sang in order to encourage the children to sing along

and dance. Except from the times when there were volunteers around as a support, there was only one teacher for 10-15 children. We also noticed how the employee's were absent from the classroom at a few times.

The classroom for the older children, between two and four years old, were around 30 m<sup>2</sup> and separated in two parts by a wardrobe in the middle. The room had the same kind of carpet as in the other classroom and the walls were painted in green. There were shelves on the walls with boxes filled with tools for educational purpose, as well as toys suitable for the age of the children. In one area of the room, there were two small round tables with chairs around them, where the teacher gave the children the opportunity to practice writing numbers and letters. In order to develop the children's coordination and logical thinking, the teacher allowed the children to play and put together Lego pieces. Moreover, we observed how the teacher tried to teach the children names of different animals.

During the class, we observed the teacher use special treatment for some of the children. We could also observe how the teacher used different disciplinary methods for the same misbehavior and corporal punishment were the most frequently used. A hit in the head or on the back was frequent forms the teacher used, either with a toy or the use of a hand. In order to show the children how their behavior was not accepted, it was common that the teacher made them leave the room. The teacher often left the children alone up to 30 minutes. Another observation we had was when a school class visited SBH. The teacher changed her behavior and pattern towards the children, for instance in the way of using communication, talking slowly to the children, looking at them and explaining in order to discipline them.

### 5.1.2 Free Time in the Afternoon

During the free time in the afternoon, the Mamas allowed the children to play outside. A fence surrounded the play area, with one gate towards the area where the guesthouses was situated. The fence was of steel but we saw how it existed broken parts and it was therefore possible to both get in and out. We could observe how the Mamas did not react when the gate was open or considered the fact that the children might leave the area. The Mamas did not react until the children were outside the gate and their reactions could differ, they mostly yelled at them; sometimes they used corporal punishment in form of hitting their behinds or heads. During another observation, one of the mamas watched a child misbehave. To show

the child that the behavior was wrong, the Mama bit the child in the cheek and said, “If you bite others, I will bite you”. Later on, she apologized to the child, although she repeated once again “if you bite others, I will bite you”. Despite this, we have observed at a few occasions that the Mamas used communications in order to inform the children when they did something wrong.

The play area had a gazebo that was empty except from benches at the sides. This was a place where the Mamas used to put mattresses for the babies to stay on. However, the Mamas gave all children the possibility to play and interact here. The gazebo had two entrances with two baby swings, hanging down from the ceiling at each side. In the rest of the play area there were four regular swings, one carousel, one sandbox and some green areas where the Mamas allowed the children to run around. If it was raining during the afternoon, the Mamas let the children play inside, even if they did not have a playroom with toys for these occasions. Instead the Mamas divided the children between the younger and older once in one of the bedroom and the eating area, despite this the Mamas allowed the children to walk between the rooms. Instead of interacting with the children, the Mamas often watched TV.

### 5.1.3 The Evening Routines

The room where the food was served was long and narrow. The Mamas placed the children in the age of three and four years on their own chair with a small table. There was one long bench at one side, where they placed the two years old next to each other. On the opposite side there was a higher bench, suitable for the children from six months up to two years old. During the feeding, the Mamas gave the three and four years old children their own plate to eat from with their hands. Before these children ate, the Mamas made sure that they had washed their hands. All the other children were fed through the system of using the same plate and the same spoon as three to five other children. We observed how the mamas accepted that some of the children did not eat, without trying any further.

After the dinner, the Mamas showered and dressed the older children in order to prepare them for the night. The routine for the younger ones were different, they were cleaned with a wet towel before they got dressed. At some occasions, we observed how the Mamas could change the children's clothes in order to make them look nicer. For example, instead of the clothes they were already wearing, they could change the top in order to match the bottom. Because

of the lack of towels and the amount of employees, the ability to help all the children immediately was difficult for the Mamas. In order to make the children stay calm and wait on their turn, the Mamas sometimes used the towels to flick the children with.

#### 5.1.4 Comments

Our purpose for the observations was to observe the employee's working methods towards the children. Different methods were used at SBH, however we could observe from several of the employees a frequent use of the disciplinary method, corporal punishment. One observation during the free time in the afternoon showed how a Mama used corporal punishment in the form of biting a child in order to discipline the child's misbehavior. Another observation during the children's evening routines showed how the Mamas used towels to flick the children in order to make them stay calm. As mentioned in the section previous research, Gershoff (2002) applies how the method corporal punishment is intended to constrain the children from further misbehaving. On the contrary Chen (2007) discuss how alternative methods to corporal punishment has shown to be more effective concerning the children's ability to understand when their behavior are unacceptable (Chen 2007, p.106-107; Gershoff 2002, p.540). According to our observations, the employees used both communication and corporal punishment in order to discipline the children. However, we noticed contradictions in the participant's discussions during the interviews and their actions in practice. What is the reason behind this? And what would the consequences be? These questions we ask ourselves but we will not be able to fully answer them in our study. Further on, during the classes in the morning, we also reflected about the teacher's knowledge about the method corporal punishment and if it was influenced by the cultural norms at the orphanage instead of evidence-based knowledge.

According to Frankenberg et al (2013) corporal punishment is a common disciplinary method in East Africa and the ideology within the society is based on norms as well as cultural values, which influences people's behaviors (Frankenberg et al 2013, p.191-194).

Accordingly, it might show a lack of knowledge beyond the cultural norms at the orphanage, which indicates how their ideologies are of higher priority. We could also observe what we view as an insufficiency in SBHs resources and we therefore suspect that the opportunities to further educate the employees are limited. The need of belonging and love in the theory of basic needs that Prince & Howard (2002) mentions, view how the economical situation can

have an affect on children's development. For example, how the caregivers are consistent in their nurturing as well as their use of discipline and punishment (Prince & Howard 2002, p.30). As we mentioned above, the employee's had an inconsistent use of both communication and corporal punishment in their nurturing methods. Once again, we can associate the inconsistency in the employee's methods to the lack of resources at SBH. The importance of the consistency in the caregiving is also highlighted in Erikson's Psychosocial Theory with the purpose to find a balance within the stages in order to have a healthy development (Martin & Fabes 2006, pp.206, 299-300).

## 5.2 Analysis of the Interviews

### 5.2.1 Children's Needs

According to basic needs, we asked about how the employees would describe the children's needs, specifically and generally as well as how they made sure that the children's needs got satisfied. Most of the Mamas answers was similar to each other, and for instance confirmed that all children were being properly fed. During an interview with one of the Mamas, she replied:

“Because if she doesn't take porridge [...] she would take a watermelon. She can fill a cup of porridge and takes a watermelon. So those one they don't give us any problem even if it doesn't take, the next shift she will take “ (Interview 4: Mama 2).

As the Mama explained, it was common that the children refused to eat and according to our observations we noticed how the Mamas accepted it, without any further attempt to feed them. The lack of employees in reference to the amount of children, as well as the Mamas worked in shift, made it difficult, from our point of view, to ensure that all the children got satisfied at every meal. Prince and Howard (2002) mention the importance of Maslow's hierarchy and the physiological needs, among others the essential need for food. Since the Mamas allowed the children's behavior to refuse the food, we come to wonder if it exist deficits in the knowledge about fulfilling the basic needs. In addition, a common complication for the children is to be affected by conditions as malnutrition and other illnesses (Prince & Howard 2002, p.28-29).



Lack of knowledge, cultural manners and the primary caregivers social position in the society within Uganda, cause a consequence of malnutrition among the children. The current knowledge about nurturing methods within the community is impacted by cultural norms and wisdom from highly valued members. In addition, the communities' knowledge about complementary feeding is deficient (Nankumbi & Muliira 2015, pp.106, 108, 111). The educational background among the employees at SBH was limited and we therefore suspect if the knowledge was mostly based on cultural norms affected by the orphanage. Although, we could see a knowledge in the care within the feeding for the babies. During the interviews, many of the participants talked about malnutrition and that it was a common disease at SBH. Accordingly the Mamas used a specific formula suitable for the children's ability to develop. Furthermore, it shows an attempt among the employees to fulfill the physiological needs according to Maslows Hierarchy (Prince & Howard 2002, p.28-29). With this quote, the Primary Director discussed the desire to help all the children in the best possible way:

“[...] we desire to have as many people working with us as possible and you know ensuring that we give the best to the children in terms of feeding, in terms of, you know, hygiene, in all aspects of life.” (Interview 10: Primary Director).

During the interview, the primary director showed awareness about how the consequences of staying at an orphanage could affect the children. She highlighted the importance to ensure every child's specific needs at SBH even though the resources was limited, as well as the opportunity to give them what all children in the society receive. Koletzko (2008) mention the importance of nutrition for children in the early years in order to promote the growth and development. There are specific requirements for every child in their intake of food and if the nurturing is inadequate it can create long-term consequences in growth, body composition and body functions as well as future diseases (Koletzko 2008, p.179-181, 184). The Primary Director had a desire to give the Mamas a qualified education in order to prevent the consequences from the lack of knowledge within nutrition. As well as highlight how all children at the orphanage are in need of care and to be ensured the same safety as all other children in the society, there is no difference. As mentioned in the section Theory, Maslow's hierarchy includes the human's five levels of basic needs. In order to satisfy all the basic needs, the first level of needs has to be satisfied. Poverty and other difficulties affect the human's ability to satisfy the first levels of needs and therefore is it unusual to reach the

higher levels, especially self-esteem and self-actualization (Prince & Howard 2002, p.28). The Primary Director as well as the employees had an ambition to help the children fulfill all the basic needs. Although, due to lack of resources at SBH it became more difficult for the employees to support the children in their fulfillment of the needs.

### 5.2.2 Development

The view and the promotion of development at SBH was one of the main subjects that caught our interest. Learning through playing as well as dividing children according to age and ability was common in order to work towards the children's development. The Primary Director stated:

“There is not much learning that will go on but giving them that opportunity of going to a big room and explore and play, because we believe that children learn through playing”  
(Interview 10: Primary Director).

Learning through playing is a method used in the morning classes by the teacher to support the children in their process of development. The toys are suitable for the children's age and create an ability to learn according to every child's possibilities. According to Ericson's Psychosocial Theory, initiative and guilt develops during the age of three to six years old. At the time when physical, cognitive and social skills improve, the children have the ability to create their own goals and reach for them. Depending on the balance between initiative and guilt, the children can create a feeling of either insufficient or negative feelings towards independency. Therefore, it is important for the children to maintain the balance and with a secure surrounding the possibility increases (Martin & Fabes 2006, p.299-300). The participants discussed how the morning classes gave the children the opportunity to independently explore and develop. However, we could see how the amount of encouragement towards the children differed. From our perspective, it was not the children's needs that determined the teacher's amount of encouragement; instead it was due to the teacher's personal thoughts towards each child.

Emotional difficulties, developmental delays as learning and cognitive functioning are consequences of staying at an orphanage. Orphans are often more vulnerable than other children and accordingly in need of more support. An attentive caregiver is therefore of great

importance in order to create a secure development (Bettman et al 2015, p.71-72; Walakira et al 2014, p.145-146). From our point of view were the Mamas present in the moment, however they did not interact with the children or encouraged them enough. In our interview with the acting director he expressed his view on institutional care:

“Because the longer these children stay in this institution, the more they are damaged.”  
(Interview 1: Acting Director).

In orphanages, the children increases the risk to develop negatively and the acting director talked about how it can come to affect them in the future. To prevent this, he mentioned the importance of educating the society about the danger in abandonment and thereby decreases the amount of children staying in orphanages. The children’s opportunity to develop emotional and social needs, as well as a healthy physical and psychosocial development is dependent on the caregiver's knowledge, time and inconsistencies in the care (Bettman et al 2015, p.77). We could see recurring aspect in the sense of poor knowledge and the limited resources with the limited number of employees in reference to the number of children. This impacted the care and it often occurred special treatment towards the children. Accordingly, from our perspective, the care in institutions makes it difficult to gain a healthy development.

Moreover, Bettman et al (2015) discusses the values of attentive and consistent relationships in the promotion within development. Some institutions have created a concept of providing every child one specific caregiver in order to prevent the un-fulfillment of the needs the inconsistency causes. During the first year of life, according to Ericson’s Theory the children are developing a feeling of trust versus mistrust and it is of great value to maintain the balance. To be able to manage future disappointments, the children must develop a sense of trust towards the caregiver’s ability of physical comfort and the possibility to satisfy their basic needs. Without a fulfillment of the children’s needs the trust can alter to mistrust towards the caregiver and a fear against the world (Bettman et al 2015, p.77; Martin & Fabes 2006, p.206). At SBH, the employees talked about how every Mama was assigned to a few children each, even if all of them cared for all the children. However, from our perspective, the Mamas affections towards the children differed. As mentioned earlier, we could once again see how the Mamas personal opinions about the children could affect the caregiving towards them. Aspects as children's appearance or how they looked determined if they

received special treatment. We therefore question if the institutional care have the ability to give every child what it need in its development, without any future consequences.

### 5.2.3 Attachment

Our interest was to view the employee's perspective on attachment, as well as how they worked towards the children's ability to attach. Although, attachment was according to the participants a synonym to love and to feel belonged. The term attachment was frequent interpreted with the word bonding and it was few of the participants who seemed to understand the difference. There appears to be a lack in understanding of the different aspects of attachment. According to the Attachment Theory is attachment separated from bonding since it is seen as a long-lasting relationship and not as a comfort (Martin & Fabes 2006, p.219). The social worker shared her view of attachment:

“...attachment helps those children understand that they belong somewhere.” (Interview 2: Social worker)

According to the participants, attachment gives the children a feeling of belonging and to be close to someone. During the interview, the social worker had awareness that the process of attachment could be different for each child. Some children attach immediately, while others are in need of more time. According to Bettman et al (2015), a safe attachment is based on security and the opportunity to discover the surrounding. Within institutional care, the caregivers work in shift therefore separation between the caregiver and the child is a common factor. As a consequence distress and anxiety can be developed, and accordingly the child's curiosity get affected (Bettman et al 2015, p.71-72). From our point of view, the employee's did not always offer a secure attachment to all of the children. We view how the aspect special treatment, as mentioned earlier, affects the employee's behavior. Moreover, we also consider how the Mamas working shift can affect their awareness of each child's needs.

Furthermore, attachment is described as the tie between the child and the caregiver. At the time when attachment starts to develop, the children separate the feelings towards the caregiver and strangers. The feeling of fear in relation to strangers can develop, although it rarely happens for children who are used to several adults (Martin & Fabes 2006, p.219-221). Because of all the different volunteers, visitors and the Mamas working shift it was according

to the Attachment Theory difficult for the Mamas, even if they tried to have the ability to create an attachment towards the children. However, we felt that the Mamas worked to create a sense of attachment for the children towards the home. Often when the participants talked about SBH they saw the importance of calling it home. In our interviews we talked about attachment and one of the Mamas expressed:

“Showing them love, yes, showing them love. That's the only, that's the only option to get bond with a child. To bond with a child you have to love that, to love him or her.”

(Interview 3: Mama 1)

Among the participants, love was the most common subject that occurred while we talked about attachment. In order to make the children feel attached the Mama expressed love towards them. Kisses, hugs and calling them name such as “baby” or “darling” was their way of showing it. In the child's life, the first hours or days is of importance for the possibility to attach. Although, the Attachment Theory show a possibility for the child to attach with the caregivers even after a few years after birth. However, it is easier for children younger than seven months to attach to a new caregiver than children in older ages (ibid). The Mamas affection allowed the children to attach despite the ages, although it was more common for them to express love towards the babies. It was difficult to identify the attachment concerning the older children and from our perspective it could have been the lack of attention from the Mamas.

Children's attachment in the first year of life can come to affect their developmental paths in the future. In order to have a healthy development, children are in need of stability and consistency during the childhood. Regardless of cultural backgrounds, every child has the inherent desire to establish secure attachment relationship (Bettman et al, p.71-72). As mentioned before, the inconsistency in the Mamas shift was another obstacle in the way of creating attachment relationships. Although, the Mamas used physical contact to show the children love and give them possibility to attach.

## 6. Discussion

In this section, we are going to apply our personal thoughts and discuss the result and the analysis we achieved. Four different themes have been recurrent among the employees through the process of this thesis. Basic needs, development, attachment and corporal punishment. Accordingly, we have chosen to further discuss these themes. In our interviews and observations, the subject, limited resources did often appear. In order to answer our research questions, we have chosen to discuss the term as a part of the existing conditions at SBH.

We believe the knowledge about nurturing methods among the employees is deficient because of the priorities within the existing cultural norms at SBH instead of evidence-based knowledge. From our point of view the employees used “tough love” in order to nurture their children. In their way of showing love, we believe the employees forced the children to grow up in the early ages to be prepared for challenges in life. We noticed how the way of showing love towards the younger and the older children differed. The love for the younger children included more physical contact as hugs and kisses, while the employees used “tough love” on the older children. Love and to feel belonged are the employees way of describing attachment. In order to help the children in their process of attachment and development, the employees used special treatment in their nurturing. We could therefore view how the employees used encouragements towards some of the children as well as the disciplining method corporal punishment to others. Although, from our perspective, both methods are used for the purpose of love.

The employees had daily routines for the children that they followed and respected meticulously, in order to fulfill the children’s basic needs and the promotion of their development. We believe the recurring routines are important and helpful for the employees in their working methods. Despite the fact that it exist, in our opinion, a shortage of employees, the routines are at least accurately followed, which is a positive aspect within development. We also viewed the method learning through playing and the use of suitable toys for the children’s ages as positive in the employees work towards the children’s development. However, we noticed how the employees did not support or encourage all children and therefore, we believe the method “learning through playing” was not practiced righteous. We were uncertain if the employees had the knowledge to understand the method

learning through playing and how it was supposed to be used in order to be beneficial for the children. The method was often used during the classes and we could witness how the employees were present, yet they rarely interacted with the children except from when they practiced music.

Often mentioned in the interviews was the ambition to fulfill the children's needs, as well as promote their development and attachment. The participants referred a lot to methods they used in theory, although this was difficult to identify for us in practice. According to our understanding, the employees viewed the cultural norms higher than the knowledge from their education, and as we discussed earlier, the cultural norms at SBH influenced the employees nurturing methods. Additionally the shortage of employees affected the possibility to give every child the effort to develop. This was clearly shown in the method corporal punishment regularly used by the employees. Communication was another method the employees used, however from our point of view; the employees did not seem to notice the difference in the outcomes of the two methods. Once again a factor, were we wonder if the knowledge is deficient. Additionally, we suspect that the economical situation and the lack of resources at SBH are another factor for the possibility to educate and give the required support to all the employees. In order for the employees to fulfill the basic needs entirely and to promote development as well as attachment at SBH, we consider that these factors have to be improved.

The UNCRC and especially the general principals were, according to our opinion, not followed even if Uganda, as mentioned before, ratified the convention in August 1990 (UN 2017). In our belief, the convention is a symbolism for respect and to regard the children, not only as children, but also as humans. Humans with the possibility to receive the things they are in need of, without any forms of exploitation or discrimination, and to get their needs fulfilled in order to achieve a healthy development.

We believe SBHs have the ability to improve with new methods. UNICEF are funding the project Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS), originally from the United States, and are working to implement it within African countries. The project is aiming to develop methods in learning standards, including the expectations about children's learning and how they achieve the goals, as well as how the adults practices work towards the children's development. ELDS has its focus on the children's physical, motor, social and

emotional development. To improve the practices, the project is aiming to change the whole education system, which according to the Africans are dismissing their methods. Even if these methods showed positive result in other countries, it is important to bear in mind that culture are meaningful for Africans (Ejuu 2012, p.3-4).

We believe this project, as it considers all parts in a child's development, is positive to take into account, in order to improve the nurturing methods at SBH. According to our opinion, the current methods are un-beneficial for the fulfillment and promotion of the basic needs, including learning, development and attachment. We believe the influences from the culture norms at SBH have an impact on the methods used by the employees. Although, we can see a great desire among the employees to work towards this fulfillment. The project encouraged how adults should work with children and can contribute with new knowledge in order for the employee's at SBH to develop their competence. To change the system, the employees at SBH need time, in order to adjust and develop into new knowledge's. At the same time we should not forget the importance to respect their cultural norms and values.

As there are limited resources at the orphanage, and as the employees appear to have lack of knowledge about how to fulfill the needs of the children, it is difficult to ascertain that the needs, including basic needs such as food and opportunities to develop attachment and bonding, are met. Nevertheless, the employee's showed dedication and love in this environment despite the limited opportunities and resources.



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# Appendix 1: Introduction letter for the participants

2016-10-20

## **Information about an MFS-study at Sanyu Babies Home**

We are Alida Karlman and Emma Jonerud and are studying to become social workers at Lunds University in Sweden. The main reason for our stay here at Sanyu Babies Home is to collect material for our bachelor thesis, through interviews and observations. Thank you so much for being a part of our study, we are truly grateful for your participation and for the opportunity to come here and learn more about children's conditions in Uganda.

The purpose of our study is to explore how you as employees at the Sanyu Babies Home support the children in their process of attachment and development, based on the conditions and the resources that exist here in Kampala, Uganda. Working with children in need is a very important job and there is still more to learn about how to care for these children in the best way.

Your participation is voluntarily and therefore you have the right to end your participation whenever you want. You will maintain anonymous and the material we collect will only be used for our study.

This study is founded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, SIDA. If you have any concerns feel free to contact our supervisor Bodil Rasmusson from our university in Sweden.

E-mail: [bodil.rasmusson@soch.lu.se](mailto:bodil.rasmusson@soch.lu.se)

Regards

Alida and Emma

# Appendix 2: Interview guide for the director

## **Background data about the organization**

- Can you tell us about the founder and history of the organization?
- Can you tell us about the vision and mission of the organization in general and for Sanyu Babies Home more specifically?
- Does the Sanyu Babies Home cooperate with any other organization?
- How is it funded?
- Which laws regulate your work at the home?
- What does the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child mean to you in relation to working at the Babies home?
- Does it occur any inspections at the Babies home by the government or any other organizations? How often?
- What kind of strength and weaknesses do you see in the Babies home? How do you maintain these strengths within the organization? How can you improve these weaknesses?

## **Background data about the employees**

- How many employees are working at Sanyu Babies Home? What different kind of position do they have?
- Which is the educational background of the employees?
- Does Sanyu Babies Home offer any internal education for the employees? What kind and how often does it occur?

## **Background data about the children**

- Can you tell us about the different reasons for why the children are coming here and what kind of background they have?
- How does the process work when the organization is receiving - and transitions a child?

# Appendix 3: Interview guide for the employees

## **Background questions**

- How old are you?
- Female or male?
- Professional role?
- How long have you worked here at Sanyu Babies Home?

## **Work and work assignments**

- Can you tell us about how an ordinary workday could look like?
- Which laws regulate your work at the home?
- Is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child known and implemented here at the Babies home?
- How do you view the possibility to get training and workshops here to develop your knowledge? What is your opinion about the training and workshops, which the Babies Home provides?

## **The children at Sanyu Babies Home**

- Do any of the children have any contact with their parents, siblings or other relatives?
- How would you describe the children's needs, both in general and specifically for individual children?
- How do you do to make sure that the children's basic needs are satisfied?
- How do you work to promote the children's psychological and social development?
- What are you proud of here at the Babies Home?
- Is there anything that you yourself would like to change in order to get better opportunities to support and take care of the children?
- What is your view on attachment? Do you work to promote children's ability towards attachment?
- Is it common that the children get attached to either the employees, the volunteers or to other visitors? Can you give us any example?
- How do you believe that the children's development and attachment get affected by how the volunteers come and go?

### **Before and after Sanyu Babies Home**

- What is the routine when a new child arrives to the Babies Home?
- Will the child be assigned a specific mama in order to promote attachment?
- How do you prepare a child for a transition out from the Babies Home?
- How does a transition work when siblings are involved? How do you work with siblings?