

**University of the Witwatersrand: Department of International Relations**



**CASCADING INTERNATIONAL NORMS IN GENDER EDUCATION,  
AND THEIR IMPACT ON DOMESTIC POLICY IN SUB-SAHARAN  
AFRICA**

A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities by:

**Lyse Jimerson**

**Student No.: 514606**

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Under the supervision of:

Dr. Amy Niang

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## DECLARATION

I, Lyse Jimerson, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Lyse Jimerson

Signed at .....

On the ..... day of ..... 20.....

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

BDPA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CGD	Centre for Global Development
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CR	Completion Rates
DAW	The Division for the Advancement of Women
DFA	Dakar Framework for Action
EFA	Education for All
GPI	Gender Parity Index
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INSTRAW	The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
IR	International Relations
LR	Literacy Rates
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NAPW	The National Action Plan on Women
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
OSAGI	Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PTLG	Persistence to Last Grade
RTE	Right To Education
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UN	United Nations
UNDA	United Nations Development Agency
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United National Populations Fund
UNGEI	United Nations Gender Education Initiative
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's and Education Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UPE	Universal Primary Education
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

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## ABSTRACT

Gender education, and in particular gender equality in education, has been a prominent topic on the global development agenda over the past few decades. The need to achieve gender equality, gender parity and access to education for girl children, have been key global education goals, evident in the numerous international and domestic education policies which have emerged. This paper seeks to understand the role that cascading international gender education norms have on national gender education policies.

Since the launch of the first international convention focusing on gender education in 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), significant progress has been made by the international community in guiding, developing and driving international norms that have helped to shape domestic gender education policy reforms.

The importance of gender education has largely been driven by a growing concern around the prevalence of poverty and the lack of significant development in developing countries. The low rates of education amongst girl children and the sustained marginalization of girls in these countries have necessitated the development of specific gender education norms. Additionally, the growing evidence of the many benefits of educating girls and ensuring girl children receive equal access and opportunity has also necessitated the development of these norms.

This research paper analyses the impact that international norms and policies have on gender education policies in SSA countries, by focusing on two countries, Rwanda and Uganda.

**Key Words:** Norm Cascades, International Norms, Gender Education, Gender Parity, Gender Equality, Access, Domestic Policies

# 1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Gender education, particularly gender equality in education, has been a prominent topic on the global development agenda over the past few decades. The need to achieve gender equality, parity and access to education have been key education goals on the global agenda, evident in the many international and domestic policies which have emerged as it relates to gender education. The purpose of this paper is to understand the role that cascading international gender education norms have on domestic policies. Using the context and background of two Sub-Saharan countries, Uganda and Rwanda, the paper will set the scene for the research objectives, to explore the impact of international norms on domestic policies.

Since the launch of the first international convention focusing on gender education in 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1979, the international community, comprising of various international institutions and actors including organisations like the UN, UNESCO, civil society and advocacy groups, amongst other, has made significant progress in guiding, developing and driving international norms that help to shape gender equality in education, and its related policy reforms. Conventions like CEDAW and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been consistent in as far as gender education norms and goals are concerned. The goals in these agreements/treaties and conventions have firstly continued to affirm the notion that education is a basic human right for all, but secondly also affirmed that it is critical for states to drive gender parity and access in primary education in order to fully yield the benefits that educating girls, in particular, can bring for a nation. This imperative seems most pressing in Sub-Saharan Africa, which is characterised by low levels of gender equity in child education.

Despite the focus on education and gender education in the past few decades, the state of education in developing countries remains a concern. Research indicates that over 60 million of the world's primary school aged children are not in school, (UNESCO, 2015; World Bank, 2014). Of this number, more than 9% are girls, compared to 7.97% who are boys. In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), of the 34 million primary school-aged children who are out of school, more than 18 million are girls, (World Bank, 2014). This means 23.30% of all out-of-school children living in SSA are girls, (World Bank, 2014). This is also the region with the highest rates of poverty and under-development, (UNDP, 2015). The international community, comprising of various actors and institutions, has therefore devised various goals and targets linked to specific norms, that are aimed at helping developing countries to decrease those numbers and ensuring that gender education becomes both a priority as well as a norm, as it is in developed countries.

The importance of gender education has largely been driven by a growing concern around the prevalence of poverty and the lack of development in developing countries. The low rates of education amongst girl children and the sustained marginalization of girls in these countries have necessitated the development of specific gender education norms. Additionally, the growing evidence of the many benefits of educating girls and ensuring they receive equal access and opportunity has also necessitated the development of these norms.

International gender education norms have therefore been very influential in driving gender education policies at state level. This has also led to a growing critique in the cascading and adoption of international policies and norms domestically, as the implementation of the international norms highlights the over-emphasis on achieving targets and reporting numbers, rather than creating fundamental and sustainable changes for the reality of the girl child.

Similarly, international policies and norms are criticised for being unrealistic, and not contextually adaptable to ensure their effectiveness at domestic level, ( Berg, Desai, 2013)

In light of this criticism, this paper looks at these gender education norms and how they have positively or negatively impacted the countries that have adopted them.

The paper starts by outlining the context for gender education and equity in education and the importance of educating girl children. This is followed by a discussion on the theoretical framework adopted for this research topic. The methodology used in collecting data is then presented, followed by an introduction of our two case studies, which are two SSA countries. The paper then moves on to understand the international perspective on gender education, and this is done by firstly presenting and reviewing the various gender education norms that exist and which have been selected for this study. The following section delves into an analysis of the key conventions and agreements that make up the argument of the study and finally, the paper attempts to prove the hypothesis to conclude with an overview of the impact of international norms on gender education at domestic level, which forms part of the core argument for this paper.

This next section provides a overview on the importance of gender education, and why there is such a dedicated international push to drive and improve the state of gender education in developing countries, particularly as a tool towards achieving development.

### **1.1. Impact of Girls' Education on Development**

Research shows that there is a strong correlation between girls' education and development in a country, (Centre for Development, 2002). According to the Centre for Development

(2002), education is key to economic development for individuals and for nations as it can help to alleviate poverty and under-development in societies.

According to the Global Campaign for Education (2005), every year of schooling lost for a girl child represents a 10% to 20% reduction in her future income. Research also shows that achieving parity in girls' and boys' enrolments can raise national per capita economic growth by 0.3% per year, or 3% in the next decade, (Global Campaign for Education, 2005).

Furthermore, the UNDP states that educating girls and women can assist in achieving or improving at least six of the eight developmental goals set by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2016) through the launch of the previous MDGs. The Centre for Global Development (CGD) (2002) affirms this, highlighting that achieving gender education indicators results in substantial progress for African development.

Ultimately, when girls are educated, it translates to women who are able to make better choices, including decisions on maternal health, for example. Educated mothers are more likely to have healthier pregnancies, healthier babies, and immunise their children, thus preventing hunger and malnutrition, (CGD, 2002).

Another benefit of educating girls is the reduction of the burden of disease on society.

Research has shown that women who have received a minimum of primary school education are more informed about disease, (Feinstein, Sabates, Anderson, Sorhaindo, Hammond, 2006). According to the UN (2013), if women in SSA could only complete primary education, maternal deaths would be reduced by 70%, which equates to almost 50,000 lives being saved. In countries where women are educated, there is evidence of better health not just for the woman but for those around her including her children. This is because the higher the education level that one has, the more income you are likely to earn, and this impacts

health. Women earning a higher income, make better health choices, including nutrition, maternal health, amongst others, (Erdoğan, Yildirim, and Tosuner, 2012).

In terms of economic activity, educating girls in agriculturally reliant economies also directly correlates to higher agricultural productivity, (UN Women, The Vital Role of Women in Agriculture and Rural Development, 2011). UNESCO (2013) has found that higher rates of education among women results in more productive farming which, in turn, results in declines in malnutrition and hunger rates. Higher farming productivity creates employment opportunities, which ultimately assists households in escaping poverty, while also imparting the necessary skills to help boost economic growth, (UNESCO, 2013).

Further studies conducted by organisations such as UNESCO also shows that educating women can foster democracy and women's political participation, (Bhalotra, Clots, Iyer, 2013). This is an important step towards achieving gender equality, if women's representation in positions of power and decision-making increases, (Centre for Global Development, 2002).

To emphasise the importance of education, the UN has in fact declared education to be a basic human right for all, therefore not just for boys, but girls alike. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26, 2 states that 'everyone has the right to basic education', (1948). The World Education Forum (2015) also states that education is crucial for the realisation of all other human rights.

However, as this study will show, this right is one that is not equitably exercised, with girls in the Sub-Saharan African (SSA) region being some of the most marginalised in exercising this basic human right of education. Driving girls' education requires a focused approach both internationally as well as domestically, in order to tackle the prevalence of gender inequality and the gender gap in education.

However, inequality in education is not a stand-alone problem. It is part of a bigger challenge facing women in various other sectors and is part of a broader gender inequality challenge. It is however an important issue, as research shows that getting gender education to equality can help to close the gender gaps in all the other three key areas (Health, Political and Economic), (WHO, 2017).

All this research on the importance of educating girl children and women provides the rationale for this study and for why there is a strong need to push gender education, especially if development and poverty eradication is a priority. Gender education has a cascading effect on equality and social and economic development, and this points to the urgency required to invest greater focus and resources into high quality education for girl children globally, which the Global Campaign for Education (2005) has emphasized repeatedly.

## **1.2. The Ongoing Challenges and Barriers To Girls' Education in SSA**

Despite the many known benefits of educating girls, unfortunately, the average girl-child living in SSA continues to face many barriers which affects her ability to access this 'basic human right'. This section will discuss some of the many challenges facing girl children, and which hinder access, equality and gender parity in education. Many of these challenges continue to be neglected when addressing the topic of gender education, even though it has such a significant impact.

The SSA region has and continues to face many ongoing economic, social and political issues, and unfortunately, it is the girl child and women who suffer the worst. Whether the issue of poverty, early marriages, or forced work, (UN Women, 2013), females are the most marginalised, are not valued and continue to not be afforded the same opportunities, or in many instances any opportunities at all, to get an education (UNGEI, 2016), (Hertz, 2004).

Challenges like conflict, and violence have far reaching effects which impact girl children. Rape for example (UNICEF, 2008), is prevalent during conflict and affects girl children the most. This results in unwanted pregnancies and HIV/AIDS, which all negatively impact the girls right to education. The risk of violence for girls on the way to school or at school is another barrier preventing girls from going to school, (PEPRAF, 2017).

Additionally, even the physiological make-up and development of a girl child has the ability to impact her getting an education. For example, menstrual periods affect a girls' ability to go to school in SSA. This is due to the lack of available facilities to cater for girls while they are on their menstrual cycles, but also because in many societies, when girls go through this, they are considered women, and therefore ripe for marriage, UNESCO, 2014).

Many of the challenges facing girls continue to be political, economic, cultural and community-based challenges. If we look at the most recent international measure for gender education, the MDGs, whose measuring period ended in 2015, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report indicates that many of the SSA countries who performed poorly in their education related goals of the MDGs had started with poor social, economic, and even political conditions, at the beginning of the MDG period, which made achieving of the goals that much more challenging, (UNDP African MDG Report, 2015). Therefore, this proves that these challenged to directly and negatively hinder progress,

despite any new policies and programs that may be implemented.

These are just some of the many challenges facing girl children when it comes to receiving an education. The many policies developed to help the girl children however do not focus on providing solutions to these fundamental challenges.

The next section looks at the theoretical framework employed in the study. The theoretical framework helps to position the paper based on existing literature and theories related to the topic of norms and gender.

## 2. CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: NORM CASCADES AND NORM DIFFUSION THEORY

This research paper adopts a deductive research approach to test two theoretical concepts. This is done by reviewing how norms and policies cascade from global level down to national policy level and how the adoption of international norms and policies impacts national domestic. We test the theory by reviewing how the cascading of norms occur, as well as exploring different the actors and motivation which drives cascading of norms.

The Constructivists Theory proposes that world politics is embedded within a deep structure of norms and values. The existing norms within a society ultimately alter the identities and preferences of states, (Klotz, Audie, 1995). They therefore determine the nature of the state. The idea that all concepts, ideas, ways of doing certain things, as well as vastly accepted global norms, are all socially constructed, form part of the constructivist school of thought. Norms are socially constructed ideas formulated and spread by groups of individuals who believe certain things ought to be a certain way, and these ideas spread from there, (Fierke, 2013). Norms therefore start as conceptual ideas which determine a way of doing things. In turn, these ideas become widely accepted and adopted as norms and, thus, become the new way of doing things within a society.

Barkin, 2003 defines Constructivism as follows, which is relevant for this research, *“Constructivists see the facts of international politics as not reflective of an objective, material reality but an intersubjective, or social, reality (Onuf 1989). In other words, what actors do in international relations, the interests they hold, and the structures within which they operate are defined by social norms and ideas rather than by objective or material conditions, (Barkin, 2003; Pg. 326)*

This paper examines how ideas and norms are spread and the impact that social norms and ideas ultimately have on how states act, and on what policies are adopted within a state

Finnemore and Sikkink's (1998) *International Norm Dynamics and Political Change* argues that constructivism is not adequately able to answer many of the questions for which the normative theory is sometimes able to answer. They argue that although constructivism can explain stability, it is not able to explain change. Therefore, the importance of how things change or come about, because we live in an ever-changing era, is not addressed and questions about change help to drive current research. (Finnemore et al, 1998). This study therefore explores the norm diffusion theory as a way of countering and explaining the limitations of the constructivist perspective.

Nyhamar proposes that norms are linked to a society's values, as they express shared values of its members and are maintained by the members' approval or disapproval. In International Relations (IR), norms can be described as those shared values that states may have, which compel them to develop and agree upon set of norms that most states agree on, (Nyhamar, 2000). Finnemore and Sikkink define norms "*as a standard of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity*", (1998; pg. 891.). This definition highlights that norms often determine and define what is broadly accepted and practiced as acceptable behaviour. Norms govern what is appropriate and acceptable within a society and they guide human actions, ways of thinking and doing, and they also communicate a state's interests.

Although consensus amongst states can be reached around a set of norms, which then form the building blocks for policies to be formulated, Nyhamar (2000; pg. 28.) describes norms "*as mere excuses for rational selfish behaviour, which consequently should be the focus of*

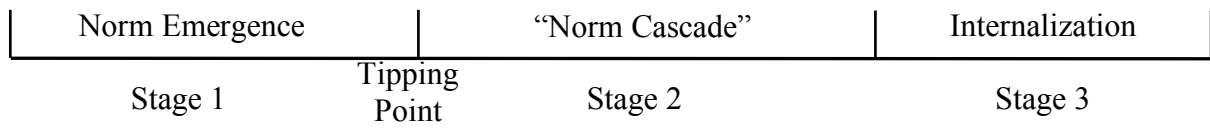
*attention.*” This, he argues, is because the international system does not really share the same values as specific societies. Those shared values are, in essence, what shapes a society, and this is what lacks in the international political system, (Goldmann, 1969).

Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) have written extensively about international norms and their role on political change, and how norms are cascaded down to domestic level, to a point of norms impacting policy change or adoption. They break down and compare the types of norms as follows:

- *Constitutive norms*, which they define as those norms which create new actors, interests, or categories of action (Searle, 1995, in Finnemore et al; pg. no. 891.);
- *Regulative norms* which guide, order or constrain certain behaviours (Katzenstein, 1996, in Finnemore et al; pg. no. 891).
- Evaluative norms, which question morality
- Practical norms are commonly accepted notions of 'best solutions' (Katzenstein, 1996 in Finnemore et al; pg. no. 891.).

The authors propose that all norms start as domestic norms, but ultimately become international norms once they are more widely accepted, which then ultimately supersede other domestic norms. Finnemore, et al. (Pg.895) propose that all norms start and evolve in a life cycle and that “different behavioural logics dominate different segments of the life cycle” (1998), as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Norm Life Cycle**



*Figure 1: Norm Life Cycle*

Finnemore and Sikkink’s (2008) norm cycle consists of 3 stages, which is critical to understand for the purposes of this paper because it provides insights into how or where international norms on gender education originate from; how these norms are cascaded down and adopted as global norms; and ultimately how norms influence policy on gender education in domestic countries. The cycle highlights who the norm originators are, and the influence they have in developing a norm. It also outlines the process it takes for international norms on gender education to become global norms, and ultimately being adopted by SSA countries, which is the focus of this study.

This step-by-step norm cascading model is relevant in my research paper as it helps to trace where norms on gender education emerge from, what these norms are, and how they are accepted and cascaded down to domestic level by our two case studies, until they have finally been internalised and adopted by both my case studies and implemented to change policies at domestic level.

Finnemore and Sikkink’s (2008) stages of the norm life cycle is represented as follows:

### **2.1. Stage 1: Norm Emergence**

This stage is influenced by what Finnemore et al. (2008) refer to as Norm Entrepreneurs. These are individuals or groups of individuals who are motivated or encourage others to adopt a particular norm due to a need that they identify. Norms do not simply appear but are

built by the use of agents who have strong notions about appropriate behaviour in their communities. This is the role of the norm entrepreneur. Norm entrepreneurs may use international norms to strengthen their position in domestic debates, on why a certain norm is important and should be adopted or accepted, (Finnemore, et al, 2008). Norm entrepreneurs are, therefore, a critical element of the norm emergence stage because they highlight critical societal issues which form the foundation of norms development and ultimately in norm adoption.

According to the authors, entrepreneurs make use of various organisational platforms to persuade the adoption of a norm. It is never by force, but rather by persuasion, and this step is necessary before a norm can move on to Stage 2. By being able to persuade others or the state on certain norms, the norm can be institutionalized into specific rules which indicates the adoption of a certain norm. “Once enough states have adopted the norm, a critical mass will lead to the norm cascade.” (Finnemore, et al. 1998)

The tipping point occurs after norm entrepreneurs have managed to persuade a number of states to become norms leaders and adopt a new norm. This becomes the norm threshold or tipping point. According to Finnemore and Sikkink, the critical mass number occurs when at least one-third of the states in the system adopt the norm. If we therefore look at the issue of gender education and gender equality, this process starts to highlight how the adoption of gender and gender education issues are cascaded and adopted by different states, which is what this paper will focus on.

In the case of gender education and the norms that exist surrounding gender education, this stage helps us to understand how norms emerge, who the key players may be in driving the norms (Norm Entrepreneurs), the platform that would have been used to spread the norm, and how they have influenced the emergence of the existing rhetoric around gender education.

This research paper explores some of this emergence process by looking at various actors related to gender education. It therefore helps us to understand how and where the numerous norms and policies have emerged from, by looking at the various treaties, agreements and policies over the years.

## **2.2. Stage 2: Norm Cascade**

This stage, in particular, is one that this paper will focus on, as we try to understand how norms are cascaded down to state level and adopted as policy. I therefore elaborate on this stage. In this stage, various actors for example states, international organisations or networks are motivated to adopt a certain norm. These actors socialize other states by creating norm breakers who ultimately become norm followers. At this stage, more countries adopt the new norm more rapidly, although their reasons or motivation for the adoption differs from state to state. These reasons can range from their desire for reputation and/or esteem, or to enhance legitimacy, and can occur as a result of pressure for change (Finnemore, et al. 1998).

There might however be some external/international pressure to conform which motivates state elites to adopt a particular norm (therefore adopting the idea that gender education is a basic human right). If enough states adopt the norm, the norm has been cascaded and other states must or may also adopt to conform. Socialisation occurs at this stage and becomes the mechanism that norm leaders use to persuade others to adhere.

A critical occurrence at this tipping point is that “enough states, and more importantly, enough of the critical states endorse the new norms to redefine appropriate behaviour”. The norm is legitimized, and all ‘legitimate’ states comply with the norm in order to remain legitimate.

If we look at this description of stage two, it describes what we will discuss in further detail in later chapters. If we take the topic of gender education, it would have started as an international norm which highlighted that equality in gender education, or the focus on educating girls, is critically important. Once enough states have adopted the norm and policies are put in place, other states have to conform by adopting these norms and therefore adopting the emerging policies. This is how norm cascades happen in practical terms. It then also links to the next stage of the norm cycle. (Finnemore, et al, 1998)

### **2.3. Stage 3: Internalisation**

Internalisation occurs when norms are officially institutionalized and transformed into domestic and international laws, bureaucratic procedures, professional training, etc. Due to increased pressure, other non-conforming states will therefore adopt the norm for the mere purpose of conforming. The norm then becomes so widely common that it becomes habit. It becomes the normal way of doing things, and even taken for granted, (Finnemore, et al., 1998). This has been explored in this paper by looking at how gender education norms have been adopted as policies both internationally as well we domestically. We explore how our case studies have internalized the various policies on gender education which have emerged from the global arena and used those for the creation of national policies related to gender education, (Finnemore, et al.,1998).

We now understand that norms go through various stages, however, it is also important to understand that each stage consists of different Actors, Motives and Dominant mechanisms. This knowledge helps us to understand the drivers of the norms that determine gender education. For example, different actors at different stages are motivated by different things, and for different reasons. Norm entrepreneurs may have different motives to the state for

adopting a norm, for example, and this differs depending on the norm and the entrepreneur at hand in question.

The table below describes the various stages of a norm but focuses on the Actors, the Motives and the Dominant mechanisms that a norm undergoes.

	<b>Stage 1 Norm emergence</b>	<b>Stage 2 Norm Cascade</b>	<b>Stage 3 Internalisation</b>
<b>Actors</b>	Norm entrepreneurs with organizational platforms	States, international organizations, networks	Law, professions, bureaucracy
<b>Motives</b>	Altruism, empathy, ideational commitment	Legitimacy, reputation, esteem	Conformity
<b>Dominant mechanisms</b>	Persuasion	Socialization, institutionalization, demonstration	Habit, institutionalization

*TABLE 1. Stages of norms (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998)*

The platform that a norm entrepreneur uses is very important and should be noted. Without this organisational platform, the norm would not have the opportunity to receive the full exposure and attention it needs in order to spread. The organisational platform is therefore required at an international level, for which norm promoters can use to endorse their norms.

Sometimes the norms are created for the sole purpose of promoting the specific norm, for example NGOs like the Red Cross or Greenpeace, (Finnemore et al, 1998). Others however use existing international organisations as a platform, like the UN or the World Bank, both institutions who are well known for driving agendas on certain international issues. These organisations have the means (either resources, expertise or information), to change other actors' behaviour, (Finnemore et al, 1998).

Finnemore and Sikkink (1998), therefore provide a good understanding of how norms work, which will provide a conceptual framework for this paper, as we explore how international policies on gender education have been formed, cascaded, spread and adopted by domestic states in SSA.

Given the many inequalities that women face in all spheres of life, education poses an area where girls are hugely marginalised and receive unequal treatment relatively to boys. These inequalities in education have resulted in the construction of many norms focusing on gender education, which speak to gender equality as a broader concept, and which ultimately determines what norms are appropriate and acceptable when looking at equality in gender education, whether looking at gender parity, or in the quality and achievement in education. This paper will use this framework to explore how international norms have cascaded to policy at domestic level and what actors and motivations have influenced the cascading, adoption and implementation of gender education policies in Rwanda and Uganda.

In the next section, I present the methodology used to research this paper. I discuss the measures and operationalisation used to assess impact of international norm cascades on gender education policies in my two case studies.

### 3. CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this paper is to understand the impact of cascading international gender education norms and policies on gender education policies at national level, and also how effective international norms and policies are at improving gender education and reducing the gender gap in education.

The paper reviews the cascading and internalisation process of international norms, and how various global agreements and policies have influenced certain norms on gender education, as well as how these have ultimately impacted domestic policies on gender education. By focusing on two case studies, we look at how these two SSA countries have adopted and implemented gender education policies that have emanated from international norms and policies on gender education. The paper further explores how our case studies have performed after internalising and implementing international gender education policies.

In doing the above, this research seeks to address the research problem of how much SSA countries are influenced by international norms and policies to set their own policies, and whether these international norms and policies are beneficial for them and whether they do in fact help to improve the state of gender education in the countries that adopt them. There is a common critique that there is far too much international influence on national policies and that international norms and policies are not always beneficial or attainable by the countries adopting them, particularly in the less developed SSA countries, (Haines & Cassels, 2004).

To understand this, the study asks the questions:

**How do international gender education norms and policies impact domestic policies at national level in SSA countries?**

This is further broken down into the following two questions:

- I. How have cascading international norms and policies influenced the adoption and implementation of gender education policies domestically?
- II. How do cascading international norms affect or improve the performance of gender education goals at domestic level?

### **3.1. Hypothesis**

The hypothesis for this study states that international gender education norms are cascaded down to national level and have an impact on gender education policies in domestic countries, and in turn, impacts the performance of related gender education goals and indicators. Therefore, international norms and policies have a causal effect on domestic (national) policies.

### **3.2. Operationalisation**

I made use of desktop research to gather secondary data for this paper. I firstly used statistical and data resource websites in order to get the latest gender education statistics. I also used various reports on gender education as well as country reports which detailed gender education performance over certain periods. Additionally, I also made use of reports and documents from various multilateral organisations, such as the UN, World Bank, UNESCO, as well as policy documents from the two case studies Ministry of Education, various international treaties and agreements, as well as convention documents. I also used the internet, journal articles and publications for further secondary data necessary for my research.

Making use of secondary data was a preferred method as it allowed me to collect large sample data not easily accessible and allowed me access to data and information from

different countries and organisation with ease and in a much shorter time period. This method also allowed me access to the most current data, which was necessary for this paper.

By analysing the various policy documents and agreements which are in existence, I was able to identify the consistent themes, norms and goals across the different conventions or agreement, which therefore helped me to identify the gender education norms which I have identified for this paper. I analysed a number of agreements and conventions between the periods of 1979 to 2000. The significance of reviewing agreements from this period was that it allowed me to assess gender education norms from the very first convention (CEDAW, 1979) on gender equality, and therefore allowing me to track the progress made until the year 2000. I further analysed various international policy documents including country-specific policy reform documents from the period 1979 to 2000. This helped to understand the direct impact of the international norms and policies on domestic policies by looking at policies implemented after a specific convention was adopted.

I used two main data sources, namely the World Bank Data and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), and all its other data platforms. UNESCO focuses on education research and conducts its own primary research and provides data to other data sources, including the World Bank. These sources provided the most up-to-date data on the progress of gender education over a number of years, using our specific indicators.

I also used these two data sources to compare the data to ensure the data was accurate, consistent and reliable.

Where data was unavailable from either source, I used various UN Reports as well as country reports (example feedback reports, example the MDG feedback Reports), as well as other data sources like UNGEI. This helped to close any gaps that may have been present.

Where data was sourced from only the individual countries, it was used with caution as it lacked other sources to verify the reliability of the data and relied only on the reporting country.

### 3.2.1. Assessing Impact

Reviewing the four different convention documents and agreements allowed me to identify specific policies that were implemented by the two case studies over the assessment period. In turn, this enabled an assessment on whether the newly adopted policies were directly influenced by international norms, based on the time of their adoption.

Furthermore, the country specific policy documents from my two case studies explicitly indicated when certain policies were being introduced and implemented as a direct result of a specific international agreement which again proves the impact of the international norm. It was, therefore, possible to see the direct impact of an international norm and/or policies on domestic policy on gender education, by using this method.

It is important to note that in some instances there were some challenges in establishing quantifiable impact of a specific norms or international policy on domestic policy, however, this we tried to prove using various methods to show causality and impact, as much as possible.

Focusing on our two-case studies, I was also able to track and therefore assess the impact of cascading gender education norms by reviewing the timing of when specific gender education policies were adopted in the country following the ratification of a new agreement or treaty. For example, if a particular convention or agreement was ratified in 1995, I then looked at the gender education policies that were adopted and implemented in each country following that convention. The government reports for both countries also confirmed the fact that certain

policies on gender education were in fact driven by specific international agreements. This once again helped to show causality and therefore the impact.

To further assess the impact, I also looked at quantifiable progress made by my two case studies over certain periods. I used the education indicators informed by the education goals of the MDGs to assess quantifiable progress and although the MDGs are not linked to each of the conventions discussed in this paper, I used the same assessment criteria and indicators as the MDGs in order to have consistency in measuring each convention on performance.

The MDGs were the flagship policy framework that sought to aggregate all of the different previous commitments that states have made over the past few decades before the MDGs were adopted. The education indicators of the MDGs really summed up most of the goals of the other previous conventions and agreements and in their educational commitments and they made up the sum of all previous policies and agreements before the MDGs were adopted.

The education indicators used by the MDGs to measure progress were also extensive in that they looked at different aspects of gender education in order to get a good assessment on progress and achievement. They were therefore not one dimensional.

Finally, the reason I use the MDG indicators to assess progress is also because they were the most recently completed set of policies to be implemented on a global scale, and which had a specific focus on gender education. The MDG indicators therefore help to provided wide-ranging indicators to determine progress across a broad spectrum of themes in gender education.

The following MDG indicators were used to assess progress in gender education in Rwanda and Uganda:

- Net Enrolment Rate (NER) – The NER, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group, is the total number of students in the official age group for primary education enrolled in that level. A high NER represents a high degree of coverage for the official school-age population. The theoretical maximum value is 100%, (World Bank, 2016).
- Completion Rates (CR) – This signifies the total number of new entrants in the last grade of primary education, regardless of age, expressed as percentage of the total population of the theoretical entrance age to the last grade of primary. This indicator is also known as "gross intake rate to the last grade of primary education." The ratio can exceed 100% due to over-aged and under-aged children who enter primary school late/early and/or repeat grades, (World Bank, 2016)
- Youth Literacy Rates (YLR) –Measures the number of 15-24-year olds who are able to both read and write a short and simple statement on their daily life, with understanding. This number is then divided by the population size in that age group. ‘Literacy’ can also include ‘numeracy’, therefore the ability to make simple arithmetic calculations. The number of literate people aged 15-24 is, therefore, divided by the total population in the same age group and the result is multiplied by 100, (World Bank, 2016).
- Out of School Rates – This is measured as the percentage of primary-school-age children who are not enrolled in primary or secondary school. Children in the official primary age group that are in pre-primary education should be considered out of school, (World Bank, 2016)

The first convention analysed using the MDG indicators to assess progress was the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

CEDAW was the first landmark, international gender convention which focused on eliminating discrimination against women. It was one of the first of its kind and therefore an important one to analyse in terms of how gender education has progressed or changed over the years. Additionally, this paper also reviewed several other conventions in between, namely the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) as well as the Dakar Framework for Action (DFA) / Education for All (EFA) and focused on consistent themes across the different agreements, as these are ultimately the themes that have determined international norms on gender education. Finally, the paper reviews the MDGs in extensive detail.

It is important to note that the operationalisation of this paper did slightly change during the course of data collection, due to lack of available data in some areas. While collecting data, I realised that pre-1979 data was inconsistent for both countries, and more often than not, simply not available. So whereas I had originally planned to track performance using available data from the first original convention (1979) onwards, I discovered that there was no available data for that period from both the World Bank and UNESCO. In some instances, country reports were available, and I was able to extract and use the data provided by the country reports, which highlighted performance of specific education indicators where available. It was however difficult to verify the accuracy of this data as there were no other sources to verify the data.

Where no data was available, I only looked at the specific gender education policies that were implemented for that period which were connected to the specific international agreement, in order to gauge impact of norms and policies on policies in the two countries.

Finally, to select the case studies, Mill's Most Similar Method of Comparison was used. This method was used to firstly compare two countries, which Mill's Most Similar Approach prescribes. The selected case studies are similar, another prerequisite, as both countries are

geographically located in East Africa, have similar historical backgrounds, both having resolved destructive conflict in the past, and are also similar economically. This enabled a comparison of countries using the same measures and international policies.

## 4. CHAPTER 4: CASE STUDIES

The purpose of this study was to understand the impact of cascading international norms and policies on gender education policies in SSA countries. This was done to assess the efficacy of international norms and policies on improving gender education in the domestic countries that adopt them. To do this, I compared two SSA countries; Rwanda and Uganda. This paper also broadly reviews the entire SSA region in order to comparatively analyse the regions performance in comparison to the two selected case studies.

A zoom in to the SSA region in the study of the impact of international norms on domestic policies is crucial, because SSA is one of the worst performing regions when it comes to gender equality in education, (UNDP, 2015). The SSA region has been subject to the influence of many international norms, programs and policies. According to the WHO's 2017 Gender Gap Report, SSA's gender gap average remains under 32%, meaning that the SSA region scores in the lower middle range of the Global Gender Gap Index. The region displays a much wider gender gap than all the other regions, and continually ranks last on the Educational Attainment Sub-Index, (WHO's 2017 Gender Gap Report). As of 2017, only 15 of the countries from the SSA region had fully closed the primary education gender gap, with only 14 having closed the secondary education gap, and seven for tertiary. Four of the lowest ranking countries on the literacy rate indicator are from SSA. This data highlights that SSA is a region of concern when it comes to gender education and perhaps emphasizes the need for international intervention.

Below I introduce both case studies and summarise their relevance to this research paper.

### 4.1. Case Study One: Rwanda

Rwanda, our first case study country performed notably well in the MDG indicators related to gender education and is also one of best overall performers in the WHO Gender Gap, Education sub-index, having ranked fourth globally. Rwanda is therefore a country worth observing. Rwanda had the highest primary school enrolments in Africa, and had achieved a 96.09% female NER by 2015, (World Bank, 2018). Rwanda's success has often been used as a benchmark of what can be achieved, despite the many challenges the country has faced in the past.

Rwanda is a landlocked country situated in east Africa. It has a population of nearly 11.9 million people, (World Bank, 2016) and a population growth rate estimated at 3.5% per year. Rwanda is the most densely populated country in Africa. Overall, Rwanda has made significant progress economically and in human development, since the end of the 1994 genocide, (World Bank, 2018). Rwanda's 1994 genocide had an overall devastating effect on the country. The three months of ethnic killing of hundreds of thousands of people destroyed the country and its fragile economy. As a result, many people were left impoverished, (UNESCO, 2007). Those most affected were women and children. Education suffered greatly as a result of the devastating past, which required extensive rebuilding. School infrastructure was destroyed, all school activity ceased for an entire year, and thousands of children and teachers were either killed or displaced due to the genocide, (UNESCO, 2007). The schools that did survive the conflict were in extremely poor conditions. There were extreme skills shortages and the teachers available were not adequately trained, (UNESCO, 2011). The country had to make a clean start to rebuild everything.

By the time the MDG's were implemented in 2000, it had only been six years since the end of the genocide, which is a relatively short period of time to turn around the state of Rwanda's education system, (United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), 2016).

Rwanda's education system has gone through a remarkable period of growth over the past number of years, and this is because the country views education as a critical investment for the future growth and development of the country. This is evident by the increased investment in the education sector, from the national budget, which increased from 17% in 2012/13 to 22% in 2017/18 (Rwanda Online, 2018).

Rwanda's gender education has also progressed over the last decade and has made strides in closing the gender gap. In the 2017 Gender Gap Report, Rwanda ranked fourth globally across the four key areas. This made Rwanda the only African country in the top 10 ranked countries in index, and the first SSA country to have closed over 80% of its gender gap, (Gender Gap Report, 2017).

Net enrollment in primary schools has seen a steady growth since the mid 1990s and NER for girls was at 96.37% in 2016 (UNESCO, 2018). Despite school fees being eliminated, the dropout rate remains high. Although school fees have been eliminated, due to other associated costs with their education, such as books and uniforms, (UNGEI, 2018).

In terms of gender equality in education, Rwanda's education system boasts the highest participation rates in East Africa as well as gender parity in net and gross enrolment at the pre-primary, primary, and secondary levels. Girls' enrolment does in fact surpass boys' enrolment at all levels of education, (UNICEF, 2018)

Over the years, Rwanda has benefitted from adopting and implementing a number of international agreements and policies that have helped in improving the education system, as well as gender education specifically. We will review these policies in greater depth in Section 6.

#### **4.2. Case Study Two: Uganda**

Uganda, our second case study, also performed relatively well in the gender education indicators of the MDGs and made significant progress in promoting gender equality in education. The country achieved gender parity ratios at primary level for some indicators, and although not all of the goals were fully achieved, there was still good progress made and the country also performed well in the WHO Gender Gap Education indicators, achieving parity for enrolment rates.

As discussed in the methodology section, to measure the progress in gender education for both countries, I used the education indicators informed by the education goals of the MDGs.

Uganda is located in the East-Central part of the SSA Region. Similar to Rwanda, Uganda experienced conflict before 1986, before the rule of Yoweri Museveni. Research (CIA, 2017) shows that between Idi Amin's rule and thereafter Milton Obote's rule, over 400 000 people lost their lives during conflict. There has, however, been relative stability since 1986, but not without its problems, as Museveni continues to hold on to power, (CIA, 2017). The north and north-east parts of the country are still far more behind in terms of development than the rest of the county, due to long-term conflict, namely the Ugandan Bush War 1981-1986 and more than 20 years of fighting between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and Ugandan Government forces), ongoing inter-communal violence, and periodic natural disasters, (CIA, 2017). Similar to Rwanda, Uganda also has a very young population. In fact, Uganda has one of the youngest and most rapidly growing populations in the world and has one of the highest fertility rates in the world, (CIA, 2017).

Past conflicts in the country have resulted in many Ugandans leaving the country to seek refuge in other countries, leaving a severe brain drain in the country. However, Uganda is also a refugee destination from neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and other nearby countries, escaping conflict in their own countries, (CIA, 2017).

Some effort at structural reform and investments by the National Resistance Movement (NRM), led by Museveni, has been made since the end of the armed conflict in 1986. This has resulted in a sustained period of high growth and poverty reduction. A number of public sector reforms have also been introduced in the past twenty years, which has created a strong governance system, resulting in the improvement of the public sector and institutional quality. Policy and legal frameworks have also seen an improvement, (CIA, 2017).

Uganda is comparable to Rwanda in that over the past number of decades, Uganda has also adopted and implemented a number of the same international programmes and policies as Rwanda, including the most recent, MDGs. Uganda is also a country that has been divided along conflict lines, which set the country back substantially across the board, but is making substantial effort at transformation and development, and has achieved relative stability and prosperity.

More importantly, Uganda has also performed relatively well in the implementation of the education goals of the MDGs and has improved with regard to achieving gender parity and closing the gender gap in education. By 2013, Uganda had achieved 95.27% primary female NER. According to the IMF country report on Uganda (2017), investment in education contributes to the accumulation of human capital, which is essential for higher incomes and sustained economic growth.

IMF Research shows that in Uganda, education is both a privately and socially profitable investment, (IMF, 2017). Estimated rates of return to education in Uganda increased in the 1990s for all sub sectors, partly because of self-employment opportunities outside agriculture opened up. Based on incomes alone, social returns to primary education are highest at 24%, followed by tertiary education (13%), and then secondary education (10%). The returns of education are however not just income based. The non-income returns are significant. Parental

education is an influential factor in child survival, and a girl receiving an education above the primary level can help lower fertility, especially at a younger age, (2017).

The total fertility rate for women with secondary education in Uganda stands at 3.9%, in comparison to those with no education, which is at 7.9%, and 7.8% for those with just primary education. Women with secondary education are also much more likely to receive antenatal care and have deliveries attended by a health professional, than those without, (IMF, 2017). Education can also impact civil institutions and helps to build a democratic society, empowering women and protecting the environment.

The government of Uganda is committed to achieving universal education and eliminating gender disparity in both primary and post-primary. Support to gender education, post primary education to increase access, quality and relevance has been intensified to sustain the gains from Universal Primary Education (UPE) framework, (IMF, 2017).

Uganda has also implemented various international agreements and policies which have guided the naturalisation of the countries own gender education policies over the years. The naturalisation and implementation of these policies have helped to improve gender education in Uganda, which we will review in more detail in Section 6.

It is important to note that both Rwanda and Uganda are not representative of the state of gender education in SSA. They are merely two similar countries that were selected for this study.

In the next section, we look at the role of international institutions in norm cascades. This section highlights these international actors as the norm entrepreneurs, as discussed in our theoretical framework. This is followed by the introduction of the specific norms that have emerged from the global agenda, and which have driven gender education norms and policies globally.

## **5. CHAPTER FIVE: INTERNATIONAL NORMS ON GENDER EDUCATION**

### **5.1. The Role of International Institutions in Influencing Norms and Policy Development**

The role that the international community, made up of international agreements and institutions like the United Nations (UN), civil society, advocacy groups, amongst others, have in influencing the development and cascading of norms, programmes and policies, which are subsequently adopted domestically, and often implemented into legislation, (Duffield, 2007), is significant. These international actors are often at the centre of leading theoretical and policy debates in the field of IR.

This influence extends to the construction of norms (Norm Emergence), as well as the resulting adoption (Norm Cascade) and internalisation of international norms at national level, as proposed by Finnemore et al, (2008). International institutions vary in nature and form, and include organisations, treaties, conventions and regimes. Over recent years, the importance and relevance of these institutions has increased substantially, (Duffield, 2007).

Using Finnemore and Sikkink's, (2008) theoretical framework as reference, it is evident that international actors, like the UN, play the role of norm entrepreneurs and is also where stage 1 of Finnemore et al, (2008) Norm Life Cycle, Norm Emergence, begins, which is the stage where specific norms are developed.

With regard to gender equality, from which gender education flows from, the UN is once again a huge global advocate amongst its member states. The UN considers gender equality to be a basic human right, (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26, 2), and according to the UNDP's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is in line with its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is, therefore, a key focus area for the organisation.

UN Women, a dedicated arm of the UN, set up to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women globally, contributes to agenda-setting and policy-making for young women and girls at key normative opportunities within the work of the General Assembly, Economic and Social Council, and the Commission on the Status of Women, at a global level (UN Women, 2017). The UN therefore influences both agendas and policies relating to

gender equality.

UN Women was established only as recently as 2010 and plays the role of norm entrepreneur in the norm emergence stage. UN Women is a globally recognised driver directing and funding UN activities on gender equality issues, (UN, 2017). The establishment of UN Women marked the acceleration of member states and the organisations goals to create greater impact in this space. It follows on from previous parts of the UN system which focused exclusively on gender equality and women's empowerment, and these included the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW); the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW); the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI); and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), (UN Women, 2017).

Other organisations like the WHO also play the role of norm actors in advocating for gender equality globally. WHO seeks to capture and track the progress of the gender gap globally over time, through The Global Gender Gap Index, which was first introduced by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2006, (WHO Gender Gap Report, 2017).

The Global Gender Gap Index measures a very important aspect of gender equality: the relative gaps between women and men across four key areas: I) health, II) education, III) economy, and iv) politics. The findings of the reports are used by countries and global institutions alike to inform the state of gender inequality, and to inform on policies.

From the above, it is evident that the UN is a significant actor in the emergence of norms in gender equality, including gender education.

This study focuses on how these norm cascade and the relevance of international norms on gender education policies in SSA.

The next section discusses key gender education concepts relevant for this paper. I review the concepts of gender equality, gender parity and access as key concepts to understand for this paper as they have become such key drivers in pushing gender education, and they are also relevant as they become the norms that we discuss further in the upcoming sections.

## 5.2. Introduction of Gender Education Norms: Gender Equality, Gender Parity and Access

This section will look at the different gender education norms that have been identified for the purpose of this paper, and which have emanated from the consistent themes derived from the different international conventions and treaties on gender and gender education.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), three principles make up a rights-based approach to education. These principles are: i) access to free and compulsory education; ii) equality, inclusion and non-discrimination; and iii) the right to quality education, content and processes, (UNESCO, 2005).

According to Gerhards, Schäfer, Kämpfer (2009), the institutionalisation of gender relations in a country or on a global scale helps to influence attitudes towards gender equality. When gender relations are adopted as policy or added into legislature, it influences the acceptance of those norms and attitudes within a society. This is an important perspective to highlight for the purposes of this study, as it seeks to understand how countries' recognition and institutionalisation of gender education norms have helped to legitimise gender norms and relations within a country.

Gerhards et al. (2009) also proposes that globalisation and trans-nationalisation processes have become important factors in influencing countries' acceptance and adoption of global norms and policies. The role that institutions play in influencing world polity is therefore significant, resulting in what Gerhards et al, (2009) refers to as 'a global cultural model'. These are essentially cultural practices and norms that are adopted and spread globally by organisations like NGO's, states and individuals (Gerhards et al., 2009).

As it relates to the acceptance of global norms and ideas, Boudet (2012) also argues that social norms play a fundamental role in what roles people play in a society and the opportunities that are subsequently offered to them as a result of the social norms that are accepted within a community. Social norms predetermine how any one group in society is treated and what opportunities are available to them and can either hinder or help an individual in making use of available opportunities, (Boudet, A. et al. 2012). This view also highlights the important role that social norms play in shaping a society. A society that values

gender equality and where gender education is a norm will push values consistent to that. The opposite is also true. When social norms exist, the people within that society value and respect those accepted norms and afford or deprive opportunities accordingly.

International norms on gender education have therefore helped to put the issue of gender inequality, and the many challenges faced by girl children in receiving an education, to the fore and has helped to raise the issue on a global platform. This has also resulted in the standard for gender education as the international community continues to promote and highlight the importance of gender equality by ensuring girls receive equal education. States play the role of norm entrepreneurs and as such, the sharing of ideas on an international platform has helped to raise awareness for the plight of women globally. To iterate this, McCormick (2012) wrote, “*Construction, dissemination, and reiteration of particular norms through policy mechanisms and documents are integral to processes of transferring ideas and strategies.*”.

The international community, which comprises of various institutions, actors, civil society, amongst others, plays a very influential role in the norms and policies adopted at national level, and are in fact often times criticised for the amount of influence they exert domestically, (McCormick, A, 2012). Over a 40-year period, there have been numerous gender policies and programmes adopted by SSA countries, which have cascaded down from international norms and policies, and which have ultimately determined the standard and status of gender education in many SSA countries. Some of these cascaded norms and policies have proven to yield some level of success, while others have not.

For the analysis of this paper, I have identified three prevalent gender education norms, as well as one other overarching norm which has helped to drive all three of the other norms. Although the universe of gender education norms are not limited to these, I have found these to be the most prominent and consistent, especially when analysing the four international conventions/goals and agreements which I review in a later section.

The analysis begins with a summary of the overarching gender education norm which has influenced the development of many of the international agreements and policies that presently exist, some of which we will look at in this paper.

### 5.2.1. Norm 1: Education as a Basic Human Right

The first overarching and universal norms is the universal idea that ‘**Education is a basic human right**’, (UNESCO, 2015). This is one of the most prominent norms and ideas driving gender education globally and has spread from merely being a belief in one part of the world, to being globally recognised, basic human right (UNGEI, 2017), and therefore also an accepted norm in many parts of the world.

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that:

*“Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace,”* (Art. 26 - Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948).

This particular norm has pushed the notion that education is not a privilege reserved only for some, but for all, including girls. This norm has featured quite prominently across the four policies and agreements we will look at and also serves as a foundation from which all the other norms and policies on gender education have been established.

### 5.2.2. Norm 2: ‘Access’ - Importance Of Access To The Education Of The Girl Child

The second gender education norm which I have identified speaks to the importance of **Access** to the education of the girl child. This particular norm has driven international as well as domestic policies on gender education by suggesting that girls and boys have equal access to education and learning opportunities. This identified norm suggests that having the opportunity of access is an important factor for girls to be enrolled into schools and in getting an education. This norm, along with its subsequent goals, have cascaded down and driven through several of the policies and agreements reviewed in this paper, including CEDAW.

The goals of access to education for girl children is aimed at providing the opportunity and ability for all children, girls included, to attend school. Access was introduced as a goal with

the introduction of ‘Universalising of Primary Education’, first introduced at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien in 1990, (World Bank, 2018).

For many of the SSA countries who adopted the goals from this particular conference, many announced programmes that would help drive the universalization of primary education in their countries, (Lewin & Sabates, 2011). For many countries, adopting universal primary education led to a push in the provision of access to education.

Access refers to the opportunity and ability for all children to attend school. Access also includes enrolment, achievement, attendance, progression and completion at appropriate ages, (Lewin, 2009). UNESCO defines access as having an environment in schools and in basic education programmes where children are able to and enabled to learn, (UNESCO, 2005). For this paper, we measure access using the MDG indicators and focus on Net Enrolment Rates (NER), Out-Of-School numbers and Completion Rates to measure access as these are not only important indicators for education access but they can also be easily be measured by gender.

A number of factors can hinder a child’s ability to access education as discussed in chapter 1. These as we discussed can be either physical, economic or social barriers. Access is an important norm to understand and highlight, because research shows that over the years, many SSA countries pushed for access, and achieved it, but this paper will also highlight that driving access alone is not enough, especially when other barriers continue to exist.

### **5.2.3. Norm 3: Gender Equality in Education**

Gender equality is an extensively broad term defined by United Nations Women (UN Women, 2018; pg. 1.) as follows:

*“The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that men and women will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women’s issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.”*

(UN Women, 2018).

The third norms speak to **equality in education** for girl children. Gender equality in education refers to girls and boys having the same opportunities including the same quality and opportunity to complete and advance their education. Despite the global progress made in gender equality in the last few decades, gender inequality continues to persist when looking at access to opportunity and resources for women, (Boudet, Petesch, Turk & Thumala, 2012).

Gender equality can be said to be at the core of this study as it is the foundation from which gender education policies and international norms are developed.

#### **5.2.4. Norm 4: Gender Parity**

Finally, the last norm identified for this paper speaks to the importance of achieving **gender parity** in education. Although gender parity can also refer to access and does in fact help to drive access, it does have a stronger focus on ensuring that there are equal numbers of girls and boys in schools, across the indicators.

UNESCO defines gender parity as “*the ratio of female to male values of a given indicator*”, (2017; pg. no. 1). The Gender Parity Index (GPI) is defined as:

*“... the value of a given indicator for girls divided by the value for boys. A GPI value of 1 signifies that there is no difference between girls and boys for a given indicator. A GPI of less than 1 indicates gender disparity in favour of boys, while the opposite is true for values exceeding 1. For UNESCO, gender parity is reflected by a GPI between 0.97 and 1.03,”*

(UNESCO, 2017; pg. no. 1)

Gender parity in education therefore refers to having the same proportion of girls and boys entering school. When gender parity is lacking (i.e. gender disparity), it results in a gender gap, which refers to a greater proportion of either boys or girls who are receiving an education, (Aikman, Unterhalter & Challender, 2005).

Gender parity has been a focus and consistent goal articulated in many of the international norms and policies examined within this study, as articulated by the international

community. Many SSA countries that have adopted many of the international norms and policies have therefore pushed to achieve gender parity as a measure of success when looking at gender education and gender equality in education.

Eliminating gender disparity therefore involves overcoming of barriers to equal access. It also includes improving achievement in school for girls and boys. Thus, gender parity can be measured simply in terms of whether there are equal numbers of girls and boys in a population enrolled in school or completing school, (UNESCO 2003).

Considering that in 2014, there were over 60 million children aged 6 to 11 not in school, and over 31 million of those out of school were girls, the extent of the challenges relating to gender disparity as well as gender inequality in education is quite prevalent, (World Bank, 2017). According to UNESCO's eAtlas of Gender Inequality in Education, 136 million children enrolled in primary schools in 2014. At the current trends however, only 38 million of those children will complete their last grade of school. In 2014, 17 million girls dropped out of school early, compared to 20 million boys, (UNESCO Tell Maps, 2017).

Over the years, these numbers have only marginally declined, despite the numerous interventions, policies and programmes implemented to close the gender gaps in education, (Hertz & Sperling, 2004).

It is important to understand the relationship as well as the difference, between gender parity and access in education. Although similar terms, access to education helps to drive gender parity. The two terms are therefore often used interchangeably when referring to education goals, but they are in fact different and also have different measurement indicators.

It is again important to note that although this paper has used specific education norms to work with, the international norms on gender education are not limited to the ones listed above. These are merely the ones that have been identified and highlighted for the purpose of this paper, and which relate to our chosen measures and study. These particular norms were the consistent and prominent norms over the time period and policies we looked at and therefore seemed to be the foundation of all the others that have followed from then on. Various government reports reviewed for both our case studies also highlight the fact that these norms have influenced many of the gender education policies at national level.

## **6. CHAPTER SIX: KEY INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS AND CONVENTIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON GENDER EDUCATION NORMS AND POLICIES AT NATIONAL LEVEL**

In this section, I review how gender education goals of international agreements and treaties have influenced gender education norms and this has impacted the adoption of gender education policies in Rwanda and Uganda. To do this, I firstly present a Table (Table 2), which maps out the 3 international gender education norms which have been identified for the purpose of this paper. These norms are Access to education, Gender Parity and Gender Equality. I linked each policy objective/goal from each convention/agreement to a specific norm to the relevant domestic policies and goals, and this is further broken-down country.

For example, In Table 2, the country-specific goals which fall under the gender equality norm are ones that were directly influenced by and linked to gender equality as a norm, across all the four agreements, and for both countries. The goals under each policy included points such as eliminating stereotyped gender roles of men and women in education, which speaks to gender equality as a norm in education. This was important in driving equality in education and changing cultural and societal perception on the role of the girl child and women. Other goals speaking to gender equality include improving literacy levels for women, as well as females being afforded equal education, and boys' education no longer being viewed as being more important than girls' education, and the provision of equal opportunities, UNESCO, 2014).

For example, in Uganda Universal Primary Education (UPE) was a policy launched by the Ugandan government, in reaction to the BDPA goals, and this is linked to the gender equality norm. These policies were aimed at achieving gender equality in education in Uganda and

driving the number of girls who were in schools, (Rwanda BPfA Report, 2003). In turn, enrolment, the number of girls enrolled in primary schools increased from 1,420,883 in 1996 to 4,168,130 in 2012, (World Bank, 2017), showing an increase in the number of girls starting school within that period.

In the case of Rwanda, two of the policies Rwanda adopted as a direct influence of the DFA, related to gender parity as a norm, was Vision 20/20 as well as the 9YBE Programme, (Rwanda, 20/20 Vision Document, 2000).

To examine impact of international norms and policies on domestic gender education policy, we also took evidence provided by the governments of both countries which attests to the direct impact. For each agreement that both countries adopted, the government reported on how they implemented the agreement and its objectives domestically, and the policies that came from that particular agreement.

We also further looked at the timing of the policies. The policies adopted and used in this study were the policies that were adopted within a few years of the agreement having been signed by both our case studies, which indicates that it was influenced by that particular agreement.

Table 2. Map of Impact of International Norms on National Gender Education Policy

INTERNATIONAL NORM	ACCESS	GENDER EQUALITY	GENDER PARITY
<b>CONVENTION/ AGREEMENT</b>			
<b>CEDAW (1979 – 1990)</b>	Access to studies Same curricula, examinations, teaching staff, school premises and equipment of the same quality; Same opportunities to programmes of continuing education, Reduce girls drop-out rates	Equality in career and vocational guidance Eliminate all stereotypical gender roles of men and women at all levels Same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants	Reduce female student drop-out rates
<b>Impact of CEDAW on Domestic Policies in Rwanda</b>	Data unavailable: Conflict period	Data unavailable: Conflict period	Data unavailable: Conflict period
<b>Impact of CEDAW on Domestic Policies in Uganda</b>	Data unavailable: Uganda Conflict period	Data unavailable: Uganda Conflict period	Data unavailable: Uganda Conflict period
<b>BDPA (1995)</b> * “To address the inequalities and inadequacies in; and unequal access to education and training”. This point runs across each of the norms.	Equal access Eradicating illiteracy Access to vocational training, science and technology Resource allocation Promote life-long education	Eradicating illiteracy Access to vocational training, science and technology Non-discrimination in education Allocation of resources Promote life-long education	Improve women’s access to vocational training Allocation of sufficient resources
<b>Rwanda Implementation of Domestic Reform Policies Related to BPDA (Impact)</b>	Compulsory and free public primary education Government investment to improve access and close access gap Access to vocational training	Equal right to education guaranteed by Constitution (2003) Boys’ education no longer considered more important	Reduce gender gap School-feeding programme Improving the school environment for girls
<b>Uganda Implementation of Domestic Reform Policies Related to BDPA (Impact)</b>	Universal Primary Education(UPE) National Strategy for Girls Education	National Action Plan on Women for women’s empowerment. National Strategy for Girls Education	Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP) 1997-2003 framework

	Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP) framework	Affirmative action in Education	Universalising primary education (Free Education) Affirmative action in Education
<b>DFA (2000)</b>	Early Childhood care and education access to complete free, quality, and compulsory primary education full and equal access to achievement	Improve adult literacy for women Achieving gender equality ensuring full and equal access to quality education for girls	Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education Launch of Vision 20/20
<b>DFA Impact of Rwanda Policy</b>	Launch of Vision 2020 Introduction of The ‘9YBE Programme’ (9 Years compulsory Basic Education) in 2008	Launch of Vision 2020	Launch of Vision 20/20 Introduction of The ‘9YBE Programme’ (9 Years Basic Education)
<b>DFA Impact on Uganda Policy</b>	Universal Primary Education (1997) Resource allocation to education Prioritisation of equitable access Partnerships and collaboration with partners	Partnership with Global Partners Equitable quality basic education National Strategy to improve proficiency in literacy & numeracy	55% of the total annual budget allocated to Education
<b>MDGs (2000)</b> <b>Overarching goal on education:</b> <b>Achieving universal primary education</b>	Improving Girls’ Enrolment Ensure full course of primary schooling Measure: Net Enrolment Rate (NER)	Enrolment and completion Measure: Literacy Rates (LR) Completion Rates (CR)	Achieving Gender Parity’ Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education Measure: NER
<b>MDG Impact of Gender Education Policy in Rwanda</b>	‘9YBE Programme’ increased to 12 years of compulsory basic education Introduction of free education Programs and interventions driving access to quality education 5-year school campaign initiative	Introduction of free education Girls’ Education Task Force of the Ministry of Education launched ‘9YBE Programme’ increased to 12 Implement the Girls’ Education Action Plan curriculum and training material	The ‘9YBE Programme’ increased to 12 years of compulsory basic education to reduce gender imbalance Introduction of free education in 2003
<b>MDG Impact of Gender Education Policy in Uganda</b>	UPE continued – free education Govt. resources - more classrooms Teacher-to-classroom ratio	Resource allocation, incl. increased classrooms	UPE continued – free education Resource allocation

**Table 2:** Map of Norms against Conventions and Impact on Policy

## 6.1. International Conventions/Agreements Driving Gender Education Norms

This next section outlines four international agreements and policies that have been key in driving norm emergence and norm cascading, which has resulted in the development and implementation of specific gender equality and gender education policies at domestic levels.

Finnemore and Sikkink's (2008) first and second stages of the Norm Life Cycle, which refer to Norm Emergence and Norm Cascading, are evident when analysing these conventions.

Through these Conventions, we start to see the foundation and emergence of the various gender education norms that have been internationally founded. This stage of the norm life cycle is influenced by Norm Entrepreneurs (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2008), and in this case these Norm Entrepreneurs would be organisations like the UN and all related organisations like UNESCO, UNICEF, and so forth, the Heads of States or various Ministries, civil society groups, international and domestic gender education advocates and organisation, NGO's, amongst others, who all play a role in the development and cascading of norms and their resulting agreements.

At these two stages, we can also debate the motives for the emergence and cascading of these norms and policies. Finnemore and Sikkink propose that there are a number of motives that drive these two stages. At norm emergence state, motives can range from empathy, altruism to ideational commitment, (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2008), as the reasons why gender education norms may arise. At Norm cascade stage, motives can include anything from Legitimacy, reputation to esteem, which might motivate states and/or other actors to adopt international norms into their own countries.

During the Norm Emergence stage, norm entrepreneurs are also said to use various

organisational platforms to persuade the adoption of a norm, (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2008). Considering that the UN is both an actor as well as a norm entrepreneur, the platform for engagement and persuasion (Dominant Mechanism) for adoption of the below norms are ideal. The engagements occur with the backing of the UN, where many heads of states and other influencers preside. Not only that, but the media also helps to spread the message regarding what is discussed at these conventions and therefore assisting in the cascading of the norms.

Both Rwanda and Uganda signed and ratified all four of the treaties/agreements we review in this research paper, which is a strong indicator of the impact that these agreements have had on the countries gender education policies. According to the UN (1948) and the Right To Education (2018) policy framework, when a state signs and ratifies a treaty which guarantees the right to education, the state is obligated to protect, fulfil and respect this right, either immediately or progressively.

Furthermore, international law (Right-To-Education, 2018), states that other actors also have a responsibility to uphold the right to education and to promote and protect this fundamental right, (Right-To-Education, 2018). These other actors include multilateral intergovernmental agencies like UNESCO, UNCEF, OHCHR, who are particularly important to the realization of the right to education. Others include civil society, international financial institutions, and even parents, (Right-To-Education, 2018).

It is therefore a reasonable assumption that these actors would have played a role in persuading member states to internalise and implement specific policies at national level.

As discussed in the Methodology section and above, I assessed the impact of international norms and policies using a number of methods. Although challenging to identify the direct causal link between a country ratifying an international policy and the direct effect this has on

norm and policy cascade and internalization, the use of the below methods allows us to reasonably conclude the impact of international norms and agreements on domestic policy.

Firstly, I looked at the timing to provide a reasonable conclusion that international norm cascades impacted domestic policy on gender education in Rwanda and Uganda. By reviewing the timing which a specific convention was signed and ratified by the two case studies, then looking at the related gender education policies that followed in the same period or a few years after in the country, as well as the performance of gender education in the country at the time, this reasonably suggested that the said policy or treaty had a direct impact on whether the state adopted and internalised the international norms and related gender education policies.

Secondly, having reviewed a number of national documents, reports and policies for both Rwanda and Uganda, both countries had specific country-related documents and policies related to each convention. Therefore, each country had a policy or document which highlighted what each country would respectively do in order to achieve the goals set out in each convention or agreement for which they had ratified. Both countries ratified all four agreements that we look at which once again allows the reasonable suggestion that the national policy is informed by international norms and policies, more so because as we saw above, states who ratify treaties are obligated to fulfil, protect and respect the rights and treaties signed, either immediately or progressively, (Right-To-Education, 2018).

Finally, I also reviewed the performance of girls' education using MDG measurement indicators in the periods following the ratification of the agreements in question. Generally, after a certain agreement was ratified, there tended to be an increase in the performance of each country's gender education indicators, which suggests that the policies adopted

following the agreement had an impact on the overall results of gender education in the country. This method I used across all four conventions.

Below are the four internationally established conventions and agreements that have helped the emergence of norms globally. All four of the conventions have received much awareness, publicity and attention globally. This has helped in persuading the cascading of norms at domestic level.

In this next section we see the second stage of Finnemore and Sikkink's Norm Life Cycle, which is the Norm Cascades stage, in effect.

## **6.2. The Convention on The Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**

The first convention/treaty that we will review is CEDAW, also known as the treaty for the rights of women, which is telling of what the treaty focused on, (UN Human Rights Office, 2018). CEDAW is an international bill of rights for women and an agenda for action by countries to guarantee those rights for women. It was a tool to help women around the world to bring about change in their daily lives, (UN Human Rights Office, 2018).

Removing disparities in access to education was and still is a core principle of CEDAW. CEDAW addressed gender equality norms, and was relevant to include in this research, as it provided insight and background into the follow up gender education policies that preceded this one. CEDAW was signed and ratified by both Rwanda and Uganda, which is relevant because being the first of the conventions on gender equality, which included the theme of gender education, we again start to see the norm emergence, according to Finnemore and Sikkink's theory (2008). CEDAW formed the foundation from which gender equality norms emerged, and one of those being gender education. The drivers or entrepreneurs of this

convention was the UN as well as other state actors, including heads of governments and NGO's, as we see below.

CEDAW consisted of 30 articles defining discrimination against women and how to prevent and it. States who accepted the terms of the Convention committed to put in place a series of measures to end all forms of discrimination against women in their countries, by establishing policies that were aligned to those defined in the convention. (Boesky, Reid & Balmforth, 2000). Here we see the role of the actors, their motives for adopting these norms, as well as the influence this stage would have on the second stage of Norm Cascade, according to Finnemore and Sikkink, 2008.

This Convention put a spotlight on gender issues and gender equality in all areas, at a global level. Although CEDAW did not solely focus on education, education did feature as one of the areas in which gender equality was to be addressed and achieved.

Noteworthy of this Convention is that it was the first convention which looked at driving international gender education norms and impacting domestic gender education policies. This convention helped to highlight the importance of gender equality globally.

Countries who ratified the Convention were legally bound to implement the measures, including amending domestic legislation. As part of the agreement, states were also obliged to submit national reports every four years, detailing the various measures they had taken to comply with the treaty obligations (UN, CEDAW, 2017). This clearly highlights the impact of international norms and policies on domestic policies, as states were obliged, and in effect, legally bound, to amend legislation and put into domestic policy what was agreed upon in the treaty. The fact that countries were legally bound to implement the measures agreed to in the

Convention also makes it considerably different from other policies that had previously emerged from other international agreements.

Both Rwanda and Uganda ratified and adopted CEDAW. This highlights their roles in the norm emergence stage as well as norm cascades as they then took the norms and policies back to their own countries.

### **6.2.1. Impact of CEDAW on Gender Education Policies In Rwanda and Uganda**

I looked at CEDAW's impact on gender education policy and performance in Rwanda and Uganda from the period between 1979 – 1990. Table 2 highlights how the goals emanating from CEDAW were split according to the identified norms. The table highlights that there were goals in the treaty related to Access (A), Gender Equality (GE) and Gender Parity (GP), and these were the goals driven to by all the countries who signed this convention.

Rwanda signed the CEDAW Treaty on 1 May 1980 and ratified the treaty on 2 March 1981, while Uganda signed it on 30 July 1980, and ratified on 22 July 1985. The data on gender education performance based on our specific indicators between 1979 to 1990 was very limited and inconsistent using World Bank and UNESCO sources. Data was also not available for every indicator. This ratification of CEDAW by both Rwanda and Uganda does however indicate the obligation of both countries to adopt the policy.

Information on the specific policies adopted by both countries between 1979 – 1990 was however not available. As such, this study combined and reviewed the performance of both countries during that period using only the out-of-school children data between 1979-1990, as this covers the decade after the policies were adopted, but no other data was available.

For Rwanda, we looked at 1978 (a year before CEDAW was launched), and again in 1999. Although the end date is a number of years after this study's targeted measuring period, it

assists with assessment of progress between the periods as there was no data in between. This is largely due to Rwanda's instability from the genocide and the Rwandan Civil War during this period (between 1979 – 1999), and the unavailability of data reflects this, (UNESCO, 2007). Although Rwanda ratified CEDAW, the impact of CEDAW on the countries gender education policies was minimal. Evidence shows very little cascading policies during this period.

Looking at indicators to assess performance, according to the World Bank (2017), the number of primary aged girls Out-of-School in Rwanda in 1978 was 177,199. This number seems relatively low but is hard to verify due to unavailability of data. By 1999, the number of out of school children had declined to 136, 858, which indicates that some progress had been made over the years, albeit small. Looking at the impact on gender education policies, there was no evidence to prove this, even though the number of out of school children did decline. Data was therefore too limited during this period to make any conclusive findings that could link CEDAW goals to any policy reforms in Rwanda.

Similarly, in Uganda, Table 2 highlights the lack of data to conclude and prove the hypothesis that international norms and policies had any impact on gender education policies in Uganda. Looking at the performance of girls in education around 1979, there were a total of 808,693 girls out of school in 1979, and this figure decreased to 700,899 by 1986, (World Bank Data, 2017). There was no data available beyond 1986, up until 2009 again, which is not helpful in proving the impact, but what the trend indicates is that there was some level of improvement in Out-of-School girls, if we compare the two figures during the CEDAW implementation period.

It is important to consider the timing of CEDAW and where many African states would have been politically and economically at the launch of CEDAW, when considering what

measures would have been taken to improve on gender education, and the progress thereof. Most of them had only gained independence about a decade prior this could perhaps explain the lack of available data or even significant improvement during this period.

Looking at the two case studies specifically, although both had ratified CEDAW, Uganda was still experiencing the first coup from the Idi Amin era, which lasted from 1971 to 1979, when CEDAW was launched. Another coup occurred only seven years later in 1989, which was still during the CEDAW period. This would therefore explain the lack of data, and perhaps even lack of implementation of gender education policies during that period, (Peace Insight, 2017). Rwanda, as discussed was also experiencing a conflict during this period and again, this would explain why during this period, no data is available on the policies implemented to improve gender education.

Therefore, although it was relevant to include CEDAW, for the reasons mentioned above, looking at CEDAW alone did not provide any evidence of the impact of international norms and policies on national policies on gender education.

The next sections look at the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which was another agreement/treaty which detailed a progressive and comprehensive blueprint for advancing women and girls' rights, (UN Women, 2017).

### **6.3. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPA or BdfA)**

The BDPA has been said to be “*the most comprehensive global policy framework and blueprint for action and is a current source of guidance and inspiration to realize gender equality and the human rights of women and girls, everywhere.*” (Beijing Declaration Document 2005, UN Women 2017; pg. 3).

It was the first UN World Conference on Women to include a specific focus on the girl-child and young women's rights and needs, (UN Women, 2017).

Endorsed by the General Assembly of the UN, and championed by UN Women, the BDPA was a world conference for member states which exclusively focused on the rights of women. The initial meeting held in Beijing in September 1995, saw an unprecedented attendance of 17,000 participants and 30,000 activists from all over the world, with a single purpose in mind: Gender equality and the empowerment of all women, everywhere, (Beijing Declaration document, UN, 1995). The BDPA remains a powerful source of guidance and inspiration for advancing women's rights, (Beijing Declaration document, UN, 1995).

The participants and numbers highlighted above emphasize the actors and influencers involved in the BDPA and highlights how specific norms emerge and also how they are cascaded down. The BDPA saw a substantial amount of influencers who also act as norm entrepreneurs in attendance. It also highlighted the motives behind the adoption of these norms and agreements, which as we see, as highlighted above, which was to enhance gender equality and empower women.

Additionally, another motive, which was also one of the aims of the BDPA was to advance equality, development and peace for women everywhere, across all spheres of a woman's life where she may otherwise be marginalised (Beijing Declaration document, 1995). The Declaration specifically committed signing members to effect change in their domestic countries, and to ensure the rights of women and girls were recognised in all areas. This required the affecting of domestic policies to be in line with the blueprint of the Declaration, therefore the adoption of policies from the international community. With over 189 international governments in the room, from both the developed as well the developing states, this was a perfect platform for sharing of ideas and norms. This once again highlights the impact because once again states were obligated to change domestic policies accordingly.

The BDPA sought to build on from agreements and successes of previous UN agreements and conventions related to women. The key proponents of the BDPA advocated for the full participation of women in all domains of society, including the decision-making process and access to power in order for equality, and therefore, development and peace to be achieved, (Beijing Declaration, 1996)

As a predecessor convention to the MDG's, the BDPA was not meant to override or be replaced by the MDGs. Rather the MDGs drew from the BDPA, especially as it relates to the goals on women and education. The two platforms therefore worked in collaboration in order to achieve parallel goals. The MDGs drew a lot from the goals and objectives of the BDPA. Both Rwanda and Uganda were in attendance in the formulation of the BDPA and both countries ratified the agreement, which would have influenced the cascading of gender specific norms and policies derived from the BDPA.

Point two of the BDPA focused on education and highlighted that women's education was a basic human right as well as a necessary tool for achieving equality, development and peace. Point 2 also emphasised that education was beneficial for both boys and girls, and highlighted that in order to create change in other areas of inequalities in a society, countries needed to first create equality in education. Equality in education was therefore seen as an important tool towards creating an equal society, (Sidint, 2017).

Many Sub-Saharan countries experienced a number of challenges in meeting the targets set out by the BDPA. Among those recorded were issues such as climate change, terrorism, conflicts, global economic and financial crises and increasing inequality. Despite this, there was some recorded progress made, (Sidint, 2017). Despite the ongoing challenges faced by

many SSA however, many SSA countries still adopted this agreement. The challenges were evident in the performance of many of the SSA countries, over the 20-year BDPA period. This, once again, questions the possible motives for norm adoption in this case, as proposed by Finnemore and Sikkink (1998). Many countries may simply have adopted these international norms and policies to conform and buy favour from the international community, in order to be seen as doing the right thing.

All that said however, the BDPA benefitted many African countries in recognising and implementing gender equality policies in their constitutions, (Sidnit, 2017), therefore proving the cascading and internalisation of international norms and policies domestically. This was the beginning of an important milestone for SSA countries, and even if progress was poor, this may still be considered an important milestone as it ensured that gender equality issues received the attention and hopefully the resources required to affect future change.

The BDPA differed from CEDAW in that it set out specific action plans to tackle in order to achieve the 12 identified areas. This was helpful in ensuring that the process of cascading the policies was specific and measurable and that it was adopted into legislation. It differed specifically from the MDGs in that BDPA only focused on women, whereas the MDGs were general development and poverty alleviating goals, with specific goals for women, and this was the biggest differentiator.

The SSA region made some progress with regard to overall gender education performance during the BDPA period. Looking at World Bank out-of-school data, in 1995 when the BDPA was launched 49.17% of girls were out school in SSA, compared to 40.43% boys. By 2000, there was a slight improvement, with 43.43% of out of school girls in SSA compared to 36.17% of boys. In 1996, a year after the BDPA was launched, out-of-school numbers were at their peak for both genders and these were the highest girls out of school numbers since

1975. Unfortunately, the reasons for this peak is not known. Data was unavailable for the other indicators, although similar trends were evident for girls' completion rates, which was at 48.39% compared to 58.40% for boys, (World Bank, 2018).

Overall, the above numbers are indicative of the quantitative impact and influence that the resulting policies from the BDPA had on SSA states. In the next section, we focus on our two case studies and how both countries developed new policies that were as a direct result of adopting the BDPA goals.

### **6.3.1. Impact of BPfA on Gender Education in Rwanda**

According to Rwanda's report on the Fourth World Conference on Women and the BDPA, the country's commitment to the conference had a direct influence on the country's commitment to developing a firm gender-responsive legal and policy framework with a supporting institutional framework to implement the commitments, (Rwanda BPfA Report, 2014). Therefore, apart from simply ratifying the treaty, this document informs us of the direct impact and influence that this international convention had on domestic policy in Rwanda. It clearly demonstrates the cascading of the particular policies as well as the internalisation of the said norms and policies.

Focusing on gender education, Rwanda actively implemented the below policies and programmes, which were not in place prior to Rwanda's commitment to BPfA, in order to meet the commitments made to the agreement. This demonstrates the cascading and internalisation of norms from international actors and platforms.

To begin, equal right to education was guaranteed by the Constitution (2003) of Rwanda as a result of adopting the BPfA. Article 40 of the Constitution guaranteed that the right to education for every person, along with making education compulsory and free in public

schools, therefore providing all children the freedom to learn, (Rwanda BPfA Report, 2003, Pg. 6). This links directly to three of BDPA's goal (Strategic Goals 1, 2 and 3, which speaks to ensuring equal access to education and eradicating illiteracy among women, (Beijing Declaration, 1995).

This constitutional requirement ensured that boys' education was no longer considered to be more important than that of girls, but it also enabled the government to invest a lot more resources towards improving access to education for all, with a particular focus on reducing the gap in access between girls and boys, (Rwanda BPfA Report, 2014). This policy linked directly to Strategic Objectives 1, 4 and 5 of the BDPA, which also spoke to developing non-discriminatory education and training, and the allocation of sufficient resources for and Monitoring of the implementation of educational reforms, by the government of Rwanda.

This gave rise to the introduction of Rwanda's Girls' Education Policy, which was developed in 2008, in an attempt to guide government efforts to reducing gender disparities in education. The implementation of this policy was aligned to other government programmes including Rwanda's school-feeding programme as well as an improved school environment for girls, particularly as it relates to providing sanitary towels and separate toilets for boys and girls. According to Rwanda's Ministry of Education, this has resulted in the country achieving gender parity in primary school enrolment and retention, (Rwanda BPfA Report, 2014). The country also made some strides in terms of improving women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing their education, (Rwanda BPfA Report, 2014).

The BPfA coincided with the later launch of the MDGs so some policies and dates do overlap. Rwanda reported that the MDGs in fact strengthened the implementation of the

BPfA. Due to this, we will look at the performance data as well as other policies implemented in more detail when we look at the MDGs as the periods do overlap.

The data on performance was however very limited for both Rwanda and Uganda and as such, we have summarised the available data. In summary, progress towards improving gender education was very slow during the BDPA period, and parity was not achieved. Even though education levels across indicators as well as across genders was low, girls continued to be worse off than boys in both countries. Out-of-School numbers and CRs were extremely low, and in the 20 – 30 percentile points. NER stats were not available.

What really stood out from the data over this period was how low the completion rates were for Rwanda. In 1992, three years prior the launch of BDPA, completion rates for girls was at 54.29%. There was a data gap, up until 1999, which was four years into the launch of the BDPA, and this figure had declined substantially to 27.85%, (World Bank, 2018). Although there was a gap in data, the decline from 1992 to 1999 indicates a plummeting of completion rates during the no-data gap period. I could not compare this with enrolment rates, in order to compare how the enrolment rate fared with dropout rates, but the number of girls completing primary school was extremely low, (UNESCO, 2017).

The unavailability of data as well as the low performance across the education indicators can be attributed to the Rwanda Genocide which coincided with the BDPA period. The Rwandan Civil War and genocide is said to have had a severely negative impact on the education sector in Rwanda, resulting in even poorer educational outcomes, than before the genocide, (Hilker, 2010).

This indicates that in as much as there was a push to provide access and ensure an increase in enrolment numbers for girls (access, parity and equality), which were goals and norms that were highlighted by the BDPA, many of those who did enrol unfortunately did not complete

their primary level schooling. By example, by 2000, at the end period of the BDPA, the completion rate in Rwanda was at 34% for girls, according to UNESCO, even though WB recorded it to be much lower, at 20.90%, (2017). Similarly, in Uganda, in 2000, the CR was at 36% for girls, according to UNESCO, even though the WB reports that by 2001, CR in Uganda were 54.35% for girls, which, would have been a substantial increase.

Looking at impact in Rwanda, there is evidence that the goals and policies put in place following the adoption of the BDPA did directly influence and impact policies and performance of gender education in Rwanda. As per the identified norms and goals, Rwanda also focused its gender education policy efforts towards access, parity and gender equality, as is evident in Table 2. This provides reasonable evidence and conclusion that the BDPA policies and norms did impact norm internalisation in Rwanda.

### **6.3.2. Impact of BPfA (BDPA) on Gender Education Policies in Uganda**

We now shift our focus to the impact of BPfA goals and norms on Uganda's gender education policies.

Uganda's National Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), and The Outcome Of The Twenty Third Special Session Of The United Nations General Assembly (2000), both give evidence of Uganda's adoption of the goals and policies articulated in the BDPA. This gives evidence of norm internalisation, as the country highlights its implemented policies as a result of adopting the BDPA. Uganda provides a detailed BDPA-specific report detailing which policies were domestically implemented to meet the goals of the BDPA.

Uganda embraced the EFA movement in 1990 and continued to uphold the declarations ideals. Since its launch, Uganda expanded access to primary education by 27.7% (male

23.1%, female 32.6%), which raised the NER at primary level to 96.0% (male 95.6%, female 96.4%), (Uganda's Education for All 2015 National Review). This substantial increase in primary education enrolment was as a result of the adoption and continuation of Universal Primary Education in 1997, which resulted in Uganda driving education, including gender education through national programs, (Uganda's Education for All 2015 National Review).

According to Uganda's National Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), and The Outcome Of The Twenty Third Special Session Of The United Nations General Assembly (2000), being signatories and committing to the BPfA directly influenced and guided Uganda's in formulating a number of policies on gender and gender education. Uganda's national framework - the National Action Plan on Women (NAPW) was guided by the BDPA. The NAPW was a guide for stakeholders in the country to identify priorities for women's empowerment. The Plan was adopted in 1999, but was later revised in 2007 following the launch of the MDGs, (Uganda National Report of the BDPA, 1995). The NAPW included five critical areas, the fourth of which focused on the girl child and education (The Girl Child and Education), (Uganda National Report of the BDPA, 1995)

Action Plan (v) which focuses on gender education is directly linked to the BDPA's second action point on education which speaks to the education of the Girl Child and eradicating the inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to education and training. The Ugandan government also mainstreamed the 12 critical areas of concern in the BPfA into various other development processes and plans in the country, which included the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), the National Development Plan, amongst others, which had a focus on gender education within the plans, (Uganda National Report of the BDPA, 1995).

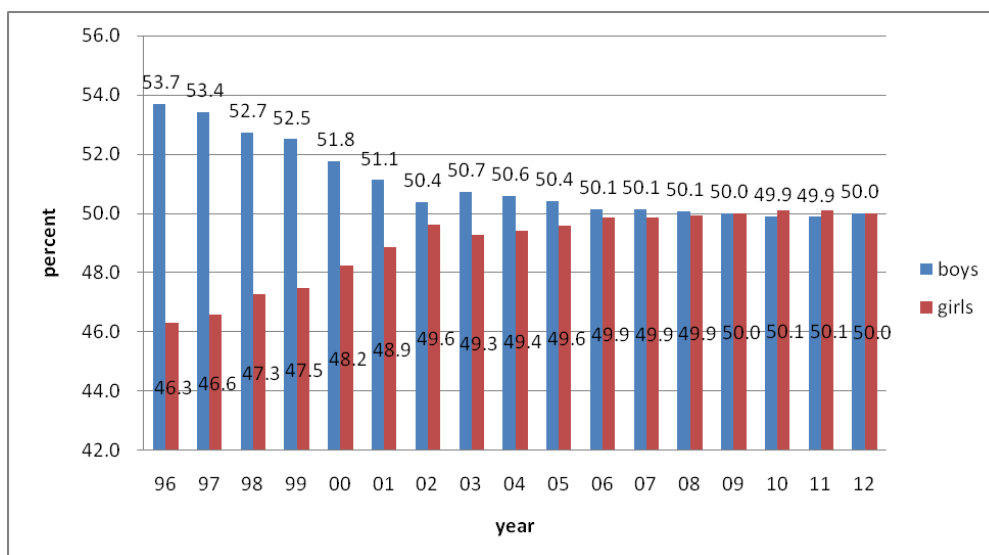
With regard to performance in education indicators, Uganda's progress on the BDPA goals on education was assessed using Uganda's own national data as there was no data available

from World Bank or UNESCO.

In 1995, women's literacy rates were at 45%, compared to 63.5% for men. Since the adoption of the BPfA, the literacy rate for women increased to 65% for women as compared to 77 % for men in 1995, (Uganda National Report of the BDPA, 1995). Although gender parity was not achieved, the literacy rates for women did improve, according to Uganda's reported data. No literacy rates were available for that period with the World Bank data or UNESCO data.

The number of girls enrolled in primary schools increased from 1,420,883 in 1996 to 4,168,130 in 2012. In terms of percentage increase, there was a steady increase of girls enrolled from 46.3% in 1996 to 50% in 2012. It was a relatively small increase over a six-year period. The steady increase in girls' enrolment was attributed to the introduction of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997, which was directly linked to all of the Education Strategic Goals of the BDPA.

The UPE programme aimed at ensuring that the goals for the Global Education for All (EFA) goals were achieved. Other contributing factors include the introduction of a National Strategy for Girls Education which was launched in 1999 as an integral part of the Education Sector Investment Plan and other affirmative action innovations in the Education Sector, (Uganda National Report of the BDPA, 1995). The Figure below compares the enrolment of girls and boys by gender between 1996 to 2013.



**Figure 3.** Primary School Enrolment by Sex and Year

*Source:* Ministry of Education Information Management System (Uganda Report)

Uganda’s National Action Plan on Women (NAPW) was launched in 1999, only four years post the BDPA launch, which again demonstrates through timing, the influence of the BDPA on Uganda’s domestic policies on gender education.

Looking at the evidence provided above for both Rwanda and Uganda, we highlight the highlight the norm cascades and norm internalisation stages, as proposed by Finnemore and Sikkink (2008), although it does not highlight the motives for adoption. The actors are also evident, which included the heads of states of both countries who signed and ratified the agreements, and pushed for it to be constitutionalised at national level. This therefore reasonably concludes the hypothesis that international policies and norms from the BDPA did in fact impact gender education policies in both countries.

In the next section we review the Dakar Framework for Action and the impact it had on gender education policy in Rwanda and Uganda.

#### **6.4. Dakar Framework for Action/ Education for All Framework**

The Dakar Framework for Action (DFA) was yet another relevant international convention which focused on gender education and helped establish global gender education norms. The DFA gave rise to the Education for All (EFA) Framework. The DFA consisted of a very detailed set of goals and formed a very important part of the global development agenda on girls' schooling and gender equity. It also represents another set of internationally developed norms and policies, which influenced domestic gender education policies in many developing countries.

The DFA was a recommitment by participants of the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All, adopted ten years earlier in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, (DFA, 2000). The DFA vision referred to both access to education for everybody as well as to meet the diverse learning needs of children, youth and adults, (DFA, 2000).

What set the Dakar Framework apart from the other conventions and agreements was firstly the fact that the DFA focused specifically on the education of women and girls, and it formed a critical role and the basis from which the gender education targets for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were formulated. The EFA 2000 Assessment also highlighted and emphasized that the challenge of education for all was in fact greatest in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, as well as a few other developed countries.

Another thing that set it apart from other declarations and conventions is the level of partnerships that were formed, not just with governments, but also with organisations at national, regional and international levels, NGO's, the private sector, multilateral and bilateral funding agencies, as well as the broader civil society organisation, to complement

the efforts of national governments. (Unterhalter & North, 2011). This again highlights the actors involved in establishing these norms. This highlights the various actors involved in the emergence and internalisation of the specific norms and policies related to DFA.

In this declaration, the World Education Forum re-affirmed this vision for not just access, but also quality in basic education. The focus was placed entirely at the national level and passed the responsibility on to national governments towards achieving these education goals, (DFA, 2000).

The DFA highlighted the fact that education was an indispensable tool for the effective participation of women in their societies and in the economy was reiterated, (DFA 2000).

Goals two and five of the DFA/EFA frameworks were particularly focused on the education of the girl child, and acknowledged the fact that girl children were most vulnerable and are marginalised when it came to education.

Both Rwanda and Uganda adopted the DFA meaning they both committed to implement and change policies on gender education within their countries, according to the DFA education goals, which including providing education for all, investing in the provision of education for all, implementing strategies for gender equality in education which aimed changing attitudes, values and practices, (Dakar Framework for Action, 2000)

The commitment made clearly defined what each country was required to do and implement in their countries. Promoting Education For All policies was, for example a focus area for both countries, as we have seen from the focus in the policies adopted, which focused on ensuring that education was accessible to all. This proves the impact that the DFA had on policy in both countries, but we will look at specific policies in the next section.

As a collective, the SSA region faced a number of challenges in achieving the goals set out by the DFA. According to the DFA Regional Frameworks for Action for SSA, (2002), many African countries experience set back due to vulnerability to natural and human-made disasters, the presence of weak physical and institutional bases and educational systems, which resulted in poor progress, (2002). Factors such as economic adjustment programmes, increased debt, inadequate and poorly used resources, HIV/AIDS, poor governance, armed conflict, droughts and floods, are just some of the combined factors that have contributed to, and had a devastating effect on education, and more so gender education in Africa, (DFA SSA regional Framework for Action, 2002).

In terms of progress resulting from adoption of DFA, the net enrolment of boys increased by 9 per cent to 56 per cent, and of girls by 7 per cent to 48 per cent in SSA, between 1990 and 1998, (DFA SSA regional Framework for Action, 2002).

The DFA Africa report (2002) also states that girls represented 56% of the estimated 41 million school going aged children who are out of school (2002). Gender parity presented itself highest in Southern Africa, where many countries achieved near universal primary education and high adult literacy rates. The highest cases of extreme gender disparity were mostly found along the southern rim of the Sahara, a region characterised by low adult literacy and weak economies, and this these regions girls' enrolment was only about half that of boys. (DFA SSA regional Framework for Action, 2002),

Of the girls who did make it into school, they had a 69% chance of reaching Grade 5, compared to 70% for boys. The Africa DFA data found that in general, where enrolment and literacy was high, gender equality was more prevalent; but where enrolment and adult literacy was low, the survival rate of girls were also generally found to be lower than that of boys (2002).

Overall, the drop-out rate of girls (and boys) also increased over the DFA period in SSA, and this was reportedly mainly due to the increased costs of schooling, or due to armed conflicts, (DFA SSA regional Framework for Action, 2002). Participation was exceptionally low amongst children in remote and rural areas, those with disabilities, refugees and internally displaced people, working children, ethnic minorities, and those affected by HIV/AIDS, conflict and other emergencies, which have resulted in an increasing number of orphans. This ultimately has a cascading effect on girl children as it leads to child headed households, of which, girls are usually the ones heading, and therefore need to drop out of school (UNESCO, 2016).

Overall access to education was limited, and the quality of education was also deemed to be poor with an often, irrelevant curricula, which did not meet the needs of the learners and of social, cultural and economic development.

#### **6.4.1. Impact of DFA /EFA on Rwanda and Uganda's Domestic Policies on Gender Education**

Both Rwanda and Uganda were signatories of the DFA/EFA. This section will review the policies implemented by both countries following the DFA/EFA adoption, and how the policies from this particular declaration influenced both countries' domestic policies on gender education.

This section will however not focus on the impact on policy or the qualitative performance of both countries, as this will be reviewed in a lot of detail when looking at the MDGs, due to the period overlap of both frameworks. DFA's EFA goals were linked to the MDGs education goals and, therefore, worked in parallel for a common purpose. Available reports

for the EFA and the MDGs are therefore for the same time periods (2000 – 2015), and we will be looking at performance data in conjunction with the MDGs, up until 2015.

Two of the MDGs targets related to education and according to the DFA, 2002, as long as the world pursues the Dakar education goals, it would also achieve the education related MDGs, and more, as the Dakar goals were the basis for national and international educational planning and implementation, as the best means to ensure that educational opportunities were met, (DFA Policy Document, 2002)

The next section of the paper will focus on the MDGs as an international measure of progress on gender education in Rwanda and Uganda.

#### **6.5. Millenniums Development Goals (MDGs)**

The MDGs are a set of poverty alleviation and developmental goals that were developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at the beginning of the new millennium. They have since been replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. The goals were developed as a blueprint to help eradicate poverty, and consensus was reached from 191 UN member countries to adopt the goals in order to help alleviate poverty and achieve development. The main objective of the MDGs was to assist developing countries in eradicating poverty and improving the quality of living for all by 2015. There was a total of eight goals, all inextricably linked to aiding the eradication of the many faces of poverty, which each goal helped to tackle.

In terms of the Actors, the UN and heads of states of member states came through as the actors in influencing these goals and associated norms. Similarly, when considering the motives of the MDGs, which was poverty alleviation and development, we can also say that

the motives for developing these goals and norms were once again of altruism, empathy and ideational commitment. The idea that these goals were developed merely to help developing countries in fighting poverty and achieving development.

The MDGs differed from previous development efforts in that they were not merely aspirations of what could be achieved, but rather, they were a definitive framework, inclusive of measurement targets as well as a framework for accountability, (Fakuda-Parr, 2004).

The MDGs had explicit quantifiable benchmarks to achieve. They also consisted of annual reviews with which to monitor progress through the 15-year period. Finally, they had a time frame, which was a 15-year period, starting from 2000, ending in 2015.

Goal 2 of the MDGs focused on education and aimed to achieve universal primary education. The key objective of MDG 2 was to ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, would be enrolled in, and complete a full course of primary schooling, (UN MDG Report, 2015). What was lacking from MDG 2 was a focus on the girl child Goal 3A, improving girls' enrolment and achieving gender parity in school was included to address the educational needs of the girl child. The inclusion of Target 3A, to goal 2, was important precisely due to the multitude of barriers that girl children face in accessing basic education in developing countries, and in particular, in SSA.

These two goals have done a lot to push access and gender parity in education across the continent.

The MDGs had explicit quantifiable benchmarks to achieve, working with a 15-year time frame, from 2000, ending in 2015. The targets (indicators) to measure MDG 2 progress and success, included Net Enrolment Rate (NER), Completion Rates (CR) and Youth Literacy

Rates (YLR), which were introduced in Section 2 of this paper. The measures set out for all countries with regard to the above indicators were to;

1. Achieve 100% Net Enrolment Rates (NER) by 2015;
2. Achieve 100% Completion Rates (CR) by 2015;
3. Achieve 100% Youth Literacy Rates (YLR)

The MDGs were adopted by both Rwanda and Uganda.

In this section Finnemore and Sikkink's Norm Life Cycle (2008) stages are highlighted, as we again see the emergence of norms from the MDGs, as well as the adoption and internalisation of these norms and resulting policies.

### **6.5.1. Impact of the MDGs and DFA on Gender Education Policies In Rwanda and Uganda**

This section looks at the impact of both the MDGS and the DFA due to their overlapping adoption periods, we will look at policies adopted to meet the goals of both frameworks.

Both the MDGs and the DFA goals and targets, along with their associated norm (access, parity and gender equality) certainly did impact gender education policies in both Rwanda and Uganda.

All countries who committed to the MDGs had the responsibility of providing regular reports to track their progress in meeting the MDG targets. To do this, countries were required to provide annual reports detailing the progress made for each goal and the steps and policies taken to meet those specific goals.

Both Rwanda and Uganda provided a number of these progress reports to the UN detailing

the policies they implemented to achieve MDG and DFA goals. This provides evidence that there was a direct impact and influence of the MDGs on both countries gender education policies as highlighted in the progress reports. This gives evidence of the cascading of norms and policies as well as the internalisation of these policies.

We will also look at impact in progress and performance of gender education in both countries, and will review progress starting from the period before the launch of the MDGs and the DFA, till the end of the MDG period (2015), which will give us a good indication of performance during the DFA/EFA period.

The data during the period of the MDGs reflects a positive skew toward improving gender education in both countries, and the internalisation and naturalisation of various policies to meet the MD goals, had significant impact for gender education in both countries.

Looking at an overview of SSA as a region, the percentage of Out of school children was 43.43% for girls in 2000, compared to 36.17% of boys. By 2014, this number had decreased to 23.29% of girls, compared to 19.21% of out of school boys, (World Bank, 2017). The data reflects a positive decline in both the actual number of girls out of school as well as a decline in the gender gap of 4.08% between girls and boys. This is however, not a big close in the gender gap when compared to the initial set of data, before the initial CEDAW was launched, which was at 8.87% between girls and boy out of school, (World Bank, 2017).

### **6.5.2. Impact of MDGs and the DFA on Gender Education Policies in Rwanda**

According to Rwanda's Education for All 2015 National Review Report, (EFANRR, 2015), the Education For All 2015 Review provided an opportunity for Rwanda to reflect on the

development of the education sector as envisioned by government policy, the progress made, issues they faced, and the challenges and prospects for post-2015. From a broader education perspective, Rwanda launched Vision 2020 in 2000, a set of policies and goals with the aspiration of making Rwanda a modern, knowledge-based, strong nation. Education lay at the heart of achieving Vision 2020, (Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Rwanda) Therefore, despite the negative impact of the genocide and the continued challenges faced by girl children, Rwanda performed exceptionally well in the education goals of the MDGs. By 2012, Rwanda had the highest primary school enrolments in Africa, and was well on its way to achieving the 100% target set out for this particular goal. Rwanda's success was a result of a number of key policy reforms that were launched specifically to achieve the MDGs and the DFA's EFA goals, (Rwanda MDG Final Progress Report, 2013). These reforms translated into improvement in the education of the girl child, which has had positive implications for the country.

This clearly demonstrates the influence and impact that international norm cascades of the MDGs and the DFA had on national gender education policy in Rwanda.

It is important to highlight the limitations and challenges in the availability of consistent data between 2000 and 2015. The NER data by gender for Rwanda, for example, is only available for the year 2013 with no data availability prior to this year. This paper will analyse the available data, in order to understand gender parity trends for education in Rwanda.

In the year 2000, the year that the MDGs and the DFA were launched, Rwanda's total primary school NER for both boys and girls was at 72%. By 2005/6, the country had made some notable progress and increased that number to 86.6%. By 2012, Rwanda further improved on those results, and had increased to 96.5%, (Rwanda MDG Final Progress

Report, 2013).

Analysing by gender, the NER for girls in 2013 was at 97.4%, compared to 94.84% of boys being enrolled. This reflects a positive outlook on girls' enrolment numbers, as it indicates a slightly higher enrolment percentage for girls than for boys, (UNESCO, 2016).

With regard to Rwanda's Completion Rates (CR), the country did exceptionally well, by way of improvement. Rwanda started from a 22% completion rate in 2000. By 2012, this number had increased to 72.7%, a notable 50.7% improvement, (UNESCO, 2016). This number was lower when looking at the World Bank Data, which indicated 66.6% CR in 2012, (World Bank, 2016).

Rwanda's achievement was even more positive for girls. In 2008, the percentage of girls completing primary school was 53.5% as compared to 50% of boys in the same year. By 2013, 72.1% of girls were completing primary school, compared to 60.9% of boys completing primary school, (World Bank, 2016). This is a more significant difference between girls' and boys' completion rates. This trend is in line with the literature outlined earlier that there is a higher likelihood of girl children completing the full course of primary education, than their male counterparts, (UN MDG report for Africa, 2015).

Finally, with regard to the literacy rates for both male and female, aged 15-24 years, Rwanda made some progress, increasing from 77.62% in 2000, to 78.4% in 2015, (UNESCO, 2015). The progress has shown the benefits of interventions targeted at girls as the highest rate of progress has been for females. Looking at the gender breakdown, in the year 2000, 76.86% of females aged 15-24 years were literate, compared to 78,52% of males. A slight but not

significant difference in the literacy rates, with a higher literacy rate among males. By 2015, 82.19% of females were literate as compared to 80.37% of males, (UNESCO, 2015). This shows a slightly higher literacy rate in females than in males over the 15-year period. Rwanda had the highest primary school enrolment rates in Africa by 2012, which is commendable.

Rwanda adopted and implemented the following policies to achieve the goals of the MDGs and the DFA.

In 2008, Rwanda launched the '9YBE Programme' (9 Years Basic Education) which was aimed to ensure that children attend compulsory education for at least 9 years to ensure that primary school was completed. This policy was later modified, and the country increased the compulsory years for basic education to 12 years from the original 9 years, in order to meet the MD Goal for education. In 2012, Rwanda won the Commonwealth Education Good Practice Awards, for innovative fast-tracking strategies for their 9-Year Basic Education programme. The country was awarded this for their impressive efforts to increase basic education to a compulsory 9 years, and also for the innovative approaches embarked on by the country to ensure all children could access and complete quality basic education, (Rwanda BPfA Report, 2014).

Free education was another very important government policy that was introduced in 2003, which helped to improve the enrolment rate by ensuring that education was truly accessible to all, especially to those children from poorer households who were otherwise unable to afford schooling. This policy is directly aligned to all three gender education norms of access, gender parity and gender equality.

Rwanda also put a lot of emphasis on what it stipulated in its Vision 2020 policy document, which was aimed at transforming the economy of Rwanda from an ‘agricultural-based economy’, into a ‘knowledge-based economy’. This is a key step to improving education, because where more African countries are still relying on their natural resources for sustainability and growth, Rwanda has taken the alternative approach by focusing on education, and fostering knowledge as a precious resource, which helps to drive and build the economy of a country.

With Rwanda’s enrolment rates being as high as they were, the government was able to focus on the quality of education in the country, as the next step. Much investment was allocated into implementing and monitoring programs and interventions that ensured access to quality education, driving programs to promote early childhood development, building capacities to plan, all with the aim of improving the quality of education, and ensuring access to education, (Rwanda MDG Final Progress Report 2013).

With regard to gender specific initiatives, the Girls’ Education Task Force (GETF) of the Ministry of Education was launched in 2004, during the MDG period. The task force was launched in conjunction with the UNGEI framework and consisted of Education (MINEDUC), Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), DFID, UNICEF, FAWE, National Women Council, National Youth Council and Pro-Femmes, (UNGEI, 2016). The purpose of the task force was to implement the Girls’ Education Action Plan, an initiative launched by the First Lady of Rwanda in 2007. The 5-year school campaign initiative was launched to help promote girls’ education and to help increase enrolment and improve the achievement of girls in school, (UNGEI, 2016).

Overall, the key to Rwanda's success was the progressive and innovative approaches taken by the government and its partners in ensuring education remains a priority. A great deal was done in terms of policies and initiatives, to drive education and particularly to focus on the girl child beyond just achieving MDG 2. Government's commitment is therefore, one key factor in achieving the goals, as Rwanda has demonstrated.

For example, in order to reduce gender imbalance in access and enrolment in secondary education, in 2009, Rwanda's Ministry of Education adopted the universal Nine-years Basic Education (9YBE) programme and by 2012, this was extended to twelve years basic education (12YBE). The establishment of these programmes locally helped to improve access as well as school proximity especially for girls, which resulted in increased girls' access to both lower and upper secondary education. This also resulted in an increase in the number of girls at secondary school. The improved access to education and learning has had significant impacts on women's capacity to fully engage and effectively contribute to all aspects of national development. Furthermore, by 2012, the number of women in public tertiary institutions had increased to 33.4%, compared to 54.7% in private schools and universities, (Rwanda BPfA Report, 2014).

The First lady of Rwanda also implemented some strategies to encourage attendance and participation of women and girls in science and technology.

This including the provision of scholarships to best performing girls in end of primary school examinations as well as the provision of scholarships to girls with excellent performance from poor families, which was aimed to help in further improving access, retention and performance especially in science and technology, (Rwanda BPfA Report, 2014). Although not policy per se, mentorship programmes were also introduced to encourage girls and

women to break the “gender stereotypes” and venture into traditionally male-dominated fields, including ICT sector, (Rwanda BPfA Report, 2014).

Rwanda’s curriculum and training material was also scrutinized to eliminate any discriminative tendencies, as well as special effort being made to cater for disadvantaged and marginalized groups, (Rwanda BPfA Report, 2014):

*“In terms of literacy rates, the government of Rwanda made the following efforts to strive to make all Rwandans literate and to achieve Rwanda’s aspiration of becoming a knowledge-based economy and a middle-income country by 2020.”*

Rwanda’s 2012 Census reported that about 65 % of the female population aged 15 and above are now able to read and write in at least one language, and this compared to the 72 % of males at the time, (Rwanda BPfA Report, 2014). These efforts have been achieved with the help of the 5181 literacy centres that have been opened across the country. These centres have been brought closer to the communities where they are needed, which has helped more women to make use of them literacy programmes. By 2012, 63.2%<sup>24</sup> of women were enrolled in these literacy centres, (Rwanda BPfA Report, 2014).

### **6.5.3. Impact of MDGs and DFA on Gender Education Policies in Uganda**

Since the adoption of the MDGs, Uganda has been through a process of internalisation of the MDGs into its national development agenda (Uganda MDG Report, 2015). This was to align the goals of the MDGs to those of the country for effective implementation.

Following the implementation of the EFA goals, Uganda prioritised equitable access to quality basic education in the country and committed to Global, Regional and National initiatives intended to accelerate progress towards EFA targets. This included partnerships

and collaboration with multilateral, bilateral, regional and national development partners, inclusive of the private sector. This was done to leverage on much needed resources for the realization of Uganda's acceleration plan. One such partnership was with the Global Partnership in Education (GPE), which was done to acquire resource and funding with the aim of providing equitable quality basic education.

According to Uganda's Education for All National Review (2015) UPE remained Uganda's flagship program and over a 15 years period since it was launched in 1997, it consistently received over 55% of the total annual discretionary budget allocated to the Education. This helped Uganda achieve gender parity by 2005. Therefore, although the UPE was launched before the launch of the MDGs and the DFA, the policy was continually amended to meet subsequent goals, (Uganda's Education for All National Review (2015)

This rapid increase in enrolment required an increase in the number of classrooms, which the government of Uganda addressed. In 1996, there were 7,351 primary schools, but by 2015, there were over 22,600 primary school. The number of classrooms also increased from 40,000 to 149,000 over the same period, (Uganda MDG Report, 2015).

The government of Uganda had committed to targeted and clear strategies to achieve this. There was also an improvement in the teacher-to-classroom ratio, increasing from 90 in 2009 to 68 in 2013, (Uganda MDG Report, 2015).

According to Uganda's MDG Report (2015), the overall NER improved to 80% since the introduction of UPE in 1997. This has also resulted in the increase of enrolment for girls, (Uganda MDG Report 2015).

Uganda also implemented the UPE programme and Quality Enhancement Initiatives, as a result of the DFA and EFA initiatives, (Uganda's Education for All National Review, 2015).

In 2000, Uganda also introduced free the education policy across the country, which has had important effects on enrolments. It firstly increased the number of children enrolled into school from poor households, and secondly, this action was particularly beneficial for girl children, and for improving enrolment of girl children. There was an increase in enrolment rates for girls relative to boys, therefore decreasing the gender gap in primary enrolment.

According the Uganda EFA National Review (2015), the gender parity index of 1.004 was achieved in 2010. Uganda also committed to working with UNESCO and other partners to strengthen coordination mechanisms in order to accelerate progress towards it's EFA targets, (Uganda's Education for All National Review, 2015). Uganda committed to supporting the Coordination Mechanism for EFA at the global and regional levels and committed to play their role as a representative of Africa Region (5A) in the Global EFA Steering Committee to ensure that African voice is heard, (Uganda's Education for All National Review, 2015). This clearly demonstrates how the internationally developed DFA and EFA declaration influenced Uganda's own domestic policies on education, and drove Uganda's commitment towards not just overall education, but also more specifically gender education.

On the education and gender education specific goals of the MDGs, Uganda did not meet the goals of the MDGs, which stipulated, Target 2.A To ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling; and Target 3.A Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015. There was however some progress, but we will look at all the targets in more detail.

According to the World Bank data, the overall (female and Male) Primary School NER for Uganda was at 93.56% in 2009. This was approximately 9 years into the launch of the

MDGs, and if we use the data provided by Uganda, is a substantial increase from the 57% in 1996, just a few years before the launch. By 2011, which is the most recent data available, overall NER was at 93.16%. It, therefore, shows a massive increase from the period before the MDGs were launched and years into the implementation of certain policies that would drive ER, (2017). If we focus on NER for girls, in 2009, the earliest period for which data was available, 94.82% of girls of primary age were enrolled into school. That is a significant rate, and NER was slightly higher for females than it was for males, which was at 92.31% over the same period.

By 2013, a few years before the end of the MDGs, female NER was at 95.27%, compared to 92.34% for males. This data indicates that Uganda performed exceptionally well with regard to access, and more so with regard to providing access for girls, and achieving gender parity, in as far as enrolment was concerned, (World Bank, 2017). This also signifies that the policies implemented by the Ugandan government, especially that of providing free primary school education helped to ensure that more girls were having access to, and starting school.

Completion Rates (CR), however, did not fare as well. We will look at the earliest data available, in order to track the progress.

Looking at the overall stats for Uganda, in 1975, the Primary school CR was at 40.21%. In 2001, a year after the launch of the MDGs, there had been an increase in CR to 60.68% of girls and boys finishing primary level schooling. By 2015, the end period of the MDGs however, this rate took a dive and declined to 53.05%. The trend is similar for girl children. In 1982, only 28.28% of girls were completing primary school compared to 56.91% of boys, in the same period. By 2001, the number of girls completing primary school saw a good increase to 54.35%, compared to 66.97% of boys in the same period. By 2015, this rate once again declined slightly for girls to 53.38%, but was slightly higher compared to the boys CR

which was at 52.72% in 2015, indicating that because more girls were enrolling into schools, so too more girls were completing primary school education, (World Bank, 2018).

These numbers indicate a problem in the Uganda education strategy. The government focused on access and enrolment, as discussed previously, but did not focus on keeping girls (or children in general) in school to complete their primary schooling. The fact that there is also a decline over the MDG period is concerning, because it is suggesting some challenges between the period of 2001 to 2015 which would have caused this rate to decline.

According to the Ugandan government, financial constraints remain the most prominent factor explaining both non-enrolment and high dropout rates, (Uganda MDG Report 2015).

Therefore, in as much as education was made free, the other costs associated with getting an education remained a challenge for poor households. Expenses such as stationary, meals and uniforms were too high to keep kids in school, especially girls. Other barriers affecting these girls' education included the families' socioeconomic status, the long distances for to kids to travel to school, and obligations towards the family business or farms, which in most cases girls bear the brunt, and these were a major contributing factor to the high primary school dropout rates (Uganda MDG Report, 2015).

According the Uganda MDG report, gross primary school enrolment was above 120%, which implies that there are more primary school pupils than there are children of official school going age, and these discrepancies highlights the challenges of late entry, re-entry and grade repetition. The high NERs are, therefore, not indicative of positive enrolment, but the numbers are skewed due to the above reasons.

Finally, we look at Literacy Rates (LR) in order to get a holistic view of the education and the literacy level of female youth in Uganda. According to the World Bank data, in 1991, the overall youth (15-24 years) LR in Uganda was at 69.80%. By 2002, two years post the launch of the MDGs, the youth LR was at 80.79%, with a steady increase in 2012 to 83.65%. This indicates a positive growth, but also high youth literacy rates for Uganda. This is also high when considering that the overall youth literacy rate for SSA region was at 71.41% in 2010, and was therefore not increasing at the same rate.

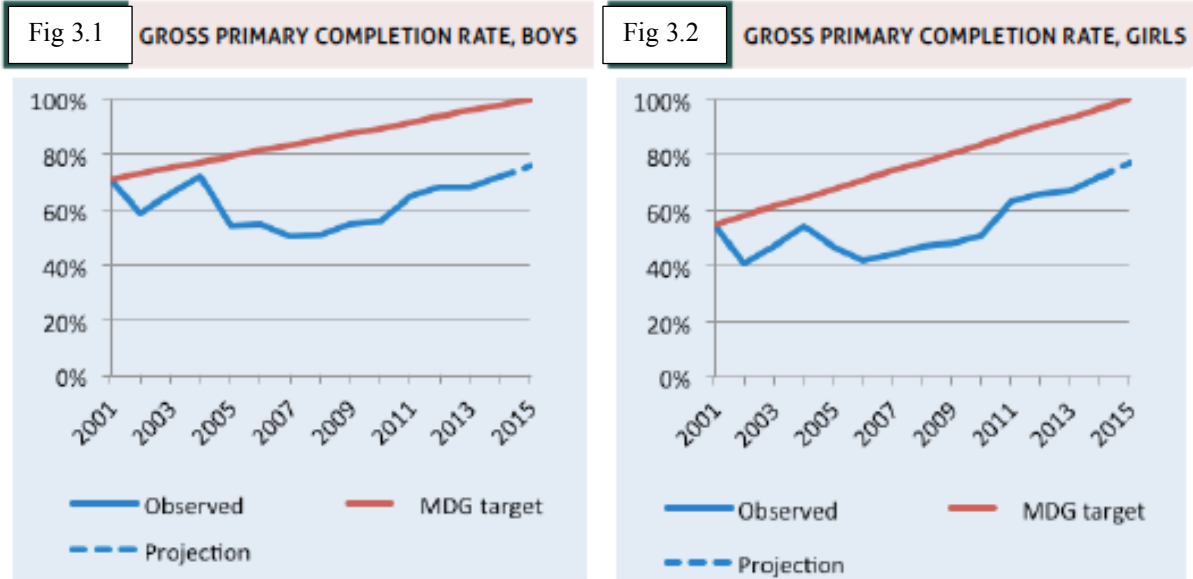
Focusing on female youth literacy rates, in 1991, the LR for females was at 63.12%, which was lower than that of males during the same period, at 77.22%. By 2002 after the launch of the MDGs, the female LR had increased steadily to 76.17%, but still below that of the male LR, which was at 85%. By 2012, the LR for female youth was at 83.65%, and had surpassed the male LR which was at 81.65. This implies a focus on gender education during the MDG period and also shows a steady improvement in youth literacy rates over the MDG period, (WB Data, 2017).

What is important to note is that there is discrepancy in the data provided by the WB compared to that provided in the Uganda MDG Report. The data provided by the Ugandan government does not correspond to the WB and UNESCO data, although the Uganda report has given more conservative numbers than the World Bank data provided above. The data should therefore be taken with caution.

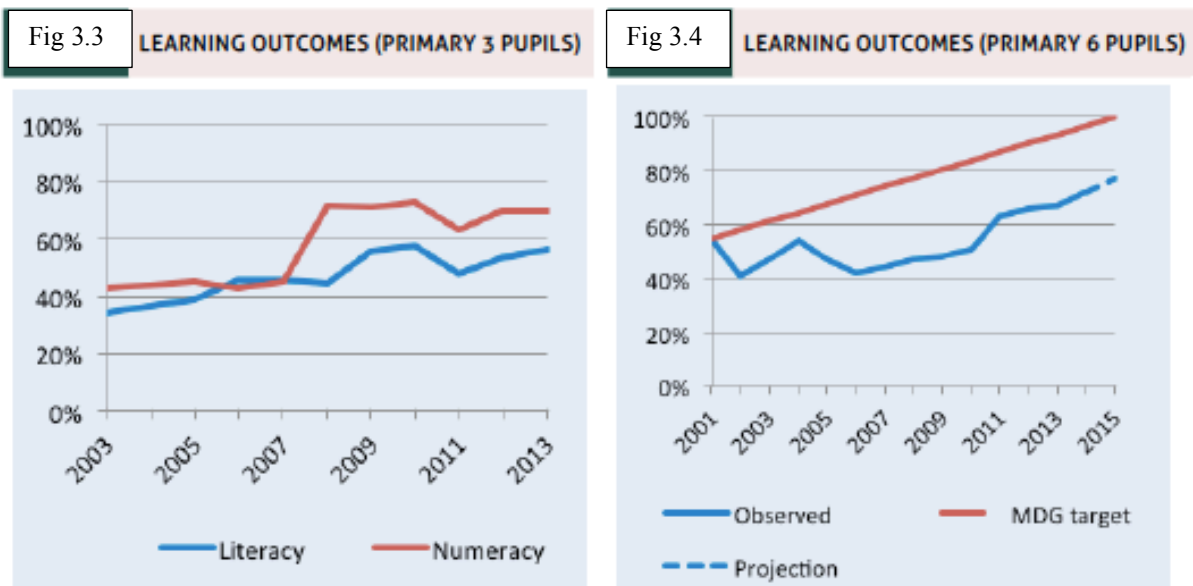
Several challenges were identified and raised by the Ugandan government, which impacted the performance on their education goals, especially those focusing on girls. According to the Ugandan Ministry of Education, there is a still a high-class repetition and drop-out rates, more especially for girls, which can be attributed to the quality of schools, which sometimes

affect girls more negatively. Economic obligations and parental attitudes to education and early marriages also play a role, (Uganda MDG Report, 2015).

Below are graphs that highlight the steady increase in primary school completion, although it highlights that Uganda's performance was always below the targets set by the MDGs. There was, however, progress over the 15-year period of the MDGs which indicates that whichever policies and programmes were introduced over this period had a positive impact on completion rates particularly for girls, despite the many challenges still faced.



Sources: Ministry of Education and Sports (2014) and Ministry of Education (2015). Notes: Gross primary completion refers to the number of candidates in the primary-school leaving exam as a percentage of the total number of 12 year olds.



Source: Ministry of Education and Sports (2014). Notes: Shows the proportion of pupils reaching the defined level of competency in literacy and numeracy.

Figure 4: Gender Education Progress in Uganda, Uganda Ministry of Education and Sport (2014)

Looking at gender parity and gender equality in education, Uganda has made some significant progress to promote gender equality as well as the empowerment of women. Gender parity has been achieved, and there are now equal number of girls as boys in primary school. This, according to Uganda’s MDG Report (2015), is reflective of the Governments

ongoing efforts to improve access to education, especially for girls. By 2015, the ratio of girls to boys in primary school stood at 100%, up from 93.2% in 2000. Below shows a table reflecting the progress of gender ratios over the 15-year period, (2015).

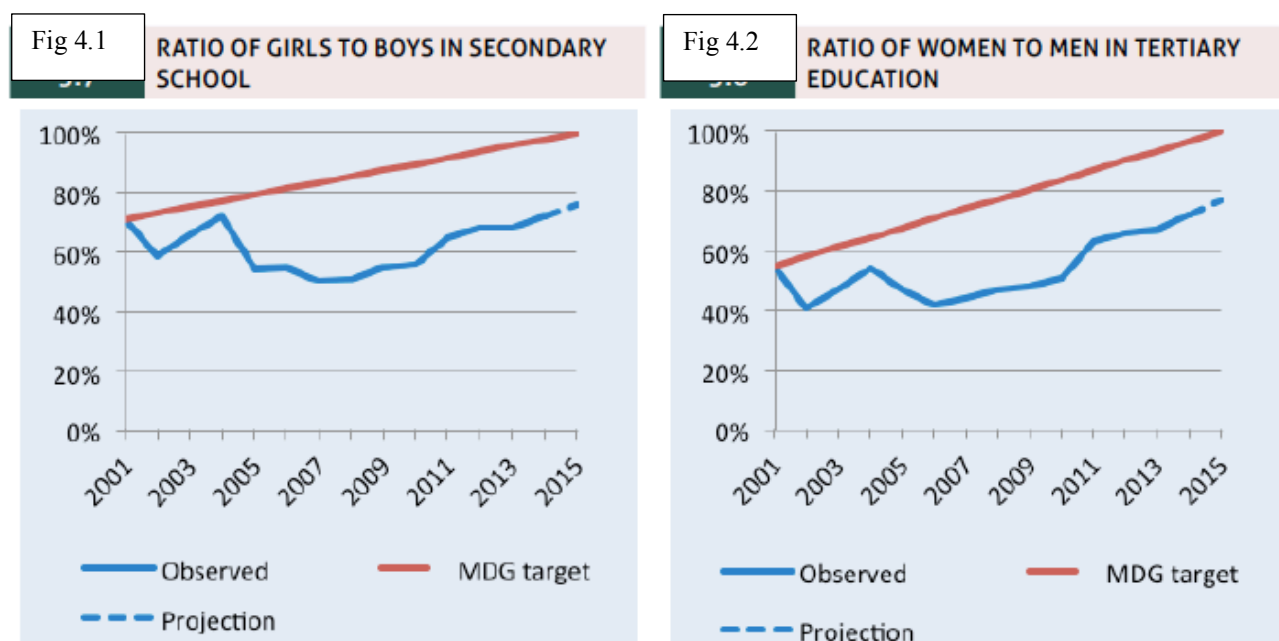
PROJECTED OUTCOME: NOT ACHIEVED							
Indicators	2000	2003	2006	2009	2012	2014	2015 target
3.1 Ratio of girls to boys <sup>1</sup>							
in primary education	93.2%	97.1%	99.4%	99.9%	99.9%	100.0%	100%
in secondary education	78.8%	82.4%	83.5%	84.2%	85.2%	88.3%	100%
in tertiary education	58.0%	64.7%	72.7%	77.6%	78.6%	79.1%	100%
3.2 Share of non-agricultural wage workers who are women <sup>2</sup>	NA	NA	28.1%	33.4%	30.2%	NA	
3.3 Proportion of seats held by women in Parliament <sup>3</sup>	17.9%	24.7%	23.9%	30.7%	35.0%	35.0%	

Table 4: Gender Ratio Progress in Uganda, Ministry of Education and Sports (2012) and (2015)

Despite this progress, there is still ongoing gender disparity in access to secondary and tertiary education. Although learning opportunities are available for all, socioeconomic, cultural and religious practices, still pose huge challenges for girls' enrolment. This includes the provision of school-specific factors such as sanitary facilities and adequate counselling services. The introduction of Uganda's Public policy has also helped to raise the aspirations of parents for their daughters to at least complete primary school.

Gender biases continue to prevail in secondary and tertiary education, however. This mainly due to cultural practices and beliefs, where households still sometimes choose to educate boys at the expense of girls, more especially in the poorer areas. As a result, the system loses even more females at tertiary level, where gender disparities are highest, according to Uganda's MDG Report (2015). Affirmative action has not yet penetrated far enough in order to counter gender biases. Below we see two graphs showing the ratio of males to females at

secondary and tertiary level, (Uganda MDG Report, 2015).



Source: Ministry of Education and Sports (2012) and (2015).

Figures 5.1 & 5.2: Gender Ratios in Secondary and Tertiary Education

Ugandan government has also attributed some of its failures in meeting MDG targets on limited systemic capability in the education and health sectors, as well as some of the challenges they have faced in encouraging behavioural change across the broader population as well as within the public sector. A lot of resource was put into the education sector, having increased the pupil-teacher ratio fell from 65 in 2000 to 46 in 2012, while decreasing the pupil-to-classroom ratio from 106 to 57, (Uganda MDG Report, 2015). Learning outcomes have however remained poor and showed few signs of improvement by the time Uganda’s report was drafted.

Uganda’s Government has however acknowledged these challenges and committed to these implement measures to motivate teachers in order to ensure compliance with set service delivery standards, strengthen school inspection and influence behavioural change through education and information campaigns, (Uganda MDG Report, 2015).

Uganda's government does however attribute much of the success they have had to the adoption of the MDG's, and as a result how they have internalised the goals into policy.

Uganda's MDG Report (2015), states that:

*“... the MDG agenda helped to raise the profile of important development objectives and has had a pervasive impact on Uganda's policy debates over the last 15 years. This has affected the country's development results in both positive and negative ways. In the early 2000s, Uganda's most prominent national policy objectives, such as reducing extreme poverty and improving access to primary education and healthcare, were to a great extent aligned to the MDGs.”*, (Uganda MDG Report, 2015, Pg. 3 )

I have included the above quote from Uganda's report as I think it best describes the important role and impact the MDGs have had on policy debates in Uganda. It demonstrates a directive link between the MDGs and Uganda's policies. The quote also proves that impact of the MDGs on policy frameworks on education., which has had both positive as well as negative impact. It however also speaks to a point, an almost expiration date period up until when the goals and policies become irrelevant.

## **6.6. Overview of Gender Parity Index for Rwanda and Uganda**

We will now analyse the Primary school Gross enrolment and Gender Parity Index(GPI) for Rwanda and Uganda in order to understand the ratio of girls to boys in schools and whether the adoption of various norms and policies aimed at improving gender education did indeed have an impact on achieving gender parity at primary level. We focus on primary level as this is what the various goals and targets focused on, but also because if parity is not achieved at primary level, it is unlikely to be achieved at secondary or tertiary level.

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) for gross enrolment ratio in primary education is the ratio of girls to boys enrolled at primary level in public and private schools, (World Bank, 2017).

The GPI indicates parity between girls and boys. A GPI of less than 1 suggests girls are more disadvantaged than boys in learning opportunities and a GPI greater than 1 suggests the other way around. Eliminating gender disparities in education would help increase the status and capabilities of women, (World Bank, 2017). The GPI indicator is calculated by dividing female gross enrolment ratio in primary education by male gross enrolment ratio in primary education. We will look at the GPI over the years, looking at the period that each agreement or convention we look at commenced and ended to evaluate the GPI and the possible impact of the policies implemented on the GPI ratio.

In 1979 when CEDAW was initially launched, the GPI in Rwanda was at 0.887, compared to Uganda which was at 0.735. By the end period of CEDAW, in 1990, the GPI in Rwanda was 0.989, and 0.804 in Uganda. This informs that gender parity had not yet been achieved by both countries, but there was an improvement in the GPI. At the time of the BDPA launch in 1995, the GPI in Uganda was at 0.844, and there was a three-year gap in data for Rwanda from 1993 – 1996, but by 1997, when GPI data was available, Rwanda's GPI rating was 0.975.

Therefore, a steady closing of the gap in Rwanda's GPI scores is evident, while Uganda's progress remained quite small. By 2000, which was the end period of the BDPA, which also coincided with the launch of both the MDGs as well as DFA's EFA goals, Uganda's GPI was on 0.939, while Rwanda was on 0.976. Once again, we see that both countries had made significant progress in closing the gap between girls' and boys' enrolment at primary level. Uganda had especially made good progress on paper, but again, this had a lot to do with many girls enrolling late into primary school, following the introduction of free education for all in Uganda.

## 7. CHAPTER SEVEN: PROVING THE HYPOTHESIS

This study has sought to prove the hypothesis that international norms and policies do in fact have an impact on gender education policies at national level in SSA countries, focusing specifically on Rwanda and Uganda.

As demonstrated throughout this paper and by looking across all four agreements/treaties, both Rwanda and Uganda's gender education policies were heavily influenced by international norms and standards and this ultimately influenced the policies adopted and internalised by both countries, following the adoption of certain international agreements.

The study has also demonstrated the integral role that norms play in International Relations (IR) as a discipline, and the influence norms have on how countries act and the policies they adopt. Goldman (1969) highlights the extent to which norms are closely linked to the values of a society. Norms are therefore not only important to societies but also to IR as a discipline, due to the importance and influence they have in cascading ideas, beliefs and values about what is important for states to focus on, which ultimately impacts policy reform at domestic level.

Nyhamar (2000) proposes that norms in states emphasise and express what is valued and respected in that state and norms also help to realise valuable states in the long run.

Therefore, what norms do is to help shape the beliefs and that which is considered important within a state. Therefore, although norms start off as just that, they ultimately gain a place of acceptance and prominence in societies, and in how societies behave and think and what they value, which ultimately leads to significant policy and legislative changes.

For example, at one point in time, education for girls everywhere was not considered to be of much importance or value, but over time this belief has changed and as a result, norms have formed which have changed this perspective and belief. Most states now appreciate and

understand the value of educating girl children as a result of cascading international norms, and the global actors and platforms that have helped to spread those ideas and norms.

Finnemore et al's, (2008) theoretical framework underpinned how norms emerge, how they cascade down to country level, the actors involved and the motives for internalising norms. According to Nyhamar (2000), these stages form an important part of how norms become globally known and accepted because norms must be shared with other actors firstly.

Therefore, if a norm emerges in one country but it remains there, it does not really become a norm but rather only a way of doing things in that particular country. It is only when norms are shared with other actors that it has the widespread power to become a global norm and impact policy change. The second part of what Nyhamar proposes about norms and their relevance in IR is that they are partly enforced by their sanctions. He argues that norms can be driven by either emotion, indignation, or feelings of guilt, which corresponds with Finnemore et al, (2008) motives for adopting certain norms, although it be challenging to determine the consequences of norms, because of these underlying motives of actors, of which it is not always know the reason for norm adoption.

This I found to be true in analysing both of my case studies. The motivations for adopting norms were hard to establish. For example, with both my case studies, they adopted international norms and policies that did not seem to make rational sense at the time of adoption, but the literature on the rationale for their decisions was not known.

For example, in 1979, both Rwanda and Uganda, along with most other SSA states adopted CEDAW. The motives are not known, but looking at the timing of CEDAW, it was only a few years post-independence for many SSA countries from its previous colonial past.

Therefore, in as much as it was important to advance the empowerment of women, as CEDAW set out to do, many SSA states were still focusing on political and economic

stability, that it begs the question on why so many adopted CEDAW, especially because many performed very poorly in achieving its goals.

This again highlights Finnemore and Sikkink's motivations, because it either signifies the importance the region placed on achieving gender equality, or perhaps it demonstrates the pressure for SSA governments to conform to international norms and policies, for legitimisation, as this was what was the international community was driving. e to conform for legitimisation, being one of them.

Similarly, when both Rwanda and Uganda adopted the BDPA, they were both experiencing some form of civil war. There were no documents to show the adoption of any domestic policies to coincide with the adoption of BDPA, unlike all the other, which indicates that although both adopted this policy and its related norms, both were unable to commit, but then questions why they would have adopted it in the first place, i.e. the motives.

In gender education, the norms speaking to gender equality, access and gender parity have shown their prominence across the various policies and agreements, and in the policies adopted by both my case studies, for which I was able to map their national policies according to the three gender education norms, including the right to education for all. These norms have helped to prove the hypothesis that international norms do in fact influence domestic policy and have certainly influenced gender education policies in both Rwanda and Uganda.

In Rwanda, we saw the clear emphasis on improving gender education through the country's National Gender Policy, an extensive strategy for gender education, which aimed to guide and promote sustainability in the progressive elimination of gender disparities in education and training as well as in management structures, (Rwanda Girls' Policy 2008).

Rwanda's Girls Education Policy also highlighted the fact that gender education numbers have increased since the first World Conference on Education for All which was in 1990. The Girls' Education Policy reiterates the notion of basic education being a basic human right and this has influenced Rwanda's own gender education policies. This demonstrates the direct impact and influence that international policies and norms have had on gender education policy reforms in Rwanda.

Rwanda further acknowledges a number of the international agreements on gender education for which it has made commitments to, that emphasises the country's determination to respect human rights, and therefore the rights of women. In the country's Girls Education Policy, The Ministry of Education continually refers to its commitments to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Education for All and to the MDGs, (Rwanda's Girls' Education Policy, 2008).

In summary, Rwanda's gender education policy refers to, and addresses all the norms and goals highlighted in the international agreements and policies that we have identified in this paper. It addresses access to education, gender parity in education and gender education.

Similar impact is evident in Uganda's gender education policies, which demonstrates the impact that international norms and policies have had on gender education in Uganda.

Articles 30 and 34 (2) of Uganda's Constitution (1995) calls for the right to basic education for every Ugandan. This is an international norm that has been emphasised over the decades, stipulating that education is a basic human right. Uganda's 1997 '2025 Vision for Uganda's development' incorporated as a development priority, the commitment to education. This gave rise to the Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP) 1997-2003 framework. Under the 1st and 2nd PEAP, Universalizing Primary Education was Government's chief education priority, (Uganda Education for All, National Review, 2015).

One of the other commitments the Ugandan government made was to raise the educational achievement of Ugandans especially among children of poor households. In 1997, Uganda's Ministry of Education to free education in 1997, has for example helped to substantially increase the primary enrolment from 2.6 million in 1996 to 6.5 million by 2015, (Uganda Education for All, National Review, 2015).

### **7.1. The Challenges Hindering Progress in Gender Education in SSA**

Although this research paper has highlighted and demonstrated the impact of gender education norms on gender education policy reform at national level, the gaps have also been revealed while conducting the research. Although the international community has helped to create awareness and address gender education on a much larger global platform, it has however, not sufficiently addressed the numerous barriers that girl children continue to face in SSA, which we discussed in chapter 1, section 1.3. Unfortunately, it seems as though until these barriers and challenges are addressed and tackled, the policies that SSA countries continue to adopt will only have surface level impact.

The policies and goals that this paper looked at fail to address these fundamental challenges, which are not only present in Rwanda and Uganda, but in many other SSA countries.

Most of the goals we have looked at across the four conventions speak to ensuring access and free education, but does not address how to provide this access to the girl who has to walk long distances, while risking her life, to ensure she can make it to school safely to receive this free education, amongst other challenges. This is something that the researcher found was lacking and was a major shortcoming of the international norms and policies.

The international norms and resulting policies and goals have therefore sought to address the symptoms as opposed to addressing the underlying causes as to why gender education is so

poorly in most SSA countries. Even in a country like Rwanda, which has done well in achieving the internationally set goals and targets, beyond primary level access and parity, the state of gender education remains poor in Rwanda, more especially around completion rates. For example, many girls do not complete primary level education, nor do they ever start or complete high school, (UNESCO, 2015).

Furthermore, even though Rwanda and Uganda were positive case studies and showed positive results, both countries do not truly reflect what is really prevalent in many other SSA countries regarding the effectiveness and impact of international norms and policies. Having analysed a number of other countries in SSA and how they performed over the same time periods, we see just how dire the situation really is for girls' education in SSA.

Countries like Niger, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, amongst many others, are just some of the majority of countries in SSA that did not achieve much success or progress from the norms and goals that the international community set for gender education, (Africa MDG Report, 2015) The shortfall, however, is not with the goals, but rather that they do not take into proper consideration of the state of each country and therefore seek to address the underlying but core challenges faced, as discussed.

As discussed in Section 1.3, many of the problems are cultural, community, economic and political challenges.

## 8. CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

This paper researched the impact of cascading international gender education norms, namely; access, gender parity and gender equality, on domestic gender education policies, using Rwanda and Uganda as case studies.

There is evidence within the framework of this paper which proves that international norms and policies *have* impacted the adoption and internalisation of domestic gender education policies in Rwanda and Uganda, and had an influence on gender education performance in both countries. Both countries, along with many others in the SSA region were influenced by the prevalent international norms and agreements on gender education, resulting in changes to their own domestic policies.

The research therefore allows us to reasonably assume and conclude that international norms and policies have an impact on gender education performance in SSA countries and on the positive progress of gender education in SSA countries.

If we take the MDGs as an example, even for those countries that did not meet all the targets of the MDGs, there was clear evidence of improvement in gender education performance, using the stipulated targets and indicators in most countries who adopted them.

Although in his research Nyhamar (2000) argues that there is no causal evidence to prove the causal impact of norms, and in this case, the causal impact of the conventions on domestic policies implemented, what was evident even for those countries that performed poorly for the MDGs, was that they did in fact implement specific domestic policies that were directly intended to meet the targets and goals of the MDGs. This was explicitly articulated in the MDG country reports which highlighted the policies implemented and how the

implementation of these cascaded norms had an impact on gender education progress in each country.

Focusing on the performance of our case, by the end period of the MDGs, both Uganda and Rwanda had achieved gender parity in some of the education indicators, although not across all of them. Both countries had also fared exceptionally well in girls' enrolment rates (over 95% NER), (access), and the enrolment for girls into primary school surpassed that of boys, therefore achieving gender parity and equality. However, looking at parity and NER (access) alone does not provide a complete, nor an accurate picture of the real state of gender education in SSA.

What was also evident was the important role that various norm actors played in the cascading and naturalisation of norms into domestic policy. In this case, the UN was a powerful and very influential actor in all of the norms that we reviewed. Heads of States and/or State representatives (ministers, etc.) were also key actors for each country.

The UN, because of its membership status, is influential in driving norms as well as policies, and in influencing countries to adopt certain agreements and treaties. This highlights both Finnemore and Sikkink (2008) as well as Nyhamar's (2000) argument on the motives for states adopting specific norms. In the case of both Rwanda and Uganda, the motives for norm cascading and internalisation were not known. It would be an assumption to provide the true motives as proposed by Finnemore and Sikkink, (2008), but could definitely be related conformity, a motive provided for the internalisation of norms, or legitimacy, reputation or esteem.

I found no other evidence on other actors like civil society or relevant NGO groups, as actors in influencing the cascading and internalisation of other norms and policies.

Although the impact was evident, what came across quite strongly through the research was that although the impact of international norms and their resulting policies did a lot to improve the number of girls enrolled into schools, it did not however address the broader issues facing girls beyond just access and parity, as discussed in section 7.1.

The data analysed also revealed that although the policies and programmes implemented by both countries helped to increase access, parity and contributed towards achieving universal primary education, there wasn't a big drive to ensure the quality of education, nor the completion of primary schooling, which is highly concerning. Substantially high drop-out rates and non-completion rates for girls remains a big problem, and the quality of education girls are receiving once enrolled, remains an issue, along with the many other barriers that exist for girl children, as discussed in Section 9.

The overall primary level completion rates are very low for both case studies despite the high enrolment rates, which ultimately impacts the number of girls who are able to further their education, post primary school.

To fully understand the extent of this problem, I looked at other different indicators to get a complete picture of completion rates, and therefore analysed the **Persistence to last grade of primary, total (% of cohort)** indicator. Persistence to last grade of primary (PTLG) is the percentage of children enrolled in the first grade of primary school who eventually reach the last grade of primary education. The estimate is based on the reconstructed cohort method. Therefore, having already looked at available data on completion rates, the PTLG of primary school rate helps to paint a holistic picture of a much bigger problem beyond what the international community drives.

I compared the PTLG over a 14-year period from the start off the MDGs. Looking at 2014 data, Rwanda, recorded a PTLG rate of 48.39% for girls, compared to 40.95% for boys. Uganda recorded a PTLG rate of only 21.62% for girls, compared to 21.09% for boys.

Therefore, in as much as the number of girls completing primary school using the PTLG indicator is slightly higher for girls in both countries, the overall numbers are still extremely low. This highlights that although providing access is critically important, more has to be done over and above access and parity.

### **8.1. “Beyond Access”**

Aikman, (2003) coined the phrase ‘beyond access’ in 2003 to refer to the challenges facing children beyond access, which resulted in barriers to their education. The 'Beyond Access: Gender, Education and Development Project' aimed to share knowledge and support policy and practice changes that would help achieve gender-equitable education in order to meet the 2005 MDG 3 on eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education, (Aikman, 2003). Aikman’s (2003) statement summed up the shortcomings of focusing merely on Access when she said that gender parity is a narrow aspiration to have, which as we have seen has been a consistent theme across all the conventions, agreements and policies. Aikman argues that simply counting girls with the number of boys is concerning, as it does not address the bigger issues that present themselves in gender education, including those such as quality infrastructure and facilities, availability of textbooks, supplies and teaching and learning material, which would help to drive completion of primary school, (Aikman, 2003). Aikman’s argument has been highlighted throughout this paper. It is, in fact, evident in the many policy and report documents, as many SSA countries put a lot of emphasis on providing access and achieving parity, as did our case studies, but did not focus and plan ‘beyond the access’. The focus was not on alleviating the many challenges that girls face

staying in school, and how to overcome them. Many of the reports we have looked at highlight positive results and reflect the positive decline in the number of out of school girls at primary level, or the increase in enrolment rates, but does not emphasize the problem of the bigger number of girls who drop out, and never complete the final stage of primary level education, and what the reasons for that are, nor provide possible solutions on how to combat that.

Therefore, in reviewing the data, it is clear that as norms, access and gender parity alone is not the solution, and therefore fails to achieve gender equality as a result. Access and gender parity is however what the international community has driven, and this is therefore what is also driven at national level. According to the DFA (2000), merely ensuring access to match that of boys is not adequate, and does not translate to equality, especially when unsafe school environments, teaching and learning processes, biases in teacher behaviour and training and curricula and textbooks continue to result in lower completion and achievement rates for girls, (UNESCO 2014).

The DFA suggests that creating safe and gender-sensitive learning environments could possibly remove a major hurdle to the participation of girls in education, (2000). Increasing women's literacy could also further help promote girls' education. More concentrated effort is therefore required in all areas and at all levels in order to eliminate gender discrimination and to promote mutual respect between girls and boys, women and men, (DFA, 2000).

According to the DFA, in order for this to happen, attitudes, values and behaviour are required to change. A notion that supports Nyhamar's (2000) argument that norms reflect what is important in a society. I agree with these statements and believe it's a very important point because change starts at community level, as the attitudes, values and behaviour

towards girl children especially, start at home and her community. Therefore, if this does not change, ultimately nothing will.

The data we have reviewed through this paper has shown that the emphasis to drive access and parity alone, hinders on the ability for countries to achieve gender equality in education, and in society.

That said, it would be remiss to discount the impact that international norms and policies have, and do play on improving gender education in SSA, and certainly in Rwanda and Uganda, as we have seen. The mere fact that gender education is now such global topic and concern confirms the impact and relevance. If we consider that this has only been the case for less than 40 years, then the strides made are noteworthy. In fact, they serve as an ‘eye opener’ of what is possible, and what can be achieved. International norms and policies provide a benchmark and goals for which, especially developing countries, can work towards. They provide a muscle that sometimes is not present in some countries, but needed in order to tackle challenges that are on a much bigger scale than what can be tackled alone.

If gender education and the concept of girls receiving an education and achieving quality at schools does indeed translate to the workplace, and to society at large, then there is no reason why it cannot be a norm for SSA countries. Girls being able to attend school and getting the same level of education, and having equal opportunity and access at schools creates opportunities for girls to succeed in life and to contribute to the countries economy, and therefore *should* be norms, the world over. Currently education, despite the gender, is a norm in developed countries, but has not quite translated into the developing world as yet.

This study demonstrated that the cascading of international norms do, in fact, impact domestic policies and norms on gender education in a big way. This research has shown the extent of the impact of international norms as well as policies on domestic policy, which is beneficial to some extent, even though more needs to be done by SSA governments to address the long list of underlying challenges that continue to negatively impact girl children, which the international norms and policies have so far failed to do. Without addressing these, little will be done towards making broader developmental progress for girls as well as for societies at large.

In conclusion cascading international gender education norms do have a strong impact and influence on gender education policies at national level.

## 9. CHAPTER NINE: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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