An Investigation into Barriers to the Education of Young Women and the Role of an NGO in Three Rural Berber Villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains

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Abstract

In Morocco, although overall access to education has increased over recent decades and many girls are now pursuing their education, such advances have not occurred in rural villages where 87% of females are still illiterate (UNESCO, 2012). The current research aims to explore the main barriers to girls' education in three rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains. Additionally, this study investigates the intervention of an NGO to reduce these barriers and assist girls in the pursuit of this goal. The study is informed by a post-colonial analysis of the influences of colonialism in former colonised countries, the post-colonial feminist theory of gender inequality and the capability approach as a framework within which to discuss girls' functioning and well-being within the educational setting. A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate for this study, effected through semi-structured interviews conducted with seven NGO staff, six female students, six dropout schoolgirls, and eighteen parents of learners and dropouts to understand their perceptions and attitudes with regards to the main barriers to school-age girls, and their perceptions and attitudes concerning NGO interventions in rural Berber villages of the High Atlas Mountains. The participants' views are presented and analysed thematically, guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines with the support of NVivo 10 software. The results of the study highlight key themes including financial, socio-cultural, familial, geographical and, school-based barriers that hinder schoolgirls from pursuing their education. Furthermore, the study offers important insights into the various services and facilities provided by this NGO to support rural girls to pursue their education through the provision of boarding houses, transport, tutorials, and extra-curricular activities to enhance girls' capabilities and to change social gender norms. In light of the findings of this research, several recommendations are made including further research and a call to policymakers, government officials, and representatives of the Moroccan Ministry of Education to plan rational educational reforms to support and encourage school-age girls to complete their education in marginalised rural villages.

Abbreviations

NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
EFL	Education For All
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Education Fund
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
ESA	Eastern and Southern Asia
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
ISESCO	The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

A sound education is one of the most fundamental requirements for the development and prosperity of a society. It is the backbone of any nation through which its societies can achieve sustainable development. However, achieving the goal of education requires these societies to provide procedural and distributive justice for all citizens, inclusively, regardless of gender, social strata, or geographical locations. A good government invests in its country's social capital by providing an education to eventually drive society to compensate for that investment. Doing so requires effective collaboration between members of that society including political parties, intelligentsia, monarchs or presidents. In Morocco, although, by and large, there has been an increase in schools' enrolment during recent decades, seeing many more girls now pursuing their education, the rate of female illiteracy in rural areas is, unfortunately, still high with 87% of women still deemed to be illiterate (UNESCO, 2012). Although the Moroccan government has allocated a large budget in support of education reforms over the last decade female learners, especially those in rural areas, still face barriers to moving forward from the primary level to the next levels and complete their schooling. Other challenges force girls to abandon school education altogether for a variety of reasons.

The World Bank (2005) reports that over 80% of school-aged children who left schools were female students and most of them were from rural areas and marginal communities. Although there has been some progress for girls' enrolment at the primary level, very little has been achieved at the secondary level, especially in rural areas in developing countries. Accordingly, several academic studies (e.g. Colclough et al., 2000; Huisman and Smits, 2009 and Brock and Cammish, 1997) have looked into considerations influencing girls' enrolment at the primary level, though few of them have studied the barriers that prevent rural girls from completing their secondary education.

This study aims to explore the main barriers to girls' education in three rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains, and the role of one NGO to reduce these barriers. In order to present relevant literature relating to girls' schooling in rural Berber communities, and the role of the NGOs in education provision, I specifically reviewed post-colonial theory (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2000; Said, 1978) and post-colonial feminist theory (McClintock, 2013; Mohanty, 1988a) to understand why girls' participation in education was poor in rural marginal communities in Morocco. I also used the capability approach, as

articulated by Sen (1980s) and Nussbaum (1980s), to examine how education can improve the capabilities of girls and enhance their agency and functioning in and outside their communities. A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate for this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six female students, six dropped-out schoolgirls, eighteen parents of learners and dropped-out schoolgirls and seven NGO staff [one conducted through email] to understand their perceptions and attitudes concerning girls' education barriers, and viewpoints regarding the role of one NGO to support girls' education.

The results of this study highlight key themed barriers including financial, socio-cultural, family-based, school-based and geographical barriers. Furthermore, the study offers important insights about different services and facilities provided by this NGO to support rural girls to pursue their education through the provision of boarding houses, transport, tutorials, and out-class activities to enhance girls' capabilities and change gender social norms. The research findings will be sent to policy-makers, practitioners from the Ministry of Education and Planning and Finance, as well as academics and other professionals in the field of education in the hope that practical actions can be taken to reduce girls' education barriers among marginalised communities.

1. 2 Purpose and Research Questions

The current doctoral research is, in essence, exploratory. It aims to examine the opinions, experiences, and views of seven NGO staff, six female learners, six dropped-out schoolgirls, and eighteen parents of learners and dropped-outs concerning the main barriers to girls' education in rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains. It also investigates the interventions of one NGO in the region to reduce these barriers, and enhance girls' education and gender equality. Through this study, attempts are made to explore the impact of economic, geographic, socio-cultural, familial and school-based barriers that challenge this disadvantaged group to continue their education and explore to what extent this NGO intervention has succeeded as an additional support mechanism to that offered by the government to enhance gender equality in education. This research addresses a key concern in education in Morocco because there is currently no literature pertaining to academic research about education barriers for school-age girls in this area of Morocco and the role NGOs can play to reduce these barriers.

This project is built on two main research questions and associated sub-questions, namely:

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of the female learners, dropped-out schoolgirls, parents of female learners and dropped-out schoolgirls and NGO members regarding the main barriers to prevent girls from completing their education in rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains?

a) What are these barriers?

b) What is the cause of these barriers?

Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of the female learners, dropped-out schoolgirls, parents of female learners and dropped-out schoolgirls and NGO members with regards to an NGO interventions in rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains to reduce these barriers?

a) What has been done by this NGO?

b) What is the effectiveness of this NGO's efforts to reduce girls' education barriers?

To build a complete answer to these research questions, the qualitative design has been selected through semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were used as the main tool to collect data. All respondents were asked the same interview questions with slight modifications to some questions according to each group. Field notes were used as a source to provide an insight into what was happening in these villages to 'get inside' and describe the world of the participants.

1.3 Significance of the Research Study

Despite the government's efforts invested in girls' education in Morocco, rural girls still face many challenges that prevent the completion of their education which prompted this study, undertaken in three rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains. The rationale behind this choice was influenced by a number of factors. Firstly, females' illiteracy rates. The situation of girls in Moroccan rural villages remains significantly poorer than their counterparts in urban and semi-urban zones with rates of illiteracy standing at 87% and only one in ten girls attending secondary school (UNESCO, 2012). Secondly, the fact that girls' education in Morocco is complex and inextricably linked to socio-cultural, economic and political issues. This study is an attempt to explore the given factors and to make a substantial and original contribution to fill the gaps in existing literature, in the absence of available academic research or official intervention to shed light on the various factors that hinder girls from completing their education in these rural villages. Through this study, I seek to examine NGO interventions to reduce these barriers and support girls' education. Thirdly, since the High Atlas Mountains represent one of the poorest and marginalised parts of Moroccan

society (Russell, 2004), I hope that this research will foster a better understanding of key issues, and indicate how a positive contribution can be made to affect the possibility of change, both in the High Atlas villages and in all isolated villages in Morocco where girls' educational dropout rates are still high compared with their counterparts in urban and semi-urban areas. This study aims to extend and enhance existing knowledge by additional insights relative to girls' education in rural villages in developing countries, and hopes to be a call for researchers in the field of education, gender and international development to consider Morocco as the base for future research to redress the scarcity of projects conducted in Morocco compared with other developing African countries.

1.4 Organisation of the Thesis

This research study consists of nine Chapters, outlined below:

Chapter One includes (1) general introduction; (2) purpose and research questions; and (3) significance of the research study.

Chapter Two in order to better understand the participants' perceptions of girls' education barriers in the High Atlas villages and their perceptions towards this NGO interventions to reduce these barriers, it is important to provide the reader with an initial general view of Morocco and specifically the High Atlas villages in which this research has been conducted. In particular, this Chapter presents the context of the study through (1) exploring the political, geographical, historical and cultural contexts of Morocco; (2) presenting the educational system in Morocco in the colonial and post-colonial eras. The Chapter concludes with a summary.

Chapter Three consists of (1) literature search strategy; (2) defining the key terms; (3) barriers to girls' education; (4) educational interventions (5) girls' education in Africa and the Arab world; (6) gender and education; (7) gender and development; and (8) gaps in the literature. The Chapter concludes with a summary.

Chapter Four discusses theoretical frameworks (1) post-colonial theory; (2) post-colonial feminist theory; (3) the capability approach; and (4) theoretical convergence. The Chapter concludes with a summary.

Chapter Five presents (1) general view about non-governmental organisations[NGOs]; (2) background of the selected NGO [Education For All]; (3) the relationship between NGO interventions and state interventions in education; (4) the implications of sustainability of

NGO interventions; and (5) the role of the NGOs in development. The Chapter concludes with a summary.

Chapter Six discusses the research methodology and outlines (1) the aims and the research questions along with discussing the use of a qualitative research approach and research instruments; (2) details of how the study was operationalised: participant recruitment, the researcher's relationship with the participants, notes on transcription and translation issues, and field notes; (3) reports on the pre-pilot and the pilot study and how they informed subsequent methodological decisions; (4) data analysis process, and ethical considerations; and (5) the Chapter concludes with notes on trustworthiness, reliability and validity issues.

Chapter Seven presents and discusses the findings of the first research question.

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of the female learners, dropped-out schoolgirls, parents of female learners and dropped-out schoolgirls, and NGO members regarding the main barriers to prevent girls from completing their education in rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains?

a) What are these barriers?

b) What is the cause of these barriers?

Chapter Eight presents and discusses the findings of the second research question.

Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of the female learners, dropped-out schoolgirls, parents of female learners and dropped-out schoolgirls, and NGO members with regards to an NGO interventions in rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains to reduce these barriers?

a) What has been done by this NGO?

b) What is the effectiveness of the NGO's efforts to reduce girls' education barriers?

Chapter Nine presents (1) thesis summary; (2) implications for policy and practice in Moroccan education; (3) recommendations for further research; (4) contributions to knowledge; (5) limitations of the study; and (6) critical reflections on the PhD journey.

Chapter Two: The Kingdom of Morocco

2.1 Overview

To understand the various barriers and challenges that constrain Moroccan rural girls and prevent them from completing their education, it is necessary to understand the geographical, historical, cultural, social, economic and political context of Morocco. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section presents a general background of Morocco, and the second one discusses the history and growth of education in Morocco.

2.2 The Geography of Morocco

Fig: 2.1 Morocco in North Africa and the surrounding international neighbouring Countries.
Source: AnnaMap.com

Al Maghreb, Al Maghreb Al Aqsa or 'far West' are all names for Morocco. Morocco is located in Western North Africa bordering the Mediterranean Sea to the North (Strait of Gibraltar from Spain), Algeria to the East, the Atlantic Ocean to the West, and Mauritania

to the South, covering approximately 174,000 square miles (447,000 square kilometers) with a population of 35,74 million (2017). Morocco comprises four distinct geographical regions. The Rif Mountains located in the North parallel to the Mediterranean coast and the Atlas Mountain region which contains three distinct ranges: The Middle, High, and Anti-Atlas Ranges with the Sahara Desert located in the South-Eastern region of Morocco. The Western seacoast is the most heavily populated area including the capital city Rabat and the economic city Casablanca. Differing vastly from cities, the countryside is the place where the majority of Berbers [Amazigh] live and maintain their tribal traditions as farmers.

The High Atlas Mountains

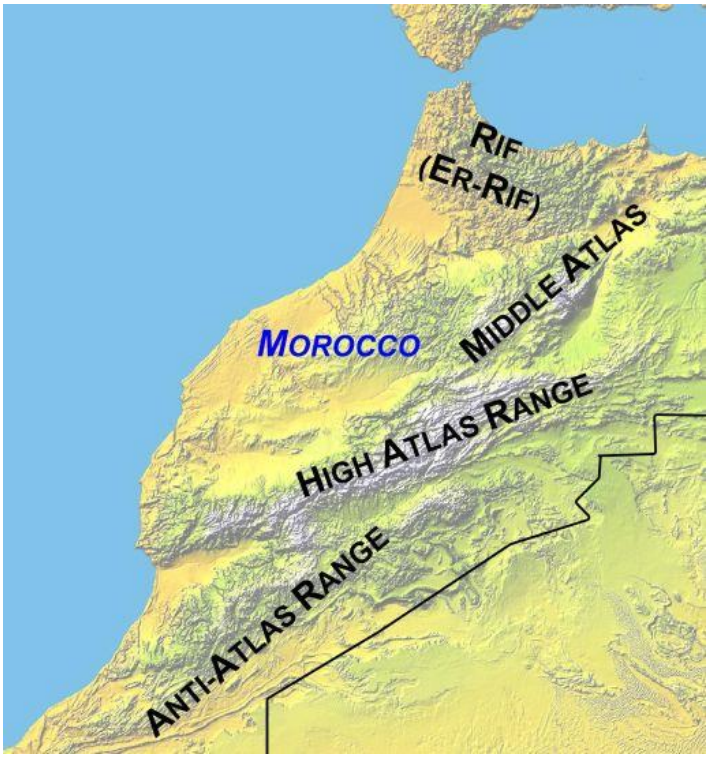


Fig: 2.2 Map of Mountains of Morocco
Source http://www.caingram.info/Morocco/pic_htm/morocco_map.htm

This study for this research took place in three rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains, known to be a challenged district. The High Atlas villages lack any significant industry and the economic structure is mainly agriculture. In 2003, the World Bank reported that 40% of Morocco's population was rural, with the majority classed as poor. The High Atlas Mountains are considered not only the borders between Morocco and Algeria but also a barrier that separates traditional Berber communities from the rest of Moroccan society (Mann, 2012). These Berber communities are marginalised in that they have limited access to resources, and the majority depend on exploiting local natural resources which leads to

landscape degradation (Jodha, 2007). According to the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development, IFAD, 75% of Morocco's rural population depends on agriculture for ta livelihood. The marginality of these rural communities can also be understood in a socio-political sense. The High Atlas populace represents one of the poorest sections of Moroccan society in terms of literacy, infant mortality, availability of potable water, electrification, roads, infrastructure and other developmental indicators (Russell, 2004). Additionally, the High Atlas population's continued demarcation as a minority ethnic group prevents its meaningful political participation in the development of the country (Mann, 2012). Khandker et al., (1994) state that for the majority of the people living in these rural villages, education is a luxury. Several factors have contributed to the relative lack of advancement of rural education. For example, in the 1980s, the Moroccan government allocated only 10% of its total educational investment to rural education initiatives, which critically affected education in rural settings. Zouhar (2011) states that even though there are some literacy programmes administered by women from the villages, illiteracy rates are still high with 84.39% of women and 50.67% of men classified as illiterate. School-age boys leave schools to work in the agricultural sector to support their families, whereas girls take care of their siblings and household duties from school age. Furthermore, even when schooling is available, attendance is restricted largely to boys (Mann, 2012).

The High Atlas schools are characterised by leaky roofs, broken doors and windows, broken chairs and tables, a lack heating, insufficient water supplies and sanitation facilities, and limited school supplies. Additionally, a lack of classroom space in rural schools results in combining multiple year groups into a single classroom which affects students' achievements negatively and accounts for high dropout rates, especially among female students. Furthermore, students have to walk long distances daily across the mountains and flooded rivers to reach their nearest schools. Another factor that has affected school attendance is the availability of teachers for rural schools. Most teachers come from urban and semi-urban environments and their unfamiliarity with the rural environment weakens their motivation, and commitment to teach these children. There is also a dearth of female teachers.

2.3 The Historical and Cultural Context of Morocco

The majority of Moroccans are of Arab-Berber descent (Hoffman et al., 2010). Morocco, a former colony of France and Spain gained its independence on January 11th, 1956. As a post-colonial country, Morocco's culture remains strongly affected by the quality of its internal

ethnic and linguistic diversity (Arabic and Berber cultures) as well as its location on the shores of both the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, situated at the interface between Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. Historically, Morocco has been the meeting point of cultural currents and diverse civilisations. However, Morocco's historical receptivity to international influences has not affected its cultural foundations nor marginalised its Muslim and Arab-Berber heritage. When Morocco's cultural identity is threatened, actions take place to reaffirm its 'belongingness' to the larger Arab-Muslim community (Alaoui and Zeggaf, 1994 cited in Skilli, 2006).

Morocco's culture is rooted in the Arab-Berber Muslim cultural traditions which constitute the 'core' of its system of values, practices, and beliefs. However, the geographical and societal position of Morocco within and outside the Arab community has been the cause of some confusion. For instance, Morocco is considered 'Western' by Middle East Arabs, who perceive it to be rather strongly westernised in perspective. Whereas, from Europeans' perspectives, Morocco is perceived as 'Oriental' (Amin, 1970 cited in Skilli, 2006). This heterogeneous character of Morocco, 'Al Maghreb', as many people prefer to call it, plays a significant role both in its cultural and historical identity and the self-definition of the country. According to Laroui, since Morocco is "neither completely African nor entirely Mediterranean, [The Maghreb] has vacillated down through the centuries in search of its destiny" (Laroui, 1977 cited in Skilli, 2006).

Who are the Imazighen (Berbers)?

The Imazighen people [Berbers] have inhabited North Africa for '33 centuries' (Shafiq, 1989). According to Sadiqi (1997), the Imazighen represent at least 45 % of the Moroccan population. The Imazighen have been invaded by Phoenicians, Romans, Byzantines, Vandals, Arabs, and Europeans. The Arabs remained, bringing Islam and became a fundamental part of the main population of North Africa (Almasude, 1999). Tamazight is the native dialect spoken by 'Berbers' and was the first dialect/language brought to Morocco. The Berber term comes from the Latin word 'Barbarus'. This was first used by the Greeks to refer to anybody who did not speak their language. However, because this term poses ethical issues to some Berbers, they prefer to be called Amazigh [pl. Imazighen] which means noble and freeman (Sadiqi, 2007). However, the origin of Berbers [the Imazighen people] has not been determined. According to Abbasi (1977), many hypotheses seek a definitive answer to the question of the origin of the Berbers. One of these hypotheses states that Berbers were a combination of people from Asia and Europe during prehistoric migrations. The second hypothesis assumed that the Berbers are from "a Mediterranean

stock which originated in West Asia and penetrated North Africa at an early Neolithic period" (Abbasi, 1977 p. 10). Abbasi (1977) adds that there are also Berbers who live in communities in some parts of Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt, and in the Northern parts of Mauritania, Niger, and Mali. These Berber communities live in mountainous regions where they can preserve their language, culture, and traditions. However, geographically, Morocco is considered the home of the largest Berber community (Sadiqi, 1997).

The table below presents the four main Berber tribes in Morocco.

Arabized Berbers: living in different places in Morocco.
Masmoudas: Farmers of the coastal plain or Pastoralists of the high plateaus of the Atlas Mountains.
Sanhajas: groups of Nomads Berbers who travel by camel.
Zenatas: Horsemen of the high plateau.

Berbers in Morocco are divided into four groups. Yet, because different tribes of Berbers inhabit different regions of Morocco, the actual deviation of the Moroccan Amazigh [Berbers] is comprised of three main geographic groups: Tarifit in the northern Rif Mountains, Tamazight in the Middle Atlas, and Tachelhit in the High and Anti-Atlas Mountains. 'Riffain' 'Amazigh' 'Cheleuh' are the given names for Berbers according to their geographical locations and their spoken dialects.

(a) Tarifit: is a Berber dialect spoken in the north of Morocco by 'Ryafa'
(b) Tamazight: is a Berber dialect spoken in the Middle Atlas by 'Chleuh'
(c) Tashelhit: is a Berber dialect spoken in the southwest of Morocco by 'Swassa'.

This part of Morocco is characterised by a series of Mountains [the High Atlas Mountains and the Anti- Atlas Mountains]. The speakers of Tachelhit are the largest group in Morocco in terms of both native speakers and geographic region. Also, they are the largest Berber communities residing in the mountains.

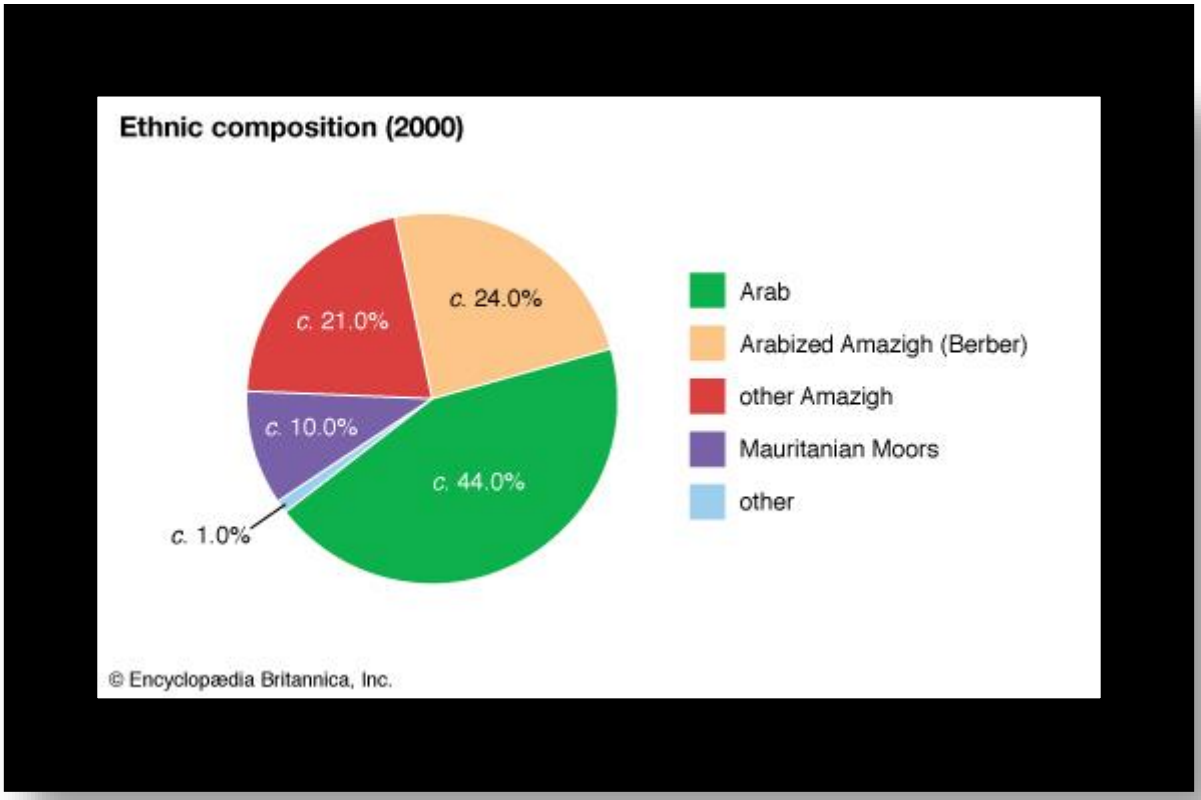


Fig: 2.3 Moroccan ethnic composition.
Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.

2.4 The Social Context of Morocco

a) Language(s) of Morocco

Moroccan society is socially and linguistically diverse, Ennaji (2005). According to Skilli (2006), the study of language in Morocco has for a long time caught the attention of many American and European linguists. The strategic location of Morocco at the intersections of Africa, Europe, and the Middle East has made Morocco open to a wide variety of linguistic influenced by the Phoenicians, Arabs, Greeks, Spaniards, the Portuguese, and the French. Morocco is known for its multilingualism which is characterised by the significant use of Classical/Standard Arabic, Berber dialects, Moroccan Arabic/colloquial darija *, French, Spanish and English (Zouhir, 2013). This diversity splits the language into two main categories. The first category includes Moroccan Arabic darija and Tamazight. This is the mother tongue of the Imazighen people (Berbers), and Moroccan Arabic/darija is the language spoken by the majority of the population in Morocco [including Imazighen people].

The second category includes Classical/Standard Arabic and the French language. These two languages are the institutional and official languages of Morocco and have a strong social capital. Interestingly, there is as much competition and power struggle between languages within the same category as there is between the separate categories. However, Moroccan darija is the language spoken by the majority in Morocco. It is the spoken language that one can hear in both public places and familial settings and in all strata of society (Boukous, 2008). Moroccan Arabic, according to Gravel (1979, p. 92), was "brought to Morocco during the nomadic invasions of the Beni Hilal Arabs". It shares many characteristics with Classical Arabic, but it differs in the phonological, morphological and syntactic contexts. Moroccan Arabic, according to the ethnic origins of their speakers, is divided into three categories (1) city Arabic; (2) mountain Arabic; and (3) Bedouin Arabic. Yet, despite these variations in phonological, morphological and lexical levels, these sub-dialects are clearly and easily understood by all Moroccans (Boukous, 1979).

*Moroccan Arabic/colloquial darija is the spoken language of the majority of the population in Morocco.

b) Religion

The official religion of the country is Islam. It arrived in 681 with the Muslim conqueror 'Uqba Ben Nafi' (Eickelman, 1981 cited in Ali, 2010). The majority of Muslims are Sunnis belonging to Maliki School. This, according to Ali (2010), is named after Malik Ibn Anas (d.179/795) and originated in Medina in Saudi Arabia, where the first Muslim community settled. The Sunnis represent 98 % of the population. The five main pillars of Islam are faith the existence of Almighty Allah, God, 'Ashahada', praying five times a day 'Asalat', fasting the month of Ramadan 'Asawm', giving alms to poor people 'Azakat', and making the pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime 'Alhaj'. The Qur'an is the Islamic holy book, and the Hadith are the sayings of the Prophet Mohamed [peace be upon him] and these are the two main sources of guidance for Muslims to leading their lives. Shi'a Muslims represent only 1% of the population. The second-largest religion in the country is Christianity, due to the Spanish and French colonisation beginning in the 19th century. The Hebrew religion is also present due to the number of Jewish people who are still living in Morocco. Besides the three main religions, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, there are other ethnic minorities, and these practice their beliefs without any interference or disturbance. In this study, cultural, religious and social beliefs have played a role in hindering rural girls from progressing with their schooling or even from enrolling into education altogether. Fig: 2.4 shows religious affiliations in Morocco.

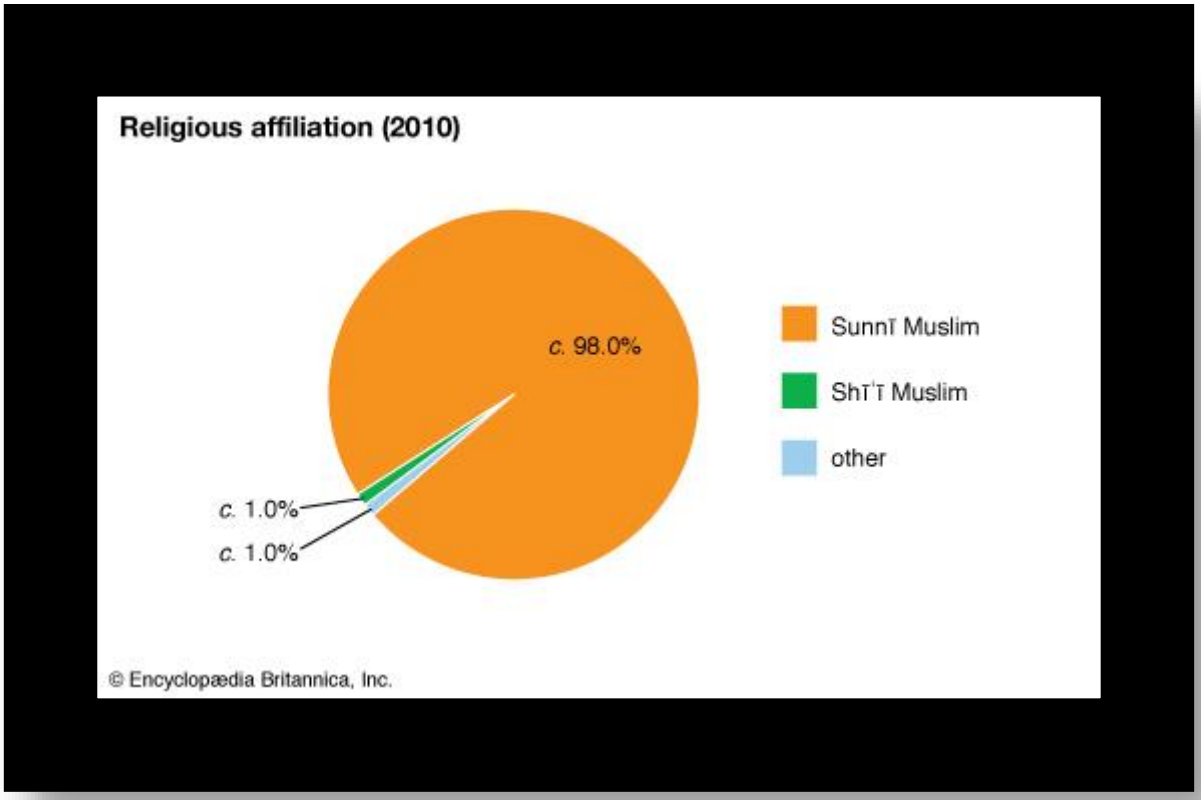


Fig: 2.4 Religious affiliations in Morocco
Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.

2.5 The Political and Economic Context of Morocco

According to El Hourri (2016), Morocco has 1.6 million citizens living in poverty, nearly 80% of whom live in the countryside. This is a total of 1,275,000 people below the poverty line dwelling in the countryside. King Mohamed VI inherited a kingdom that still struggles with many unresolved economic problems (Willis, 1999). According to Cherkaoui and Ben Ali (2007), King Mohamed VI is considered as a symbol and the commander of the faithful '*Amire Al mouminin*' of the country; all political parties work under his guidance and respect his position. When King Mohamed VI ascended the throne on July 1999, he was recognised as a symbol of hope for democracy, justice, and modernity. In the Moroccan and foreign media, the King Mohamed VI was lauded as the "king of the poor/ *malik al fokaraa*". In his first speeches, he pledged changes in Morocco. He defended women's rights to education, their rights to participate fully in all aspects of public life and called for equality between all citizens regardless of their gender, race or political views. He called also for a new concept of authority based on accountability, individual freedom and human rights (Maghraoui,

2001). There is no doubt that since King Mohamed VI ascended the throne, concrete changes have been made in Morocco. However, Morocco still faces serious challenges that prevent its sustainable development and a large segment of the population is lacking the basics. Poverty is the main challenge for the government, approximately 4 million people live below the poverty line, 3 million of whom are in isolated rural communities without access to basic needs such as potable water, decent housing, sanitation, electricity, infrastructures, roads, hospitals, and schools, all of which contribute to Morocco's ranking at 130th in the UN's Human Development Index.

2.6 History and Growth of Education in Morocco

2.6.1 Education in the Colonial Period

a) Quranic Schools

In Morocco, before the French and Spanish colonisation, learning took place in *msid* or *kuttab,* traditional Quranic schools. According to Wagner and Lotfi (1980), Quranic traditional schools were based on memorisation and provided the learner with the basic skills of writing, reading, and knowledge of the basic notions of grammar and Islamic law. Classes in *msid* were taught by the '*fqih*' the traditional Quranic teacher. The curriculum of these traditional Quranic schools required the student to memorize part or all of the Quran. Ennaji (2005, p. 216) argues that Quranic schools "impose a mechanical and monotonous form of learning on the child whose interest is not aroused by such a form of study, which reduces the learner's intellectual and cognitive motivation". However, Wagner (1993, p. 278) has a different point of view and argues that Quranic schooling "has a significant effect on serial memory and does not generalize to other kinds of memory of cognitive skills such as discourse and pictorial memory". Historically, Quranic schools were the only type of formal education available to children in most Islamic countries until the arrival of European influences, and even now, in Morocco the traditional Quranic schools are still popular all over the country, and predominantly in rural communities where parents encourage their children to memorize the Quran before enrolling in school.

Wagner and Lotfi (1980, p. 2) agree that the present-day Quranic schools and *msid* appear to function primarily as a preschool setting for Moroccan children because these Quranic schools "play an important part in teaching children how to assume their traditional roles in the Muslim community of practice".

Notably, in a royal decree of 1968, King Hassan II launched a campaign called "Operation Quranic School" underlining the importance of Quranic schools in shaping the life of youngsters. In these schools, learners were taught the basic educational principles they needed to know before embarking upon the next level of education. The Quranic schools were also important in providing a commonality amongst early learners and emphasising the value of Islamic belief. The king was keen to establish these schools and urged the Ministry of Education to promote and standardize Quranic instruction, so it became compulsory for all children to attend a Quranic preschool for at least 2 years Wagner (1993). However, what is important to note is that attendance at these Quranic schools restricted admittance to male students and excluded females. This exclusion was based on cultural- stereotyping, the role of girls has traditionally been to look after the household chores and learn how to manage their future homes upon marriage. The royal decree of 1968 did not state that girls could attend Quranic schools and there was no attempt made to advocate for equal educational opportunities for girls.

b) French Schools

Educational systems in many developing countries have been seriously affected by centuries of colonial rule, and Morocco is one such country. The colonisers had different strategies and priorities in colonised countries. Gordon (1962, p. 7) summarised them in the following: "when the Portuguese colonised, they built churches; when the British colonised, they built trading stations; when the French colonise, they build schools". Although France colonised Morocco for less than 50 years, its influence ran deep in many aspects of social life. Education, for instance, is one of the sectors that was affected by the presence of the French system in Morocco and after independence, the French language remains a secondary official language in the country (Wagner 1993). According to Redouane (1998), during French rule, there were three types of school: European, Franco-Islamic, and Free. The first two types of school were part of the public sector and the third [Free schools] was private. The European schools were reserved principally for children of the French community and for Moroccan children of the elite upper classes. These schools ran on three main cycles: primary, secondary and higher secondary then tertiary education, and the programme and all curricula were similar to programmes taught in France. The second type of school was the Franco-Islamic school, which was categorised based on the social position of the students' parents. For instance, the *'écoles des fils de notables*/ schools of the sons of public figures' were primary schools in urban areas, reserved for limited numbers of upper-class children. The

'écoles rurales/ rural schools' were for country children. In addition to these two types of school, there were also 'Free schools' comprising several private schools under government control. What is important to note in this regard is that in contrast to the Quranic schools, French schools were open to both male and female students in the belief that education makes no difference between genders.

2.6.2 Education in the Post-Colonial Period

Education plays a vital role in socio-economic change and political development in all countries. Morocco is a former French and Spanish colony. In the immediate post-independence period, Morocco faced multiple challenges and constraints in constructing a comparable educational system, and it remains significantly weak despite concerted efforts implemented by the public authorities. After its independence in 1957, Morocco introduced the first 'Royal Commission' charged with educational reforms such as unification, generalisation, Moroccanisation, and Arabization of schools to cope with the increasing demand for primary and secondary education and to meet the requirements of national development. The 1975 reform aimed to develop educational opportunities through the creation of more schools and by extending workshops to train teachers principally in primary education. In 1985, a new reform came as a response to the 'Structural Adjustment Programme' through which public authorities aimed to encourage private education and vocational training. Although public authorities implemented all these reforms, the performance of the educational system remained very poor. In response to this, the late King Hassan II established a 'Special Commission for Education and Training' (COSEF) in charge of developing the first consensual project to meet the expectations of Moroccans (Ibourk and Amaghouss, 2014).

In 1999, the government commenced new initiative, which was known as the 'National Education and Training Charter' and the period between 2000 to 2009 was entitled the "Decade for Education". Training and education were prioritised at a national level. However, the desired objectives were not achieved, and in its attempt to remedy this situation, in 2009 the government initiated another reform called the 'Education Emergency Plan' to improve the performance of the education system required initially through creating an equitable system and extending access to education to all citizens. The student body increased nationally from 52.4% to 98.2% in the primary level, from 17.5% to 56.7% in the initial secondary level, and from 6.1% to 32.4% in the higher secondary level due to

investments in the schooling infrastructure, in addition to monetary contributions for needy students (Ibourk and Amaghouss, 2014).

Nevertheless, major discrepancies still remain among boys and girls even at the primary level, and among students intakes in urban versus rural areas. In cities, for instance, the student body rate in the lower primary level is 79% for boys; whereas for girls in the countryside it is only 26%. This inconsistency reflects socio-cultural conventions that remain unfavourable towards girls in the countryside (World Bank, 2011). The most recent strategic vision for reforming education and training started in 2015 projected until 2030. In Morocco, the educational system consists of 6 years of primary school, 3 years of lower-middle/intermediate school, 3 years of upper secondary, and tertiary education under the Ministry of National Education. Bachelor's Degree (B.A.), Master's Degree (M.A.), and Doctoral degree (Ph.D.) are under the Ministry of Higher Education, and all public universities [higher education] are completely free of charge.

Summary

An overview of Moroccan history, economic, political and socio-cultural life presents the context of this study and gives a basic idea about how girls' education is curtailed in marginalised rural villages, very much below the expectations of the most recent educational reforms in Morocco.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

3.1 Overview

This Chapter is divided into five sections. The first section presents literature search strategies and key definitions. The second section covers barriers to girls' education in developing countries. The third section looks at educational interventions. The fourth section discusses girls' education in Africa and the Arab world. In the fifth section the concepts of gender and education, gender and development are reviewed. The chapter concludes with a summary.

3.2 Literature Search Strategy

The quality of literature for review was carefully assessed for credibility of research. To identify relevant literature reviews from a wide range of sources, many different search engines were used. These include Social Sciences Citation Index (Web of Science), British Education Index, JSTOR, ERIC, and Google Scholar. By using these search engine databases and directories on the Web, several keywords were entered [see Table 1: list of search key terms] taking into consideration the international differences in terminology in different contexts. Importantly, the choice of databases was made along recommendations of academic librarians at the University of York. Many research journals were identified including International Journal of Educational Development, Journal of International Business Studies, Journal of International Affairs, Journal of International Development, Journal of Education and Social Justice, Cambridge Journal of Education, Journal of Gender and Education, Journal of Development Economics, Journal of Philosophy of Education, Journal of Human Development, Journal of African Studies, Journal of International Women's Studies, etc. These journals were selected on the basis of their direct connection with this research aims.

An additional element of the search strategy was related to the geographical area under investigation. A focus on all developing countries would have been unrealistic; therefore, the focus was directed to Africa and the Arab world only [MENA Region]. Unsurprisingly, a large number of sources were gathered due to a 'snowball effect' of selecting additional sources from reference lists. Additionally, to gather relevant data, I followed the Boolean search approach by using the add and subtract symbols in my web search query as it is recognised by many electronic searching tools a way of defining a search string. Boolean searches allowed combined words and phrases to widen, limit, or define my search.

Table 3.1: Literature Search Key Terms: Boolean Search Approach

Search terms	Number of documents
Education and gender	26
Education and girls	19
Education and gender and girls	15
Education and equity	10
Education and gender and girls and equality	17
Education and gender and girls and school and equality	12
Education and gender and girls and development	10
Education and gender and girls and school	13
Education and international development	14
Education and gender and poverty	11
Education and gender and girls and poverty	15
Education and gender and justice	15
Education and school and barriers	17
Education and girls and justice	9
Gender and international development	18
Development and education	21
Development and gender	21
Development and education and gender	17
NGO and education and intervention	9
NGO and education	14
NGO and education and development	17
NGO and state	13
NGO and state and poverty	14
NGO and education and girls	9
NGO and poverty and gender	7
NGO and Morocco and gender	2
NGO and gender and Africa	6
NGO and women and education	9
Gender and poverty	3
Girls and education and Africa	9

Gender and education and Africa	3
Girls and education and the Arab World	7
Gender/ girls and Morocco	2
Gender and education and Tunisia	1
Gender/ girls and Egypt	2
Gender and education and Algeria	0
Gender and education and Mauritania	0
Gender/ girls and Libya	2
Gender/ girls and Ethiopia	7
Gender/ girls and Somalia	4
Gender/ girls and Ghana	8
Gender/ girls and Tanzania	3
Gender/ girls and Malawi	5
Gender/ girls and Mozambique	3
Girls and education and colonialism	11
Gender and education and colonialism	10
Post-colonialism and gender	7
Post-colonialism and education	9
Post-colonialism and feminism	6
Post-colonialism and Third World	7
Feminism and gender education	11
Feminism and post-colonialism	8
Capability and gender education	11
Capability and social justice	7

Selecting from previous research of the topic under investigation and defining appropriate literature was not an easy task. Sifting through what was relevant to this study was very time consuming, from the first attempt which was a painstaking process. However, the search for appropriate literature in support of this study yielded a large source of books and articles relevant to this project, comprising above 100 articles, 60 chapters, and 39 books. After searching for relevant literature, I identified the precise topic and applicable titles, references were screened according to suitability for the research. These methods allowed me to control and determine the relevance of references to the present research project.

3.3 Defining the Key Terms

Gender

Many researchers have investigated the concept of gender as a social construct to describe characteristics of men and women (Connell, 2002). Gender, according to Diamond (2002), is a term that refers to social or cultural distinctions associated with being female or male. According to (Kimmel, 2000 cited in Robeyns, 2006, p. 73) "gender, understood as a set of social rules, norms, and expectations, leads virtually everywhere on earth to a gender division of work whereby women carry the primary responsibility for childcare and the daily management of the household". Ostergaard offers the following definition:

> *Gender refers to the qualitative and interdependent character of women and men's position in society. Gender relations are constituted in terms of the relations of power and dominance that structure the life chances of women and men. Thus, gender divisions are not fixed biologically but constitute an aspect of the wider social division of labour. This, in turn, is rooted in the conditions of production and reproduction, and reinforced by the cultural, religious and ideological systems prevailing in a society.*
>
> *(1992 p. 6)*

Gender Equality

Gender equality is a major issue on the global agenda. Gender equality means providing equal chances and opportunities for both males and females in all sectors of society. Also, both females and males have the same actual rights, duties, and responsibilities in their societies, including economic participation, access to education and decision-making. Gender equality means that men and women are free to develop their abilities and make their own choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles and prejudices. Therefore, gender equality is the first step towards creating social justice between all citizens to lead to the sustainable development of all nations (United Nations, 2005).

Non-Governmental Organisations [NGOs]

The term non-governmental organisations [NGOs] was created in 1945 by the United Nations (Willets, 2002). Willets (2002) reports that all types of private organisation can be recognised as NGOs. They are required to be independent of government control, not seeking to challenge the government, either as a political party or by focusing on human rights, nor for profit or crime. Since the 1980s, the number of NGOs increased rapidly and they have gained power and influence (The Economist, 2000). Werker and Ahmed (2008, p.74) define non-governmental organisations 'NGOs' as:

> *One group of players who are active in the efforts of international development and increasing the welfare of poor people in poor countries. NGOs work both independently and alongside bilateral aid agencies from developed countries, private-sector infrastructure operators, self-help associations, and local governments.*

A similar definition is presented by the World Bank:

> *Private organisations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development. They are value-based organisations which depend, in whole or in part, on charitable donations and voluntary service, and in which principles of altruism and voluntarism remain key defining characteristics*
>
> *(World Bank, 2009: online)*

Gender stereotypes

The term 'stereotype' refers to a printing stamp that was used to make multiple copies from a single model or mould (Sadiqi, 2011). The first scholar who adopted the term stereotype and used it as a way of describing how society sets about categorising people or 'stamping' them with a specific list of characteristics was Walter Lippmann, 1922 (cited in Sadiqi, 2011). Jussim et al., (2009) argue that the term 'stereotype' has positive as well as negative effects. As an example of stereotypes in developing countries and more specifically in rural areas, boys from a young age are told to go outside and discover the world and are unjudged; whereas girls are always encouraged to remain at home and undertake household chores, including fetching water, washing clothes, cooking, looking after their siblings, and sweeping the house. This traditional sex-role division in society always gives scope to boys to learn the social skills needed for occupational careers; girls, meanwhile, are directed to learn skills that prepare them to be housewives (Lever, 1976). Robert Blum, a professor at Johns Hopkins University and the director of the Global Early Adolescent Study, adds that children, from a very early age, in both conservative and progressive societies categorise girls as inferior, weak and dependent and class boys as independent, strong and superior. These generalised views about the role of women and what they can perform can extend fears that women lack natural skills and with this classification be marginalised within society. Besides, Sadiqi (2011) believes that such stereotypes are easily transmitted from generation to generation and constitute real violence against women.

Rural areas

Although a generic understanding of the term 'rural' exists, there is no specific definition that can comprehensively describe this term. In defining the term 'rural' common usage links it to unique characteristics. According to Food and Agriculture Organization FAO, the definition of a 'rural area' is based on two main criteria. The first is related to where people reside, the second is linked to the type of work people engage in. Generally, in rural areas the population is low compared with urban areas, and the unsettled lands are used mostly for primary products such as forestry, mining, and agriculture. Also, people living in rural areas are usually characterised by a lower level of education and their dependent on primary production work as a means of income. However, the size of the population and the types of employment activities are not accurate measures for labelling a place as a 'rural' area. It mainly depends on the different available facilities and the area's connections with the external world. In a comparison between rural areas in developing and developed countries, there can be seen to be vast differences. For instance, rural areas in Morocco are not the same as in Australia, Europe or the United States. Australian rural areas are more developed than some urban areas in Morocco. Moreover, the facilities available in Australian rural areas may not available in some cities in Morocco or other developing countries. With regard to population size, some rural areas in African countries constitute a larger population than in urban areas in Europe. Therefore, 'urban' and 'rural' areas have not been determined on the basis of population and facilities, and the definition of a place can only be made according to the characteristics and facilities of the area itself.

3.4 Barriers to Girls' Education in Developing Countries

Although several developing countries have experienced significant growth in school enrolments in recent decades, such exponential growth has been accompanied by manifold challenges and problems. In searching the factors that prevent girls from completing their education, a number of researchers have developed a long list of barriers responsible for high dropout rates including household poverty, masculine domination, traditional and cultural attitudes towards girls' education, illiteracy among parents, poor physical facilities in schools, serious shortage of qualified teachers, geographic location, school violence and poor quality of education (UNICEF, 2006).

3.4.1 Socio-Cultural and Traditional Barriers

According to Tanye (2008), socio-cultural and traditional barriers affect girls' schooling and rob females of their human identity and social rights. Culture, as a definition, may refer to a system of practices, rules, beliefs, rituals, behaviours, values, and ways of the meaning of a community. It is a system of values and beliefs by which members are controlled (Sadiqi, 2011). Dunne et al., (2006) and Brock and Cammish (1997) state that the roles individuals play in their lives determine their position in society, and from these social roles gendered constructs and stereotypes are built which may negatively impact on female members. They add that the widespread operation of 'patriarchal' systems of social organiSation such as lower regard for the value of female life, heavy domestic duties of females [especially in rural areas] and early marriage are all rooted in culture and tradition and negatively affect girls' participation in formal education. On the other hand, there exists a fundamental near-universal cultural bias in favour of males (Brock and Cammish, 1997). According to Drèze and Sen (2002, p. 162), parents believe that "'over educating' a daughter may make her more difficult—and more expensive—to marry".

A similar view is presented by Skelton (2007) who believes that society expects boys to acquire male attributes of leadership and social legitimacy for dominance over girls, while girls are expected to be respectful and passive. Therefore, Oxaal (1997) suggests that cultural challenges can only be surmounted by major change in societal perceptions through influential males and progressive females in main social positions. In Morocco, socio-cultural barriers are related to the perception of women's status within society. For example, in rural conservative communities, girls' schooling is considered as an element of devaluation in the 'marriage market' and a threat to social structure and cohesion. Although Morocco has made notable progress to achieve gender equality and equal access to education for both boys and girls, socio-cultural promotion still lags behind.

3.4.2 Family-Based Barriers

Although notable progress has been made in many developing countries to get girls into school, there are still large numbers out of school. When girls attain the age of twelve or thirteen their parents tend to keep them back home, as in some societies it is considered shameful for a girl to leave her home unaccompanied once she reaches the age of puberty

(UNESCO, 2004). Also, concerns about privacy and safety push some parents to prevent their daughters from attending school. In Moroccan rural culture, for example, parents forbid friendships between their daughters and their classmates of the opposite sex. Additionally, low job opportunities for females and a lack of transparency in the employment market which offers more opportunity in the job market to males than females negatively affects girls' willingness to complete their education. Lockheed et al., (1980) state that in many cultures, mainly in low-income countries, parents believe that education is not worthwhile for girls who, at a certain age, get married and whose husbands' families receive their productivity rather than their own families. Thus, educating girls is perceived by biological parents as something invaluable, and they keep in mind that "caring for a daughter is like watering the neighbours' tree; the fruits go to someone else" (Islam, 1979 cited in Kabeer, 2003). Mishra (2005, p.179) too found in Mali that parents "commonly regard girls' education as a 'lost investment' because it is the future husband's family who reaps the returns, not them".

In many developing countries, the parental home is considered a transit point for girls. At an early age, they may have access to primary education if the financial conditions of the family allow this. However, during this time the family devotes more time to prepare daughters to be housewives. Kaul (2001, p.160) points out that parents "preferred engaging their daughters in household work and preparing them for 'marriage'". Moreover, Bourdieu (2001, p. 41) debates that there are explicit reminders to girls of their destiny and assigned traditional duties. Thus, girls receive training and orientation from their parents from the start of their lives. They are taught to serve others, look after their husbands, assist in fieldwork and take up the household responsibilities at their husband's home. In addition to what has been said, early marriage is a serious barrier to decrease girls' education. Girls get married at an early age for many reasons. In low-income countries where parents have a limited budget, there is a preference of marrying daughters early as a timely way to save money. Also, cultural and traditional beliefs often question the value of educating girls since their future roles are seen as purely domestic, therefore formal education is considered unnecessary. Many studies highlight this issue (e.g. Herz et al., 2004; Colclough et al., 2000). Their studies argue that due to the cultural beliefs attached to marriage, parents tend to marry their daughters as soon as they reach puberty or even earlier to avoid the shame attached to pregnancy outside of marriage. They state that early marriage is a common cultural belief whereby girls should go to their husbands before or just after they attain puberty as a way to protect them from any sexual abuse or physical violence.

Another issue that increases the drop-out rate among disadvantaged female learners relates to parents' involvement in their daughters' learning progress. Many studies report the importance of parental involvement in children's education (e.g. Baker and Soden, 1998; Christenson et al., 1992; Tracy, 1995). The outcomes of parents' involvement in their children's learning process are numerous and include learners' regular attendance at school, increased activity, and interaction in classroom activities, and most importantly their guidance and involvement in assisting and developing their children's self-esteem and self-confidence (Henderson and Mapp, 2002). Parents' involvement in their children's learning progress can be accomplished in different ways, for instance communicating with the school to follow their children's progress, volunteering and taking part in school events and activities to increase a sense of security with their own child, and assisting them to build relations with their classmates. However, a number of studies indicate that in low-income countries and in the more vulnerable poverty-stricken areas, parents' involvement in their children educational progress is absent. This is due to many factors including but not confined to illiteracy among parents (Christenson et al., 1992; Johnston, 1994; Lamb-Parker et al., 2001); parents' negative attitudes towards education (Jones, 2001); a lack of teacher training in parents' involvement and teachers' negative attitudes and inaccurate assumptions about parents of their pupils (Lazar and Slostad, 1999).

Illiteracy among parents is a key problem that prevents children in general, and girls in particular, from completing their education. Convincing illiterate parents that a good education can help their daughters to explore a variety of opportunities concerning their career, finances and most importantly, make them self-dependent, is an extremely challenging task. In 1995, the World Bank noted that "literate parents are more likely than illiterate ones to enrol their daughters in school, and the regions with the highest proportions of illiterate adults are therefore those with the widest gender gaps in education" (p. 44). Davison and Kanyuka (1990) point out that some parents believe that it is more worthwhile to educate boys rather than girls because they think boys are more intelligent than girls as they perform better in school.

Family size also has a significant and largely negative impact on girls' education. Kugler and Kumar (2017) state that children from larger families have less education because financially it is more difficult for parents to send all of their children to school especially if those children contribute to the family's income and assist in the household chores. Schooling costs increase, both directly and indirectly, when a family has many children, which can lead to lower educational attainment for children; most of the time, priority in

large families is given to boys to continue their education. Concerning birth order, the eldest girls in the family frequently dropout of school before boys because of the essential household duties they are expected to perform. Also, the higher value placed on having male children can result in larger family sizes if female children are born prior to boys. Parents will often continue having children in their pursuit of a male child which indirectly affects the elder girls' education. According to Ali (2008), the eldest daughters in rural villages, unlike their counterparts in urban families, have a central role within the family; they have to look after their young siblings, assist their mothers with the housework, and sometimes undertake outdoor labour, such as helping in cultivation and bringing in the harvest, feeding the cattle, and fetching water from the well. This pattern is all the more prevalent when the size of the family is large and parental education is limited.

Early marriage is another impediment to girls' education in marginalised rural villages. All over the world, marriage is a moment of celebration and a milestone in adult life. However, the imposition of a marriage partner upon a child means that both his or her childhood is cut short and fundamental rights are compromised (UNICEF, 2001). The reasons for and forms of early marriage in developing countries vary greatly from one society to the next. For example, in some societies it is believed that early marriage is a way to protect girls from unsanctioned sexual activity. For others, it is a family survival strategy, whereas in other societies early marriage is merely a cultural tradition that is followed to guarantee a better future for girls.

According to (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2005), the marriage of minor-aged girls is a human rights violation. A number of studies indicate that girl-child marriage is more likely to occur in impoverished and marginalised villages with low access to either female education or health care services (Gokce et al., 2007; Nour 2006, 2009; Jain and Kurtz, 2007; Mehra and Agrawal, 2004; Raj et al., 2009; United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], 2005; UNICEF, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2009). Pursuing education in remote rural villages means that a girl has to leave her parents' home to live in a boarding school. Many conservative societies prize virginity upon marriage and hold the fear that in allowing girls to leave home and live alone, they may be exposed to the temptations of premarital sex and the risks of pregnancy. Even where girls can live at home, fear about sexual harassment and insecurity on the daily journey to and from school discourages parents from sending their daughters to school. Thus, parents believe it is safer for their daughters to get married at a young age and be under the control of a husband (UNICEF, 2001). Very often, child marriage of girls in rural villages is an arrangement between families that is sanctioned

happens without the girl's consent (Assani, 2000). This illegal practice deprives a girl of her adolescence, freedom, and right to an education, and is justifiably the greatest reason for literacy rates among rural women being the lowest of any group in society. Therefore, when girls are deprived of the opportunity to complete their schooling they may have difficulty in developing self-confidence and self-identity and lose the opportunity of voicing their opinions (United Nations Children's Fund, 2001:15).

According to UNICEF (2001), economic hardship and poverty are among the major factors underpinning child marriage of girls. For instance, in some South Asian and Middle Eastern societies, it is a common practice to marry a female child to a rich elderly man in order to support her family financially. Whereas, in traditional societies in sub-Saharan Africa, the bride's family requests from the groom's family cattle as a price for their daughter (Rwezaura, 1994). In Egypt, a recent study of five very poor villages carried out by the Ministry of Social Affairs and supported by UNICEF Egypt (1999) found that young girls married with very old men from oil-rich Middle Eastern countries to help their families. Similarly, in Bangladesh early marriage is seen as a strategy for family survival, and instances of false marriages occur whereby parents are persuaded to part with daughters for financial gain, which unknowingly is a bait to lure the girls into prostitution abroad (Kabir, 1998).

Child marriage has profound psychosocial and emotional consequences for girls. It is a forced sexual relationship wherein girls lose their childhood, adolescence, freedom, rights to education and personal development. A study conducted by UNICEF (2001) shows that most girls, unhappy in an imposed marriage, are very isolated and less talkative because they are surrounded by people who endorse their situation and are not interested to hear their concerns. Researchers on the marriage of minor-aged girls in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh in India reports that girl spouses suffer more than boys. Saxena (1999) further explains that if the husband dies the girl is treated as a widow and becomes the common property of all the men in the family; whereas in some parts of Africa, a widow is remarried to a brother-in-law, a custom known as *'levirate'*, to provide economic and social support. In this arrangement, if the widow refuses the marriage she may be cast out by her in-laws (UNICEF, 2001). Early marriage also has harmful implications on girls' health. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the high rate of HIV/STI and other sexual transmitted diseases is directly associated with child marriage (Nour 2006, 2009; Raj and Boehmer, 2013). Similarly, early pregnancies among rural young wives remain critical drivers for their and their children's health (Mehra and Agrawal, 2004; Raj et al., 2009; Stewart et al., 2007).

3.4.3 Financial Barriers

Many factors prevent females from completing their education: a family's low-income and poverty are considered the main factors that decrease girls' education in many developing countries. Poverty and its negative impact on girls' education has been the subject of discussion by a number of researchers and an issue raised by many organizations (UNESCO, 2005; Seel and Clarke 2005; Kane, 2004; Herz, 2006). All are in agreement that the negative influences of poverty deprive girls from completing their schooling which is a fundamental human right. Researchers furthermore consider that parents' limited financial income translates into the failure to send their daughters to school. They believe that when education is costly, parents of limited means and low income may feel that the future returns from sending their daughters to school may not be justified by the cost they payout during the girls' time at school. Also, girls are more likely to be withdrawn from school and are not allowed to repeat a class if their families experience financial problems Hyde (1989). As a consequence, girls are the first to be excluded when it comes to making a decision about who has the right to attend school and continue studying when the family struggles financially.

In 2000 at the United Nations Millennium Summit, 150 heads of state adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration and made a commitment to meet eight Millennium Development Goals by 2015. These included the eradication of poverty and hunger, the guarantee of a universal primary education, promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Five years later, in New York 2005, the Global Call to Action against Poverty was launched as an international movement that sought to hold governments to account for their promises to end poverty. Poverty and education in developing countries are inextricably linked, people who live in poverty may stop their male children from going to school to seek marginal jobs to support their families instead, and impose marriage on their girls to establish their own families at an early age. Consequently, this category of children ends up without any literacy or numeracy skills required to be an independent and productive individual within the society.

The United Nation Millennium Development Goals MDGs (2006) and UNICEF (2009) report that in low-income countries, one girl in every four fails to reach a fifth-grade education because of financial problems faced by her parents. In a study of rural families in Egypt (CEDPA New Horizons Needs Assessment 1995) it was found that 'poverty' was a more important compelling reason for girls' dropping out of school than for boys (Swanson, 1999). Also, in Malawi, a study of education attendance showed that between Grades 1 and

2, both male and female pupils said girls dropped out of school primarily because of the high school costs. Tanye (2008) explains that sending girls to school is restricted by the limited financial sources of families, predominant among them the poor. Schooling brings a range of direct and indirect costs which include school fees, accommodation, uniforms, travel expenses and textbooks, all of which are often beyond parents' financial capacities (Hunt 2008). Furthermore, even when education is state-provided and there are no tuition fees, parents on limited incomes still face costs such as registration fees, transport, food and school materials. The 2010 UNESCO report indicates that poor societies, mainly those found in the Sub-saharan Africa (SSA), Eastern and Southern Asia (ESA), the Middle East and North Africa (MENA region) still continue to favour boys' education over girls'. When parents in these countries face financial problems, priority in education is always given to sons at the expense of daughters. The high direct cost of education is behind parents' choices as they cannot afford to pay all the tuition fees, books, uniforms, accommodation and transport to send all their children to school (Herz, 2006; Seel and Clarke, 2005; UNESCO, 2010). Colclough (1996) observes that economic and political pressures have even led many governments to transfer the costs of education to local communities, therefore parents in poor households are unable to afford the direct and indirect costs of their children's schooling, and many poor families seriously consider whether to send their children to school, and if so, how many they can afford (Lister, 2004).

3.4.4 School-Based Barriers

There are a number of barriers related to the school that prevent female learners' attendance and completion of their education in rural settings. Lifanda et al., (2004) and Herz et al., (1991) state that the insufficiency of physical facilities in rural schools, such as separate toilets, running water and other sanitary facilities, may discourage girls from attending school regularly and increase their dropout rates. In Morocco's rural schools, for example, the lack of separate toilets is considered a serious issue; where this situation occurs a majority of parents have no confidence in sending their daughters to school, because of the shared toilet facilities and the fear that this may allow an opportunity for physical or sexual assault to occur. The same problem has been highlighted in Zambia by (Kasonde-Ng'andu et al., 2001). It is believed that poor sanitary facilities result in girls' reduced participation in schooling. Moreover, during their menstruation, a large proportion of girls miss school due to the non-availability of sanitary towels, segregated toilets or running water.

In addition, the majority of rural classrooms have leaky roofs, broken doors and windows, broken chairs and tables, no heating, limited school supplies of textbooks and stationery. Insufficient rooms in rural schools result in placing two levels side by side in one classroom which affects girls' progress in learning, and once they fail to pass to the next level their parents do not allow them to continue to study. All of these factors, unfortunately, greatly affect girls' educational achievements and push a number of girls to leave school very early (UNESCO, 2012).

The curriculum content, school culture and teaching methods are also factors that affect girls' entry to school and the prospect of remaining in school for the duration of their education (Dunne et al., 2006). Lifanda et al., (2004) and UNICEF (1999) agree that in rural schools there are issues not only with the amount of available materials but also their content and quality. Leach and Humphreys (2007) state that teaching practices and curriculum content often exclude particular groups of learners. Students from minority ethnic groups, for example, can feel ignored when their culture, belief and tradition are not presented in the curriculum materials, and by this omission gender violence is promoted and the conditions of learning for girls diminish. Many books and illustrations are characterised by gender-biased stereotypes which are not favour to girls' education. These materials, in both an official and non-aparent sense, can convey messages that portray girls as unchallenging, helpless, passive, inferior, dependent and of lesser importance, while boys are represented as superior, brave, independent and important. In addition, Dunne et al., (2005) reveal that the school culture affects girls' participation and achievement. In most schools in developing countries, school culture is far from gender-neutral. For example, the distribution of school activities reinforces what is signalled in the textbooks and in the gender-based assignation of household chores. Positions of leadership and challenging tasks are usually assigned to boys and less valued tasks are mostly given to girls.

Lifanda et al., (2004) insist that teachers' lack of familiarity with gender issues and their inability to deal with atypical situations contribute to girls' poor participation in basic education. According to Shabaya and Konado–Agyemang (2004, p. 414) within the schools and classroom themselves, "the attitudes of both teachers and male students, which obviously have their foundation in cultural norms, tend to hinder the progress of female students". Additionally, Malewezi (1990) conducted a study in Malawi to explore the main factors that prevented girls from completing their education. The result was that some teachers treated boys and girls differently in relation to academic expectations, participation and gender-specific forms of discipline. Also, in Nigeria boys are given greater opportunity

to ask and answer questions in the classroom and lead peer groups; whereas girls are given less time to ask and answer questions, such as in science (UNICEF 2012). Therefore, specific training is needed to help teachers to improve and develop their understandings of issues of gender-equality and moderate their manner of treatment to eliminate, as far as possible, any form of discrimination against female learners. In addition, these training packages should be designed well so that they suit different contexts and different circumstances (Aikman, et al., 2005).

Teachers' gender is also a significant factor that affects girls' access to and remaining in school. According to Dee (2005) research has shown that both male and female students are more likely to be considered disruptive by teachers of the opposite sex. According to Butler and Christiansen (2003), drop-out rates are lower among girl students when they are taught by female teachers. Dee (2005, p. 159) states that the gender of a teacher also affects teacher-students collaboration. Female teachers are considered as 'role models' for girls by being comprehensible, supportive and willing to provide them with advice more than male teachers. Certainly, female teachers are needed not only as source of encouragement and to give advice to girls, but also to serve as a stimulating model by raising motivation and inspiration among girls, and importantly to assure parents that their daughters are in a safe place at school. The Moroccan sociologist Guessous (2010) in a conference in Ifrane, Morocco stated that promoting education among rural girls starts by increasing the role of women to inspire other women. She calls to increase the number of female teachers in rural schools, women in the management of education and in positions of decision-making in the Ministry of Education. In the same vein, the Education For All Global Report (2003) agrees that in countries with a high percentage of women school teachers, the enrolment rate among girls has consistently increased. The report further emphasises that the presence of female teachers has an effect of making parents feel more secure about sending their daughters to school. Therefore, providing appropriate facilities and offering bonuses to female teachers to attract and keep them in rural areas, are effective strategies that should be taken into consideration.

Teachers' racial, ethnic and gender identity also have an effect on girls' schooling. The question of a teacher's ethnicity affecting girls' schooling has been a central topic of investigation for a number of researchers (e.g. Quiocho and Rios, 2000; Gordon, 2000; Carrington 2002a; Dee, 2004; Dee, 2005; Dee, 2007). In the case of female students in the High Atlas Berber villages, teachers' ethnicity may have a great influence on increasing girls' schooling because the majority of the population belongs to the ethnic Berber group,

so having a teacher who speaks 'Tachelhit' and knows about the Berber tradition and culture, will undoubtedly have a positive influence on both learners and parents. Teachers' comparable ethnicity to students' in rural areas of high educational dropout, is also a strategy that the government should consider to address the high rate of resignation that is prevalent among urban teachers for whom working in rural settings is not appealing. For Dee (2005) there is the notion that the influence of teacher ethnicity can be stronger with students who are of low economic status. Dee (2004) adds that students can concentrate more and feel more comfortable when studying with a teacher of their own ethnicity. He believes that both male and female students may feel disturbed and lack concentration in the classroom with a teacher from different ethnic group. Also, the presence of a teacher from a similar background supports and encourages female students to work harder and widen their educational horizons; having a teacher from a similar background allows female learners to feel more relaxed in the classroom and achieve successful results (Dee, 2005).

Concerning teachers' qualifications and teaching skills, a lack of trained female teachers is one of the supply factors blamed for girls' poor access to school and incompleted education. In rural Moroccan schools, there are too few qualified female teachers especially holding positions of responsibility. The majority of female teachers in rural schools are newly appointed individuals. According to the internal rules of the Ministry of Education, new teachers are obliged to spend a minimum of five years at rural schools to gain teaching experience before moving to urban and semi-urban zones. This strategy results in less-qualified female teachers working in rural schools which affects the quality of education imparted generally, and girls' participation in particular. However, the living conditions for a teacher of urban origin placed in a rural setting can have a dramatic effect on the morale. This, therefore, indicates the need for orientation training to prepare teachers, psychologically and physically, before embarking upon a new career in rurally-located schools. Additionally, poor remuneration levels cause teachers to feel undervalued and results in their lack of commitment and low morale Bruns et al., (2003) this is the cause of many teachers, mainly females, to resign or take frequent leave of absence. This has a negative influence on the learning process within rural schools and results in many students dropping out, in the main, female students. In general, rural schools remain plagued by significant challenges related to a lack of available qualified teachers, insufficient educational resources, inadequate classrooms and a substandard infrastructure (Moletsane, 2012).

Violence is another school-based barrier that prevents girls from completing their schooling. Violence has various definitions in the literature and takes different forms according to the setting. Violence can include excessive physical force against a student, intimidation, psychological and emotional violence or as Debarbieux (2003) call 'incivilities' 'micro-violence' or 'anti-social behaviour' (Dunne et al., 2006). In 1993, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women defines violence against women as 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women'. The issue of gender violence in and around the school setting, both in developed and developing countries has attracted the concerned attention of a number of researchers (e.g. Dunne, Humphreys and Leach, 2006; Leach and Humphreys, 2007; Leach and Mitchell, 2006; Mirembe and Davies, 2001; Parkes, 2010, 2013, 2015; Shumba, 2004; and Sundaram, 2014, 2016). Their research studies show that young girls very often encounter both sexual and non-sexual forms of abuse, in and around schools, either by male teachers or male classmates, as indicated by (Leach, 2002). Schools, where the stereotypical masculine culture is promoted, are the site of high levels of gender violence. Many studies undertaken in the mid-1990s (e.g. Hallam, 1994; Gordon, 1995; Odaga and Heneveld, 1995) reported that girls' low participation in education in Sub-saharan Africa was a consequence of being subjected to sexual harassment and verbal abuse within the classroom by male teachers, and through their negative attitudes towards girls.

Leach and Humphreys (2007) add that many male teachers use their authority to have sex with their students and use subject grades as a threat and a weapon in this pursuit. In addition, some male teachers use abusive language that is intended to humiliate and embarrass female students (Dunne et al., 2003). Even where abuse inflicts no physical harm, its psychological influences may have a long-lasting effect, which causes many girls to drop out of school at an early stage. Older male students are known to offer money and presents to girls in exchange for sex, in other cases, girls are often harassed by male students for performing well in class which tends to depress their desire for achievement making them afraid of excelling in case they provoke a negative reaction from the boys (Hyde and Kadzamira, 1994). In developed countries, there are frequent inspections from police officers in schools and the involvement of youth club representatives to talk to young people about the consequences of violence (Sundaram, 2014). By contrast, in developing countries, unfortunately there are no serious steps taken by school administrations or police officers to halt, reprimand and punish culprits. This leads to widespread violence among young learners, especially in vulnerable settings impoverished communities. Sexual violence is not

only restricted to the classrooms and school walls, but also outside the schools. Violence on the way to and from school raises parental fears for their daughters' safety, thus this is a valid reason why the majority of parents of girls prefer to withdraw or not to enrol their daughters in school to avoid problems.

3.4.5 Geographical Barriers

The developmental levels between urban and rural areas in Morocco are vast. Rural areas contain the highest levels of poverty and the hardest harshest living conditions (Berlanga, 2013). Although 21% of the nation's territory is mountainous, these areas have been traditionally marginalised by public authorities and there have been no concerted efforts to provide them with the needed facilities available in urban areas (Berriane, 2002b cited in Berlanga, 2013). The High Atlas rural villages still endure serious limitations in terms of basic facilities. Though in recent years, efforts have been made to provide access to drinking water and electricity, there still remain large communities without these basic resources (Berlanga, 2013). As stated by the United Nations, the top priorities in rural areas are electricity, access to drinking water and passable roads, because the lack of a basic infrastructure results in higher poverty levels (UNDP, 2000: 16-18).

Rural schools are located in geographical regions traditionally characterised by low population density, a lack of infrastructure such as roads, electricity, water, sanitation and health centres (Mukeredzi and Mandrona, 2013). McEwan (1999) presents two groups of factors that are commonly associated with rural areas: (1) factors that can be changed and are under the control of the Ministry of Education, such as hiring qualified teachers, providing adequate teaching and learning materials for both students and teachers, building sufficient classrooms, providing appropriate orientation training for newly-qualified teachers and elevating remuneration packages. (2) Inalterable factors, beyond the control of educational policy-makers, include climatic changes and the physical location of schools. The distance students have to walk to school daily in rural villages is not only about the number of kilometres, but the serious potential hazards students may come face-to-face with on their journeys to and from school. These include physical and sexual assault, attacks by wild animal, impassable flooded rivers in winter, a lack of electricity on public roads and the lack of transportation. In addition, high transportation costs in rural mountainous regions affect the daily life and activities of people including students.

Rural schools are generally characterised by leaky roofs, broken doors and windows, broken chairs and tables, a lack of heating, insufficient water supplies and inadequate sanitation facilities, and depleted school material supplies. Moreover, a lack of sufficient space in rural

schools results in combining two levels within one classroom which negatively affects students' achievement and accounts for the high dropout rate, especially among female students. Furthermore, students tend to have to walk long distances every day across mountainous terrain and frequently flooded rivers to reach their nearest school. Rural teachers' attitudes are another factor that affects school attendance. In addition to an insufficiency of female teachers, most teachers come from urban and semi-urban environments and their unfamiliarity with the rural context weakens their motivation, morale and commitment. All of these factors decrease school enrolment and increase dropout rates especially among females (UNESCO, 2012).

3.5 Educational Interventions to Enhance Girls' Education and Gender Equality

Investigating educational interventions that can lead to girls' increased access and improved retention and progression in schools is one of the topics that has attracted the attention of many researchers (e.g. Herz et al., 2004; Aikman and Rao, 2012; Unterhalter et al., 2014; Kane, 2004; Stromquist, 2001). The implementation and development of educational interventions to enhance girls' schooling and increase gender equality can be affected by different contextual aspects, locally, nationally and globally (Unterhalter et al., 2014). The reviewed studies indicate that there are different forms of interventions that may assist girls to pursue their schooling and this is dependent on state's capacity as well as on non-governmental organisations [NGOs] and private sectors to implement constructive policies and engage in inclusive dialogue. Educational interventions take many forms, yet studies have focused more predominantly on interventions linked to physical resources than on engagement with issues related to exclusion provoked by gender norms (Unterhalter et al., 2014). The following section will discuss three educational intervention types. 1) interventions that focus on resources and infrastructure, 2) interventions to help change and modify institutional policies and rules, and 3) interventions that deal with changing social norms and attitudes to enhance inclusion and decrease gender inequality in education.

3.5.1 Interventions Associated with Infrastructures

a) Building boarding houses

Many children around the world drop out of school after primary level especially those living in isolated rural villages that necessitate walking long distance to reach their nearest school. The building of boarding houses where the need for them is greatest may assist in increasing

girls' retention in schooling. Boarding houses are not only a place for students coming from disadvantaged communities and from different places to reside communally, they are providers of educational facilities for students during their school time, and improve every aspect of students' academic, cultural and social life. The boarding house atmosphere is an important aspect in the success of learners' schooling as it is the place where mental ill-health can develop if there is a lack of supervision or a lack of communication between learners and the house keepers or between learners themselves. On the other hand, it can be a place where students forge their personality and build up their self-confidence if the atmosphere is well prepared (Bista and Cosstick, 2005). Qualitative evidence suggests that the provision of boarding houses can reduce the time girls are obliged to spend doing housework thereby allowing them to focus on their schooling. This provision can also help girls form stronger relationships with their teachers and by doing so they can build their self-confidence and concentrate more on their study (Shah, 2011; Jones et al., 2015a; Willemsen, 2016). For girls from poor rural families, boarding house accommodation can assist in ensuring continued education, and serve to allay parents' concerns since the long journeys to school and the potential of meeting dangers en route are no longer issues.

In rural settings where girls' movements outside home are not permitted, the provision of suitable boarding house accommodation can give school-age girls the security and protection they need whilst away from their families. While, statistical data from the Moroccan national government provision of educational support show that boarding houses have been built as a strategy to help girls from poor marginalised families access secondary education away from their villages (Muskin et al., 2011), this provision has not been followed up by a measurement of the effectiveness of these government interventions, nor are there follow-up inspections to ensure that the basic requirements and maintenance are provided within these boarding houses. In research undertaken in Mongolia and Malawi, for instance, rural parents are more likely to support girls than boys to pursue schooling when this facility is provided because they perceive that boarding houses offer personal protection and education that ensures their daughters of future jobs (Bista and Cosstick, 2005).

b) Building new schools

Students in remote rural villages suffer from a number of issues related to school access and retention. To boost school attendance and completion of education in rural areas, studies (e.g. Unterhalter et al., 2014; Redding and Walberg, 2012) agree that building new schools, the improvement of existing schools, and the employment of distance technologies can assist largely in reducing dropout rates among rural students. In rural areas, the poverty rate is high

Schafft et al., (2008) which is why the limited resources available to rural schools require schools to do more with less (Monk, 2007). As a result, large numbers of students drop out at an early age, especially female learners. Redding and Walberg (2012) point out that larger schools can offer and provide more extensive courses than smaller schools, thus students in rural schools may be deprived by the narrow scope of curriculum in their schools (Monk, 2007; Oakes and Maday, 2009). The provision of new schools in remote villages and the expansion of existing ones could help greatly in increasing school attainment and decreasing dropout rates especially among female learners. In addition, the provision of technology and computer access in schools in remote areas could also enhance learning improvement. According to Cristia et al., (2014), over the last fifteen years, many developing countries have embarked on ambitious programmes to expand computer access in schools. This initiative can affect decisions of permanence including enrolment and dropout rates and affect decisions taken daily about attendance to school.

c) Provision of transportation, running water, sanitation and electricity

There are different types of interventions that can assist girls to enrol and remain in their schooling if provided with more advantageous settings. Distance-related obstacles and security problems cause many parents to be less persuaded to send their daughters to school from remote villages. Thus, the provision of transportation could facilitate access to school with improved conditions and ensure girls' safety. It is also interesting to explore the connection between sanitation, running water, electricity and girls' schooling. A majority of schools in rural areas in developing countries are often ill-equipped with water and electricity supplies (Taylor and Mulhall, 2001) and the lack of such facilities discourages parents from giving their daughters the chance to remain in school. Studies from South Africa provide indications that improved infrastructure, particularly of water and sanitation, may contribute to increased exam pass rates for girls (Khumalo and Mji, 2014). Girls face an additional challenge in attending school during their periods that boys do not have to contend with (Unterhalter et al., 2014). Therefore, the provision of adequate sanitary supplies can be of improved beneficial for girls to manage their menstruation so that they can maintain consistent attendance at school.

d) Provision of financial support and remove school fees

The provision of financial support, scholarships and the removal of school fees for marginalised families has a long-term impact and makes significant improvements in girls' school participation. Studies such as Unterhalter et al.,(2014) indicate that such interventions

need to target eligible households based on income, and the process should be objective and transparent, if not the results can be ineffective. Chapman and Mushlin (2008) present an example of the Ambassador Girls' Scholarship scheme in Sierra Leone and Djibouti where a lack of transparency created tensions between girls who received scholarships and those who did not. Furthermore, providing conditional cash transfers for unmarried adolescent girls and their families in Malawi assisted in increasing school attendance, and small amounts of money could be significant in poor areas to help girls' completion of their education (Baird et at., 2011). Removing school fees is also potentially important to assist girls to complete their schooling in marginalised settings where resources are scarce. For instance, in Uganda in 1997 when school fees were removed, primary school enrolment was known to massively increase, particularly for girls. The same applied in Ghana and Mozambique where the gender parity index was enhanced after school fees were abolished (Unterhalter et al., 2014). Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) add that the opportunity costs of attending schools are often higher in rural areas, which is why the provision of financial support and removal school fees is an effective strategy to help girls complete their schooling and reduce dropout rates.

3.5.2 Interventions which Focus on Changing Institutional Cultures

a) Increasing female teachers and women in leadership positions

Overcoming the gender gap requires not only providing more schools, accommodation, and other physical supplies but also overcoming other issues related to the school environment, teachers' sex and introducing pedagogical approaches to change norms, policies, and practices in the educational system. It has been found that teachers' skills in the management of the classroom and instructional planning have the strongest influence on students' learning progress (Wang et al.,1993). Therefore, the employment of female teachers, increasing women's presence in leadership positions, school governance and community engagement can be effective strategies to improve girls' access and participation in school and enhance in changing gender social norms. Recruiting female teachers is known to have a positive impact on girls' aspirations and self-confidence. According to (Holmlund and Sund, 2008), the sex of the teacher is important because female teachers are role models and therefore they provide more encouragement, aspirations, and support to girls than male teachers do. Butler and Christiansen (2003) add that dropout rates are lower among girl students taught by female teachers as they can help to make the school environment supportive and nurturing for girls. Malewezi (1990) explains that girls fail to continue their

education because male teachers treat girls differently from boys both in terms of academic expectations and gender-specific forms of discipline.

In Ghana, because of the shortage of women teachers at rural schools, women teachers have been asked to accept postings to rural schools in order to stand up for girls and contribute to the national development (Ghana News Agency, September 23, 2011). Similarly, in Bangladesh and in Africa, having female teachers in local schools has increased girls' enrolment and reduced dropout (Mingat and Suchaut, 2000). Concerning leadership positions, in many developing countries even with a substantial increase in the presence of women in different educational sectors, their presence in holding key positions such as on school governance committees and in decision-making is still low compared with their male counterparts.

b) Provision of girl-friendly schools and out-of-class activities

As an approach to promote gender equality and encourage girls to continue their schooling in disadvantaged areas, an effective intervention is by changing institutional cultures and implementing new policies both at the level of the school and within the education system. Similarly, what is needed for girls to succeed in rural schools is the provision of after-school activities. Many research studies (e.g. Kazianga, 2013; Unterhalter and Heslop, 2012; Mannathoko, 2008) highlight the importance of school culture and after-school activities in disseminating gender equality and removing negative attitudes and discriminatory behaviours. A study in Burkina Faso, Kazianga et al., (2012) stresses the benefits of building 'girl-friendly' schools and the combination of both infrastructural interventions and interventions regarding institutional change in a 'quality mix' including separate toilet facilities for boys and girls, permitting students to take home necessary books, increased mobilisation campaigns and larger capacity building among local associates. In fact, such combinations of interventions have, undoubtedly, had a positive impact on the enrolment of girls and encouraged parents to take initiative and to sensitize people about the importance of girls' education.

Another intervention which can be of benefit in assisting girls to continue their schooling and achieve positive academic results is encouraging and spreading after-school activities. A number of qualitative studies have shown that girls responded positively to collaborative learning styles. For example, Hossain and Tarmizi (2012) examined the effects of group learning on the mathematics performance of both girls and boys in Grade 9 in Bangladesh, which showed that the girls benefited more than boys in the experimental group. From

Malaysia, they found that cooperative learning assisted both female and male students to develop their understanding and improve their learning style. Similarly, Chambers and Schreiber (2004) studied the effects of extra-curricular activities on girls' learning achievement in Grade 8 and 10 in four subjects in the USA, and studies found that schools' academic organised activities (such as clubs), out-of-school academic non-organised activities (such as homework) and out-of-school non-academic non-organised activities (such as chatting with friends) seemed to have a positive effect on learning achievements in all subjects amongst girls of different ethnic backgrounds. Thus, after-school activities, both formal and informal, could be an effective intervention to assist girls' educational chances and help them build social connections to achieve positive academic results.

3.5.3 Interventions which Focus on Changing Gender Norms

a) Tackling gender-based violence and sex education in schools

A third form of intervention concerns changes in gender norms and enhancing inclusion by facilitating the means for girls and young women, especially among the most marginalised groups, to take part in reflective and decision-making processes. These interventions focus more on personal and interpersonal relationships to promote inclusion and remove all variety of barriers that might deter girls from school participation. A discussion and explanation of gender-based violence within schools along with the provision of sex education and supporting literacy programmes are some interventions that might be of help to change gender norms and improve inclusion (Unterhalter et al., 2014). A number of studies (e.g. Parkes and Chege, 2010; Parkes and Heslop, 2013; Parkes et al., 2016; Parkes, 2015; Parkes et al., 2013, Sauntson and Sundaram, 2016; Sundaram, 2014, 2016; Dunne, 2003, Dunne et al., 2006) shed light on the importance of the integration of discussions about sex education and gender-based violence into school programmes to eradicate exclusion, raise awareness and increase girls' schooling chances.

According to Sundaram (2014, p.17), "gender education must be the primary component of anti-violence education". Sundaram and Sauntson (2016) add that sex education and relationships, (SRE) curricula and provision are under discussion with a sense of urgency in many countries around the world as an important ground for engaging with gender norms (Unterhalter et al., 2014). When discussing sexual education, sensitising people about how to protect themselves from diseases that might put their lives at risk, HIV and AIDS take priority, but this only partially addresses the problem.

Many programmes focus only on information regarding safe sex, and completely ignore the relevance of dealing with gender inequalities, and also misaddress or ignore questions about equality, add (Unterhalter et al., 2014). In Namibia, Fitzgerald et al., (1999) tested western approaches to the discussion of sexual risks within relationships between girls and boys, with the result that both boys and girls have understood and accepted that young people can enjoy a close relationship without necessarily resulting in sex, although both sexes were also given knowledge about how using condoms and the benefits of their use. This is paradoxical, because in the provision of sexual education there is affirmation that students need to know about using condoms, yet this undermines Fitzgerald's statement, since if the focus is on students being taught that sex need not necessarily follow as a result of friendship, why the need of information about contraception?

Similarly, studies conducted by Parkes and Heslop (2013) investigating the implementation of the 'Stop Violence against Girls Campaigns in Ghana, Mozambique and Kenya' found that girls' clubs, training for teachers and school management committees, assisted in changing attitudes to gender and violence, and provided girls with information about how to report incidents of violence. Ellsberg et al., (2015, p.1) argue that "evidence for interventions is highly skewed towards…response, rather than prevention" of violence against women and girls, but evidence for their effectiveness to reduce revictimisation is weak. Most of the research has been done on interventions for perpetrators, addressing the problem after it has happened, in effect closing the door after the horse has bolted. In low-income and middle-income countries, there is an increasing emphasis on prevention of different forms of violence against women and girls, but this speciality of violence prevention is still in the early stages. An assessment of research initiatives indicate that it is possible to prevent violence, with some interventions achieving positive measures within the study timeframes. The success of these programmes could come from a number of factors: engaging multiple stakeholders and taking multiple approaches, aiming to address the underlying factors for violence including societal norms that condone violence against girls and gender inequalities, by supporting the development of non-violent behaviours towards girls. Further research is needed to "expand the evidence base for what interventions are effective in different contexts, assess a broader range of intervention models, and explore issues of intervention cost, sustainability, and scalability" Ellsberg et al., (2015, p.1).

Among 84 studies into sexual violence and gender inequality, two thirds (52) focused on responses to violence against women and girls as individuals, and the remainder focused on prevention at the community or group level. While, in low-income and middle-income

countries, most of these studies (16 out of 18) focused on preventative measures, most of the interventions targeted women alone (38) or women and men (17), and 22 studies which targeted men, were predominantly interventions for men who had already assaulted women. These findings indicate that campaigns and researches need to be aimed inclusive of men and boys as well as girls in their target audiences (Ellsberg et al., 2015, p.2).

This signals a gap in the literature as these campaigns address girls about their problems, but do not implement grassroots level spread of this knowledge to boys. Boys' clubs, too, need to be included in the equation, to impress upon males the non-acceptability of gender-based violations against girls, and the responsibilities boys' can assume towards the protection of girls from unwanted sex, with more emphasis on education for boys regarding rights of girls and prohibitions of violence against them. There is also a gap in the literature regarding research into why there is a perceptible lack of sex education among school-age learners and the prominence of sexual violence against school-age girls within a specific community context. This kind of community is by some or all of the following features: these communities are conservative, patriarchal, closed-door societies, rural, marginalised, Islamic, have social norms of gender-based inequality, a lack of implementation of educational provision of sexual awareness, and suppression of friendships between boys and girls - even without sexual contact.

3.6 Girls' Education in Africa and the Arab world

Over the last several decades, gender and education inequalities has been a debated subject in many developing countries (e.g. Herz and Sperling, 2004; Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005; Leach, 1998; King and Hill, 1997; Johannes, 2010; Buchmann 2008) and has been identified as a major barrier to social and economic development in both national and international forums. Despite the unlimited expansion of educational opportunities worldwide during the last few decades, with special attention paid to closing gender gaps in education, female education is still lower and gender gap is larger in developing countries (King and Hill, 1997). The question is why do women in many developing countries continue to lag far behind men and fail to reach levels of higher education?

a) Girls' education in Africa

According to King and Hill (1997), in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) as a whole, and in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) the dropout rate for girls is higher than that for boys. In African countries, women still suffer from unequal access to education (Odaga and Neveld, 1995). Bloch and Vavrus (1998) state that right across the continent, the years of

schooling among women aged between 15 and 49 is lower than that of men, and illiteracy rates among women aged between 15 and 60 are significantly higher than for males. African women ranked as the most undereducated in the world compared with women in East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. According to UNICEF's report (2000), 70 % of illiterate women are found in Sub-saharan Africa. Kane (2004) states that in Africa girls attend school for an average of only 2.82 years before the age of 16. This percentage is far lower than anywhere else in the world, and only 46 % of girls who enrol in schools in Sub-saharan Africa complete primary school level. By this rate of progress, as Aikman and Unterhalter (2007) believe gender parity in Sub-saharan Africa will not be attained until 2038. Odaja and Heneveld (1995) add that in Sub-Saharan Africa alone, 27 million girls are excluded from school education.

Formal education in most African countries has traditionally been reserved for men, and they fill the most important positions and roles in society; whereas most African women received education of an informal nature (Johannes, 2010). Unsurprisingly, the African continent contains the world's poorest countries wherein are the world's highest illiteracy rates. This rate of illiteracy has been shaped by a mix of factors that have influenced the educational system in Africa and more specifically affected women's schooling. For example, during the colonial period, the continent was robbed of its people, its natural recourses and cultures, and suffered the humiliation of being referred to as the 'Dark Continent' (Johannes, 2010). Furthermore, language was a factor that delayed women's enrolment in schools, because African schools in general used the colonisers' language for the language of instruction, and as a result the impact of the instructional language contributed to illiteracy rates among women and girls (Johannes, 2010). In the same vein, a number of studies directed by the World Bank among other agencies point out that girls' enrolment at both primary and secondary school levels in Sub-saharan African is not the same as boys' because at the secondary level, for example, where school fees are involved, girls' enrolment lags far behind that of boys UNESCO (1995); United Nations (1995).

Hyde (1989) investigates another factor that establishes African countries as having the world's highest illiteracy rates; financial barriers. A majority of parents on low incomes tend to view daughters' education as a luxury while sons' education is considered a necessity. Therefore, girls' length of schooling tends to be of short duration, and a high percentage of them are likely to be withdrawn from school and not permitted to repeat a class if their family experiences financial problems. Meena (2001) places the fault on the governments of the Sub-saharan countries for failing to make greater efforts to support girls to have access to

secondary level. To combat this issue King and Hill (1993) suggest that investment in education is one of the most important ways through which nations can move towards goals of long-term development to improve standards of living, both socially and economically. Furthermore, Roudi-Fahimi and Moghadam (2006) believe that by providing the necessary supports and materials to improve the quality of its education, this is the most rewarding investment a country can make for its people. Gender and education in Sub-saharan Africa has received a great amount of attention since the early 1990's, both at national and international levels and within policy debates specifically addressing formal education. However, more work remains to be undertaken in order to meet the international Millennium Development Goals.

b) Girls' education in the Arab World

Although there are a variety of differences among Arab countries, there are also many common denominators factors such as language, cultural heritage, and Islam. In her chapter on 'The Development of Women's Education in The Arab World' (Kirdar, 2006 cited in Griffin, 2006) notes that Arab women are still fighting to free themselves of restrictions in a rigid patriarchal society that is supported by laws, religious beliefs and traditions, from which only educated women of the elite have been able to free themselves (Roudi-Fahimi and Moghadam, 2006). Though there has been expansion of significance in the provision of female education throughout the Arab world, there still exist many factors that prevent girls' full participation and progression in respect of education provision. The first problem facing girls' education is related to government policies. Azzam et al., (1985, cited in Griffin, 2006) argue that disparities between female and male education in lesser developed countries are the result of a function of culture, religion or level of a nation's development, and also as a result of government policy.

In some countries, part of the problem is that governments aggravate the problem rather than seek the solution. Millions of children in Arab countries are missing school even though the government has legally granted every child a right to education. Sometimes, even when they might be officially enrolled, they are not physically at school. In other scenarios, when students attend schools they find their classrooms unattended by teachers (Tomasevski 2003). What is important to mention is that government policies affect females firstly because many governments believe girls' education is of lesser importance than boys' (Kelly, 1987). Another challenge to girls' education in the Arab world is related to subject choice. In many Arab countries, females rarely receive the same education as their male counterparts and most often enter fields of study that are predominantly female, such as

teaching and nursing. This system reflects the Arab culture and the absence of women in the workforce. Therefore, their rate of return is low compared with that of men (Kelly, 1987 cited in Griffin, 2006).

Even though significant progress has been made in the Arab world to enrol girls into school education, there is still a large percentage of the female population not in attendance. In Morocco, for example, even if girls commence primary school, few reach the level of the fifth year at the age of twelve, when they ought to sit their exams for the primary school certificate. As soon as girls reach the age of twelve or thirteen, their parents keep them home, as it is considered shameful for a girl to be out of the house once she reaches the age of puberty (UNESCO, 2004). Additionally, low expectations about their future employment affect girls´ likelihood of completing their education. Lockheed et al., (1980) state that in many cultures, parents give less value towards girls' education. They believe that their education is not worthwhile because they will get married and move to live with their husband's families thus their productivity and income will be accrued by the families of their sons-in-law rather than their own parents. Thus, educating girls is perceived as something which will benefit some other family and not the biological parents themselves. They believe that educating daughters is like watering the neighbours' tree; the fruits and the income will go to someone else (Islam, 1979 cited in Kabeer, 2003).

Gender equality, as reported by the World Bank (2001a), is a development in itself and a means to promoting growth, reducing poverty and promoting better governance. Gender equality and women's empowerment has been articulated in the policy statements of a number of high-level international conferences such as the Beijing Platform for Action, the Beijing+5 Declaration and Resolution, the Cairo Programme of Action, the Millennium Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (World Bank 2001a).

3.7 Gender and Education

Girls' schooling has been the subject of intense debate over the last few recent decades. Following the World Education Conferences organised in Dakar and Jomtien (1990 and 2000), academic scholars, politicians, government officials, and consultants have shown great interest in issues surrounding girls' schooling after the Millennium Development Goals (Kumar, 2009). Attention given to education in general, and to girls' education in particular, has since been gaining momentum locally, nationally and internationally. it is important to make education available for everyone including girls, for the purpose of transferring

knowledge, skills, and abilities to future generations, educating women is deemed to be rewarding from one generation to the next according to USAID (2005). Gjerde (2018) quoted Dr. James Emmanuel Kwegyir-Aggrey (1875-1927) who believes that "if you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a generation". In other words, educating women contributes to sowing the seeds of benefit that will pass from one generation to the next. There is also the argument of 'education as contraception'. Women who are educated are said to have more capability of taking care of their children's comfort and health because they are better-informed about the available health and medical options. According to Tembon and Fort (2008, p. xviii), in those countries where there is a higher presence of females in the post-primary level, there are a number of beneficial health paybacks that carry over from one generation to the next, such as lower infant mortality, less risks of HIV and AIDS, and better nutritional choices for their own children. Some researchers have undertaken studies in Africa where they have concluded that children whose mothers received a minimum of 5 years of primary schooling have a 40 % higher likelihood of surpassing the age of five (Summers, 1994).

In Niger and Nigeria, the children whose mothers receive schooling have a 50 % likelihood of receiving immunization, as a result of which there is a decrease in the mortality rate for generations to come (Gage et al., 1997). In addition to benefits in terms of health, it is also proven that children have greater chances to access education if their mothers are also educated (Hanushek, 2008). Indeed, those women who have received a formal education have a greater tendency to ensure their children are educated. This naturally follows since women are the primary caregivers in the home and the ones who provide their children with the preliminary concepts of family and education. Therefore, women are great contributors to the "intergenerational transmission of knowledge" (Hanushek, 2008, p. 24).

3.8 Gender and Development

Since the mid-1990s, the theme of 'gender, education, and development' has been the focal point of the discourse on gender and women's challenges (Howard, 19993). During the aftermath of the post-war era, the predominant preconceived ideas about women centered on the fact that they were inferior, that they could not support themselves and they were in fact dependent on social welfare. In other words, their role in the development of society was deemed insignificant and ineffectual. During the early 1970s, the inclusion of women into development was manifested as a new discourse that would call into question and nullify treating women unequally.

The focal point of the proponents of women in the development approach was predominantly centered on women's role in development. Boserup (2013) explains how during the 1960s, men benefited from the launching of modern technology as well as cash cropping. As a result, women's calling was mainly devoted to raising the family and temporary labour. She further explains that upon studying women's roles in the field of agricultural labour, she concludes that there was compelling reasoning behind the argument that monetary remuneration should be awarded to rural women as well as their male counterparts. Boserup adds that the recruitment of women in the modern sector would contribute to speedy growth in the economy if they were provided with the proper education and training. Boserup's main arguments shed light on the fact that women's roles were not confined only to giving birth and rearing children. Their significant role was evident in farming, in informal settings as well as working in many other sectors. Unterhalter (2005, p.17), however, alleges that regardless of the fact that women, according to the development theory, predominantly focus on girls' and women's participation in education and in the process of development plans, the theory itself does not contest or question the 'multiple sources of women's subordination'. Examples of this become manifest in both the workplace, at home and in society in general where both girls and women suffer from all forms of inequality and social injustice. This approach, adds Unterhalter, was found to have taken over 1990s discourse, including policy files of UNESCO and the World Bank. Although the theory stressed that the increase in the development of educational institutions for girls would increase "social benefits", it did not seem to recognise the personal gain for girls and women in being educated (Unterhalter, 2005).

However, by the late 1980s, with the gender and development approach, more focus was being drawn towards the discourse of the deeply rooted power inequality in society and its effect on girls' education. In developing countries, this approach was deemed more applicable, especially with regard to the delegation of tasks among males and females in and out of the household (Unterhalter, 2005). As Unterhalter states, the entrenched gender discrimination that permeates society is the focal point of the gender development approach. It is based on the conviction that equality between men and their female counterparts can be attained through programmes to initiate a shift and reinstate an equitable distribution of power between men and women through the process of removing the "structural barriers to gender equality" (Unterhalter, 2005, p. 22). The proponents of gender and development theory stress on the significance of gendered power structures of inequality in a variety of

contexts, and they further allege that politics can be used to confront these power imbalances (Unterhalter, 2005).

3.9 Gap in the Literature

In relation to the education of girls in rural communities in Morocco, the High Atlas villages are some of the most marginalised geographic areas in the country, wherein gender inequality is pivotal in a lack of education of girls, a fact of which, unfortunately, few studies have discussed the circumstances. Vaughan (2007) points out that the best way to analyse gender equality is to carefully analyse whether factors enable a child to attend school or not. In addition, in an appraisal of the reviewed literature, there is evidence of a significant gap with regard to the role of NGOs in Morocco in enhancing girls' educational chances in rural Berber villages. Thus, this study aims to contribute to the better understanding of the main barriers girls face in completing their education and presents an overview of NGO interventions to facilitate for girls in marginalised communities to have the same school opportunity as their counterparts in cities.

Through this study, I examined the direct and indirect factors preventing rural Berber girls from their rights within the context of education, and found it of significance that there is no previous academic study investigating the lack of education for indigenous people of the Berber communities. The colonising of Morocco historically played a major part in exacerbating this educational deficiency and is one which the post-colonial era has neither sufficiently addressed nor more than superficially redressed.

Summary

This chapter presents literature search strategies adopted to facilitate search process, presents definitions of some key terms, covers the main girls' education barriers with a focus on African and Arab world. The chapter includes also different educational interventions that may assist marginalised girls to continue their education. Before the conclusion, the chapter looks also to the role of gender in development and this can be through supporting girls' rights in education.

Chapter Four: Theoretical Frameworks

4.1 Overview

The aim of this study is to investigate the participants' perceptions of the main barriers to girls' education in some rural villages of the High Atlas Mountains and to examine the role of one NGO to support schoolgirls to complete their education. This study is informed by post-colonial theory (e.g. Crossley and Tikly, 2004; Said, 1997) to analyse and discuss the impacts of colonialism on post-colonial states, post-colonial feminist theories (e.g. McClintock, 2013; Mohanty, 1988a; Spivak, 1988,1990) to provide a clearer understanding why the education of marginalised rural girls is poor, the capability approach, as articulated by Sen (1980s) and Nussbaum (1980s) to explain how education can improve girls' capabilities and boost their agency and functions in and outside of their community. The capability approach was also used because it deals with human well-being rather than just economic growth in human development.

4.2 Post-Colonial Theory

Writers and critics of Moroccan culture, and of Africa as a whole, have tried to discuss and analyse the colonial experience through post-colonial study (Lazarus and Neil, 2004). In order to understand the status of Berbers [Amazigh] during Morocco's colonial and post-colonial era, and to understand Berbers' perceptions concerning girls' education, post-colonial theory was selected as a theoretical foundation to shed light on how marginalised people's lives were shaped during and after colonisation, and to understand whether in this post-colonial era Morocco's education system facilitates or continues to marginalise the Berber communities and undervalue girls' schooling in these remote rural villages. Post-colonial theory is a mix of ideas, strategies, and techniques that address the effects of colonialism on post-colonial nations (Hickling-Hudgson et al., 2004). According to Piedalue and Rishi (2017), post-colonial theory emerged to describe phenomena that are fixed in specific locations and geographies i.e., in the Global South but not the Global North, across the three continents of the formerly colonised world. Post-colonial theory is an appeal to concentrate on the consequences of European expansion in the colonised states from the 19th century onwards to understand their subsequent histories (Crossley and Tikly, 2004). It is based on the belief that colonial and imperial relations of the nineteenth century still impact on non-Western cultures and on the way non-westerners behave (Mills, 1998), and provides a general view about the consequences of inequality alongside other issues in post-colonial

states (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2013). Post-colonial theory also analyses the consequences of colonial education and the influence of imperial languages, knowledge, culture, and power on those colonised states (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 2008). Authors working within post-colonial theory have engaged with a wide range of issues including:

> *slavery, migration and diaspora formation; the effects of race, culture, class, and gender in postcolonial settings; histories of resistance and struggle against colonial and neo-colonial domination; the complexities of identity formation and hybridity; language and language rights; the ongoing struggles of indigenous peoples for recognition of their rights (Ashcroft et al., 1995 cited in Crossley and Tikly, 2004, p. 148).*

In Edward Said's (1978) 'Orientalism', one of the original inspirations for the development of post-colonial theory, an ontological and epistemological distinction is provided between 'the Orient' and 'the Occident' (Kennedy, 2000). Said argues that many non-Western cultures were presented as 'other' in European literature during the Imperial expansion. In other words, the "West was represented as masculine, active and dominant and the non-West viewed as feminine, passive and submissive" (Mapara, 2009, p. 142). This view is shared by Fanon (1986) who points out that colonialism supported the presence of white people over non-white people to create division and separation amongst the colonies, to weaken their identity and their unity. According to Ahluwalia (2001) and Mapara (2009), the colonised have been left with a gaping sense of dependency, which has arisen from the death of their cultural origins. In the same vein, Harik (1990, p. 18) states that being dominated by Imperial powers for hundreds of years has affected the mind-set of Arabs and Muslims in general, in that western colonialism has "undermined their sense of security and confidence".

Ahluwalia (2001) has debated the need for colonial systems to be revised in order to enable former colonies to regain a sense of independence, and through education the colonised can rebuild their own identity in throwing off the colonial system to establish a new national culture. However, this remains a challenge for many nations of former colonies because most of the education systems in the Arab world and other colonised nations are still imbibing the knowledge of the Centre (West) and are still following its ideologies. Crossley and Tikly (2004, p. 149) expressed it as ''many existing education systems still bear the hallmarks of the colonial encounter in that they remain elitist, lack relevance to local realities and are often at variance with indigenous knowledge systems, values and beliefs''. Colonial education policies succeed in manipulating colonised peoples' minds in convincing them that their indigenous cultures and traditions have less value than western cultures and traditions. It was a tool of the battle of winning the 'hearts and minds' in the words of

Lyautey (1921, p. 289). On top of that, education programmes are significantly influenced by the colonial legacy and the global agendas of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education For All (EFA) from where a large part of educational pedagogies of developing countries were inspired. In addition, the education budget of developing countries is dependent on donor countries and international organisations such as The World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, ISESCO, Oxfam and other agencies for the provision of funding, which requires a subordination of continuous compliance with the 'West' and which limits the abilities of developing countries to establish their own agendas (Tikly, 2004).

Post-colonial theory has engaged with various core issues across the three continents of the formerly colonised world (Young, 2001), and critically assesses and addresses the North-South power relations and asymmetries. For decades, indigenous people resisted colonial and neo-colonial dominations and struggled for recognition of their rights (Ashcroft et al., 2000 cited in Crossley and Tikly, 2004). However, independence from colonialism does not mean liberation (Fanon, 1984 cited in Rizvi et al., 2006), and the ongoing effects of European colonisation are still spreading across different domains. Crossley and Tikly (2004, p.150) highlight that efforts to transform the basis of colonial schooling have suffered in the postcolonial era from the continuing hegemony of western forms of knowledge and power and the spread of western consumer culture. Therefore, in this study post-colonial theory was used to provide a better understanding of the nature of education provision in Morocco generally, and consideration is given to the Berber [Amazigh] communities in particular, which is achieved through the analysis of the collected data. Post-colonial theory, therefore, has the potential to exploit and rework the philosophies of non-European cultures to help tackle the problems of the present and the future, in the context of school-age girls in marginalised Berber communities who are prevented from continuing their schooling (ibid, 1998). In addition, post-colonial theory challenges the nationalist discourse "that still remains a taboo subject in many academic circles, including the field of education" (Subedi and Daza 2008, p. 2). Crossley and Tikly (2004, p. 153) suggest that for developing countries like Morocco "post-colonial theorising can help to challenge dominant discourses, and make a positive contribution to the improvement of educational policy and practice in a way that may also foster critical thought and essential social transformation". On the issue of giving voice to the marginalised, Khan et al., (2007, p. 231) explain that the aim of post-colonial theory is to "challenge the established dominant discourses of oppression by giving a voice to those who have been marginalised by history and viewed as the other".

Post-colonial theorists have discussed a number of issues related to colonised nations. However, the theory is, according to some, less fully developed in discussing and analysing gender issues in post-colonial societies (Khan, McDonald, Baumbusch, Krikham, Anderson, 2007; Mills and Lewis, 2003). Since the focus of this study is around girls' education in marginalised settings, the theory falls short in addressing gender issues. According to Blunt and Gillian (1994), colonialism affected both men and women, though it was manifested in different ways. Females were discriminated against not only as colonised people but also as women. The same view is shared by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2000) who add that colonialism exposed women to different types of oppressions and ignored their presence and rights until the introduction of feminist theory into the discourse. In the same vein, Hodgson (2001) argues that post-colonialism theories have taken for granted women's subordination and considered women's issues of lesser value and not important subjects for political thinking, hence the disregard for an analysis of gender issues among marginalised communities. These limitations are evidence for the need of critical research to address this lack of equality towards women's rights in colonial theory, and it has stimulated my thoughts to apply the feminist theory approach to inform a gender analysis of girls' schooling among marginalised groups in this research, which I discuss in the following section.

4.3 Post-Colonial Feminist Theory

In the past decade, many scholars across the social sciences have focused on the importance to learn, recognise, and validate theories generated in the 'Global South' (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2015). According to Kerner (2017, P. 854), post-colonial theories look at the discursive, material and economic aspects of global power-relations in conjunction with one another, whereas post-colonial feminist theories focus on the gender aspects of these issues, and on the challenges they create for the political projection of global feminism. Understanding women's positions within various segments of society, and what it means to be a woman in those societies, has been the central focus of feminist theories. Code (2000) defines post-feminist theory as a system that analyses and explains women's position in society along with articulating useful and appropriate strategies to ameliorate women's conditions. The theory came to enlighten people about the importance of women's roles in different societies to halt the 'taken-for-granted' practices that have ignored and silenced woman's voices and have hence established an unequal and discriminatory social order. The political movement of the eighteenth century assisted in developing the goals of the theory to defend women's rights and improve their position in society (Jackson and Jones, 1998).

Feminist theories aim to understand, analyse and discuss the nature of gender inequality, and examine men's and women's respective social roles, relations, interests, and experiences. Feminist theories aim also to investigate the results of gender discrimination, sexual objectification, oppression, patriarchy and stereotyping. There is no single 'feminist theory', rather, different perspectives have emerged at different times, yet have frequently been in tension with one another. Thus, Gordon (1979, p. 107, cited in Osmond and Thorne, 1993) defines feminist theory as "an analysis of women's subordination for the purpose of figuring out how to change it". This definition summarises three main themes, attention to women and women's experiences; women subordinated or oppressed under the existing social arrangements; and further efforts to ensure gender equality and to end injustice and subordination. Thus, attention to gender and gender relations is fundamental to all aspects of social life, inclusive of men and women, which is the main theme feminist theories try to spread (Osmond and Thorne, 1993).

Post-colonial feminist theory is tied to the feminist movement and criticises how colonialism affects the traditional, social and personal aspects of women's lives (Frisby et al., 2009). Furthermore, Tong (2009) maintains that post-colonial feminist theory advocates that colonialism and racism, and their influences in the post-colonial situation, are associated with the unequal gender relations between western women and women of the rest of the world. Post-colonial feminist theorists agree upon and insist that inequality between men and women is not natural or inevitable, and it is time to rectify these differences and provide women with opportunities to fully perform their duties and responsibilities and achieve their goals (Beasley, 1999; Chege and Sifuna, 2006). They examine how patriarchal stereotypes, gender-based oppression, objectification, and discrimination against women interconnect with identity, ethnicity, race, and sexuality to eliminate women's presence in patriarchal systems in different communities and societies (Lather, 1991). Post-colonial feminist theory not only focuses on patriarchy as a source of oppression, but it also examines how social inequalities are inscribed within a historical, political, social, cultural, and economic context that influences a number of social factors, mainly health and education (Racine, 2011, p. 18). This is why post-colonial feminist theories fight against gender domination and serve to challenge the practices that use gender as a boundary marker and a maker between national, ethnic and religious groups, by revealing such practices and providing a discursive space for the silenced voices of both women and men on these issues (Marchand, 2009 p. 931). However, post-colonial feminist theorists along with other feminist theorists, have differing focus on theoretical perspectives, and post-colonial feminist theory is concerned, not only

with understanding women's position in society and unequal gender relations, but also identifying the appropriate strategies and policies to develop the social world to make it a place for women and for all people to have a voice (Ritzer et al., 2004).

During the development of the feminist theories, non-Western women became concerned that most feminist theories defended women's rights from a Western perspective which ignored the experiences, struggles, and lives of women in the rest of the world. At the beginning of 1980s, a number of feminist researchers from different backgrounds (i.e.Mohanty, 1988a; Collins, 1991, 2005; Spivak, 1988, 1990) critically analysed feminist theories dominated by the West and exposed the limitations and problematic history of Western feminism. The latter research was more relevant to white middle-class women in America and Europe than to non-Western women, classified as 'Third World' women and described as poor, uneducated, traditional, ignorant and sexually constrained by their gender. Mohanty (1988) examines the inadequacy of Western epistemological frameworks to understand women's lives and struggles outside the Western world. In addition, her criticism of the invisibility of non-Western women in the history of feminism has inspired many feminists, for example Black feminists (Hooks, 1984). In Mohanty's essay '*Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses'*, which later became the opening piece of her monograph '*Feminism Without Borders*', Mohanty (2003) examined and articulated a critique of how 'Western feminism' impacted on 'Third World women', in exploring the location of feminist scholarship within a global political and economic framework which places the 'First World' at its epicentre. In addition, she criticised Western feminism for being ethnocentric by universalising women's experiences and ignoring the voices of non-Western women (Mills, 1998).

Post-colonial feminists assert that patriarchy, stereotyping and other social, cultural, economic and historic factors perpetuate gender inequality in different aspects of life including that of limiting girls' chances to accessing and continuing their schooling (Loomba, 2005). Barriers to schooling for non-western women gives the priority to western women to take initiatives and lead in the fields that have direct influence on 'Third World women'. Understanding women's local challenges and experiences is crucial for an understanding of national and international experiences and status (McEwan, 2001). However, McEwan's argument considers this understanding from the outsider perspective looking in. In this regard, understanding Berber women's experiences and challenges from a more localised perspective may better assist in understanding these and could be an effective template to measure other marginalised and indigenous women's life realities, and

explain the relationship between their status and the compromise in their participation in formal education.

In this regard, this study unveils the history and culture of domination over women in Berber communities. What it means to be a woman in the Berber community is explored in this research from oral accounts given by schoolgirls, dropped-out schoolgirls, their parents, and from the perspective of NGO staff to explain how cultural and historical stereotyping favours male domination and marginalises females. Feminist and post-colonial theories, therefore, are used in this study as the foundational background for shedding light on gender inequalities that continue to perpetuate in rural Berber communities. These inequalities have subjected Berber women to subordinate positions in their own communities and, even now, influence and curtail Berber girls' schooling. This study has analysed different cultural, historical and social beliefs that still dominate Berber women's lives and shape their position within and without their communities. Moreover, I have discussed the communication relationships that exist within families, the role of parents towards their children's education, and different oppressive contexts that affect women's lives (Racine, 2011). Feminist and post-colonial theories have also enabled me to better understand how structures of power reproduce social divisions in the everyday lives of women (Marchand, 2009; Mirza, 2009), and in my study of non-western women in the context of Berber communities gives a clearer understanding of their lives.

Post-colonial and feminist theories do not provide a framework for analysing Berber community values, nor do they provide a space for analysing girls' agency, freedom and capabilities. Thus, the capability approach is used to complete the selected theoretical frameworks of this study.

4.4 The Capability Approach

The capability approach is a broad normative framework that aims to evaluate and assess various aspects of individuals' well-being and design appropriate policies and proposals about social arrangements and changes in society (Robeyns, 2005). It is a theoretical foundation of the human development paradigm (Fukuda-Parr, 2003; Fukuda-Parr and Kumar, 2003). The capability approach, conceived in the 1980s by the Indian economist and philosopher Amartya Sen and the American philosopher Martha Nussbaum, is an alternative critical approach to welfare economics that focuses on material income, and is an evaluative device for a social cost-benefit analysis of development policies by governments and non-governmental organisations in Third World states (Robeyns, 2005). Amartya Sen (1980,

1984, 1985a, 1985b, 1987, 1990b, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1999a, 2002) often referred to as the father of 'human development', claims that material wealth is important for well-being, but many other components such as education, security, and health, are also necessary for the quality of well-being. According to Sen (1999, 2002), financial income is an essential factor for a good quality of life, yet material wealth is not the only tool of measure to assists researchers to understand the various challenges of life in our society. Therefore, the capability approach emerges as an alternative approach to the development of equality and takes into account human diversity and its contextual circumstances from which equality and well-being can be judged.

'Capability', 'functioning' and 'agency' are the main concepts that the capability approach uses to assess individuals' well-being (Sen, 1999, 2002; Nussbaum, 2011; Robeyns, 2003, 2005). 'Capability' is the opportunity for being or doing what one values or has reason to value. In other words, the quality of a person's life is centered on moving the prevailing barriers that prevent that an individual from achieve his or her desires and to gain freedom to live the lifestyle they have reason to value, whereas functioning is being and doing (Sen, 1999). For example, being nourished, participating in the community, having shelter, access to the labour market, caring for others, having the right to vote and the right to an education (Robeyns, 2003; Sen, 2002). According to Walker (2006 p. 166), functioning depends on "individual circumstances, the relation a person has with others and social conditions and contexts", which means an individual has many needs to operate within this functional range.

In many nations all over the world, women lack support in the fundamental functionings of their lives. They are much less likely than men to be literate, less likely to have access to professional positions and they still lack opportunities to use their imaginative and cognitive faculties. All of these unequal social, political and institutional circumstances form unequal capabilities for human intelligence in women (Nussbaum, 2000). The capability approach thus has enormous potential for addressing feminist concerns which are not reducible simply to forms of financial welfare, such as education, effective participation in political life, freedom from domestic violence and sexual abuse, recognition of women's social status and, importantly, equality between the sexes (Robeyns, 2003). In relation to girls' schooling in the High Atlas Mountains, it is necessary to consider what influences that impede their school progress. Robeyns (2005) argues that it is important to be sensitive to complicated social relations, people's individuality and the nature of the relationships that connect people and enable them to optimise their capabilities. In the same vein, Sen (1992) stresses that understanding human diversity is fundamental to equality, and that diversity, based on race,

age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and geographic location, needs to be considered when analysing marginalised communities generally (Robeyns, 2003; Walker and Unterhalter, 2007).

Closely aligning with the ideas raised by Sen, Walker (2006) believes that social, political and economic arrangements of society are also significant factors that either enable or hinder a person's potential to function effectively and gain the freedom to 'do' or to 'be'. Furthermore, the environment and the nature of the group with which a person lives and engages has important impact on that individuals' aspirations, capability for improvement and well-being in general (Stewart, 2005). Robeyns (2005) considers if economic, political and social environments are unequal, they lead to an imbalance in people's capacity for being able to choose what is worthy in terms of this potential. Therefore, since groups have a crucial role to play in human life capacity and well-being, thus their impact should be taken into consideration when analysing the capabilities to which individuals give value.

The capability approach explains the role of education in developing girls' capabilities and functioning (Nussbaum, 2001). Thus, girls in marginalised communities need to be provided with an education that will develop those capabilities they value to function locally and in the wider context. Many researchers (e.g. Subrahmanian, 2003, 2005; Unterhalter, 2005) have debated that the benefits of education are not restricted to a particular group of people, rather education is beneficial for all. Researchers agree that there is a causal link between education and economic growth, (e.g. Schultz, 1971; Sakamota and Powers, 1995; Sedwal and Kamat, 2008; Chatterjee, 2000; Birdsall, 1993). They argue for augmenting production possibilities; Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2008, p. 479) state "an educated population is a productive population". Tilak (2002) believes that the culmination of productive knowledge and skills that are acquired through education increase an individual's productivity and thereby increases that person's earnings. However, this vision has increasingly blocked out the cultural, social and non-material dimensions of human life; it cannot satisfactorily deal with related issues such as culture, gender, identity, emotions, religion, art, history and social acts (Fine, 2002) if considering education only as a tool for material benefits. Therefore, human capital theory has been criticised by a number of scholars who debate that the first goal of human capital theory is to determine the role of education in influencing economic production and growth while at the same time ignoring its role in influencing social changes and advancing the freedom and well-being of the individual (Sen, 1999 quoted in Saito, 2003).

This is why Sen applies the concepts of 'functionings and capabilities' (Sen, 1995, p. 266) as a way to link achievements and freedoms, such as "the alternative combinations of things a person is able to do or be" (Sen, 1999 p. 75). Furthermore, in order to fully increase the fundamental freedom of the individual to live the life he or she values and improve rational choice, impartial access to adequate education should be available for both girls and boys to enable them to develop informed and rational choices and to increase agency. Sen adds that gender equality in education would be the most influential strategy to achieve human development, create social justice, and in giving opportunities and freedoms to individuals to make their own choices will, in turn, assist the development for the nation. Education promotes benefits including influencing social change, enhancing the freedom and well-being of both the individual and society and improving economic production (Sen, 1999, pp. 293–6). As a significant social good, it is vital that it is distributed fairly to boys and girls.

Although the mentioned theories (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 2009) have been developed in a Western context, all agree about the injustice of inequality in educational opportunity, which makes them especially relevant to educational policy in developing countries. Thus capability approach gives importance to the intrinsic value of education and considers education as a human right, as an opportunity and an entitlement (Tilak, 2002).

4.4.1 Recognising Women as Agents of Development

A) Educating girls to support themselves

Without equality of access to education, a woman is denied a path towards her full potential Somani (2017). Sen (2000, p. 11) emphasizes the intrinsic value of education for girls and women in addition to its instrumental value. For him, education should enable individuals to ''effectively shape their own destinies''. His capability approach calls for providing every individual with the foundations for economic, political and social participation to enable them to develop their capacities to live a life that is of value to them. Education is not only pursued for economic and material incomes alone; rather the benefits of it are more about promoting better health, lowering crime rates, longer life expectancy, and participation in community life. In general, it is the source of decent standards of living. Providing facilities and opportunities for females to have access to education and the opportunity to continue their education is a universal human right and a priority within public policy. Girls' education, as Orji (2011) points out, is one of the most powerful means for reducing girls' vulnerability.

Furthermore, providing formal education equips girls with skills for life and is an instrument for their sustainable development and a tool to contribute meaningfully for themselves personally and for the benefit of their country. On the contrary, girls deprived from the education their male counterparts receive, lose respect within society, miss out on opportunities to achieve their full potential, which deprives them of independence (Baba, 2012). Moreover, Hollander (2001) finds that femininity is usually associated with vulnerability, and cites education as the single most powerful tool of empowerment and protection against their discrimination and domestic and public violation. Thus, Sen (2000, p.11) stresses the fundamental value of education to overcome a male sense of dominance and superiority over girls, emphasising that education allows them to "effectively shape their own destinies" as the appropriate way to allow girls to live with dignity, respect, and protection.

B) Educating girls to support their families

Many researchers (e.g. Subrahmanian, 2003, 2005; Malhotra et al., 2002; Unterhalter, 2005) have debated that the benefits of education are not restricted to a particular group of people but is of benefit for all of society, and when women are educated, the benefits filter down to the next generation. Baker and Stevenson (1986) state that educated mothers are more informed about their children's schooling, they are better able to identify their children's educational strengths and weaknesses and can evaluate their academic performance. Moreover, educated mothers are a strong role models and a source of inspiration for their children, and especially their daughters, because of the mother-daughter bond. Additionally, they are better informed about their children's health and well-being and better equipped to make appropriate choices about medical treatments. Tembon and Fort (2008, p. xviii) report that countries with higher levels of post-primary enrolment for females enjoy health benefits such as lower rates of HIV and AIDS, lower infant mortality rates for their children, and better child nutrition. In Africa, children of educated mothers are 40 % more likely to live beyond the age of five (Summers, 1994). In communities in Nigeria and Niger, where women are better educated, their children have a 50% greater likelihood of receiving immunisations, which raises that generation's chances of a healthier life (Gage et al., 1997). Therefore, within the household, a woman's own level of education impacts on the education and well-being of her children as the primary care-giver, and her awareness of available resources to benefit the well-being of society through her central role in the "intergenerational transmission of knowledge" (Hanushek, 2008, p. 24).

C) Educating girls to support their communities

Development in a country is made by the productive efforts of members of society. Education in general, but of girls in particular, is a potential source of national wealth and development. A UNESCO report in 2010 claimed that, as women constitute half of the world population, their participation could be an effective force in community development. Sen, through his capability approach, suggests that access to adequate education should be available for both girls and boys to enable them to develop their capacities for informed and rational choices and to have increased agency. He adds that gender equality in education is the most influential strategy to achieve human development, and by giving opportunities and freedoms for individual choice, will assist in the development of any nation (Sen, 1999: 293–6). Chavez (2015) explains that education can improve a person's capabilities, which in turn can bring about positive social change. Unterhalter (2005, p.18) believes "the education of women is for others, not for themselves" which explains how girls' limited access to education causes a cycle of reduced development across society and affects subsequent generations.

Increasing educational opportunities for girls in low-income countries has undoubtedly a positive outcome for their communities, their families as well as individual benefits. In other words, knowledgeability and access to education is a valuable capability that enables girls to flourish (e.g. Sen 1999; Nussbaum, 2004; Alkire, 2002: 255-271; Unterhalter 2003b). This capability, enhanced by accessible education, allows girls to grow into women who can expand their opportunities, and be informed beyond the work/education sphere, in situations such as how to leave an abusive marriage, or to gain equal chances to take part in social and political participation (Nussbaum, 2004, pp. 332-333). However, despite theorising, where provision is made for girls' education, it cannot positively impact society if either she is denied the chance to take up this opportunity, or if various social and material factors fail to be addressed regarding education. Thus, the provision of important material facilitators of education include: boarding accommodation, sound infrastructure, transportation, access to school supplies; additionally, the social conditions of safety, freedom, encouragement, equity between genders to receive education and pursue life values, are required.

4.5 Theoretical Convergence

Post-colonial theory, post-colonial feminist theory, and the capability approach were applied as theoretical foundations from which to develop an understanding of the value of education,

in particular for school girls in marginalised communities. This study adopts a combination of the three mentioned theories, based on the understanding that they are complementary since it is not possible to obtain full perspectives regarding participants' viewpoints about the education of this category of girls from one theory alone.

Post-colonial theory examines the impact of colonialism on the colonised states (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 2001). This theory raises questions about domination and resistance in former colonies, and the persistence of global inequality that threatens the continued survival of local cultures and traditions, affected by the imposed industrial culture of the West (Rizvi et al., 2006). Post-colonial feminist theory explains the position of gender through the period of colonialisation, and provides an analysis of its impacts on the social status of women and an understanding of gender inequality in post-colonial nations such as Morocco (Mohanty, 1984). The post-colonial feminist theory also examines the status of women in patriarchal societies in formerly colonised countries, and measures gender inequality among marginalised groups in these countries. Therefore, post-colonial and post-colonial feminist theories have been selected for their commonality in giving a voice to the voiceless in traditionally male-dominated societies and investigates the perspectives of marginalised groups whose cultures and social beliefs control their freedom, agency, and capabilities. These freedoms, according to Nussbaum (2000), are important for every citizen, in all nations, and each is to be treated as an end.

Morocco is one among many African countries that has a long colonial history. When it gained its independence in 1956, the country was unable to sustain itself and had no choice but to continue to look to France for guidance in respect of finance and education. This perpetuated direct indefinite dependence on the former coloniser which affected the country socially and limited the development of its indigenous cultures. According to the World Bank (2016), indigenous peoples comprise one-third of the world's rural poor, totalling 5 % of the global population, who throughout history have been disadvantaged as a result of colonisation. To this day the indigenous Moroccan population remains marginalised and excluded from government policies, health, and education systems (United Nations, 2010).

Rizvi et al., (2006) argue that not only do colonisers reshape the culture and identity of those they colonise, but are themselves, reshaped by their encounter in a range of complicated ways. Post-colonial theory and post-colonial feminist theory do not provide the background for analysing agency of girls and what is valuable in that context, especially in relation to girls' education. Hence why this study has adopted both post-colonial and post-colonial

feminist theories and the capability approach in order to obtain a general understanding of participants' opinions about various socio-cultural and economic barriers that hinder girls' schooling in the rural Berber villages of the High Atlas Mountains.

The chosen theories have, alike, the concepts of 'context' and 'voices' of members of this marginalised group. For instance, post-colonial feminist theory argues the importance of taking into consideration women's local contexts when investigating their life experiences (Mirza, 2009; Mohanty, 1988a). Post-colonial theory also supports this view with the addition that one of the effects of colonialism is inequality of social relations, whereby some ethnic groups and individuals capabilities are treated differently to other ethnic groups and individuals within a nation, as a direct consequence of the influence of colonisation on the local context, and in particular regarding women's experiences. Sen's (1999) capabilities are referenced contextual, and only individuals living within that particular context can identify these capabilities to know what is valuable for them. This means that only Berber girls in rural High Atlas villages can identify the capabilities that they value which would allow them the freedom to choose the life they value to make their experiences meaningful. Thus, for the development and functioning of girls' capabilities, and for the functioning of the community as a whole, it is necessary to take into account the circumstances and context of individuals' lives.

In addition, post-colonial feminist theory analyses gender concerns from the particular to the generic, and connects micro and macro levels of analysis (Khan, et al., 2007). Building upon this, understanding women's status and experiences locally can help to better understand these experiences at national and international levels (McEwan, 2001). Therefore, understanding girls' educational barriers in rural Berber villages of the High Atlas Mountains can be a way to understand lived experiences in other parts of the world, and a study of non-Western women in their own context to give a clearer picture of their lives. For this reason, international education policy agendas such as Education For All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are creating greater awareness of the importance of contextual circumstances that various marginalised groups experience in seeking access to, and continuation of, education.

The second theme under consideration is giving 'voice' to marginalised communities. Women's voices are at the heart of post-colonial feminist theory, which places emphasis on the notion of women being allowed to speak for themselves. Mohanty (1988) and Spivak (1988), two eminent post-colonial feminist scholars who devote their research focus to

defending ‘third world women' since they are perceived as silent, oppressed and with voices heard only in limited contexts. Thus it is necessary to provide space for marginalised women’s voices to be heard representing themselves rather than by western feminists speaking on their behalf. Spivak’s (1988) work *Can the Subaltern Speak?* is a response to various forms of discrimination faced in the dominant patriarchal system and supports women’s rights to a voice for a sense of self. In this regard, post-colonial feminists emphasis giving voice and authority to those whose voices have been silenced and whose experiences are stripped of importance in earlier feminist theories. Post-colonial feminist scholars argue that non-Western women’s voices and experiences have not only been disregarded, but also misrepresented. For this reason, this study attaches importance to ensuring that women and girls who have participated in this research are given freedom to express opinions that are their own and ensure their voices are heard throughout the entire journey from data collection to findings.

Summary

This chapter provides a review of the theoretical frameworks applicable to this study. Post-colonial theory, post-colonial feminist theory, and the capability approach were deemed appropriate for criticism and analysis of barriers to girls’education within a marginalised community context, and the post-effects of colonialism in reshaping the structures of society and perpetuating the challenges that subordinate women in patriarchal systems and hence perpetuate gender inequality.

Chapter Five: Non-Governmental Organisations [NGOs]

5.1 Overview

In order to help readers better understand the role and activities of NGOs, this chapter provides a brief introduction about the origins and developmental growth of NGOs, then presents the NGO selected for this study. This is followed by a discussion of interventions of NGO and state in education and discusses the sustainability of NGO interventions, and the role of NGOs in development. The chapter concludes with a summary.

5.2 What are NGOs?

The term Non-Governmental Organisation [NGO] was created by the United Nations in 1945. At the United Nations, most types of private organisation can be classified as NGOs as long as they are not dependent on the government, do not seek to change or challenge state policies, and are not profit-seeking or criminal organisations (Willets, 2002). Werker and Ahmed (2008, p. 74) define NGOs as:

> *Nongovernmental organisations are one group of players who are active in the efforts of international development and increasing the welfare of poor people in poor countries. NGOs work both independently and alongside bilateral aid agencies from developed countries, private-sector infrastructure operators, self-help associations, and local governments.*

The first presence of non-governmental organisation in Africa occurred during the colonial period. NGOs came in the form of churches and missionary societies as the main providers of education and health services in remote rural settings while the state stood aloof from rural development and focussed on the regulatory functions of law and order (Bratton,1989). In the post-colonial period following the Second World War, many formal and informal organisations spread out throughout Africa (Bratton, 1989; Manji and O'Coill, 2002), and later, into the 1980s and 1990s, both developed and developing countries witnessed an increased number of NGOs whose interventions were not restricted to the provision of education and health services, but also undertook a variety of developmental activities in the area of social life, with the stated aim of reducing poverty and assisting poor communities to sustain their own developmental processes. Non-governmental organisations can be classified according to a number of measures. For instance, Edwards and Hulme (1995) classified NGOs according to their size, Korten (1987) categorised them by their activities, such as charitable relief organisations and service organisations with local community

involvement, whereas Caroll (1992) and Farrington et al., (1993) classified NGOs by their origins, their sectoral focus and their funding.

Non-governmental organisations provide welfare services for the poor in countries the world over, especially in Africa where governments lack the resources to guarantee total national coverage in the vital sectors of education and health. However, the difference between past and present provision is that NGOs are now viewed as the preferred channel for service provision. Edwards and Hulme (1995, p. 6) report: "in the New Policy Agenda, NGOs are seen as a preferred channel for social welfare and this is a fundamental change".

5.3 The Selection of Non-Governmental Organisation for the Study

The process of choosing an NGO to participate in this study had its basis in three main criteria. First, and most important, the willingness of NGO staff to participate in this research study. Secondly, their compatibility with the focus of this particular research, and finally their established presence in the region of Morocco's High Atlas Mountains to be sufficiently informed to be able to provide evaluative data relating to their interventions and effectiveness.

Few girls in rural Berber villages in the High Atlas Mountains have the chance to pursue education beyond the primary level, a fundamental reason being that secondary schools, in the main, are located in towns tens of kilometers away from Berber villages. As families in this region are in the lowest income brackets nationally, they are unable to afford the accommodation costs associated with secondary school education, so a sizeable majority of girls drop out of school after primary school. Education For All (EFA) is a legally-constituted 'association' in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains established to provide the opportunities for girls to continue their studies and to improve gender equality within education provision in Morocco. In 2007, EFA began its work with the opening of the first educational girls' boarding house in the town of Asni, 52 kilometers from Marrakech. It provided accommodation for 36 girls from the High Atlas Mountain villages, giving them an opportunity to extend their education beyond primary level, and providing a safe learning environment away from the home. A few years later, the organisation opened a second boarding house in Talaat n'Yacoub, 100 kilometers from Marrakech, with a third established in Ouirgane, in 2010, 65 kilometers from Marrakech. Since then, EFA has opened two further houses, in 2016 and 2017 respectively, each with a capacity to accommodate 48 girls.

This NGO has not been involved in any phase of the educational policy-making cycle nor in the implementation of education (policy) in Morocco, rather its focus is a particular one, supporting rural Berber girls to gain access to secondary education in the High Atlas region through the means of facilitating boarding house accommodation and in the provision of transport. Additionally, this organisation runs an international volunteering programme which recruits women of different backgrounds and nationalities to share their knowledge and experience with rural girls, aiming to inspire them to take initiatives and give them a chance to discover how women live in other parts of the world. During the past decade this NGO has achieved the following:

Pass rates of 97% of girls in secondary and high school examinations, trust and support of the local community with regard to girls attending secondary education beyond their villages, an improvement in local administration through girls' feedback on performance, a demand for increased places for girls at secondary and high school boarding houses, a growth in girls' confidence and skills in the study of information technology, English as a 4th language, and presentation skills, and an increase in the number of awards gained by girls at college level. Girls reaching university are happy to share their knowledge and skills with local communities and show promise of important community leadership. Now, with the establishment of a community network of graduate Berber women, a generation of educated girls has meant a radically different prospect for their future than there was for their mothers and grandmothers.

5.4 The Relationship between NGO Interventions and State Interventions in Education

Rural education provision in marginalised and patriarchal communities is beset with challenges for school-age girls: problems relate to the infrastructures, provision of schools, boarding accommodation, transportation, challenges within school, and socio-cultural issues, pervasive family attitudes and societal norms pertaining to boys and girls respectively. Investigating factors that promote or impede the education of girls in remote areas involves a discussion of the relationship of interventions between NGOs and the State in respect of educational assistance for girls in marginalised communities to access school and obtain a full education.

The relationship between governments and NGOs in many parts of the world has not been straightforward. According to Mundy (2001), NGOs gained new prominence in the early twenty-first century as educational service providers around parts of the world due to a

number of particular reasons. Since the establishment of a neoliberal agenda in Africa, there has been increase in emphasising NGOs' leads in the roles of service management in the social fields of education and health provision (Arnove and Torres, 2003; Monkman and Stromquist, 2000). This has seen a simultaneous corresponding decrease in the role of state provision of these social services, a role of the centre which has often been criticised for its corruption and incompetence. The neoliberal agenda maintains that NGOs can be more responsive to local, regional and national needs, more flexible and more effective in the delivery of basic social services than can government agencies (Sutton and Arnove, 2004). This argument is clearly demonstrated by the actions of powerful international institutions and militant grassroots agencies preferring to circumvent governments to support services and programmes through NGOs, in the view that they are more efficient and accountable than the state. Similarly, the World Bank, regional development banks and bilateral agencies such as USAID, are able to stretch their capabilities to support the development of schooling systems in the 'developing world' through the spread of agenda and by the impact of globalisation upon education in the Third World (Sutton and Arnove, 2004). This kind of domination and intrusion of NGOs into sensitive domains of education and health is, as Shin and Kubota (2008) bluntly assert, a kind of (neo)colonialism under the umbrella of modernism, signalling the continued existence of colonialism in the globalising world (Robertson, 2003).

The growing prominence of NGOs in the delivery of basic educational programmes around the world raises issues both complex and controversial regarding the relationships they maintain with the state. For example, NGO expansion is seen to erode the legitimacy of the government's authority in the provision of key administrative and financing systems, and in its role as the controller of the objectives, credentials, content, and materials of state schooling (Sutton and Arnove, 2004). Although NGOs are international, national, or regional, they are frequently international in nature, beholden to trustees rather than to the region they provide; such tensions between NGOs and the State show the complexity of this relationship. However, tensions can be resolved when NGOs agree to work within the strictures of government to increase sustainable intervention, by which the NGOs concerned understand and deal empathetically with constraints that face the official system (Edwards and Hulme, 1995). Also, for sustainable development within a country, both government and NGO must prioritise funding in an educational context to create inclusion, quality, safety and gender-equity in the learning environment, to ensure succeeding generations of girls and boys together build an agency of gender equality (Hanchett, 2008).

In Morocco, education is administered by governmental bodies who hold ultimate responsibility for financing education, and are morally, socially and legally required to ensure equality of educational intervention for the entire population. However, since Morocco's independence in the late 1950s there has been failure in education policy to establish far-reaching reforms in the likes of marginalised segments of society in rurally remote enclaves. This failing in social provision necessitated the government to seek to collaborate with NGOs and other social civic bodies to overcome disparities in educational provision in order to reach the more elusive regions and most marginalised communities in the country.

As an example, where the school drop-out rate of education for Moroccan girls was the highest in the country in the Chichaoua district, an education-forming partnership was established with a UNICEF (2017) pilot programme to encourage school girls to continue attending school. In a parallel move, the programme aimed to disseminate the benefits of schooling for families by raising awareness of the importance of daughters' education and gaining parental approval for school provision. With the help of local authorities, families were encouraged to attend information sessions and visit proximal [Dar Taliba] girls' boarding houses to view the provision to allay their fears and encourage their permission for their daughters to attend secondary school. The result was that girls' schooling increased from 35.19 % in the 2016/2017 period to 54.39 % in 2017/2018.

As a move to protect girls from gender-based violence, many vulnerable rural families remove their daughters from school and keep them at home to do domestic work, thus depriving them of an education. So, in order to eradicate this phenomenon, UNICEF Morocco, and the national NGO, INSAF, work in partnership to assist excluded girls and reintegrate them into education. Hanchett (2008) suggests that in order to help girls gain an education in the rural context, the government needs to abolish school fees for low-income families, underwrite costs through the efforts of scholarship, provide bicycle transport for lengthier school journeys, and create micro-enterprise development projects. Such interventions could assist and encourage low-income families to send both boys and girls to school and decrease the incidence of dropping out among girls, especially in the area of secondary education. https://www.unicef.org/.../Morocco_2017_COAR.pdf

5.5 The Implications of Sustainability of NGO Interventions

Non-governmental organisations [NGOs] aim for an active role in local, national and international development efforts, to assist in increasing provision and enhancing well-being in marginalised communities around the world (Werker and Ahmed, 2008). Sustaining the delivery of effective services and programmes is arguably one of the most significant challenges NGOs face nowadays (e.g. Hailey, 2014; Davis, 2013; Lewis, 2003). This section discusses the implications of NGO interventions and their sustainability in maintaining educational attendance, expanding secondary education enrolment, and reducing dropout rates among girls in marginalised rural communities.

Sustainability in the context of NGOs, according to Hailey (2014), means a body is able to perform its missions and objectives over time to meet the needs of key stakeholders, mainly beneficiaries and supporters. The ongoing process involves collaboration amongst financial, social, organisational and strategic parties. For instance, there is sustainability concerning financial feasibility and long-term economic growth; other forms of sustainability are concerned with the environment and deal with issues related to climate change and pollution, while others pertain to intervention sustainability to maintain the quality of a programme or service after a targeted intervention is completed, for example, educational interventions. Hailey (2014) adds that there are different perspectives on sustainability, any analysis of which should acknowledge the diversity of these perspectives as they complement each other, and work in unity rather than in isolation.

There is growing recognition of the importance of NGO interventions to promote change whether locally, regionally, nationally or on an international level. However, the common barriers associated with NGO interventions link to the difficulties in scaling-up and ensuring sustainability (Ulleberg, 2009). Financial sustainability is one such challenge and threatens NGOs' survival and their ability to achieve the desired objectives for social change (Davis, 2013). According to Hailey (2014), financial sustainability is an essential element for the long-term existence and effectiveness of all types of NGO. Lewis (2003, p. 213) defines NGO financial sustainability as the "ability to generate resources from a variety of sources, which will, over time, reduce its dependency on development assistance funds". Thus, to avoid undesirable consequences, it is important to increase financial sustainability and diversify NGO funding, and to secure financial resources from multiple sources. Furthermore, NGO sustainability indicates that the limited capacity of NGOs to plan and make medium to longer-term decisions about operations affects their mission. To avoid this,

Hailey, (2014) suggests setting-up systems and resources that can accurately plan and implement frameworks for managing different types of funding.

Yet sustainability is not only about the ability of NGOs to raise and manage funds, but also about their leadership capabilities, management competencies and a strength of reputation. This means being able to respond strategically and effectively to different external changes and challenges and maintaining strong relationships with both internal and external partners (Hailey, 2014). There are several factors that can assist NGOs to manage change and retain sustainability. Firstly, this can be achieved by building a wide network and maintaining strong personal relationships with key stakeholders, mainly donors, volunteers, staff, and beneficiaries. Secondly, by building a strong reputation of respect by which to enhance the public profile and attract resources through funding. Thirdly, in the adoption of appropriate systems to retain relationships with donors and other associates, and finally, to increase internal capacity and willingness to learn and evolve (Hailey, 2014). Edwards, 1999 (cited in Ahmad, 2006 p. 637) states that "organisational and management theories suggest that NGOs which lack the capacity to learn and iterate, or are dependent for their survival on donors who demand short-term measurable results, are unlikely to be effective in supporting the longer-term social and institutional changes sustainable development demands".

Scaling-up and sustaining NGO interventions can create positive implications in the field of education, especially in the most excluded and marginalised areas in developing countries. Ulleberg (2009) believes that NGOs take on the role of promoter for changes in education. In other words, NGOs working in the education sector are able to influence education policy by both presence and intervention (Miller-Grandvaux et al., 2002). In this regard, securing sustainability for NGO interventions can help to expand enrolments in basic education especially and to reduce drop-out rates among marginalised people who live in diverse and difficult socio-economic and demographic environments that are marginalised from the societal norm (Akyeampong, 2004). The key to successful 'scaling up' can be effected through NGOs working in collaboration with the government. Edwards and Hulme (1992, p.78) point out that "the state remains the ultimate arbiter and determinant of the wider political changes on which development depends, and controls the economic and political frameworks within which people and their organisations have to operate".

Through the research findings presented in the discussion of Chapter 8, most of the participants' responses acknowledged that the NGO interventions in the High Atlas villages was conducive to local girls' needs. This was clearly exemplified through the specific

establishment of educational boarding houses, the provision of transport, academic interventions, those aiming to enhance girls' capabilities and for a change in social norms. The question, however, is how high standard NGO services can be maintained for measurable long-term results. According to (Sobhan, 1997), with their limited financial and management expertise, many local NGOs have to rely on external resources and aid in order to fulfill their goals and missions, and for strong focus on long-term development. While discussing the importance of NGO sustainability, the NGO in question has demonstrated a flexible vision in regard to funding. While their first aim is to continue to keep the current five girls' educational boarding houses running well into the future, upon receipt of any considerably large donations, they will invest in the building of more boarding houses where the need requires to, to meet growing demand for school places for schoolgirls. It is obvious that the experience of such NGO accommodation and the access which it has provided for rural girls to a full education is changing these girls' futures forever. It is also making a marked difference to Moroccan society by empowering Berber women who are the most marginalised social and economic group in Morocco, giving them a voice, the means of action, and influence in professional and public domains.

5.6 The Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in Development

NGOs are perceived to bring proportional benefits with regard to money-saving, helping the needy, involvement in societal matters, and assuring modernisation, while governments, on the other hand, tend to be viewed as entities that are fixated on hierarchy and autocracy (Hudock, 1999; Smillie and Helmich, 1999). Consequently, development in the educational sector can be best enhanced by NGOs' participation in its building process. Funding of the educational sector in African countries depends mainly on benefactors, as many governments are unable to priorities their budgets for the allotment of sufficient resources for this sector. In efforts to reach the neediest, the global community has been looking for the most effective modes of aid allocation. As Rose (2007, p.1) says, "the state has been unable to fulfil its role in extending access of appropriate quality to all children in the context of the Education For All (EFA)", and as such, entities that are not part of the state play important roles as service providers for those who receive insufficient in terms of services.

NGO involvement in development can be seen in sectors including wellness, schooling, farming, manufacturing, civil liberties, gender and environment-related concerns (Lewis, 1998). Their roles or their 'expectations' in developments, Fowler (2000, p.12) believes are multi-faceted and include: (1) effectiveness and efficiency in terms of cost in reaching out

to those individuals in dire need of health care and schooling; (2) the positive influence on society through the work of NGOs; (3) the creation of social and developmental procedures that are geared to people; (4) access to 'leverage' on procedures that regulate progress in terms of societal and developmental objectives, nationwide and globally. NGOs are able to act as ombudsmen for the benefit of the public and can preserve the rights of unprivileged individuals and minority groups; (5) NGOs interact with supporters for the purpose of aid quality assurance; and (7) they keep 'voters' motivated to help with tax distributions for 'aid'. As a result of diminishing state support for the public sector, particularly in terms of health care and education, NGOs have stepped in to compensate for this shortfall in service provision. In terms of developmental spheres, there has been a unanimous agreement that bottom-up activities of NGOs have a relatively considerable benefit vis-à-vis the inefficiencies that certain government bureaux have with respect to the execution and distribution of developmental aid, and to some extent, because they are "closer to the grassroots" (Gary, 1996; Bek et al., 2004).

Many nations have, for decades, voiced concern over the inadequacy of female education provision in third world countries. The World Bank (1995) reported that benefactors, institutionalised and non-institutionalised voluntary organisations placed the education of girls as their top priority. Researchers and consultants have had a seemingly increased devotion to non-governmental organisations in terms of development, which being the case, statistics show that NGO contribution is helping to make minority groups' lives better. A broader contribution of investors for the purpose of ensuring 'Education For All' (EFA) by the date of 2015, was sponsored as a result of the World Education Forum in Dakar, in 2000. The civic society contribution has stressed the end goal aim of accomplishing development across the board. This means that aid distribution benefits both government and non-governmental organisations as well as aid organisations working hand in hand with aid recipients, an effective example of which is the BRAC [Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee]. There is extensive historical information regarding the impact of this large indigenous NGO that has been in charge of offering a non-formal educational service since 1985 (Hashemi et al., 1996).

BRAC's educational support was launched in 1985 "with 22 experimental one-room schools and 726 students and grew to some 34,000 schools by 1999. From 1999 to 2004, the number of BRAC schools increased from 34,000 to 35,500 as enrolment stabilised at just over 1 million students, making BRAC easily one of the largest complementary education models in the world" (Chaboux, 2006, p. 4).

According to Stromquist (2002), NGOs' involvement in community work is remarkable. Their staff members are devoted to their work and are experts in their subject field when it comes to responding to the needs of the local communities they help, and as such, their mediation role is much more efficient than government interventions. NGOs' efficient performance is not an arbitrary outcome, they have to perform well in order to increase the number of benefactors and to respond to the needs of their local communities. According to Mwansa (1995), to gauge NGO involvement in effective case scenarios, it is important to determine how much empowerment they offer the under-privileged sectors that they serve, whether personally, collectively or at a community level. Mwansa further points out that in their attempt to improve circumstances, NGOs have had a tendency to help the underprivileged for the sake of the effective governance of their contribution in development. Moreover, he notices that occasionally NGOs have delivered assistance with elements that do not fall within the public sector's own jurisdiction and have established agendas to respond to issues that are beyond the public sector's framework of support.

NGO contributions to education are multifaceted. Certain NGOs are activists who act as driving forces to push governments to comply with their dedication to 'Education For All' (Mundy and Murphy 2001). Others contribute to the improvement of governmental mandates through plans such as 'school adoption'. While others provide aid for underprivileged individuals, such as in the case for this research involving girls living in rural villages in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco. NGOs are often viewed by governments as individuals who lack professionalism, organisation and comprehension. They are also viewed as interfering 'civilians' who are un-disciplined and intrusive despite being well-intentioned (Mahabir, 1992, p. 81). Governments also view them as troublemakers who cause a lack of harmony between ordinary people and government representatives, by uncovering government flaws and causing confusion regarding government-end goals Shaeffer (1994).

By the same token, governments are viewed through the eye of NGOs as entities lacking in efficiency, who use more than necessary caution and take longer than required to accomplish policies. Government representatives are also viewed as individuals whose input is somehow lacking and limited in terms of technicality and intellectual ability. They are viewed as less dedicated to community work, but more inclined to pursue personal interests. They are often seen as corrupt and prejudiced with regards to their support of the educated and of government officials, and they are thought to be unaware of issues of the community (Clark,

1992). Lastly, they are considered to believe that more frequent legislation and regulation concerning NGOs in the developing world can cripple rather than support their activities.

The reason for these factors can be jealousy, an inability or unwillingness to seek compromise or to clarify both parties' respective responsibilities, their taking of refuge in technical approaches by government and in ideological rhetoric by NGOs, and the superficial implementation of participation in very limited levels of the system (Shaeffer, 1994, p.198). According to Clark (1991), the relationship between NGOs and the state has always been marked by confrontation and opposition. Yet, it is impossible for NGOs to disregard the state completely as they are compelled to work side by side. In other words, both entities are in existence to negotiate between one another for the purpose of a common end-goal. Smillie (1995) also discusses the connection between NGOs and the State, most particularly the governments of developing countries. According to Smillie (1995), the government controls the overall dynamics of NGOs in a variety of forms of conduct, official and unofficial. Unofficially, governments portray NGOs as vital constituents for sustainable development, either through the media or by projecting a seemingly conducive environment that conveys a sense of mutual agreement and cooperation. However, in other official settings, NGOs sustain themselves and evolve according to the regulations, provisions and tax systems wherein they operate. Smillie (1995) also questions the clarity and simplicity of NGO reports and registers of prerequisites. He wonders if there is compromise in foreign commodities or fiscal frameworks as well as whether there exists fairness and consistency in terms of the applied rules and regulations. Smillie adds "Is there a right of appeal?" (1995, p.74).

Summary

Malkia and Hossain (1998) state that NGO-led projects are innovative, flexible, participatory in and reflective of the needs of marginalised people in developing countries. However, NGOs cannot perform all of these roles in isolation because the nature of their relations with governments is important and there need to be effective lines of communication between them to reach effective results. On the other hand, some argue that governments need to integrate the added value of innovations into their policies and practices and encourage the participation of NGOs in their policy-making and change.

Chapter Six: Methodology and Research Design

6.1 Overview

This chapter considers the place of my methodology in this study and covers five sections. The first section presents the aim and research questions, the research design and instruments. In the second section, I summarise the pre-pilot and the pilot study, which were undertaken prior to conducting the interviews for the main study, and I discuss how these informed subsequent methodological decisions. The third section provides details of how the research was conducted: participant recruitment, introducing research participants, my relationship with the participants, notes on recording methods, transcription, issues with translation and field notes. The fourth section provides details of data generation, the analysis process and ethical considerations. The chapter concludes with notes on trustworthiness criteria and some qualitative research limitations.

6.2 Aim and Research Questions

This study aimed to investigate the perceptions, attitudes, experiences and views of seven NGO staff, six female learners, six dropped-out schoolgirls, and eighteen parents of female learners and dropped-out schoolgirls concerning the main barriers to girls completing their education in rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains. In addition, this study examines the participants' perceptions towards the role of one NGO who works in these villages to reduce these barriers and to assist girls to complete their education. Semi-structured interviews were used as the main tool to collect data, and field notes were used as a source to provide insight into the happenings in these villages to 'get inside' of the world of the participants' lives. As an exploratory study, this project is built on two main research questions and associated sub-questions, namely:

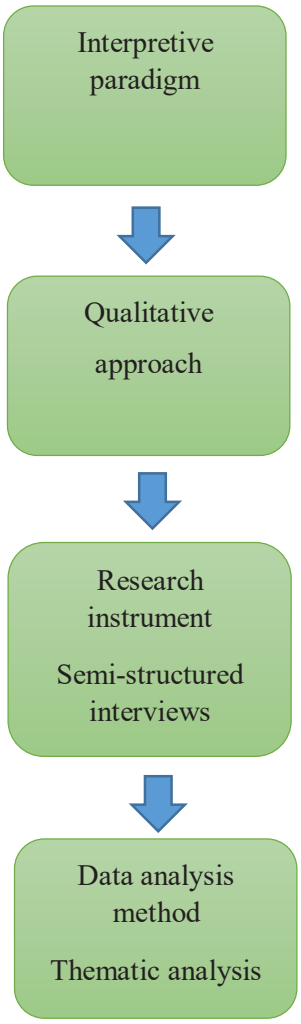
Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of the female learners, dropped-out schoolgirls, parents of female learners and dropped-out schoolgirls, and NGO members regarding the main barriers to girls completing their education in rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains?

a) What are the barriers to girls completing their education?
b) What has caused these barriers to the completion of their education?

Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of the female learners, dropped-out schoolgirls, parents of female learners and dropped-out schoolgirls, and NGO members with regard to the interventions of an NGO in rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains to reduce these barriers?

a) *What actions have been taken by this NGO?*
b) *What is the effectiveness of this NGO's efforts to reduce girls' educational barriers?*

Due to the exploratory nature of the research questions, this study has adopted a qualitative approach located within the interpretive paradigm. Nelson et al., (1992, p. 2) state that "the choice of research practices depends upon the questions that are asked and the questions depend on their context". The main instruments used for data collection were semi-structured interviews to understand the perceptions and views of the research participants and to identify the main themes and sub-themes uncovered from the data analysis. The approach adopted is shown below in Figure 6.1: Methodological Framework.



6.3 Research Paradigm

Researchers need to identify their own assumptions about social reality, determine what the world in which they live is like (ontology) and the nature, purpose, and theories of knowledge (epistemology) before determining suitable methods for their investigation (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). This research study is located within an interpretive paradigm. The term paradigm has been identified differently by a number of researchers. According to MacNaughton et al., (2001) a research paradigm contains three parts (1) the nature of knowledge; (2) a methodology and (3) criteria for validity. Whereas, Neuman (2000) and Cresswell (2003) refer to the paradigm as epistemology, ontology, or research methodology. Bassey (1999, p. 12) offers the following definition:

> *A network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and the function of researchers which, adhered to by a group of researchers, conditions the patterns of their thinking and underpins their research actions.*

According to Bryman (2012), interpretive paradigms are based on the principle that the world should not be viewed as an objective reality, but rather must be seen and understood in terms of subjective interpretations of human experiences, actions, attitudes and behaviours. Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 3) add that this method of inquiry "involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world". Furthermore, the use of interpretivist ontology gives the researcher the opportunity to explore phenomena in their natural surroundings and interpret phenomena according to the meanings people bring through the lens of their present reality and their own experience (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). By adopting this research approach, this study agrees that social reality is based on interaction, reflection, action and interpretation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Bryman and Cramer, 2004), that is to say 'the world of human experience' (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p. 24). Consistent with Cohen and Manion's viewpoint, Creswell (2003) and Yanow and Schwartz-Shea (2011) highlight that interpretivist researchers discover reality through their participants' views, experiences, and their own background. Thus, the participants in this study are the producers of knowledge through my interactions with them. Also, by adopting this method, I was not restricted to conducting my interviews in a specific order; rather I had more freedom to move from one question to another. The features of the interpretive paradigm can be summed up in the following points:

1) The researcher is the first and main instrument in data collection (Merriam, 1998)

2) The collected data is expressed by the research participants' own words through their own experiences and beliefs (Holstein and Gubrium, 2013; Merriam, 1998)

3) The research focus and outcomes are mainly about 'the myriad hows and whats of everyday life'. (Holstein and Gubrium, 2013, p. 266).

6.4 Rationale of Qualitative Approach

In social science, many considerations go into deciding upon the most appropriate approach to use for data collection. In this research, a qualitative approach was selected due to the nature of the research aim and research questions. This study is first and foremost a study of 'social reality' and its aim is to investigate perceptions, feelings, attitudes, and experiences of my participants in regard to what is fundamental in their lives. Bryman (1988, p. 8) points out that "the way in which people being studied understand and interpret their social reality is one of the central motifs of qualitative research". Della Porta and Keating (2008, p. 26) add that "qualitative research aims at understanding events by discovering the meanings human beings attribute to their behaviour and the external world. The focus is not on discovering laws about causal relationships between variables, but on understanding human nature, including the diversity of societies and cultures". Furthermore, qualitative research means "any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 17); rather qualitative research produces findings arrived from real-world settings where the "phenomenon of interest unfolds naturally" (Patton, 2002, p. 39).

Unlike quantitative researchers who seek to obtain exact, precise, measurable, objective and valid results, qualitative researchers, by contrast, seek to understand, explore and collect data in a verbal and pictorial form (Devetak et al., 2010). A qualitative approach is an inductive, constructivist and interpretative exploratory approach that describes and takes into account the context where the study takes place to present a completed image of the study. Also, the qualitative approach emphasises the process and not only the final results (Bryman and Cramer, 2004). Consistent with their view, Merriam (1998, p. 45) adds that "qualitative research is designed to inductively build, rather than to test, concepts, hypothesis, and theories". However, it is worth mentioning that selecting a qualitative approach does not necessary avoid quantification whilst analysing the results obtained. Hammersley (1992, p.163) clarifies this as the decisions relevant to the levels of meticulousness are to be made based on what is being described and ''not on ideological commitment to one

methodological paradigm or another''. Thus, the chapters on analysis and discussion will contain phrases such as 'a few of them' 'many of them', 'only one', 'five participants', 'all participants', 'five out of six' 'a large number' etc. in places where a fixed description is needed. Thus, in relation to this research study and in order to gain a deep understanding of the participants' perceptions concerning the main barriers to girls from completing their education, and their attitudes towards an NGO interventions in rural villages of the Atlas villages, I adopted a qualitative approach to focus on the participants' meanings and experiences that they verbally described.

6.5 Research Instruments

6.5.1 Interviews

According to Bryman (2012), interviews are the most widely employed qualitative research instrument. In this study, interviewing was chosen for direct interaction with my participants, to gain an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, and to know directly the characteristics of my participants. Moreover, as interviewing is a way to give the informants freedom to express their thoughts, they are able to tell their own experiences in their own words. McNamara (1999) states that interviews are particularly useful as they may unearth data around the topic by constructing meaning from participants' lived experiences. In addition, interviewing, as Reinharz (1992, p. 19) points out, usually includes opportunities for clarification and discussion, which are excluded through other methods. This feature of interviewing allowed me to ask my participants for fuller details and for clarification if their answer was vague or unclear. Furthermore, "interviewing offers researchers an access to people's ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher". It is a "conversation with a purpose" Mason (2002, p. 67).

There are practical dimensions that influenced my decision to choose to use interviews as the main data collection instrument. Firstly, as illiteracy among parents was one of the reasons behind choosing semi-structured interviews to collect the data, I could not approach female learners and dropped-out schoolgirls' parents with a survey or questionnaire where they would be required to read and write their responses. Interviews can often succeed with participants who have language difficulties with writing or reading. Secondly, interviews provide a more informed way of claiming knowledge than a questionnaire can provide in order to answer the research questions (Coleman and Briggs, 2002). Thirdly, while interviewing, I had the freedom to ask questions in a format that was applicable and relevant to the situation and allowed flexibility of phrasing. Fourthly, the nature of this research study

is exploratory, first and foremost. It aims to investigate a social issue that could not be approached numerically. Therefore, interviews were deemed the most appropriate data collection tool.

6.5.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Gaining a first-hand sense of the participants' perceptions of the main barriers girls face that prevent them from completing their education, and their attitudes towards the NGO interventions to reduce these barriers, this research project chose face-to-face semi-structured interviews as the main tool to collect the data. As a definition, interviews can be placed on a scale of structure, from 'unstructured', 'semi-structured' to highly 'structured' interviews (Bryman, 2001). However, unstructured and semi-structured interviews are the common types in qualitative research.

For this study, semi-structured interviews were considered most suitable to collect the data as they give "free interaction between me and my participants, exploring 'participants' views of reality" (Reinharz, 1992, p.18). This kind of interviews also collect detailed information in a style that is somewhat conversational by allowing the participants to talk about the issues relevant to themselves with appropriate probes in following a prepared interview schedule. Importantly, the format of the questions in semi-structured interviews is mainly open-ended, which allows the interviewer to ask the interviewees to elaborate and clarify their responses by using a set of 'prompts' and 'probes' Robson (2002). Doing so, the probing I used was for two reasons; firstly for clarity, and secondly for completeness of answer and for additional information. Kajornboon, (2005) believes that experience of interviewing is an essential element in the interview process. Following this advice, I tried to use some of the following expressions to seek more details from the interviewees, as follows:

- You mentioned …, can you tell me more about that?
- You talked about …, can you describe a specific example?
- You said that ..., can you tell me why?
- What do you mean by this?
- Could you please give me some examples?

Unlike semi-structured interviews, in the employment of unstructured interviews the researcher has a clear plan, but with minimum control over how respondents will answer. As a result, the conversation may drift away from the topic. For example, the question "what do you do?" can go in one of many directions, and will vary according to the respondent. If the interviewer exerts little control over the discussion or the follow-up or additional questions based on the topics that the respondent brings up, the session becomes relatively

free-flowing. Not surprisingly, gathering information in this manner [unstructured interview] though it may lead to very rich and nuanced data, it can take a long time to extract the information required and be suitably employed only when researchers have a great deal of time to spend with the community they are studying, which was not the case in this study. Whereas, the structured interview is based on a questionnaire with a sequence of questions, asked in the same order and uniformity to all research subjects, with little flexibility on the part of the researcher. By and large, interviewing is not merely a data collection exercise, but an interpersonal social encounter where the interviewer should be natural and respectful of the individual and culture of those being interviewed (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2008). Therefore, the benefits of semi-structured interviews can be summarized in the following: easily manageable, allows for the development of rapport and gives participants the chance and space to consider, speak and be heard (Smith et al., 2009 p. 57).

6.5.3 The Language (s) of Interviews

For better understanding participants' viewpoints, it was important to let them adopt language which can express their perceived identities to the best of their ability. Luna et al., (2008) indicate that due to the relationship between language, emotions, and cognition the same question can illicit different answers depending in which language the question was asked. Therefore, while interviewing, the main priority for me was to give my participants the freedom to choose their language for the interview and allow them to express their thoughts and feelings openly without the worry of translating their ideas. The linguistic repertoires of the participants included colloquial Moroccan Arabic [darija], Standard Arabic, English and the Tachelhit dialect. As mentioned in previous Chapters, there were four participant groups in this research (1) female learners; (2) dropped-out school girls; (3) parents of learners and dropped-outs, and (4) NGO staff. With the first and second group, the interviews were conducted in both colloquial Moroccan Arabic [darija] and Standard Arabic. The third group was interviewed in Arabic, but their answers were in Tachelhit (for which their daughters were present to translate the interview questions). The fourth group was interviewed in both colloquial Moroccan Arabic [darija] and English because it was conducted with Moroccan and non-Moroccan NGO staff. Whilst being interviewed, one NGO staff who was a bilingual speaker (Arabic/English) preferred to participate in the interview in English stating that English was her professional language and that with English she could easily communicate her thoughts and express herself.

Moreover, conducting the interview in English, as she said, was helpful to me in the sense of saving time with the translation process. Another example of a female student who preferred to be interviewed in English instead of Arabic, because even though Arabic was her native language, she stated that her communication skills in English allowed her to express her thoughts in a comprehensive way. Zahra's passion to learn English assisted her greatly to respond to the interview in English and inform the data. Zahra code-switched to Arabic whenever she was stuck for a word or whenever she felt the need to emphasise specific points relating to her own experience in primary school, or relating to a particular event. Whilst doing so, her tone of voice changed with her language, expressive of emotion and feeling. As Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (2015) believes, emotions are expressed differently in different languages and across different cultures. The following quote from Zahra provides an explanation about why she preferred to speak in English:

> *Yes, this is my chance. I have always been interested to speak English because it is the main door to communicate with other people and to share with them my ideas and stories. I am lucky enough because I have learnt English not only on school but also in this boarding house where all female students have extra hours in English. For me, this is a challenge and a way to say thank you to our English tutor [Zahra female learner, English face-to-face interview]*

There were pros and cons in this study to the variety of language(s) and dialect of the interviews as this constituted both an opportunity and a challenge. Although the interviewees were deemed to be most comfortable conversing in their native language (Arabic, Tachelhit, and English) this flexibility, however, posed challenges which I dealt with during the transcription, translation, and analysis stages.

6.5.4 Interview Questions

The interview questions for the main study were finalised after detailed piloting and semi-structured interview schedules were developed, with a list of questions for each participant group [Appendix: H, I, J, K, L Interview Questions]. There were also probes set to help respondents answer the questions in case they did not understand or need further clarification of questions. It is worth mentioning that probes and follow-up questions give interviewers some flexibility in dealing with particularly complex questions. For example, when asking questions about the participants' perceptions about the role of the NGO to reduce barriers to girls' education, most parents needed clarification of the question. In addition, answering questions like "what has been done by this NGO", and "the effectiveness of the NGO interventions to overcome these barriers" was not easy and the majority of the participants

needed me to explain these questions. I told them that, based on the research questions and the main purpose of this project, I was interested in knowing what kinds of changes had been taking place since this NGO first came to these villages, and had this NGO's efforts succeeded in reducing any barriers in assisting rural girls to continue their education. At this early stage, my role was not only as a researcher but also as a facilitator and monitor in keeping the interviews informal and easy.

The interview questions I asked were somewhat different between one group to another. As mentioned previously, there were five participant groups in this research, therefore it was necessary to frame and structure the interview questions according to the research questions and the participants' position within this study. For example, the NGO's interview questions were related to the participants' role in this organisation such as "what motivated them to work in this organization" and "their future agenda concerning girls' education in these rural villages".

6.5.5 The Order of the Interview Questions

Since the majority of my participants were being interviewed for the first time in their lives, I considered whether it would be better to follow a logical progression based upon the objectives of the research or ask questions in a random order. According to Kumar (2014, p. 191), "the order of questions in a questionnaire or in an interview schedule is important as it affects the quality of information, and the interest and even willingness of a respondent to participate in a study". Between the two options, I chose to ask questions following a logical progression because it was deemed an appropriate way to gradually introduce the participants to the themes of the study and move from simple questions (introduction and warming up) to main questions that aimed to answer the research questions of the study. This choice assisted the participants to become familiar with the nature of the meeting [academic interview] and answer the remaining interview questions with confidence.

6.6 The Pre-Pilot Study

Before I planned the pilot study, I considered it appropriate to conduct a pre-pilot to discover what would be the best approach to my research. On October 2014, I contacted one member of NGO staff by email for an informal conversation about the role of the organisation and its activities. The meeting was in a Moroccan city, about 60 kilometres from the High Atlas Mountains. During our meeting, I asked the NGO staff member about the history of the organisation, its mission, the rationale behind choosing the High Atlas villages to conduct

activities, the different obstacles and challenges the organisation faced at its inception, and the relationship of the NGO organisation with the Berber village communities. Our conversation was spontaneous and we both had a chance to exchange unstructured questions related to this research. In addition, the NGO staff member showed a great deal of interest to take part in this study with this being the first study of its kind in this region of Morocco, and the first study to investigate the role and interventions of this NGO. The meeting lasted an hour and a half and took place at her Moroccan Riad*. My intention behind the pre-pilot was to know more about this NGO, the conditions of girls' schooling in the High Atlas villages with whom she integrated, how I could gain access to participants, and how I could reach their villages. In light of this feasibility study, I came up with a clear plan for my pilot study, which later assisted in the development of the main study.

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*Riad is the traditional Moroccan house, normally with two or more storeys around an Andalusian-style courtyard that contains a fountain in the centre.

6.7 The Pilot Study

According to Leon et al., (2011), the main purpose of conducting a pilot study is to examine the feasibility of the intended approach a researcher wishes to use in the main study. The term 'pilot study' refers to "a small scale test of the methods and procedures to be used on a large scale…" (Porta, 2008 cited in Hazzi and Maldaon, 2015, p. 53). The pilot study is considered to be an essential part of a successful study design (Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2002). It is the first step the researcher has to take to test the research instruments, techniques and methods to be applied in the main study. The pilot study helps the researcher to determine a suitable mode of research to save some time, effort and money which can be lost if a main research study fails because of unforeseen elements or outcomes.

Furthermore, the pilot study was planned to examine the interview questions which were designed according to the research question: "w*hat are the perceptions of the female learners, their parents and NGO staff concerning the NGO interventions to support girls' education in three rural villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains'*. In October 2015, during a period of two weeks, I conducted interviews with eleven participants from four villages in the High Atlas Mountains and one in the city. Table 6.2 summarises the pilot study's participants and locations.

locations participants	Village 1	Village 2	Village 3	Village 4	City
Female learners	1	1	1		
Learners' parents	2	2	2		
NGO staff				1	1

Table 6.2 pilot study's participants and locations

The informal conversation which I had with one NGO staff member during the pre-pilot gave an indication about how best to reach my participants, routes and transportation to reach the High Atlas villages and costs. I was based in accommodation in the city from where, for two weeks, I commuted to the High Atlas villages to conduct the interviews with the selected participants according to their availability. Eleven semi-structured interviews for the pilot study were conducted with three female students, three fathers, three mothers and two NGO staff. The female learners were in their final year of high school aged between 17 and 18, and from three different villages, but they were all living in the same NGO boarding house in Asni town. Their fathers were farmers and their mothers were housewives. The interview questions sought to examine the participants' perceptions concerning the interventions of one NGO to support girls' education. The interviews with the NGO staff and female learners were between 30 and 40 minutes duration and one hour with their parents. While interviewing parents, their daughters were present to translate the interview questions from Arabic to Tachelhit, and to translate their parents' responses from Tachelhit into Arabic, and to sign the consent forms on their behalf. The interviews were recorded after obtaining written consent from the participants, and the interview questions were prepared according to each participant group.

6.7.1 Building Rapport with Participants

Karnieli-Miller et al., (2009) believe that the quantity and quality of the data shared with the researcher depends in part on the development of the relationship between the researcher and her/his participants. Before I started my interviews, time was given to building rapport with my participants and creating "a feeling of empathy for informants" that enables "people [to] open up about their feelings" (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998 cited in Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009 p. 281). Upon meeting, I introduced myself and my background, stated where I had studied in Morocco, why I had moved to the UK to study, my research interests, the purpose of this study, and why I was interested in investigating such a topic as this, all of which

background information was given in order to gain my participants' trust. Also, I explained to them that the purpose of this study was purely for academic reasons and not for business or financial gain and that their identities would be confidential and nobody would have access to the collected data other than me [more details in the consent forms Appendix: D and E]. All participants agreed to use the tape recorder and showed great interest in taking part in this project as they considered 'girls' education' one of the most problematic issues in their community. They believed it was time to expose the barriers that prevent girls from completing their schooling.

6.7.2 Piloting the Interview Questions

The necessity of piloting interviews was inspired by Bryman (2001) who emphasised the need to pilot the interview questions, saying that piloting can provide investigators with further knowledge and create a greater sense of confidence. For this study, the main objective of piloting was to find out whether or not the semi-structured interview question techniques I had prepared were free from ambiguity and were straightforward enough to be adopted for the main study, following Dörnyei's advice that open-ended questions should be piloted in advance (Dörnyei, 2007). Before commencing the data collection, Ethics Committee procedures were followed. The ethics audit form was filled in and approved in order to ensure that this research complied with the Ethical procedures of the University of York. Three interview schedules were designed according to the following categories: interview schedule for NGO staff, female learners and female learners' parents [Appendix M: interview questions for the pilot study]. When interviewing, I used tape recording after obtaining the participants' permission to avoid any loss of data. Furthermore, I regularly checked the tape-recorder during the interviews for functionality and recording quality, and back-up equipment in case of any eventuality with the recording equipment during the interview.

a) Piloting NGO's interview questions

The first interviews were conducted with 2 NGO staff, one based in a village in the High Atlas Mountains and the second based in the city. The two NGO staff were contacted via email to check for their availability. Prior to the commencement of their interviews, each was handed a brief note outlining the objectives of the study along with the consent form they were required to complete to indicate their willingness to take part in the pilot study [Appendix D and E: consent forms]. For NGO staff, the interview questions schedule contains four parts: the first 2 questions were designed as an introduction to gain general

background knowledge about them. Question 3 was about the obstacles and barriers that hinder their interventions in the High Atlas villages. Questions 4, 5 and 6 were about their relationships with the Berber communities, female learners and learners' parents. Questions 7, 8 and 9 were designed to investigate their perspectives towards girls' education in the rural villages of the High Atlas Mountains and their role to support girls to complete their education. The interviews were conducted in both Arabic and English depending on which was the staff member's native tongue. I concluded the interview by asking the respondents if they had questions, comments or suggestions concerning this project.

As Kumar (2014) states, the purpose of the pilot study is not to collect data but to identify problems and to test the instruments before using them for actual data collection in the main study. Therefore, I was keen to test each question's feasibility and see how it prompted understanding and responses from my participants. Questions 1, 2 and 10 prompted straightforward ease of answering. Whereas, questions like "*can you describe your relationship with the Berber communities in these villages in relation to your work?"* I realised that questions like this required more thought before an answer because the question did not specify whether it pertained to their personal relationship or their relationship concerning their activities in the Berber communities. As my role was not only a researcher but also a facilitator and I was monitoring the interviews to keep respondents and the mood relaxed, I altered the question to make it more readily understood. For example, the question "*what are the key obstacles and challenges that you are facing?"* was about determining the obstacles and barriers this NGO face in its mission in the High Atlas villages. However, the interviewees gave answers about the obstacles and barriers that young girls face to complete their schooling. From the answers offered, I observed that investigating "girls' education barriers" was emerging as an important element that could be added to my research questions.

b) Piloting female learners' interview questions

The second group to be interviewed were three female learners aged between 17 and 18 from three villages in the High Atlas Mountains, living in one NGO boarding house. Before I commenced my interviews, I spent time with the respondents discussing education in rural villages, about my own primary, secondary and high school education in Imouzzer Kander in the Middle Atlas, which shares some features with the High Atlas Mountains. I also discussed my undergraduate study in Morocco and told them how and why I moved to pursue my MA and PhD in the UK. I realised that talking about my own educational experiences in Morocco and the UK interested them and provoked many questions about how I coped with

different cultures and the level of education in the UK and other topics related to my daily life. This was a successful start and gave my respondents a sense of trust. As Silverman (2006) observes, researchers can relate their own experiences of the phenomenon under investigation as a tool to build rapport and ensure trust. For Fontana and Frey (2000) such behavioural attitudes should connect and engage with the language and culture of the respondents in a way that helps to gain a level of trust.

The interview design for female learners comprised three sections. The first 4 questions were introductory to give female students a chance to become familiar with the nature of our meeting and to build their confidence in me. Also, through these questions, I hoped to be able to identify relevant detail that could help to restructure the eventual interview questions. The following 6 questions were designed to gauge respondents' perceptions towards the NGO interventions to support girls' education in these villages. The final 2 questions were designed to determine, according to their experiences, what kinds of relationship exist between this NGO, the Berber communities and their families. I concluded the interview by asking for any further details they wished to add concerning this study and any other questions, remarks or suggestions.

Questions like "*can you tell me what you know about NGOs?" "how can you describe your relationship with the staff of this NGO?"* were a bit difficult to understand. I realised that asking questions about the definition of 'NGO' was not easy to answer. Piloting female students' interview questions helped me to be more precise and ask clear questions. I also had a chance to test myself before conducting the main study. While interviewing female students, each one was interested in talking about the various barriers in their villages that young girls face and prevent them from completing their schooling. After that I realised that changes were necessary to both the interview questions and the research questions.

c) Piloting interview questions of parents of female learners

The third group I interviewed was parents of female learners. These interviews were conducted with the parents and with their daughters present to translate the interview questions from Arabic into Tachelhit and their responses from Tachelhit into Arabic. The female learners were given consent forms to sign signalling their agreement to participate, and consent forms on behalf of their parents who were illiterate [Appendix F and G: consent form for daughters]. As mentioned earlier, building rapport with respondents was a particularly important element to obtain rich data (Fowler and Mangione, 1990). Silverman (2006) suggests that in qualitative interviews the researcher has to pay attention to the culture

and the environment in which the respondent is located, with advice to be polite, display courtesy and facilitate talk without judgment or critical opinion in order to establish trust. Taking Silverman's (2006) advice into consideration, I was cautious while dealing with female students' parents because their culture as Berbers differs from mine and I did not want to miss any important details which could be important for this research. Thus, I was careful in my choice of Berber words for greetings and thanks. As with other participants and prior to the interviews, I aimed to build rapport with the parents for mutual contributing. My origins in the Middle Atlas region of Morocco helped me engage with learners' parents because the majority of the habitants in the Middle Atlas region are Berbers and they have similar cultures and traditions. In general, 'frank and open discussion' (Goudy and Potter, 1975) was the strategy I followed with my participants.

The interview schedule with learners' parents was divided into three parts. The first interview question was an introductory one to get to know about them. The following 5 questions were about their perceptions of the NGO interventions to support girls' education in their villages. The final question was an invitation to voice their concerns, ask questions, and make comments and suggestions relative to this research project. During my interview I found that questions such as "*how would you describe your communication with the NGO staff?"* were hard for respondents to formulate an answer to. Also, the following open-ended question "*can you tell me what you know about NGO?"* were met with confusion as they were not able to provide an answer. However, they were keen to talk about the difficulties their daughters faced in order to continue their schooling and how the absence of any kind of government support resulted in an increase in the rate of females in their villages dropping out of school. Therefore, after piloting the interview questions, some research questions and interview questions were modified.

Briefly, the pilot research question poses the following:

What are the perceptions of the female learners, their parents, and NGO members concerning the intervention of an NGO to support girls' education in rural villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains?

However, based on the pilot study results, some modifications took place and the main research questions ask:

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of the female learners, dropped-out schoolgirls, parents of learners and dropped-out schoolgirls and NGO members concerning the main barriers to girls' education in rural Berber villages of Morocco's High Atlas Mountains?

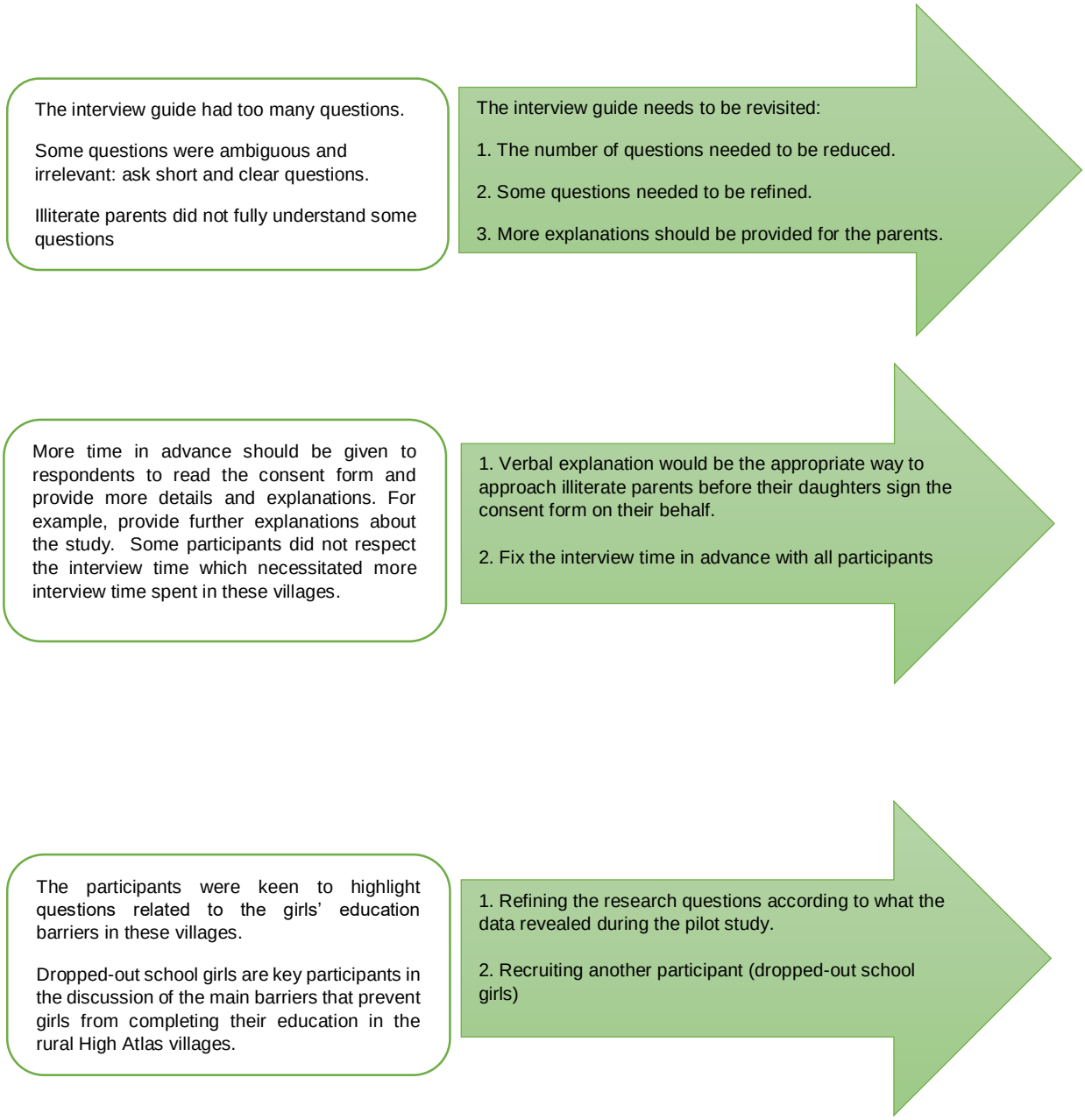
a) What are these barriers to completing their education?

b) What has caused these barriers to completing their education?

Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of the female learners, dropped-out schoolgirls, parents of learners and dropped-out schoolgirls and NGO members concerning an NGO interventions in rural Berber villages of Morocco's High Atlas Mountains to reduce these barriers?

a) What has been done by this NGO?
b) What is the effectiveness of this NGO's efforts to reduce girls' barriers to education?

Figure: 6.3 summary of some aspects of the semi-structured pilot (white) and the decisions that were made accordingly (green)



Points to check after piloting

After I finished the pilot study, I asked myself the following questions:

- Did each question prompt the data I was asking for, or did I need to change the question format?
- Was the wording understood by all participant groups?
- Did I create a positive impression that would motivated the participants to take part again another time?
- Was the time I spent with the participants sufficient to fully answer all research questions?

6.8 Participant Recruitment for the Main Study

Recruiting participants is a challenge faced by many social science researchers. In this study, the research participants were recruited following Creswell's (1994, p. 148) formation guidelines: "the idea of qualitative research is to purposefully select informants (or documents or visual material) that will best answer the research question". The purpose of purposeful sampling according to Patton (1990, p. 169) is "to select information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study". Therefore, the strategy adopted during the participants' recruitment stage was purposive sampling.

The total number of female learners who were living in one NGO boarding house was 36, aged between 17 and 18. Six of these 36 learners, their parents and 7 NGO staff took part in this study. Concerning the dropped-out schoolgirls, I was flexible about the potential number of respondents among the dropped-out schoolgirls in the villages where I conducted my research because there were no official statistics or local sources relating to this information.

During the recruitment stage for the main study, I applied purposive sampling for the selection of respondents by following Fetterman's (1998) template and decided to first of all set boundaries of exclusion from among potential participants instead of who to include. I ruled out anyone who was not completely eager and willing to be interviewed, and participants from the following groups were excluded.

(1) Female learners and dropped-outs schoolgirls who were under 17;
(2) Parents who had been living away from the villages for over a year; and
(3) NGO staff whose work positions has no relation with the research study (cleaners, gardeners and drivers).

From the three criteria selected, the first criterion excludes female learners and dropped-out school girls aged under 17 because of their limited knowledge in relation to NGO's interventions. The second criterion excluded parents who had been living away from the

villages for over a year because they would not be adequately informed about things that would enrich the data, such as the latest activities of this NGO. The third criterion invited only NGO staff whose position bore direct relation to the study under investigation, excluding those who could not provide 'fruitful' information. This was following Patton's (2002, p. 46) advice for in-depth understanding by selecting "those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research". Morse (1991, p 129) adds that "when obtaining a purposeful (or theoretical) sample the researcher selects participants according to needs of the study", as Patton (1990, p. 169) calls it, "information-rich cases".

The recruitment process followed several techniques. With regard to female students' recruitment, I sent a letter of invitation in Arabic to an NGO staff member who was responsible for running one NGO boarding house in one High Atlas towns where female learners were living, stating the required criteria and asking her to hand round the invitation letter to female students inviting them to take part in this study. The invitation letter made clear that female learners were not obliged to participate but their cooperation would be appreciated. One week later I received a list of female participants who agreed to take part in this study along with their parents. In recruiting the NGO staff, I followed the same technique by sending an invitation email to the key staff in this organisation whose position was directly link with the project under investigation.

In the recruitment of dropped-out schoolgirls for the research, I used the snowball technique by asking female students who had volunteered to participate to invite their friends or neighbours who had likewise dropped out from school in their villages. This followed Bryman's (2004, p. 100) advice, "the researcher makes initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses these to establish contact with others". I used the snowball sampling method to access the dropped-out schoolgirls because of the difficulty otherwise to reach this sample. Bergeron and Senn (1998) point out that in order to access 'hard to reach' or 'sensitive' populations, a researcher can employ individuals' social networks. In other words, the snowball sampling method was the most feasible technique to enable me to gain access to this hidden population of dropped-out schoolgirls. Female students were asked to recruit dropped-out schoolgirls because they shared similar characteristics to the potential target group of dropped-out schoolgirls: age, attitudes towards girls' schooling, and from the same rural villages (Faugier and Sargeant, 1997). As Spreen (1992) points out, this sample is designed to ask participants to invite other persons to take part in the study according to the researcher's specifically determined

criteria. For instance, female students and dropped-out schoolgirls share characteristics i.e. they are similar ages, they may have attended the same primary, secondary or high school before dropping out, they may still retain friendship relations since living in the same villages. Therefore, I determined that female students were the appropriate participants to engage dropped-out schoolgirls. This was because random selecting is not an appropriate strategy for a purposeful sample for qualitative research, and this was the only effective way of reaching dropped-out schoolgirls, very much hidden and therefore 'difficult to reach', and highly unlikely to be included in a randomly obtained sample in the rural High Atlas villages. Another barrier for research is the lack of official statistical data about the drop-out rates among school girls in this area and a lack of local authority representation of the Ministry of Education in the High Atlas villages from where helpful information and documents could be obtained.

The participants' recruitment in this research was entirely voluntary, and the number of participants totalled thirty-seven. This including: six female students, six dropped-out schoolgirls, eighteen parents of learners and dropped-outs schoolgirls, and seven NGO staff, and most of the interviews were conducted in the High Atlas villages, two in one Moroccan city and one interview via email because this NGO staff was not in Morocco the time of collecting data, and in order to save time she proposed to answer all the interview questions by email. In relation to the size of the sample, many researchers agree that there is no particular ideal number of participants to be interviewed. Seidman (2012) states that two main criteria should be borne in mind. The first criterion is sufficiency which can be felt by the interviewer him/herself. The second criterion is saturation by which the researcher begins to hear the same data already obtained from previous participants. Therefore, these criteria are more accurate than that of pre-determining a particular number of participants, especially in terms of interviews. The same view is also highlighted by Guest et al. (2006, p. 59) who add that the size of the sample "…relies on the concept of saturation". Taking this into consideration, saturation and adequacy of information was my first priority over the sample size itself. Furthermore, interviewing different participant groups, as in the case of this study, may reveal rich data to add extra value to the research.

The data was collected at three villages and one town in the High Atlas Mountains, in one Moroccan city, and one set of data was collected via email. Three villages where female students and dropped-out schoolgirls were living were remote villages which to reach required the researcher walk a long distance from the paved road. The fourth town was where the NGO female boarding house was located. This town is considered central to surrounding

villages where there are schools, shops, Moroccan Hammam, transport networks and other public facilities. The researcher did not choose villages from which to conduct her research; rather these villages were where female students and dropped-out schoolgirls suitable candidates for interview lived. One interview was conducted through email because the NGO staff was based in the UK, to save time she proposed to answer interview question via email.

6.8.1 Introducing the Research Participants

In this section, I will elucidate the key differences between groups (female learners, dropped-out schoolgirls, parents of these groups, and NGO staff) and provide brief descriptions of their characteristics.

a) Female Learners

Six female students aged between 17 and 18 took part in this research study. In order to keep a balance between the participants, two learners were selected from each of three rural Berber villages in the High Atlas Mountains. Each of them was in her final year of high school, sharing the same boarding house. Two of them had participated in the pilot study and had a previous idea about the interview process. Their mother tongue was the Berber dialect and most of their parents lived in the villages [Appendix N: female learners].

b) Dropped-out schoolgirls

Six dropped-out school girls aged between 17 and 18 participated in this research study. In order to maintain a balance between female learners and dropped-out schoolgirls, two from each of the three villages were selected to take part. One of them was married with no children and all had finished their primary level education and some secondary school education. Their mother tongue was the Berber dialect and most of their parents lived in the villages [Appendix N: dropped-out schoolgirls].

c) Parents of female learners and dropped-out schoolgirls

Eighteen parents of female students and dropped-out schoolgirls took part in this study: ten mothers and eight fathers from three villages in the High Atlas Mountains. All the mothers were housewives and the majority of the fathers were farmers. It was the first time any of them had been interviewed about the conditions of girls' schooling in their villages. All the parents were illiterate and their mother tongue was the Berber dialect [Appendix N: parents of female learners and dropped-out schoolgirls].

d) NGO Staff

For reasons of privacy and security the current role of the NGO staff who took part in this research was not mentioned and instead replaced with numbers. Anonymity and privacy in social research being not only a matter of ethics; it can have legal implications in case the researcher(s) disregards what is written in the ethical and consent forms. Therefore, respecting the anonymity and privacy of my research participants was one of my top priorities, and in addition to the written consent form which contained how the information in their interview would be used, I was keen to start my interview by saying: 'your privacy is important to me and I take my responsibility regarding the security of your personal information very seriously'. Importantly, the NGO participants were selected on the basis of their role within this organisation, and as long as their positions link directly with the study under investigation, invisibility of their functioning roles does not affect the quality of the data or the process of the interviews [Appendix N: NGO staff].

6.8.2 My Position as 'Insider' and 'Outsider' Researcher

In this section, I will reflect on my identity as an 'outsider' and 'insider' researcher and the impact it has on my data-collecting progress. Afterward, I will reflect on how my social capital assisted in building rapport with my research participants.

The position of the researcher as either insider or outsider to the group under study is a vital topic in the qualitative research and has received increased attention by social scientists (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). Floyd and Arthur (2012) argues that a researcher's identity as an insider or outsider can shift according to the social, political and cultural values of a given situation or context. This means that my position as an 'outsider', urbanised, a stranger to the rural High Atlas villages, a female researcher influenced by Western culture due to my 7 years of study in the UK, may indirectly impact on my research participants' attitudes and responses. On the other hand, being an 'insider' as a Moroccan female researcher, from Morocco's Middle Atlas region which shares some characteristics with the High Atlas villages, who knows the culture, tradition and the lifestyle of Moroccan rural Berbers and Western culture, who speaks Arabic, French, English and some basic words of the Tachelhit dialect, may also have an influence on my research participants and on the quality of the collected data.

According to Kanuha (2000), an insider researcher is a researcher who conducts her/his research with populations of which she/he is a member, and with whom he/she shares an identity, language, and experiential base with the research participants (Asselin, 2003). As

my research contained four participant groups, my identity as an 'insider' and 'outsider' researcher shifted accordingly. For example, with female learners and dropped-out schoolgirls my position was an insider researcher because we shared many characteristics [e.g. language, gender, nationality, tradition and Moroccan cultural norms]. Concerning my position with the learners and dropped-out schoolgirls' parents, this was more of an outsider researcher because I was not a Berber, I did not speak the 'Tachelhit' their mother tongue, and I had come from a foreign country, even I am Moroccan, and have an additional set of beliefs and cultural experiences. Concerning the NGO staff, I was both an insider and outsider researcher. As this group was a mix of Moroccan and non-Moroccan NGO staff, my position shifted accordingly. For instance, for two Moroccan NGO staff I was more an insider researcher because we shared characteristics of gender, language, age, culture, identity, level of knowledge and experiences, whereas for the two other Moroccan NGO staff I was considered an outsider researcher because I was seen as a foreigner having travelled from a Western country of residence, having limited knowledge about rural life and being unable to speak their local dialect of Tachelhit. Finally, the three non-Moroccan NGO staff viewed me as simultaneously an insider and outsider researcher. My ability to speak their language(s) 'English and French' and my knowledge of their culture and lifestyle categorised me as an 'insider' researcher, but for them I was still an outsider researcher because we lacked the same identity, culture and beliefs.

It is worth noting that a qualitative researcher, whether an insider or outsider, is neither a better nor a worse researcher; rather the quality of the research produced depends on the researcher's personal skills, how she/he deals with sensitive situations and how she/he approaches her/his research participants and builds a rapport with them. Therefore, being an 'insider' and 'outsider' researcher had somewhat influenced my relationship with my research participants.

6.8.3 Researcher/Participants Relationship

The relationship between a researcher and her/his research participant(s) is integral to the quality of the research output, and establishing a working relationship between the researcher and research participant(s) is an essential part in the research project. Social science research is based on human interactions, and building human relationships with the participant(s) comes first. Dealing with four participant groups, necessitated a shift in position accordingly. I list three factors as a researcher's social capital contribution to build rapport with my study participants:

- Reciprocity (mutual benefit)
- Interview location
- Participants' comments on taking part in this study

Ruttan (2004) agrees that reciprocity is the principle that must guide research. According to Maiter et al., (2008), reciprocity is the ongoing process of exchange in order to establish and maintain equality between the participants and the researcher(s). It is what (Kottak, 1986, cited in Maiter et al., 2008 p. 307) define an 'exchange between social equals.' In the research process, social exchange or reciprocity are important criteria through which the participants could feel that they might could benefit from participation in the project. Taking this into consideration, when I met my participants, my first priority was to build their trust and respect and then give them an opportunity to ask any questions they might have. In my first day in one NGO boarding house in the High Atlas village, I was invited to deliver a short speech in the presence of all female students who were living in this boarding house and the NGO staff who were working there. At the end of my speech, I felt that the first step to build up rapport with female students and the NGO staff had been successful. At the end of the talk, I gave them the chance to ask any question regarding my research project, my sojourn in the UK, my undergraduate study in Morocco and other questions relating to this study. The majority of female students were keen to know who had helped me financially to pursue my education in the UK, what the main challenges I faced were the first time I arrived in the UK. Whereas, NGO staff were interested in knowing about my educational background in Morocco, my work experience prior to moving to the UK and my future plans after finishing my PhD. I did not hesitate to answer all their questions and shared with them both my personal and work experiences in Morocco and the UK.

Another aspect of reciprocity was with a NGO staff member who asked how I succeeded to gain a place at a British university. She was very keen to know all the small details because her ambition was to pursue her education abroad. I was also asked about how I coped with the challenges of being a Muslim in the UK, wearing an Islamic head-cover, and being exposed to a range of cultural values. A third example of reciprocity was when a female student asked for information about the ELTS test and how to apply for a scholarship to pursue study abroad. Although I did not have specific information about the process and the main criteria to gain a scholarship because of my own self-funded status, I attempted to answer her question to the best of my ability. Besides reciprocity, the time I spent in these villages contributed to build friendly relations with female learners and NGO staff, and

before the fieldwork ended we exchanged mobiles numbers and I accepted Facebook requests of those who added me.

Unlike female students and NGO staff who were talkative during the interviews, used to having such meetings and interviews with people from different countries whether for academic purposes or friendship visits [students from European and American schools]; dealing with dropped-out schoolgirls and their parents, and female learners' parents was quite challenging because they lacked experience of dealing with outsiders. To the majority of them, I was an outsider even we had the same ethnic identity a Moroccans, yet they identified themselves first as 'Berbers' whilst I, being a Moroccan researcher coming from a Western country, they labelled me as an 'outsider' Moroccan. Therefore, my duty was, firstly to break the ice, gain their trust, and engage with them in unstructured conversations before proceeding with interviewing them. Also, during the interviews I was keen to pay attention to even the smallest details and respect the environment in which the interviews took place. A few dropped-out schoolgirls and mothers asked me very limited traditional questions such as 'how I coped with certain challenges in the UK', and 'how was my family in Morocco'. In return, I took the initiative and asked them if I could offer them any kind of help. In short, as Maiter (2003); and Young (1997) point out, reciprocity cannot be entirely balanced and a researcher cannot fully understand another's culture, habits and traditions due to the unbalanced relations. However, reciprocity is important in research so that the participants do not feel exploited.

The second factor to consider was selecting the venue of the interviews. I gave my participants the chance to choose the place they preferred to conduct the interview. Most interviews took place in open spaces, which meant I did not need to book anywhere to conduct my interviews. The third factor to consider was participants' comments on assisting in this research. The participants were asked to outline their personal views on participating in this research. The majority of the participants felt some sense of worthiness for taking part in this project, for two main reasons: (1) they see this project as a hoped for way to improve girls' education in the rural High Atlas villages; (2) they felt that by participating in this study they gained a sense of female empowerment in society; (3) parents had a chance to share some of the challenges they faced in the position of parents in these villages and what their attitudes were towards the situation of girls' education in the High Atlas villages. All participants at the end of the study expressed appreciative feelings for being a part of the study, and at the end of my stay in the High Atlas villages, I thanked all participants for their invaluable contribution to my research.

6.8.4 Gifts in my Research

In the Moroccan context, bringing something for the host when you visit someone is related to generosity and culture. In Morocco, the type of gift people bring depends on their social class and whether they live in a rural or urban setting. Milk, yogurt, cookies, treat for children and sugar cones are common in rural areas because Berbers drink a lot of sweet tea. 'Berber whiskey' is the common beverage people bring when they visit houses in a rural setting. However, higher-class people in Morocco usually bring chocolates or flowers. Even though the mentioned commodities are small, they are a gesture of respect, generosity and this is an essential feature of Moroccan tradition that still exists all across the country. In relation to this research study which was conducted in rural villages, it was not unethical to bring a humble gift to my participants when I visited them for the first time in their homes and when I met female students and NGO staff for the first time in an NGO boarding house. Bringing small gifts for my participants was a way to bridge the gap and break the ice between us, and a way to thank them for their time and their valuable participation rather than as an exchange to put pressure on them to take part in my research. In return, as soon as I entered their houses, Moroccan mint tea was served with homemade cakes and followed by lunch prepared especially for me, as Berbers are well known for their generosity and their good treatment of their guests.

6.8.5 Note on Data-Storing Methods

Interview data collection was conducted with a digital voice recorder with the consent of the interviewees [Appendix: D and E consent forms]. According to Merriam (1998) recording interviews gives the researcher a chance to preserve all the details of the interview for analysis at a future data. While recording, each interview was identified by an alphabet character followed by the date of the interview. For instance, 'participant A, May 10th, 2016'. Before I started interviewing, I checked the recorder battery to ensure that all times the recording equipment functions well and that the batteries are available. Also, I made sure that the interview setting was noise-free and made as few interruptions as much as possible. I tried to avoid any noise interference or overlap in speech. After I finished, all audio files were downloaded to my personal computer and passworded. I used 'internet storage' as an alternative to the traditional local storage such as disk or tape drive to enhance data protection. Online storage also has a big benefit as the researcher can have access to data from anywhere and at any time.

6.8.6 Note on Transcription

According to Nunkoosing (2005, p. 699), "interviews deal with thinking and talk that are later transformed into texts". These texts are the transcripts which have the merit of '…keeping intact the interviewee's words' (Bryman, 2008, p.453). There is no one way to follow when producing a transcript. However, Braun and Clarke (2006) state that it is important the transcript retains all the information the researcher needs from the verbal data in order to establish reliability, dependability and trustworthiness of the study and avoid any bias occurring. In addition, it is of paramount importance to allow the participants' voices to be heard and acknowledged within the analytic process (Brocki and Wearden, 2006).

Transcription is not only a simple mechanical process of putting spoken sounds on paper (Lapadat and Lindsay, 1999). It is "a key phase of data analysis within interpretative qualitative methodology" (Bird, 2005 p. 227) where qualitative researchers are frequently interested in not just what people say, but also in the way that it is said. For example, words can mean different things according to the tone and inflection. In this study, transcribing the equivalent of twenty-four hours of recorded interviews was time consuming. The process of transcribing all the recordings took a long time because of the following factors. Firstly, the speed of spoken speech differed between research participants; some of them were slow in speech, and sometimes when two participants talked simultaneously [in the case of some of the daughters when translating their parents' Tachelhit responses into Arabic] required more time to disentangle, attribute and word-process their conversations. Secondly, the clarity of the recording was sometimes not optimal due to background noise while recording, despite my best efforts to avoid interference or overlaps in speech. Thirdly, due to the data collection being produced in three languages [Arabic, English, and Tachelhit dialect] the transcription was complicated as the Arabic script right to left language and English ran left to right, which was time consuming and difficult to alternately left-align and right align, etc. The fourth factor slowing the transcription process was the lack of recorded clarity of the voices, their unfamiliar accents and instances of mumbling.

Although the transcribing was time–consuming, and I had calculated that it would take up to ten times as long to process as the length of the interviews themselves (Robson, 2011), listening to its content as I transcribed it was an effective way to start familiarising myself with the data contained within (Riessman, 1993). In this research study, each interview required approximately six hours of transcription time and amounted to between two and three written pages. Robson (2011) stresses the need for professionalism in timekeeping within the transcription process. In this sense, once I had finished the transcription I re-read

the entire data set twice in an active way. For this I printed out copies of the transcripts and made annotations in the margins if I observed there was anything required to add or omit. In this way I was able to familiarise myself with the depth and breadth of the data. This technique assisted me greatly acquainting me with all aspects of the data and having some initial analytic interests and points of reflections prior to an analysis. I also checked each finished transcript for errors by listening back over the recordings, simultaneously reading the transcripts to ascertain key words, trends, themes and ideas in the data that would help to outline the analysis before commencing. Table below shows some of the participants' transcript quotes where the tone and inflection stress to emphasise meaning.

Pseudonym	Interview transcript quotes
Ali (DOSGF)	'We do not have **any support** from the government'
Fatima (FLM)	**'**Yes! we need this **to be heard**…'
Zahra (FL)	**'Education is our right**…it is our right'
Mouna (DOSG)	'…I know it was a **wrong** decision'
NGO staff	'…**How come**!!! the government wants all students to be in school
Aya (DOSG)	'…I feel I have no value **at all**!...'
Lehcen (DOSGF)	'…We **need** someone to talk to! …'
Rekaya (DOSGM)	'…Allah knows **everything**…'
Saad (DOSGF)	'…We are **neglected** in these villages…'
Laila (NGO staff)	'…The government **should rectify** its policy'
Majda (DOSG)	'It was **very cold very very cold**…'

Another area requiring clarification is the removal of fillers from the transcriptions. Fillers, such as "um" ''oh'' were interjections participants used automatically to fill the silences between clauses while thinking. Sandelowski (1994) reports that in the majority of qualitative approaches to analysis, excluding pure narrative analysis, the inclusion of fillers in transcription adds no value to the text. The informational content of the data takes priority, and the transcription process has to accurately and clearly focus on the data content. After an initial transcription, it was decided that words such as "uh-huh" and "hmmm" were deleted.

6.8.7 Note about Translation

Language is of special significance in this research as the mother tongue in which the interviews were conducted differed in language and context. from the format in which it was

ultimately going to be produced. Where cultural and linguistic difference and variation existed between some of my respondents mainly the Berber parents of female learners and dropped-out schoolgirls and the medium in which their interviews would be produced, the responsibility lay with me to convey the actual essence of this research through clear and meaningfully presented data. That is why, issues of translation and subsequent interpretation, according to (Temple, 1997; Temple and Young, 2004) along with my role as a multilingual/translingual researcher, will receive detailed discussion in this section.

The traditional dialectal language of communication among the Berbers of the High Atlas villages is Tachelhit [see Chapter 2] but the language of education and learning in the High Atlas schools is classical Arabic, with French and English taught as foreign languages to Advanced level. In this project, the data collection was conducted by the researcher in two of these languages, Arabic and English, and Berber respondents whose only language was the local dialect, spoke in Tachelhit which was translated simultaneously into Arabic for the benefit of the researcher. However, the results will be presented in English, the world language for international research and science. Therefore, the words of Arabic research participants will be translated into English in order to accommodate a wider readership, and the voices of the research participants are accurately preserved through the translations. Translation is a challenge that requires intense focus and knowledgeable insight from researchers to convey what the participants actually say. In this regard, translating, interpreting and analysing the data was handled very carefully so the final piece of translated interview text would lose none of its flavour of the original.

As discussed in section 6.5.3, giving participants the freedom to elaborate on their responses through the language(s) or dialect that best reflects their identity, raises some translating issues. However, I had an advantage in being both an ‘insider’ and an ‘outsider’ Moroccan researcher. I have a basic ‘insider’ knowledge of the Berber dialect, traditions and culture, and also have the advantages of an ‘outsider’ as a PhD researcher from the UK having good knowledge about research procedure and protocol from a Western perspective which assisted me to understand my participants’ meanings and follow their thoughts while interviewing them [both Moroccan and non-Moroccan participants] in accordance with Birbili (2000) who states that the researcher’s knowledge of the context and people assists in this situation.

In this study, the translation procedures adopted were a combination of both literal translation and communicative translation (Newmark, 1988), the purpose being to convey participants' views, attitudes and feelings in the best way possible (Nord, 2014). According to Newmark (1988, pp.45-47), this form of communicative translation attempts to replicate exactly the contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily comprehensible and authentic-seeming to the readership. The literal translation, however, converts the grammatical constructions into their nearest target language equivalents and lexical words are translated singly and out of context. For example, while translating Mouna's quote, ' كنت حمقاءعندما تركت المدرسة' it literally translates into 'I was crazy when I left school'. This type of translation does not produce an intelligible rendering of what Mouna, a dropped-out schoolgirl, wanted to communicate, which was '*I made the wrong decision when I left school*'. Therefore, a pragmatic communicative translation becomes necessary because in literal translating there is a risk of losing the real nuanced meaning of the original text.

Van Nes et al., (2010) believe that some meanings of participants' narrative may definitely be lost while translating and more so some culture-specific metaphors can be difficult to directly translate from the first language, which means a validation of the translation is very necessary. Following the advisory notes of Van Nes et al., (2010), I was cautious in the sense that a sample of my translation was validated by using back-translating. I translated all the received data from Arabic into English, after which the back-translator, selected in relation to his professional skills in translation, checked the extracts back from the target language of English to the source language of Arabic. I provided the back-translator with a copy of the interview questions and an idea of the overall research theme in order to provide him with a context for the project. The back-translator was a Moroccan Berber researcher of English language at a Moroccan University. He also checked the parents' interviews to compare the daughters' Arabic translations with the recorded parents' Tachilhet responses. His native fluency in the Berber dialect enabled him to validate these daughters' translations of the interview answers. For reasons of ethics and privacy, he was not provided with information relating personally to the participants, and I gained permission from the participants [Appendix: D and E consent forms] to recruit a back-translator who spoke Tachelhit before he checked the recorded interviews. Although some minor disagreement was found in the dropped-out schoolgirls' translations, pertaining to tense and the shades of meaning of some words across translation, the back-translator and I agreed on maintaining

two important issues: keeping to the meaning of the data and securing the originality of the data.

6.8.8 Field Notes

This research study was based in three villages and one town in the High Atlas Mountains. Field notes in this study were used as a source of insight about what took place in these villages to 'get inside' and describe the community in which the participants for this study lived. Field notes were conducted primarily for background information and stimulus and not as an instrument to collect data. The researcher used field notes at random as there was no specific time or place allocation for this. Bryman (2012, p. 447) defines field notes as "fairly detailed summaries of events and behaviour and the researcher's initial reflections on them". The description is based on two areas. First, at the villages in which the research studies were conducted, and second in the boarding house of this NGO.

For purposes of privacy, descriptions of the homes of participants within this study will not be included. The four villages were not selected by the researcher; rather three of these villages were sourced according to where female students and dropped-out schoolgirls lived with their families and the fourth village was where the NGO female boarding houses were located.

The researcher's impressions of the rural High Atlas villages.

When I visited the families I was immediately aware of generosity, kindness, hospitality, and a warm welcome being the main features of this region's people. Berbers are well known for their hospitality, and especially when someone visits them for the first time. When I entered the participants' houses, I received a warm welcome after which Moroccan mint tea and homemade cakes were served, followed by a lunch specially-prepared in my honour. My rudimentary knowledge of the Tachelhit dialect allowed me to engage in polite short conversations with parents and much of the time we discussed life in the Middle Atlas region where I was born and the High Atlas villages. We talked also about similarities and differences between the Middle Atlas Berber traditions and culture and the High Atlas culture. My position as an insider researcher know in about the Berber culture allowed me to understand their different customs, and by using my interpersonal skills and my social capital, I was able to build an easy rapport with the study participants and was comfortable in the various situations. For instance, when I was inside the participants' houses I did refrained from taking pictures or using my phone to answer or make calls in respect of their privacy and to show respect and appreciation of their time. Because collecting data meant

the movement from one village to another, an NGO staff member generously accompanied me and introduced me to the families I visited. On our journey, I took the opportunity of asking the NGO some questions relative to my project which could help guide my interview questions and also asked for more information about the area. In respect of my Moroccan origin I was an 'insider' researcher which assisted in the planning of my visit to the High Atlas villages and I knew from my own native cultural knowledge what to avoid in any kind of act or gesture that may unwittingly or indirectly annoy or upset my research participants.

What it was like in the female students' boarding house

In Chapter 2, the background to the study, detailed attributable information is given about the life of people in the rural High Atlas villages. In the field notes, the focus is through the researcher's own lens given in her own first-hand descriptions of the NGO boarding house for female students. When I first arrived at the boarding house I was surprised by the services provided for the girls to assist them in the pursuit of their education. Unlike at public boarding houses, in this boarding house the girls had their own social space where they could engage in artistic activities such as painting and playing music. Importantly, these activities were organised by international volunteers who were recruited to give these girls the opportunity to meet people from different countries and share their ideas with them. Also, the way the boarding houses staff dealt with the students was interesting, in that they treated them as members of their own families. The girls were able to receive visitors and they had their own free time to indulge in their own hobbies. During my main data collection visit, I was invited to attend a social event held to celebrate the young schoolgirls' first Ramadan of fasting. This event summed up how life appeared within this boarding house. I was surprised by how these rural girls were able combine their tradition with a willingness to accept modernity. In the NGO boarding house, I was both a researcher who came to conduct academic study and a guest who shared moments of celebrating the young girls' first Ramadan fasting with students and NGO staff, an activity which also took place in an additional NGO boarding house located in the same village.

6.9 Data Analysis

The analysis of qualitative data is considered a demanding process, the reason being that is not a primarily mechanical or technical exercise, but because it is a dynamic, intuitive and creative process of inductive reasoning, thinking and theorising (Basit, 2003). Qualitative data collection carries a number of strengths as it is based on social reality and contains rich

data. However, these strengths are accompanied by additional challenges. At this stage, the researcher has to choose the appropriate method of data analysis carefully to secure validity and reliability and reduce bias. Bogdan and Biklen (2003, p.54) define qualitative analysis as ‘‘working with data, organising it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesising it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others’’. In my analysis of the data, I followed a thematic analysis for several reasons. First of all, thematic analysis according to Robson (2011) is a widely-used method for processing qualitative data. Secondly, it is most suited to studies where the research goal may not be generating theories. Therefore, I conducted the thematic coding method to analyse qualitative data by following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases.

Patton (2002) states that the data generated by qualitative methods are voluminous, thus the process of analysis involves sifting through the data, filtering out the significant information, identifying codes, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what is revealed in order to establish themes and categories for a general idea about what is in the data and what is interesting about them. Braun and Clarke (2006, p.79) define thematic analysis as "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data", and Bryman (2012) considers it to be one of the most common approaches to qualitative data analysis. Guest et al., (2011) consider thematic analysis a little less structured than content analysis. This study aims to maintain a balance between thematic analysis and clarification of the phenomena while ensuring flexibility in the use of emerging themes. This technique prevents the analysis process from being constrained, thus flexibility is one of the advantages of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Also, this analysis approach gives space for the researcher to use his or her own interpretation and explanation while analysing the data, creating a link between the filtered findings in order to present a comprehensive piece of work. Kelle (1997 in Bazeley and Jackson, 2013) explains:

> *Qualitative researchers who investigate a different form of social life always bring with them their own lenses and conceptual networks. They cannot drop them, for in this case they would not be able to perceive, observe and describe meaningful events any longer - confronted with chaotic, meaningless and fragmented phenomena they would have to give up their scientific endeavour*
>
> *(1997 p. 25)*

6.9.1 Phases of Data Analysis

The analysis process of this study followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps guide as shown in Table 6.9.1. It is important to mention that the analysis was not a linear process of moving from one phase to another. Rather, it was an iterative process which involved moving back and forth.

Phase	Description of the Process
Familiarising with the data	Transcribing, translating, reading the data several times and taking notes of initial ideas.
Generating initial codes	Coding important features of the data systematically across the entire data set.
Searching for themes	Organising codes into prospective themes and gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
Reviewing themes	Read-through if the themes work in relation to the codes and generate a thematic map of the analysis
Defining and naming themes	Refine the specifics of each theme, and the general picture the analysis presents, generating clear names for each theme.
Producing the thesis	Final analysis of selected extracts, relating the analysis to the research question and literature and producing a final report of the analysis

Table: 6.9.1 Phases of Thematic Analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006)

Phase 1: familiarisation with the data

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the first phase in qualitative data analysis is immersing oneself in the data and obtaining a rough picture of the depth and breadth the data provides. Therefore, the familiarisation phase involved transcribing, translating and reading of the data [both the original and the translated transcripts]. I listening to the recorded interviews 3 times before I moved to the transcription phase, adhering to Richards' (2003) advice "never move straight from recording to transcribing: always take time to listen carefully - and listen again" (p.180). In the second phase, in order to know my data intimately, I transcribed and translated all interviews myself, with the exclusion of greeting words and ice breakers. As Allwight and Bailey (1991) suggest, the researcher should reduce the redundancy of the qualitative data by eliminating unnecessary or unhelpful conversations to achieve the study objectives. Following this advice, in the transcription process all unwanted conversations, phrases and words were deleted to shorten and sharpen the focus

of the analysis process. However, the participants' body language and emotional tones were transcribed in order to provide a better understanding of the context of the conversations (Seidman, 2013), resulting in a transcript of over forty pages taking more than three months to complete. Briefly, the familiarisation phase underwent three main steps (1) transcribing interviews manually, (2) translating interviews from Arabic into English, and (3) importing the translated folders onto Nvivo Programme 10, a software system used widely for qualitative data coding (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013).

Phase 2: generating initial codes

Coding data manually

In this study, coding was data-driven (inductive codes) and theory-driven (deductive codes) keeping in mind the research questions as well as the theoretical underpinnings of the research. According to (Seale, 2000), coding is the process of organizing and sorting data, either manually or through a software programme. Saldana (2009, p. 4) adds that "coding is not a precise science; it is primarily an interpretive act". In this project, I began by analysing the data manually during the first stage before using the software package NVivo Programme 10 to analyse the data electronically. By coding the data manually, I underlined the interesting segments of text by colour-coding, and retained the left-hand margin to describe the content of each passage with a label or a code. These codes contained a range of words or short phrases. In the right-hand margin, I recorded more detailed notes and ideas, such as referencing questions and explanations to bear in mind as the analysis proceeded. Below is an excerpt of coding from one of the transcripts. The participant, an 18-year-old female student, discussed how living conditions in the rural villages could affect girls' educational progress, which was in response to the first main research question: What are female learners, dropped-out schoolgirls, parents of learners and dropped-out schoolgirls, and NGO members perceptions concerning the main barriers that prevent girls from completing their education in rural Berber villages of Morocco's High Atlas Mountains? My underlinings emphasise interesting parts of the data that I felt were worth coding or noting.

Descriptive codes	Extract from an interview	Notes & ideas
(1)GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION (2) SECURITY (3) SOCIAL TRADITIONS (4)FINANCIAL OBSTACLES (5) GENDER TEACHERS (6)FAMILY RELATIONSHIP POWER (7)DEVELOPING/DEVELOPED COUNTRIES	''There are a lot of barriers that prevent girls to continue their study. We live in (1) mountainous villages, no electricity, no roads, no security when we go to school especially in winter when rivers flooded. Obviously parents cannot accept a girl to walk (2) long-distance by herself. Some families prefer to (3) marry their daughters very young at the age of 14-15 to avoid any problem and preserve their honour. You know, (3) Berbers are conservative and honour is an unquestionable matter. In addition, (4) the income is very limited, no job opportunities, no financial support from the government and this affect greatly decision (3) who has to go to school boys or girls. In school, girls are treated differently always (3) priority to boys and rarely when can find (5) female teachers in these villages. We need someone who can (5) listen to our concerns I am not saying it is unacceptable to be taught by males but if we have female teachers that helps more and gives us more confidence and might influence	(1)rural life (3)Old traditions still exist in conservative communities (honour) (5)A Female presence in such communities gives more support to girls and parents

	(6)parents' decision to send their daughters to school. We need years to create equality for girls' education in remote villages in Morocco, and hundreds of years to reach (7) developed countries". Zahra, 18 year-old female student

Table 6.9.2: data extract, with codes applied

Coding data electronically, Nvivo Programme 10

I initiated coding my data manually then electronically. Analysing the data electronically is a common method in qualitative data analysis. Bazeley and Jackson (2013) state that the use of electronic software helps greatly in the organisation of the data, but it can not perform the analysis. Thus, to identify interesting aspects in the data and produce rich findings depends mainly on the data itself and the researcher's skills. In analysing the data electronically, I translated all the Arabic interviews into English because the software Nvivo Programme 10 did not work with Arabic transcripts. Then I imported the translated folders onto Nvivo Programme 10. The large amount of data was a challenge. However, Nvivo Programme 10 offered the opportunity of locating the coded reference in the interview transcript, i.e. reuniting the code with its context which helped greatly in the coding process.

Phases 3, 4, 5: deriving, reviewing and defining themes

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), ways of generating themes involve making patterns out of the codes by the researcher then has to transform into themes which should reflect the consensus that is shared by constituent codes. In this research study, the themes were extracted according to the following three criteria: (1) as mentioned, theory-driven (deductive codes) were applied to extract meaning of the qualitative data. Thus, some themes were created according to the literature review, (2) I used 'mind mapping techniques' to envisage the connections and relations between the different codes, ''visual representations'' (Braun and Clarke, 2006 p. 89). (3) although the frequent citing of some codes among participants was not sufficient enough to be an indicator for a theme, though it may be drawn on against the researcher's subjective bias in the analysis of the qualitative data (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Therefore, the most frequently used extracts were considered participant themes. In the fifth phase, all the themes were refined and polished by giving names to each theme.

Phase 6: producing the Thesis

Providing well-structured and organised findings is necessary for the research because the discussion Chapters will be built on these findings. In other words, phase six represents the final 'story' that the current research study aims to tell. Braun and Clarke (2006) and Ryan and Bernard (2003) believe that the report of the qualitative data should display an appropriate argument on research questions driven from the collected themes rather than provide a simple description of the data. Therefore, in order to convey the weight and validity of my analysis, I was careful not to package the findings too tightly and I aimed to discuss the relationships that were seen to exist between themes. Moreover, comparisons were made between the participant groups to validate and demonstrate the complex story of the data and to make arguments in relation to the research questions.

6.9.2 Ethical Considerations

Issues to do with ethics in research have been stressed by many scholars (e.g. Kelly and Ali, 2004; Blaxter et al., 2002; Silverman, 2000; Kvale, 1996). In qualitative research, ethical issues 'arise in many phases of the research process' (Creswell, 2013, p. 65). Since this study invited participants to divulge personal details and used recordings of their voices from the interviews, it required an official ethical approval. To this end, and before I started collecting the data, Ethics Committee procedures were followed. The Ethical Issues Audit Form [Appendix: A] was filled out and approved in order to ensure that the research complied with the ethical procedures of the University of York, Education Department. The main requirement of all ethical codes is that the research participants should not face any harm through the procedures of the study (Diener and Crandall, 1978). At every stage of this study, this code of ethical practice was respected. The second ethical procedure that was undertaken during the pilot and the main study was providing the participants with informed consent forms which were given to the participants before conducting the interviews [Appendix: D]. Since this research study involved collecting data from illiterate parents, a perceived vulnerable group, an extra consent form was given to the female learners and dropped-out schoolgirls to further demonstrate their agreement and participation when data was collected from their parents [Appendix: G]. The consent forms reviewed the purpose of the study in outlining participants' rights to withdraw from the study at any time, in stating the benefits of participating, as well as the guarantees around the confidentiality and anonymity of the information they were sharing with the researcher. It also detailed how the information

would be used, the relevant contact information and the approximate time needed for the interviews. At the end of each interview, the participants were given the opportunity to ask any questions or concerns they had about the study and I concluded with the following statement 'Thank you very much for participating in this study; do kindly contact me if you would like to add anything'. The consent forms were translated into Arabic to be signed by the participants before I started collecting my data [Appendix: E, F]. To sum up, this study has complied with important social research ethical codes guided by the University of York and Research Code of Ethics.

6.9.3 Trustworthiness Criteria

According to Lincoln and Guba (1990), trustworthiness is the power of a researcher to convince the reader that the results emerging from the research study are accurate and trustworthy. Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out that trustworthiness means the extent to which the research results are determined as reliable and credible, that is "trustworthiness" can be realised through a researches (1) credibility, (2) transferability, (3) dependability and (4) confirmability. Therefore, the employment of trustworthiness in the components of this research study confirmed its validity and reliability.

1) Credibility

Credibility means the extent to which qualitative researchers can prove that their research data are appropriate and accurate (Denscombe, 2010). It is the internal validity of the study that demonstrates how credible the findings are. Williams and Morrow (2009, p. 577) list a number of categories related to credibility that all qualitative researchers must adhere to. In other words, 'integrity of the data, a balance between reflexivity and subjectivity, and clear communication of findings'. To establish this credibility, some research participants were approached to give their feedback on the raw transcripts and ascertain if there were any things they wished to add, paraphrase or delete from their contribution to the research data.

2) Transferability

Transferability is the external validity which questions whether the findings gained from the research data analysis can apply to other research contexts. In this study, the transfer crossover from validity to transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1990) was achieved by providing rich descriptions in the background to the study (Chapter 2), criteria used to select participants (Chapter 6) and the selected themes for investigation (Chapters 1 and 6). Therefore, by providing these details the reader would be able to make a confident judgment of the applicability of transfer of the findings to other contexts.

3) Dependability

According to Elo et al., (2014), dependability refers to the stability of data over time and under different conditions. Lincoln and Guba (1990) state that there is a close relationship between credibility and dependability because the one cannot be achieved without the other. In order to achieve dependability, I employed a number of external strategies. Firstly, the data of this research study was cross-checked with the assistance of my supervisor to establish and confirm its clarity and accuracy. The data was also cross-checked against the field notes taken during the interviews and the draft transcripts of the interviews.

4) Confirmability

Guba (1981) suggests the use of triangulation to verify the consistency of the available data with the interpretation of it provided by the researcher. In the same vein, Creswell and Miller (2000) state that this could be undertaken on one or more of three levels: (1) the researcher; (2) the participants; and (3) external auditors and checkers of the research study, such as reviewers. Additionally, the data was tested by peer debriefing, whereby a skilled person in a similar study to this reviewed the research and provided constructive feedback, which was helpful in achieving an understanding in greater depth of the data.

6.10 Limitations of the Qualitative Method

According to Saunders et al., (2009), research methodology serves as the pillar of a research study. Every research methodology consists of two main phases, namely planning and execution (Younus, 2014). Therefore, it is obvious that within these two phases, there are probably some limitations which are beyond the researcher's control (Simon, 2011). The research of this study is primarily qualitative and exploratory in nature, whereby allowing concepts to grow and develop. However, there are drawbacks to this method, the most major of which associated with this study being the incredibly time-consuming element to various components (Bowen, 2006). In the first instance, while analysing the qualitative data I spent over three months on the transcription with an amount of time for the translation [Methodology, Chapter 6]. Elo and Kyngäs (2008) state that a qualitative study requires a labour-intensive process of analysis such as in the likes of categorisation, and recoding. Secondly, the study was conducted across four different rural villages in the High Atlas Mountains and in the city of Marrakech, which required the researcher to travel from village to village, and from village to city, depending on the availability and location of individual

respondents according to their suitability for this research. Alder (2003, p. 497) sums up qualitative research as follows:

> *Although the results of qualitative research can give some indication as to the 'why', 'how' and 'when' something occurs, it cannot tell us 'how often' or 'how many'. In other words, the results can neither be generalised; nor are they representative of the whole population being studied.*

Summary

This study was designed to explore the perceptions of seven NGO staff, six female learners, six dropped-out schoolgirls, and eighteen parents of female learners and dropped-out schoolgirls with regard to the main barriers to girls' education in rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains, and the perceptions of each towards the NGO interventions to reduce these barriers. With the selection of qualitative design for this study, semi-structured interviews were used as the main tool to collect data, while field notes were formulated and used to provide an insight into the happenings in these villages to 'get an insider's view' to describe the community and conditions pertaining to lives of these participants.

Chapter Seven: Findings and Discussion of the First Research Question – Thematic Analysis of Interview Data

7.1 Overview

This Chapter analyses and discusses findings collected from semi-structured interviews with seven NGO staff, six female learners, six dropped-out schoolgirls and eighteen parents of learners and dropouts in an attempt to elucidate the perceptions of the respondents and answer the first research question:

R. Q1: What are the perceptions of the female learners, dropped-out schoolgirls, parents of learners and dropouts and NGO staff regarding the main barriers that prevent girls from completing their education in rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains?

a) What are these barriers?
b) What has caused these barriers?

The Chapter presents and discusses findings thematically, as identified by the researcher and NVivo Programme 10, through the examination of repetitions, transitions, similarities and differences, and theory-related material (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). At the same time, the Chapter discusses changes that occur in the barriers to girls' education and changes to educational provision. The Chapter ends with a summary. The thematic analysis of the dataset illustrates the emergence of five main factors that significantly contribute to shaping participants' views, comments and attitudes.

7.2 Financial Barriers

In direct response to the first research question, financial barriers surfaced as an obstacle that prevents rural Berber girls from completing their education. The participants reported that families' low-income, absence of government financial aid and lack of job opportunities were factors contributing to the high drop-out rates among girls in the High Atlas rural villages.

7.2.1 Low-income family

The analysis of the data allowed me to break down the information gathered from semi-structured interviews to reveal common themes among the participants' perceptions concerning the financial barriers to girls' education. Seeking to understand the interconnection between low family income and girls' schooling, parents were asked about their own educational level and their profession. Table: 7.2.1 presents parents' education level and profession. All the names indicated are pseudonyms [how I have followed the

appropriate ethical procedures with illiterate participants, and how I have approached them to answer the interview questions are presented in detail in the Methodology Chapter 6].

Names	Parents	Profession	Villages	Educational level
Ahmed	FLF	Farmer	Village (3)	Illiterate
Bachir	FLF	None	Village (2)	Illiterate
Saad	FLF	Farmer	Village (1)	Illiterate
Fatma	FLM	House wife	Village (3)	Illiterate
Rabha	FLM	House wife	Village (3)	Illiterate
Yato	FLM	House wife	Village (2)	Illiterate
Aicha	FLM	House wife	Village (1)	Illiterate
Mina	FLM	House wife	Village (1)	Illiterate
Said	DOSGF	Labourer	Village (3)	Illiterate
Ali	DOSGF	None	Village (3)	Illiterate
Moha	DOSGF	Farmer	Village (2)	Illiterate
Hado	DOSGF	Farmer	Village (1)	Illiterate

Table: 7.2.1 parents' educational level and their professions

Abbreviations

FLF: female learner's father
FLM: female learner's mother
DOSGF: dropped-out-schoolgirls' father
DOSGM: dropped-out-schoolgirls' mother

Considerable literature has focused on the effects of parental income (typically of fathers) and girls' early school-leaving. Colclough (1996) states that because economic and political pressures have led governments to devolve the cost of education to local communities and parents, poor households are still unable to afford the direct and indirect costs of children's schooling. Lister (2004) adds that many poor families consider seriously whether sending their children to school and if so, how many they can afford to send. A study of rural families in Egypt (CEDPA New Horizons Needs Assessment 1995) found that 'poverty' was a more predominant reason for girls' premature school-leaving than boys (Swanson,1999). Whereas, in Malawi a research study showed that between grades 1 and 2, both male and female students said girls dropped out primarily because of high school fees. As shown in table: 7.2.1, fathers of learners and dropped-out schoolgirls are illiterate and the majority of them depend on either cultivation or agricultural labour wages as their primary income and

a few of them had temporary jobs [waged labour]. Thus, with what they earn from their land as unstable income, and from other low paying jobs, they were unable to send all their children to school. The following extracted quotations illustrate parents' opinions about low family income:

> *What I earn as a farmer is not sufficient to send all my children to school. In the period of drought, there are no crops and that severely affects our daily life [dropped-out schoolgirl's father, Tachelhit * face-to-face interview]*
>
> *It is not easy to send all children to school with what I earn from my land…what I get from my land is not sufficient and as you know schooling needs a lot of money. I have three daughters and all of them left school because I could not afford to send them to secondary school [dropped-out schoolgirl's father, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*
>
> *I have a temporary job and what I earn from this job is not enough to send all my children to school… [dropped-out schoolgirl's father, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*

*Tachelhit: the mother tongue of Berbers

The three fathers reported that their limited income was an obstacle to sending their daughters to another town to continue their education. Another interesting finding and a significant challenge to girls' education in rural Berber villages is related also to the maternal profession. Table:7.2.1 indicates that all mothers are illiterate housewives. Their primary role is family care provider, responsible for water and fuel collection, food preparation, household chores, childcare and care of the sick and elderly. All mothers' work is unpaid even if it amounts to more work than that undertaken by men. The United Nations' The World's Women (2000) Report points out that women spend an average of 30 minutes a day longer than men on paid and unpaid work in developed countries and 50 minutes longer in developing countries, and still much of their unpaid work in developing countries remains undervalued because there is no financial return. These findings confirm the same situation in the High Atlas Berber villages where women work more than men, both indoors and outdoors, yet still their position in the family is low because there is no financial remuneration for their work. Therefore, the maternal profession in rural areas affects girls' education because there is no potential to earn extra money to assist their daughters to continue their education. Moreover, the maternal profession is not solely about earning extra money but also as a 'role model' for daughters. For instance, a mother's decision-making in the family is also a significant factor that can assist girls in their schooling. Shahidul (2012) examined data in Bangladesh and found that if a mother takes part in the household decision-making process, the dropout rate of girls is lower than when mothers are passive and do not

have a decision-making role within the family. To illustrate this phenomenon, below are some extracted quotations from dropped-out schoolgirls' mothers:

> *I did not go to school… I do not have a job to help my family and help my children to continue their education especially my daughters. I wish I could do something to help them to have a better life then mine [dropped-out-school girl's mother, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*
>
> *I am a house wife and my husband is the only one who helps the family. He is a farmer and what we gain from the land is not sufficient to send all our children to school, school needs too much money… [dropped-out schoolgirl's mother, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*
>
> *I feel like a piece of furniture; I cannot help my family to live a better life. I wish I were able to work and earn some money to help my family and my children to go to school, especially my daughters because I want them to be educated and have a brighter future… [despondent voice] [dropped-out schoolgirl's mother, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*
>
> *Most of the women in these villages are illiterate. They did not go to school; they do not have a job. Their duties are looking after the family. I wish I could help my daughters to continue their schooling [dropped-out schoolgirl's mother, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*

These quotations reflect the real image of women in rural Berber villages. Most of them marry and have children at a young age, and none of them has even a primary level education. Women's activities revolve more around the subsistence economy such as food processing and preparation, household maintenance, cultivation of plants and other crops located in or near the homestead, and animal husbandry. These activities are essential to the family's survival and welfare, but they are usually unpaid activities, considered 'secondary' in importance compared with 'primary' paid work. A study conducted in Bangladesh shows that the average hours of work per day over the whole year for both men and women are roughly the same with 8.33 for males and 8.29 for females. However, men allocated 85% (7.04 hours) of this time to income-related work; whereas women allocated most of their labour time to household chores at 81% (6.68 hours) (Cain et al.,1979). This indicates that although women in rural settings work longer hours than men, they are still considered passive and dependent. Mouna, Farah and Salima, three dropped-out schoolgirls added:

> *…As you know, the majority of people who are living in these villages are farmers. My father is a farmer too and my mother is a house wife…my father is the sole supporter of the family and with the money he gains from the land he could not afford school expenses for all of us. When I finished primary school I was obliged to move to another village, you know…I need money to rent a house, money for food, transport and other expenses…unfortunately my father could not afford all of this so I was obliged to get married early*

and leave school… [Mouna dropped-out schoolgirl, Arabic face-to-face interview]

…It was not my decision to leave the school but the financial situation of my family was difficult…after primary school I had to go to another town because there was no secondary school in my village…living in another town meant more expense and my family could not afford it [Farah dropped-out schoolgirl, Arabic face-to-face interview]

There are many factors that prevent girls in rural villages from continuing their education and financial problems is one of them. I left school after primary level because my father's income was not enough to finance my secondary school, like many children, priority was always given to boys to continue their studies [Salima dropped-out schoolgirl, Arabic face-to-face interview]

Considering that the three dropped-out schoolgirls talked about financial barriers as a barrier that prevented them from completing their education, and as "the goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied" Creswell (2014, p. 8) and in order to probe for more detail, they were asked to talk about boys' education and how they managed to continue their studies under the same financial constraints. Mouna and Salima said that:

I: You left the school and you got married because of the financial conditions of your family, does this problem affect your brothers' study as well?

R: when a decision has to be made, my parents gave priority to my brothers to go to school and continue their studies. My parents wanted my brothers to finish their studies and get good jobs so they could look after them when they got old…but for girls when they get married they cannot look after their parents as they used to do before marriage. That is why preference is always given to educate boys regardless of financial problems because this is considered an investment for the future.

Salima added:

I: you said that after primary school you stopped your education because you had to go to another village and that was expensive for you, what did your brother do after primary school?

R: my brother moved to another village after primary school. It was not easy to save money for him but we considered his study an investment for the future and prestigious for the family in the village to be called teacher, [laughs] whereas spending money on educating a girl, many people find it just a waste of time and money…

I: you have mentioned that you left school because of financial constraints, what about your brothers?

R: one of my brothers left school as well to help my father and the little one stayed with a relative to finish his study. It is common here that priority is always given to boys.

I: what about you?

R: I am not allowed to stay away from home before marriage, this is not acceptable in our tradition especially when relatives have boys [laughs]

I: Interviewer, R: Respondent

An analysis of the interview data indicates that there is a link between financial and cultural barriers in relation to curtailment of girls' education in Berber villages. Boys are given priority to continue studying even when the family face financial difficulties. When families are faced with limited finance, they opt to send their sons to school at the expense of their daughters. Parents specifically pointed out that their choice was only a result of their limited financial ability to support all their children's schooling. According to (UNESCO, 2005), where families face financial issues and when they cannot afford to educate all their children, it is more likely that girls have to drop-out to help their families with the household chores and sometimes outdoor work such as helping on the farm, feeding animals and other activities. Boyle et al., (2002) add that for both the poorest and the slightly better-off groups, the costs of education, either direct or indirect, are the main reasons given for children in the household never having attended school. Zahra and Safina, two female learners who were fortunate enough to complete their education, reported that low-income of the majority of parents was the reason behind girls' early school-leaving. According to Zahra:

The majority of girls living in these villages dropped out of school because of financial shortages. For example, when parents do not have money, they cannot afford to send their daughters to other towns to continue their education. I was lucky enough to continue my education because when I finished my primary level, one NGO staff came to our house and told us about an organisation whose aim is to help girls in these villages continue their education. She explained to my parents the purpose of this organisation and what kind of support they could provide for girls in these villages, and other details…and because it was the first time we had heard about this organisation, it was quite difficult for my parents to allow me to leave the house and live away in another town, but thank God I was lucky and because of this organisation I am here [Zahra female learner, English face-to-face interview].

For Safina:

My father is a farmer and my mother a house wife, and our family income is very small and it would not be possible to move to another town and rent accommodation and cover my living expenses [Safina female learner, Arabic face-to-face interview]

Zahra and Safina indicated that the conditions where they lived were similar to those of many girls in their villages. All families had limited income, and in the absence of job opportunities and government financial aid, girls were obliged to leave school at an early age. Zahra and

Safina were lucky to pursue their studies after primary school due to the help of a NGO in the region. The presence of this NGO freed their families from accommodation costs, living expenses, school supplies and transport costs, which are the basic requirements for rural girls to complete their schooling. These findings concur with a large body of literature that lists financial barriers as the main factor causing the high dropout rates among girls (Shahidul and Karim, 2015; Burchfield and Kadzamira, 1996; Kadzamira and Rose, 2003). According to Grant and Hallman (2008), in South Africa, the family's financial situation has a direct correlation with the potential for daughters dropping out, because parents cannot afford the direct costs such as books, school fees, uniforms and travel expenses.

In addition to the direct costs, schooling also incurs indirect costs such as children not being available to help with the housework, on the family farm or earning additional money as child labour (Basu, 1999; Admassie, 2003). In the High Atlas villages, although a high percentage age of girls had access to primary level education, most of them were not able to continue their schooling. The direct and indirect costs continue to be prohibitive for the majority of girls in High Atlas families. For instance, tuition fees, even if only a symbolic amount, is still beyond the means of the majority of people in rural villages especially those with large families. Transport, uniforms, meals and school supplies are also expenses that are too much for parents whose income is limited because the majority of them obtain an income from temporary work [labour wage, farming].

Furthermore, in poor rural Moroccan communities, girls are dependent on their parents or other family members to finance their education. However, families with meagre incomes cannot afford to send all their children to school and where choices are to be made as to who will receive educational priority, more often than not, boys are given priority over girls. Faced with an economically driven choice between sending sons or daughters to school, poor families often prefer to send their sons. Moreover, poorer parents with large families tend to regard their daughters' education as unnecessary and expensive especially since girls are often seen as the unpaid domestic helper in the family home.

7.2.2 Lack of job opportunities

Lack of job opportunity in rural High Atlas villages is another factor that affects girls' education. Through their comments, parents strongly stated that the 'cycle of poverty' where they live labels them as 'socially excluded' citizens. This exclusion affects not only the school progress of their children but their daily life as well. Sen (2009) believes that unemployment contributes to 'social exclusion' and leads to loss of self-reliance, self-

confidence, and brings about psychological and physical ill-health. Beresford et al., (1999, p. 42) add that "poverty was associated with loss of self-esteem, feelings of powerlessness, anger, depression, anxiety and boredom". Hado and Moha, two dropped-out schoolgirls' fathers pointed out:

> *We do not have opportunities for work…the majority of people in these villages are farmers… we have to wait till harvest time to sell the crops and sometimes when there is no rain we have nothing…also we have cattle in winter; we do not find food for them…school is far from here and to send my daughters to school I need a regular income to be able to finance their study. We are neglected in these villages… we have nothing here, we need permanent jobs where we can earn a regular salary [loud voice] [Hado dropped-out schoolgirl's father, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*
>
> *When there is no rain, there are no crops; we work only three months a year, we need factories and job opportunities where we can have regular jobs…I cannot send my daughters to school because I have other boys and it is too much for me to send all of them to school [Moha dropped-out schoolgirl's father, Tachelhit face-to-face interview].*

Amani, Rose and Machiala similarly, expressed this view regarding the lack of job opportunities in these villages:

> *I am not blaming parents but I am blaming the government because there is no fairness in distributing job opportunities…people in these villages cannot find jobs to support their families and to educate their children… there is no advancement in these rural villages [Amani female learner, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *I can say that the lack of job opportunities has a direct impact of girls' education in these villages…parents struggle for their daily expenses [Rose NGO staff, English face-to-face interview]*
>
> *We heard about new changes in the education systems in Morocco but nothing is seen in these villages… people are still suffering from lack of job opportunities to help their children to continue their studies. Also with parents' limited income, usually priority in education is given to boys [Machiala NGO staff, English face-to-face interview]*

Lack of job opportunities in Morocco's rural villages is a common challenge, and every year the gap between urban and rural area opportunity continues to widen even though 70% of people live in rural areas (Levy, 2004). A lack of job opportunities for most fathers in rural villages negatively affected girls' education, and when families face a shortage of financial resources to educate all children, girls are left behind. Unlike urban and semi-urban towns and cities, in villages there are no factories or companies where illiterate people can have a permanent job. A lack of job opportunities also affected people's daily lives because relying only on agricultural activities cannot secure their living expenses. Although in recent years, there have been a series of government policy reforms in the education sector, the economic

conditions of rural people are still the same, as Amani reported *'there is no changes in these rural villages'.*

7.2.3 Lack of government financial aid

Lack of government financial aid is another financial barrier which impedes girls' schooling in rural Berber villages. According to Fan and Zhang (2008, p. 467), "government policies play a crucial role in promoting both economic growth and better income distribution". However, a lack of fair distribution of assistance by the government impedes girls' education because most parents with their limited income are not able to afford to educate all their children. The following extracts from parents' interviews corroborate this fact.

> *Life here is very difficult. In winter, we are isolated; no transport no food for the cattle…children suffer to reach school… we need help from the government… people of Rabat [the government] have to know this and have to come and see where we live…thanks to God for everything, endless thanks to God… [broken sentences] [Ali dropped-out schoolgirl's father, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*
>
> *Sidna Allah ynesro {His Majesty the King Mohamed VI} provides transport and other school supplied to help rural students in these mountains to go to school… we have seen this on a TV programme but in reality nothing reached these villages…we do not know to whom we have to report our complaint, who is responsible for this illegal behaviour…we want our daughters to go to school just like their counterparts in the cities [Saida dropped-out schoolgirl's mother, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*
>
> *My daughter dropped out of school because we could not afford school supplies [looking at her daughter] we need help from the government like the children in big cities get…the government should help people in these villages and help girls to go to school…I want my daughters to go to school but [Allah Galeb] all belong to God, we cannot change our fate [Rahma dropped-out schoolgirl's mother, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*
>
> *We are waiting and waiting: nothing is changed… [low voice] every year we hope to see some changes but in vain…we are neglected … we do not have the support of the government to help our children to go to school. My daughters got married early because we could not afford their schooling… [Hada dropped-out schoolgirl's mother, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*

Suffice it to say, the issue in rural Berber villages is not only a lack of government aid but also the lack of transparency. An unequal distribution of resources and services affects both girls' education and people's daily lives. This finding is consistent with Unterhalter et al., (2014) who reported that educational interventions should target eligible households based on their income, and the process should be objective and transparent, otherwise the results can be ineffective. That is why even though the Moroccan government spends nearly a

quarter of its budget on education, remote villages are still struggling to have access to education Sepeda-Miller (2015). Dropped-out schoolgirls and NGO staff add:

> *The government should help girls in rural villages to continue their education, we have the same rights as girls who are living in cities [Farah, dropped-out schoolgirl, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *There have been no signs of change since I left the school. This means that the government does not pay any attention to improve girls' education in these villages[Salima dropped-out schoolgirl, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *If you ask anyone in these villages what the first obstacle is that girls face to continue their education, they will say financial problems. People here are unable to afford educating all their children…if they move from primary school, they need accommodation, transport, tuition fees and many other expenses…which is not possible for most people. The government must take into consideration that these villages are part of Morocco… [in a strong tone]…the government should rectify its policy and think about the rural poor …this is my message to those responsible for education and decision makers in the Ministry of Education… [Laila NGO staff, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *…it is the responsibility of the government to provide all the necessary things for girls to complete their education…imagine if one family has only one low income how will they be able to send their daughters to another city after primary school to continue their education…people here are fighting with the poor conditions of life, no jobs, no aid from the government: that is why girls drop out of school and get married at an early age. The same for boys who dropped out of school to help their fathers with manual labour … [Malik NGO staff, Arabic face-to-face interview]*

After primary school, rural girls needed to move to another town to obtain their secondary school education, but because of the limited income of their families they were not able to pursue their studies. Even though the Moroccan government provides some school supplies, many of these aids are supplied only to those in cities where there are also people in need. Hodgkinson and Obarakpor (1994, p. 2) point out that "rural poverty is not the same as urban poverty in a different setting". This view reflects the situation in rural-urban life conditions in Morocco. In urban settings, for example, people can have the chance to work in factories and companies even they are not educated, whereas people in rural areas are much more in need of support because their financial conditions are more complex and limited than those of urban dwellers.

Furthermore, in Morocco there is a large difference between rural and urban areas when it comes to enrolment in middle school education. According to the World Bank (2003), most recent data, 83% of Moroccan students make the transition from primary school, but

the highest drop-out rate is among children who live in rural villages. In 2009, the government launched the '*Education Emergency Action Plan*' to help poor children to attend school, built more preschools in rural areas, developed existing schools and created more dormitories in major cities to accommodate children, especially girls from rural villages to continue their education in a safe and comfortable environment. However, despite the '*Education Emergency Action Plan*' and before it the '*National Chart for Education and Training'* in 1999, the situation in rural settings remains the same. These reforms have failed to fill in the gap that exists between urban and rural education. Even though the government spends nearly a quarter of its budget on education, this has not helped to achieve equality in education and the country's highest drop-out rate is of marginalised rural girls. Indeed, the country is still behind achieving the required average in terms of literacy, and girls schooling is still one of the biggest challenges the government has to face to succeed in achieving the '*Education Emergency Action Plan'*. Therefore, it is very important to adopt a systemic view while setting goals for reforms (Llorent Bedmar, 2014).

7.3 Family-Based Barriers

Many factors contribute to the curtailment of girls' schooling in marginalised rural villages. Family size and birth order, parents' educational levels, absence of parental involvement in education choices, and a lack of communication within the family emerged as observable family-based barriers from the collected data.

7.3.1 Family size and birth order

Family size and birth order have significant negative influences on the probability that girls will not be able to continue their schooling in rural villages. Unlike urban families, the eldest daughters in rural villages have a central role within the family; they are required to look after younger siblings and help their mothers with the housework, and sometimes they undertake outdoor manual labour, too. This kind of system increases when the number of the family is large and where parental education is limited. The following extracts from participants' interviews serve to illustrate how family size and birth order in villages affect girls' schooling.

> *Girls are always the ones who pay the price. For example, if a family has older daughters and younger sons, priority is given to boys to continue their education [Sabah dropped-out schoolgirl, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *I think it is a common feature of Moroccan culture when a family has many children, that the eldest daughters are more likely to stay home to look after*

the house than go to school and continue their education [Malik NGO staff, Arabic face-to-face interview]

These research findings are consistent with Kugler and Kumar (2017) who report that children from larger families have less education because financially it is difficult for parents to send all their children to school especially if those children's earnings can contribute to the family's income. The cost of school attendance, both direct and indirect, increases as the size of the family increases, thereby resulting in lower educational attainment for children in larger families than children in smaller families. Concerning birth order, most of the time older girls drop out of school before boys because they have to look after their young siblings and help with the housework. In addition, the desire for male children is stronger in rural villages, thus if a girl is first born families tend to have more children in order to have baby boys resulting in a large family size indirectly affecting girls' education (Basu and De Jong, 2010; Ebenstein, 2010). According to Ali et al., (2011), in rural poor households it has been a traditional system that the eldest girl gets more responsibility, take care of her younger siblings and help with the household tasks. Hada and Rekaya, two dropped-out schoolgirls' mothers, touched on this point and indicated that the large size of their families was preventing their eldest daughters from completing their studies. They said:

My eldest daughter dropped out from primary school to look after her siblings and to help me with the household chores. Because we cannot afford to finance schooling of all the children, my eldest daughter dropped-out school…I wish we could afford schooling for all the children but God knows the situation [Hada dropped-out schoolgirl's mother, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]

It was not possible to send all the children to school. My daughter dropped out of school to look after her siblings and to help me with the household chores because she was the eldest [Rekaya dropped-out schoolgirl's mother, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]

7.3.2 Parents' education levels

Parents' lack of completed education is a significant barrier to girls' education. Aya and Sabah, two dropped-out schoolgirls, their own parents' low education level was a factor contributing to their inability to continue their studies. It is apparent that if parents attend school the chances of the child continuing in school are much higher than if parents have less of an education (Davis-Kean, 2005). Taylor and Mulhall (2001) point out that rural parents are often less educated and may see less value in schooling than do their more educated urban counterparts, and even where they place a value on schooling they have less opportunity to provide support for their children because of their more limited knowledge.

In addition, illiterate parents may feel embarrassed to discuss school subjects with their children because of their own lack of knowledge, and as a result, rural children receive less parental encouragement to go to school and find less support for their education from the home environment. Aya, Sabah and Kaoutar provide the following comments:

> *I wish my parents were educated, especially my mother, to help me during my study because she is the person with whom I spend most time. I failed to pass French and Mathematics exams because nobody helped me at home and as you know we are Berbers and our spoken language at home is Tachelhit so I could not get through my exams successfully [Aya dropped-out school girl, Arabic face-to-face interview]*

Sabah acknowledged:

> *It is very important for parents to be educated. I grew up in a family where neither of my parents knew how to read or write. I got lower marks because nobody was helping me, I was struggling to do all the exercises by myself [Sabah dropped-out schoolgirl, Arabic face-to-face interview]*

> *You cannot find among the older generation in rural villages in Morocco educated parents…that is why parents lack knowledge about the importance of education and do not know the skills to support their daughters in school. I want to add also an important point that when the eldest members of the family do not pay attention to girls' education, girls cannot discuss this with their fathers and big brothers…they cannot discuss this topic with them because simply if they do so it is as if they are breaking down respect for their fathers…also when a family has many children [because they believe that a lot of children makes the family stronger] girls find themselves at the bottom of the list to continue their education, and they end up by helping with the housework and looking after younger siblings…[Kaoutar NGO, staff Arabic face-to-face interview]*

The possibility of a girl continuing her education is much higher if her mother had attended school or at least had some knowledge of the education system, she would be able to support her daughters to continue their studies. According to a report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 1995), in 1980, 62.8 % of the world's 877 million illiterate adults were women. The significant extent to which mothers' education affects their daughters' education has been noted in social science literature. Moen et al., (1997) believe that daughters of better-educated mothers may be more positively influenced by their attitude and example than daughters of mothers with less education. The same is true if fathers were working in non-farm jobs and had basic knowledge about the importance of education for all children.

Baker and Stevenson (1986) add that educated mothers have more knowledge of their child's schooling. For instance, they are more likely to be able to identify their child's stronger and weaker subjects and offer an evaluation of their child's performance. These mothers are also

able to contact their child's school i.e. they can have meetings with teachers and discuss their child's educational progress, and take action when necessary. Moreover, mothers are the stronger role model for children's education. An educated mother is, undoubtedly, a significant support for her children especially her daughters because the mother-daughter relationship is closer than that with the father'. In addition, children can see their empowered mother as a positive role model for their own lives and as a source of inspiration and strength. However, if the mother is illiterate, that can affect children negatively and diminish their opportunity to learn. Therefore, the involvement of educated mothers in their child's schooling may be more effective and fruitful because they guide effective learning progress.

7.3.3 Parental involvement

In addition to parents' level of education, much literature has explored the positive effects that parental involvement can have on children' academic performance (e.g. Christenson et al., 1992; Epstein, 2010; Barnard, 2004; Desimone, 1999; Hill and Craft, 2003; Hill and Taylor, 2004; Zellman and Waterman, 1998). Epstein (2010) states that parents who encourage their children to learn and help them to develop positive attitudes toward school, achieve successful academic results and develop their personal growth. Samiya, Noura and Machiala had similar viewpoints:

> *My parents are not educated so they do not know what is going on at school and because they do not know what is going on at school I do not share many things with them [Samiya female learner, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *When I come back home at the weekend or during vacations my parents ask me more about my health and how I am doing in my study but they do not ask about my marks or how I am coping with my study. I am not blaming them because they are not educated and their knowledge about school and education is very limited [Noura female learner, Arabic face to face interview]*
>
> *Parents' poor involvement in the progress of their children at school can affect progress. But the case of parents who are living in Atlas villages, they cannot help because they cannot read or write. For the majority of students drop-out at an early age mainly girls because no one at home can help and encourage them. Unfortunately, this gradually developed into a pattern people got used to in these villages [Machiala NGO staff, English face-to-face interview]*

In addition to academic achievement, increased parent involvement leads also to early social competence, social capital and social networks, which ultimately leads to academic success and permits children to access additional support and resources such as tutoring or access to

curriculum extensions beyond the school (Hill and Craft, 2003; Hill and Taylor, 2004; Lee and Bowen, 2006). Barnard (2004) also adds that early parental involvement in a child's education promotes positive long-term effects and results in improving the child's achievements. In contrast, many studies have indicated that a lack of parental involvement in the learning process of their children may prompt negative academic achievement and school attendance. When evaluating parents' involvement in their children's education, this has been conceptualised in two ways. Firstly, school-based involvement. Secondly, home-based involvement. The first is related specifically to children's school programmes, such as communication with school staff and teachers and involvement in various school activities and events (Crosnoe, 2001; Marcon, 1999; Miedel and Reynolds, 1999).

Whereas, home-based involvement may include those activities that parents do at home that have a relation to a child's school activities, such as revising and helping with homework, discussing specific topics to assist the child to better understand what was taught in the classroom, and parents may also get involved with school projects (e.g. Seginer, 2006; Shumow et al., 1996). Seginer, 2006 states that parents can influence school achievement by engaging more effectively with their children and this is demonstrable in several ways. For example, the time parents spend with their children is important to gauge their weaknesses and strengths and through an evaluation they can direct and teach them how to deal with situations by citing examples from their own experiences. Moreover, parents have to keep in regular contact with their children' schools to know their progress and intervene when necessary.

7.3.4 Lack of communication within the family

Girls' early school leaving is not due to a single factor alone, but is composed of several overlapping factors, and a lack of communication within the family is another issue that affects girls' schooling. According to Vernberg et al., (1993), discussions between parents and their children considerably facilitate the development of higher levels of moral reasoning during the adolescent period. The findings of this study reveal that social norms and tradition still control the relationship between parents and children, especially daughters. In rural areas, girls may not be able to express their thoughts and ideas openly with their fathers and eldest brothers. Amani, a female learner was the first participant who unveiled what kind of communication exists within the rural family. She argued that if a girl is not able to communicate openly with her family it becomes difficult for her to communicate with the

outside world. Amani had a strong belief that communication is the key to understanding each other and bridging the gap between individuals, she reported :

> *If you ask me what the main barriers and obstacles are that prevented girls in these villages from completing their education, I will tell you that there are many factors. Financial problems come first then other issues related to the family. First, parents are not educated and children struggle to help themselves by themselves. Secondly, parents do not get involved in their children's education simply because they are not educated. The third point which is also important is a lack of communication…daughters in rural villages cannot express their opinions with their fathers and eldest brothers or any elder member of the family [she provided more details about the difference between respect and communication from her point of view] …Yes all these obstacles cannot help girls to continue their education [Amani female learner, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *I: concerning the third point, you have mentioned, that daughters in these rural villages cannot speak with their fathers and eldest brothers, what about boys?*
>
> *R: usually girls cannot speak with their parents as they considered this a form of respect; whereas boys have more freedom within the family.*

I: Interviewer, R: Respondent

7.4 Socio-Cultural and Traditional Barriers

Education plays a pivotal role in advancing the position of women in society and creating social justice. However, in developing countries girls' education still faces barriers and girls still lag behind their male counterparts. The preference for sons, gender stereotypes, early marriage of girls, and a misinterpretation of Islam are the main themes that emerge as socio-cultural barriers.

7.4.1 Preference for sons

In rural communities, when decisions have to be made, parents usually give priority to boys to go to school and continue their studies; whereas girls have to learn household chores and follow their mothers' path. They are obliged to get married as soon they reach 14 years of age and establish a family of their own. In Morocco, the socio-cultural and traditional norms, unfortunately, still dominate families' lives. This domination is strong in conservative rural communities where the illiteracy rate is high and the chance to change these norms is low. In other words, Morocco is a patriarchal society where men are the primary authority figures and women are subordinates.

In the previous section, 'Family-Based Barriers' discusses how 'family size' and 'birth order' affect girls' schooling and how Berber families form their own rules and give priority to boys to continue their schooling; whereas girls have to look after their young siblings and help with the housework. In rural Berber villages, the cultural norms and traditional gender roles still prevail and families continue to believe that it is a boy's priority to go to school and the proper place for a girl is at home. This is why the number of girls attending school in rural areas in Morocco is only 26% while for boys it is 79%, according to the (World Bank, 2003). The following extracts say:

> *Always priority goes to boy child not only in education but in everything because he will hold the name of the family and he will look after his parents when they get old… that is why my husband said boys should be educated to reach higher levels and to secure a good job in the future and live a different life to that which people live in these villages [Hada dropped-out schoolgirl's mother, Tachelhet face-to-face interview]*
>
> *My husband said the education of sons comes before girls because they will look after their parents when they grow up and my daughters will marry and will live with their husbands' family even if they get a degree… also we cannot break the traditions and send daughters to school and keep boys at home...Boys have to go to school to learn how to read and write to find good jobs in the future, and girls look after the house and learn how to be good wives [Yato dropped-out schoolgirl's mother, Tachelhet face-to-face interview].*

According to Brock et al., (1997), there is a near-universal central cultural bias in favour of males. Son preference and biased parental investments are dominant in many societies around the world (Lhila and Simon, 2008; El Gilany and Shady, 2007; Kabeer and Mahmud, 2014). In patriarchal societies, families in rural villages have explicit preferences for educating sons over daughters because sons are responsible for providing support for their parents when they reach old age, and they may also be seen as greater economic returns; whereas daughters leave their family home once they get married (Das Gupta et al., 2003; Jayachandran, 2015). Similarly, Oliveira (2016) found that parents may rely on their sons because they have limited access to pensions, and a large percentage age of them live with their sons when they reach an old age, i.e. 'intergenerational support systems'. Some researchers argued that poverty and limited resources are the reasons behind parental bias and that parents may favour boys when they face hard times (Maccini and Yang, 2009).

However, Das Gupta et al., (2003) argued that bias against girl children in India, for example, originates mainly from cultural factors rather than economic difficulties. Furthermore, in more traditional communities, parents (especially fathers) encourage boys to grow up

believing they take priority when it comes gaining an education and that a girl's place is looking after her siblings and doing household chores. This pattern of behaviour appears to be a two-way problem. Firstly, girls cannot be active members in either the family or society. Secondly, boys grow up with the idea that they are favoured and that they are superior to girls. Salima, Farah and Mouna bluntly stated that parental bias and boys being prioritised directly affected girls' schooling. They argued that parents in rural villages care more about educating their male children as a way of securing themselves financially in their old age.

> *Not only in these villages but in many places in Morocco people give priority to boys to go to school and build their future and girls help with housework. [Salima dropped-out schoolgirl, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *It is our culture… we cannot change society in a day. Yes, boys get priority not only in education but many other stuff as well [Farah dropped-out school girl, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *Not only do parents give boys freedom to go to school, but sometimes they interfere even in our lives…I am married now but still I cannot do some things which create problems with my brothers [Mouna dropped-out school girl, Arabic face-to-face interview].*

The dropped-out schoolgirls believed that son preference in Berber families is a cultural practice that cannot be ignored and it is very hard to change it in a short time. In a similar vein, Zahra, Noura and Amani reported the same attitudes and added that when it comes to choosing who has priority to go to school, parents always prioritise sons.

> *Culture is culture, unfortunately we cannot change it and son preference is one of these cultures in these villages [Zahra female learner, English face-to-face interview]*
>
> *Parents in these villages rely on sons more because they know they are the ones who will support them when they get old. No problem… but to secure the future parents especially fathers do not give attention to their daughters and send them to school and always priority in education goes to boys [Noura female learner, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *I do not have brothers but I can tell that families here always give priority to boys to go to school, but girls have to help their mothers [Amani female learner, Arabic face-to-face interview]*

Moreover, Laila, Machiala, and Kaoutar believed that son preference is a common phenomenon in many developing countries especially in conservative rural communities. They explained that son preference in the rural High Atlas villages is not driven solely by cultural factors but economic factors as well. Laila affirmed that one of the justifications of parents selecting boys to have priority in education is to help their sons to secure their future by gaining permanent jobs with a good salary and in return sons will support their parents in

their old age. Similarly, Machiala stated that when you ask rural parents why priority is given to boys to go to school and not girls, the most straightforward answer is 'to help us when we get old'. For them, educating girls is like 'watering the neighbour's tree' because daughters leave their family home once they get married (Das Gupta et al., 2003; Jayachandran, 2015).

7.4.2 Gender stereotypes

The misconception in rural communities about girls' education is an additional factor in promoting the perception that girls are inferior than boys. Salima, Farah and Mouna, three dropped-out schoolgirls believe that gender stereotypes are serious issues that indirectly ruin women's identity.

> *Girls have to do this and should not do this…girls should not do what boys do…girls have to obey the rules and get married early…girls…girls…girls and boys are allowed to do whatever they like…we hear this every time…that is why a lot of girls left the school because they did not have the same value as boys have…always girls have to follow what society said and what the eldest said and if a girl breaks these rules it is a problem…always girls are not able to do what boys do and this is not fair…these sayings affect the mental capacity of girls and made them weak…also parents have to be neutral when dealing with their children because they have great impact on their children…[strong tone] [Salima dropped-out schoolgirl, Arabic face-to-face interview]*

> *Our lives were influenced largely by our tradition. Living in rural villages has many challenges… the traditions and cultures cannot be changed in one day. People have to follow traditions even though sometimes these traditions are not acceptable. For example girls and women are always considered weaker and cannot do what men do…there are a lot of common sayings in these villages that criticize women and this affect their lives…for example, if girls move to another village to continue their education, people in the village will not see this as achievement but as a way to live as she wants… I think it is time to change the mentality of people and give freedom and confidence to women as well [Farah dropped-out schoolgirl, Arabic face-to-face interview]*

> *It is not only in education, but girls are always presented as inferior and unable to do what boys can do…in fact I do not think that if girls get the same opportunities in education and freedom to work openly without barriers can fail in doing well…unfortunately our society still considers the education of girls as just a waste of time and money…these common sayings should be changed - we are in the 21st century! [Mouna dropped-out schoolgirl, Arabic face-to-face interview]*

There is strong evidence that gender-related beliefs and stereotypes seem to have had an impact on girls' education processes especially in rural areas where boys are usually given precedence over girls. These findings about gender-related beliefs and stereotypes are consistent with reviewed literature. Gunderson et al., (2012); Glaeser and Ma (2013) argue

that gender stereotypes are a strong barrier in shaping the beliefs of children who hold these entrenched societal beliefs may view girls as less valuable than boys. The pre-existing beliefs that women are worth less than men may result in an inherent bias among parents. Many studies have shown that parents are primary responsible for shaping and influencing children's beliefs. They have both the motivation and abundant means of doing so. For example, exposing children to gender stereotypes in childhood literature may have a direct effect on children's attitudes towards the world in which they live. Weitzman et al., (1972) examines children's storybooks in the United States and finds persistent differences in the ways that gender is represented. Storybooks presented boys as independent, dominant, active, competitive, adventurous, ambitious, courageous and leader; whereas girls were seen as emotional, submissive, dependent, passive, home-oriented, easily influenced and aware of the feelings of others. Furthermore, when Bereaud (1975) examined French children's books, the general image and message these books delivers presents girls as inferior to boys. Girls are presented as symbols of weakness, passive, dependent with limited capabilities. Whereas, women are shown as housekeepers or low-paid and unskilled workers.

Another image of gender-related beliefs and stereotypes is presented in Ghana. Many people in Ghana, for example, hold the view that educated women tend to equate themselves with men; thus, if they are deprived of the chance of education, that would be much better for them (Gyekye-Nimako, 1983 cited in Tanye, 2008). However, in Morocco the situation is different from that which has been presented in the US and France. Gender stereotypes come not from childhood literature and storybooks or even from fairy tales; rather gender stereotypes are gleaned from the daily traditional beliefs which negatively influence the position of girls and women in society. In Moroccan culture, while there are some positive stereotypes, most stereotypes about women are negative and reflect the underlying patriarchal dictates that structure gender relations in Moroccan culture. Tools such as linguistic expressions, discourses, common sayings and proverbs maintain and perpetuate these stereotypes (Sadiqi, 2011). This is consistent with Warnock (1998) who adds that, traditionally, Moroccan women have been viewed as inferiors whose first duty is to look after children and perform household chores.

From the above extracts, the combination of gender-related beliefs and stereotypes hinder girls' abilities to continue their education and significantly influence their lives even after they have left school. During my interviews, 'priority was given to boys' was frequently repeated by participants which indicated that cultural beliefs still dominate life in these rural

villages. While interviewing dropped-out schoolgirls, it was noticeable that most of them talked about the effects of the stereotypes not only in relation to education but also in other aspects of their lives. Therefore, further investigation in gender-related beliefs and stereotypes in other research fields such as sociology and psychology would assist better to understand this phenomenon and present all components in relation to gender-related beliefs and stereotypes in developing countries.

7.4.3 Early marriage

Early marriage is being discussed as a matter of urgency in countries around the world. Some societies believe that child marriage for a girl is a way to protect her from unsanctioned sexual activity, for others, it is a family survival strategy. Whereas in other societies, girl child marriage is merely a common tradition and culture of the community. In this study, early marriage emerged as another impediment to girls' education in rural Berber villages of Morocco' High Atlas Mountains. As per the interview results, all female learners, dropped-out schoolgirls, mothers of these groups and NGO female staff bluntly stated that child marriage for girls is a risk factor to pursuing their studies; in fact, one dropped-out schoolgirl's father stated that early marriage, for a Muslim, is following the Sunnah [the way of the prophet Mohammed peace upon him] to increase the 'ummat al-Islām' [the Islamic community] which is a symbol of strength. The following are some quotations extracted from the interviews:

> *I am lucky to get a chance to pursue my education because of this (NGO). Before this organisation the majority of girls dropped-out from primary level and got married because for some it was expensive to move to another village, and for the majority of parents they wanted their daughters to get married early to protect their 'sharaf' [honour]…and to avoid any problem, as we say in Moroccan proverb 'girls are like glasses if they are broken nobody can repair them [Zahra female learner, English face-to-face interview]*

> *I am scared my daughter may lose her 'sharaf' if she moves to another town and nobody can control her… there are some incidents that happened with some girls in other villages and this scared parents from allowing their daughters to live away from home…such incidents are not acceptable in our family and our culture [Rekaya dropped-out schoolgirl's mother, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*

Pursuing education in remote villages means that a girl has to leave her parents' home to live on her own in a boarding house. Berber communities, as many conservative societies, prize virginity before marriage and fear that allowing girls to leave home and live away may expose them to risks of premarital sex and pregnancy (UNICEF, 2001). Even where girls

can live at home, in rural villages fear about sexual harassment and insecurity on the journey from and to school discourages parents from sending their daughters to school. Rekaya added that '*there are some incidents that happened with some girls in other villages and this scared parents from allowing their daughters to live away from home'* Thus, parents believed it is safer for their daughters to get married at an early age and be under the control of a husband (UNICEF, 2001). Zahra believed that fear that a girl may lose her 'sharaf' was a big reason behind the high drop-out of girls after primary school. The Moroccan proverb she cited was strong enough to show how society described girls "*girls are like glass: if they are broken nobody can repair them"* added Zahra. Other participants added:

> *In rural villages life is different. The tradition and customs are still dominating people's thoughts. Girls get married at a very young age and stop completing their education… [Machiala NGO staff, English face-to-face interview]*
>
> *Early marriage is a big barrier for girls in these villages to continue their education. Parents want their daughters to marry early because they think this is the best way to protect them from violence and sexual harassment, and on the same time avoid being called 'Bayra' [spinster in Moroccan Arabic] [Noura female learner, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *''It is not generally considered necessary for girls to go to school as their main social role is to become wives and mothers (some girls from these villages might marry as young as 15 or 16). This is why if there are any means at all to go to secondary school, boys are given priority…'' [Susan NGO staff, written English response]*

Where tradition is widespread, families and communities have no intention of changing their minds about child marriage and girls under 18 years are continuing to get married. Girls in conservative rural communities, according to Noura, married at an early age to avoid being called '*Bayra*' [spinster in Moroccan Arabic]. In Moroccan culture, when women remain unmarried at an advanced age, they are outcast from the mainstream society, and they are constantly perceived as a financial burden. Therefore, the negative aura surrounding the word "*Bayra*" pushes many rural girls to leave school at an early age and get married. For Noura such words, which are common in Moroccan conversations, can have the power of shaping parents' thoughts in the long run, and negatively affect their daughters' future. Furthermore, tradition takes many forms. For Susan, early marriage in the High Atlas villages had a direct connection with the attitudes of parents towards girls' education. "*It is not generally considered necessary for girls to go to school"*. In addition, cultural bias in favour of males gives priority to boys to pursue their education, Susan added: "*if there are any means at all to go to secondary school, boys are given priority*". In short, for rural

conservative communities, child marriage for girls is a tradition that should be followed and a fight against early marriage is a fight against tradition and culture.

> *Early marriage of girls is a common tradition when girls reach 14 or 15 parents do not have a problem to marry their daughters because they think this is the best way to guaranty their future. But they do not know that early marriage negatively affects their personality and sometimes they have psychological issues because at this age young girls are not ready for big responsibilities [Salima dropped-out schoolgirl, Arabic face-to-face interview]*

Salima's comment was in line with the previous participant's view, and she added that early marriage not only deprived girls from completing their education but it also affected their personality. Salima pointed out that girl child marriage has a profound psychosocial and emotional consequences. It is a forced sexual relation where girls lost their childhood, adolescence, freedom, rights in education and personal development. UNICEF's (2001) study shows that most girls who are unhappy in an imposed marriage are very isolated and less talkative because they are surrounded by people who endorse their situation and are not interested to hear their concerns. Researchers on marriage of minor-aged girls in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh in India report that girl spouses suffer more than boys. Saxena (1999) further explains that if the husband dies the girl is treated as a widow and becomes the common property of all the men in the family; whereas in some parts of Africa, a widow is remarried to a brother-in-law, a custom known as '*levirate*', to provide economic and social support but if the widow refuses she might be cast out by her in-laws (UNICEF, 2001). Girl child marriage is not only a barrier that prevents girls from completing their schooling but is an act against human rights and a form of robbery of a girl's freedom and youth which is replaced by heavy responsibility which she is not psychologically or physically ready for. Farah and Hada had an additional viewpoint concerning early marriage in the rural Berber villages.

> *Everything is improving and developing but unfortunately the situation of girls in Morocco's rural villages is still the same… without models and supporters who can defend girls' rights in education; nothing will be changed…I can tell you that the harsh conditions in which girls of these villages live pushes them to marry early and leave their dreams of continuing their education…I have a message to send to those responsible if they do not take actions towards girls in these villages the only option they will have is to marry early and follow their mothers' path…[Farah dropped-out schoolgirl, Arabic face- to- face interview]*

> *We are poor… people do not have stable jobs…it is better for girl to get married and their husband look after them because even if they go to school*

they will not find a job … [Hada dropped-out schoolgirl's mother, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]

Girls' education in rural villages can be limited for a number of reasons. According to Farah and Hada, the harsh living conditions in rural High Atlas villages is one important drive for girl child marriage. Farah believes that poverty and low-income of families shapes girls' lives and prevents them from completing their studies. Whereas, Hada believes that even if rural girls go to school and finish their education, it is very hard for them to find a job because the job market is very competitive, and even if they get a job once they get married they will move to live with their in-laws who will benefit from their income, whereas their natal family will not have any returns. Hada, like many rural mothers, still believes that marriage is the appropriate way for a daughter to secure her future. According to UNICEF (2001), economic hardship and poverty are among the major factors underpinning girl child marriage. In some South Asian and Middle Eastern societies, it is a common practice to marry a child girl to an old rich man to support her family financially. Whereas, in traditional societies in Sub-saharan Africa, the bride's family requests from the groom's family cattle as a price for their daughter (Rwezaura, 1994). In Egypt, a recent study of five very poor villages carried out by the Ministry of Social Affairs and supported by UNICEF Egypt, (1999) found that young girls married with very old men from oil-rich Middle Eastern countries to help their families. Similarly, in Bangladesh early marriage is seen as a strategy for family survival where parents are persuaded to part with daughters through false marriages, which are used to lure the girls into prostitution abroad (Kabir, 1998).

To reduce early marriage among rural girls, the government should provide the educational facilities needed and launch campaigns to inform the public about the importance of girls' education; as reported by the World Bank (1995) educated women marry later. Also, a study conducted in Kenya Duflo et al., (2011) found that lowering school costs and providing free uniforms increased girls' continued education and as a consequence early marriage was reduced. The final factor that pushes rural parents to marry their daughter at an early age is, as stated by one dropped-out school girl's father, increasing the Islamic community, 'ummah'. He said,

It is good if our children get married early and have their children early as well. Early marriage is following Sunnah to increase ummah of Prophet Mohammed [peace upon him] and protect our daughters from any immoral behaviour… [Moha dropped-out schoolgirl's father, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]

In Morocco, as in many Arab/Islamic countries, early marriage is highly recommended

because some people believe that early marriage is a way to increase 'ummah' [the worldwide Muslim population] which is a symbol of strength. For Moha, early marriage is following Sunnah and protecting both boys and girls from having immoral relationships "*protecting our daughters from any immoral behaviour"* as Moha put it. According to Ayotola and Karim (2015), Islam encourages early marriage to protect the chastity of both men and (especially) women and to protect them from committing adultery. In Moroccan rural villages, girl child marriage is a common practice encouraged by both religious and social customs for its advantages, for example having many children who can help their parents when they get old, assist them in household chores and farm activities and uphold the name of the family. All these factors about early marriage do not necessarily harm individuals but when early marriage becomes a barrier and a practice that prevents girls from their basic entitlements, then it is necessary to intervene and defend girls' right not only in education but also in their full participation in society.

7.4.4 Islam and girls' education

According to Abuznaid (2006), religion might influence the political and educational system of any society. Morocco has the highest percentage of illiterate women in the Muslim world (Seager and Lewis, 2003). This high rate is the consequences of a number of factors. As discussed previously, early marriage, gender stereotypes, and preference for sons are all socio-cultural factors that decrease girls' schooling in marginalised rural communities. From data analysis another theme emerged which could also be considered a barrier to girls' education, the misinterpretation of Islam regarding girls' education.

> *Still Moroccan beliefs affect girls' education in these villages… Some people justified their attitudes that Islam comes to protect women and thus their right place is at home to look after children and do household chores…they link their traditional beliefs to Islam to justify their actions…this is not right! Islam encourages both women and men to go to school and get knowledge, that is why some people have to learn more about Islam and know what is in Quran and Sunna [Islamic law] [Laila NGO staff, Arabic face-to-face interview]*

> *Some people, unfortunately, interpreted religion in their own way and follow tradition and culture …they think that the right place for girls is staying at home and look after their husband and children… Islam encourages girls to get access to school and have knowledge the same way boys do and that there is no difference between men and women in seeking knowledge… [Kaoutar NGO staff, Arabic face-to-face interview]*

Religion is considered part of human activities for Muslims and all their behaviours are linked directly to Islamic law 'Sharia'. Laila and Kaoutar, bluntly stated that some people

have to understand the real message of Islam and what Oulama 'religious people' said about girls' education. Islam does not constrain Muslim girls from getting an education, and in Islam there is no preference based on sex in seeking knowledge as Kaoutar raised '*there is no difference between men and women in seeking knowledge*'. Some extremist groups' interpretation of Islam, unfortunately, is intermingled with popular culture and social traditions and beliefs. '*Some people justified their attitudes by saying that Islam comes to protect women and that their right place is at home to look after children and do household chores'* added Laila. These results are consistent to some extent with Khimish (2014, p. 134) who found that "there are always emphases that the social traditions and local customs are the main reason behind women's sufferings, rather than the religion itself". Khimish's view is also supported by Shah (2009) who said that:

> *The Islamic philosophy of education, or the Quranic teaching, may not be gender discriminatory, but the discourses that have been produced in articulation with multiple social, economic, political and cultural factors in different Muslim societies and legitimised in the name of religion, are often gendered.*
>
> *(pp. 132–133).*

For Laila and Kaoutar Islam comes to protect women's rights and urge them to seek knowledge the same way men do and there is no discrimination between them. Kaoutar said that some people's behaviours follow culture more than what Islam comes with. Their views are supported by Yaseen (2010, p. 64) who believes that "most of these practices [of discrimination] are based on culture and tradition, rather than religious beliefs". The Prophet Mohammed [God's peace and blessings be upon him] said: ''*every Muslim male and female, is requested to seek knowledge''*, thus both men and women are equal in having access to education regardless who they are and where they live. Similarly, Ahmed (1992) asserts that the Prophet Mohammed [God's peace and blessings be upon him] was concerned for women to get educated and urged them to go to the mosque and participate in their religion.

What was quite significant during the interview with Laila and Kaoutar was the examples they used to explain how Muslim women through history achieved victories and assisted in building society alongside with their male counterparts. Throughout history, women were active in all domains including Qur'anic interpretation and the transmission of traditions and they were also soldiers (Cooke, 2000). As Samier (2015, p. 244) argues, much of the destructive images and "negative stereotyping regarding women in Muslim countries [are] based on practices that issue from politics and culture", rather than representations of the Quran and Sunna (ibid). Laila and Kaoutar made a small recommendation that parents

should not follow religious interpretations which lack basis in the Quran and Sunna.

It is important to mention here that all non-Moroccan NGO participants refused to discuss anything in relation to religion, and upon their request I did not ask for further elucidation. It could be that it is policy of NGO to avoid discussion of religion and culture, as invasive steps by non-Muslim and non-indigenous participants could be interpreted as interference in the lives of the Berbers in these rural villages, and this could potentially spark tensions between NGO and families, cut necessary ties and the permissions for girls to attend school. Additionally, there is so much cross-over between culture and religion that it is hard for an outsider to differentiate between societal tradition and actual Islamic legislation concerning permissions and prohibitions. NGO, in attempts to ally themselves with these communities have to show respect for traditions in that elements of religion are present. There is a need, in this regard, for parents to be better acquainted with the pure teachings of Islam and the rights it affords girls, and the emphasis it places on education for all. The potential for this change can be perceived to come through the education of girls themselves, and for this knowledge to be disseminated, albeit slowly, to their families and communities.

7.5 Geographical Barriers

While analysing the data, the issues of security during the long distance to and from school and the lack of infrastructure and transport emerged as major themes related to the geographical barriers to girls' education across the participant groups.

7.5.1 Lack of security and long distance

The High Atlas schools are unreachable because of the poor infrastructure, and dirt roads are not always dependable. Unsurprisingly, most participants agreed that security and longer walks to and from school are serious obstacles for girls to pursue their education. The followings are some extracts from participants' interviews regarding the long distance between home and school:

> *My daughter was walking a long distance every day to reach to school. You know the village is not like city no security, no transport, no roads…in winter it was very difficult to reach school … We need schools near our home… [Hada dropped-out schoolgirl's mother, Tachelhit face- to- face interview]*
>
> *My daughter left school because it was very far to reach it, and it was not safe to walk this distance alone every day … [Said dropped-out schoolgirl's father, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*
>
> *It is very difficult to cross these mountains every day to reach school. Parents care more about the safety of their daughters than going to school that is why*

many girls who are living in mountains leave school very early [Sabah dropped-out schoolgirl, Arabic face-to-face interview]

School is far away …it is about seven kilometres away… and we have to walk every day. Also, arriving late to the class pushed many girls to stop to go to school because some teachers do not understand the conditions where girls of these villages live… For the past seven years, I was lucky because when I reached secondary school I moved to Asni village and with this NGO I lived near school with free accommodation and food... Thanks to God and to those people who helped me to finish my studies [Amina female learner, Arabic face-to-face interview]

School is very far… girls have to walk long distances every day to reach school…and walking alone in these mountains is not safe… [Ahmed female student's father, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]

It is difficult to reach school from these villages, girls have to walk miles every day to reach school and in winter roads are blocked which make it worse for them [Samiya female learner, Arabic face-to-face interview]

Really it is not easy to walk every day to school across mountains and rivers…a lot of girls left school because of these conditions [Noura female learner, Arabic face-to-face interview]

It is not safe for girls to go school by themselves in this village, school is very far [Kenza dropped-out schoolgirl's mother, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]

''Difficulties of physical access which badly affects girls more than boys. As mentioned earlier, the location of many of the villages makes it difficult to reach the towns, especially in winter when the roads may be blocked. It could take many hours and different types of transport to reach school from their villages. Additionally, there may be a long walk from their villages which may have no road access at all. (see UNESCO video, the case of Fatima)'' [Susan NGO staff, written response]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-URuglBdbV8 (UNESCO video)

Numerous issues were raised in the interviews with participants in relation to girls' education in the High Atlas villages. The geographical location of the villages affected not only girls' schooling but also the entire daily activities of Berber communities. Most participants agreed that long walks from their villages to reach school affected educational progress in general and girls' schooling in particular. They have associated the low rate of female schooling to the lack of nearby schools, and the long distances children have to walk every day to reach the nearest school. Some participants stressed that girls' failure to remain in schools has nothing to do with their personal choices or their families' decisions, but it was primarily related to the geographical location of their villages. The participants stated that in winter it became very hard for girls to cross the rivers or walk through mountains. Susan, NGO staff

said '*in winter when the roads may be blocked. It could take many hours and different types of transport to reach from their villages*'.

Therefore, many girls dropped-out after primary level. While talking about school distance in remote rural villages, a lack of security on the way to and from school raised parental fear for their daughters' safety, as Ahmed, a female student's father put it '*walking alone in these mountains is not safe'.* Thus, the walk to and from school can be intimidating. Most parents in the rural villages prefer to withdraw or not enrol their daughters at all to avoid unexpected problems.

7.5.2 Lack of infrastructures and transportation

According to Berlanga (2013), the High Atlas villages still endures serious limitations in terms of basic facilities. Schools are located several miles from some villages and children do not have any means of transport that can facilitate access to school, especially during winter time when heavy rain and snow isolates villages. The following are some extracts from participants' interviews in this regard.

> *It is not easy to study in these villages…girls have to wake up early in the morning to reach school. When I was in primary school I had to walk through the mountains to reach the school…cars cannot pass through these mountains. Also, it is not safe for girls to walk by themselves. That is why many girls left school… [Salima dropped-out school girl, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *Nothing changes… every year the same… every year the same… we are living in isolation. In winter, snow surrounds all mountains and prevents people from going to work for months. Rivers get flooded with no way to reach the main road. We suffer too much in winter, that is why I left school [Aya dropout-school girl, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *Winter means isolation in these mountains…in recent years Morocco has known waves of severe cold reaching -10 degrees, and to reach school, students of these villages have to walk long distances every day which affects their concentration and their outcome…that is why most of girls dropped out school after primary level [Laila NGO staff, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *Transport is not available and girls have to walk long distances to reach school. My daughter left school because I do not want her to face any problem on the way y because it is not safe [Saida female learner's mother, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*
>
> *I cannot tell you how is life in these villages in winter …when it snows everything is blocked…children do not go to school and what becomes important is only the basic needs to survive, food and some wood for heating… [Bashir female learner's father, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*

Laila was keen to present a comprehensive image of how life looks in the Atlas villages in winter. She lived almost all her life in the High Atlas Mountains and she knows the price children have to pay every day to reach school. Saida, dropped-out schoolgirl's mother, shared the same view as Laila and added that a lack of transport in these villages affected educational attainment. Ali's view, dropped-out schoolgirl's father, was the strongest criticism of life in the Atlas villages. When basic needs such as food and heating are lacking, education becomes a luxury that is hard to get. Ali, like many parents, cannot afford extra expenses for education. Furthermore, Salima, dropped-out schoolgirl, added it was hard to walk long-distances every day. '*When I was in primary school I had to walk through the mountains to reach the school…cars cannot pass through these mountains'*. According to Berlanga (2013), the levels of development between urban and rural areas of Morocco are different. Rural mountainous areas constitute the highest poverty levels and the hardest living conditions, and although these rural mountainous areas cover 21% of the national territory, they have been marginalised by public authorities and have very few facilities and infrastructure in contrast with urban and semi-urban areas (Berriane, 2002b cited in Berlanga, 2013). As mentioned earlier, Susan described how the location of villages and lack of transport made school access difficult especially for girls '*the location of many of the villages makes it difficult to reach the towns, especially in winter when the roads may be blocked…' 'there may be a long walk from their villages which may have no road access at all'*. Susan summarised girls' education in the Atlas villages through a UNESCO video ''Fatima's journey to school'' where pictures speak louder than words.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-URuglBdbV8

Although in recent years, some efforts have been made to build roads and provide access to needed facilities, still a large number of communities do not have access to the main resources. Consequently, people in rural settings suffer from both public authority neglect and the geography. According to a United Nations report, the top priorities of the rural world are electricity, access to drinking water and roads because the shortage of a basic infrastructure results in higher poverty levels (UNDP, 2000: 16-18). This research study shows that the geographic location of the High Atlas villages has had a dramatic effect on girls' education and had tremendous potential for increasing gender disparities in education in rural areas.

7.6 School-Based Barriers

The final theme that emerged from the interviews is school-based barriers. Analysis of data from participant interviews revealed that teachers' behaviours and classroom environment, a lack of female teachers and school infrastructures (toilets, tables, books, heating and classroom supplies) are the main school-based barriers that impede girls' education in rural High Atlas villages.

7.6.1 Teachers' behaviour and the school environment

Teachers' behaviour and the school environment, were described in different ways by the respondents, such as teachers' authority, teachers' role, teachers' responsibility, school second home, and were responsible for the high drop-out rates among girls in the High Atlas villages.The following extracts show participants' viewpoints regarding teachers' behaviour and the school environment. Majda said:

> *R: We need teachers who listen to us, a teacher who understands our conditions and not a teacher who criticises everything we do and gives us punishment for nothing…you know that the majority no…no… almost all the teachers who are teaching in these villages come from cities and obviously their life style is different from the life style of people who are living in villages...I left the school because one day I came late to class, it was morning class in winter and my teacher asked me why I was late I said that the road was slippery and I could not walk faster, and the punishment I got was to stand up outside the classroom for more than half an hour…I could not stand up that long and without asking permission from my teacher I went back home. It was very cold!! [long silence] … This was just one of many other incidents happened to me when I was in the school.*
>
> *I: can you tell me what happened after?*
>
> *R: On the following day, when I went to school my teacher did not allow me to enter the classroom and asked me to bring one of my parents or my big brother, what happened because my father does not speak Arabic he asked our neighbour [may God bless him] to come with me because because he speaks Arabic to explain to my teacher I will not be late in future…Unfortunately every time I came late I faced the same punishment… I also want to add that our teacher was pressuring students to buy all school stuff and it was not allowed to share one book between two students because we need books to do homework. This was another problem that pushed me to leave school because it was very expensive to buy all school stuff…*
>
> *I: what was the reaction of your family when you decided to leave the school?*
>
> *R: my parents are illiterate so education does not mean much to them…and for my mother she needed me to help her in the household activities…*

I: Interviewer, R: Respondent

Majda's interview was the longest interview among all participants. She was very talkative and talked freely about the different barriers that prevented her from continuing her education. Being the first time she was being interviewed, Majda considered this interview an opportunity to convey a message to decision-makers in the Ministry of Education in Morocco. She was happy to share her own experiences and expose the real picture of education in rural villages. In rural Morocco, Majda's experience is far from rare '*…there are hundreds of girls suffering in silence…*' Majda was keen to provide all kinds of support to her daughters in order to make up for what she has missed.

Majda's revealed a key point that may threaten girls' schooling in the rural settings. She said: '*…the punishment I got was to stand up outside the classroom for more than half an hour… it was very cold, very cold!!...'.* Corporal punishment by teachers has serious consequences on students' academic performance and in the long run, it may have serious psychological and emotional effects and lead to an increase in the probability of deviance. Aucoin et al., (2006) and Romeo (1996) argue that physical punishment leads to emotional and psychological harm. Majda's case is consistent to some extent with what occurs in some Kenyan schools where corporal punishment takes many forms such as twisting students' ears and pinching them or slapping them on the head or back. Sometimes teachers use sticks as canes to hit students on the palms or backside (Mweru, 2010). In a recent study, Tiwari (2019) reports that the Arab culture, which is characterised by traditional collectivist values, supports the use of punishment at schools as a kind of discipline to help them to concentrate on their studies. However, more frequently corporal punishment has negative consequences and to instil character in students, teachers should refrain from any physical punishment when dealing with students. Like Majda, Salima commented on how teachers' behaviour in the classroom was the key factor behind her decision to leave school. She said:

> *R: A teacher should be a model for students, especially young students because they are still young and they need a good person to teach them how to be good students and how to feel good about yourself, unfortunately some teachers did not know how to deal with students, I mean how to be good example for them [Salima dropout schoolgirl]*
>
> *I: Can you explain this a bit further with some examples?*
>
> *R: When I was in school I was not good at Maths and French language; not only me but many students, and when I gave a wrong answer my teacher did not correct my mistakes and did not guide me, rather [he, she] just started looking at me for long time, and many times I had corporal punishment if I did not complete my homework [long silence]……nobody helped me at home my parents are illiterate… in the classroom we did not have the chance to talk freely because we were afraid to give the wrong answer, the teacher was the person who was talking almost all the time and students were*

listeners…in my opinion, the teacher should encourage students inside the classroom and outside the classroom, not criticise and discourage them…I know my level was weak but if my teacher helped me I would do better.

I: Interviewer, R: Respondent

It seems clear that teachers' attitudes and behaviour affected not only the performance of the students but also their personalities. According to Carr (2000), teachers, regardless of what they are teaching, have a moral role to play in education, and teachers' behaviour could have lasting negative effects on students' psychology. In fact, not only Majda and Salima reported that teachers' misdemeanours and the rural school's atmosphere were barriers behind girls' drop-out high rates, but Malik and Laila also shared this opinion with Majda and Salima.

We need urgent interventions to teach teachers how to behave with students andgirls in particular in the classroom and outside classroom…unfortunately it is not only in villages that we find such kind of issues but in other Moroccan schools as well [Malik NGO staff, Arabic face-to-face interview]

Malik believes that the misbehaviours of some teachers is not restricted to rural areas, but it is a wide-spread phenomenon affecting students in other schools in Morocco. In Morocco, like many developing countries, unfortunately less attention is given to investigate teachers' behaviour and its impact on the psychology of the learners because the teacher is a role model for students. Kaplan and Maehr (1999) point out that the role of the teacher is not only delivering the course but it is more about developing positive interaction which is extremely important for students' psychological well-being. Daniels (2011) suggests an example that might be an effective method to increase motivation in the classroom and improve the relationship between the teacher and students. Greeting students in the door makes students feel their teacher is more approachable and shows them that their teachers are interested in their matters and in turn, students behave better. Laila had another opinion concerning teachers' behaviour and the school environment in rural villages. For Laila, '*schools in rural villages are like farms without fence'.* From her viewpoint teachers are free to do whatever they like and nobody can judge their behaviour or follow up their work. Laila described rural teachers:

Coming to class regularly and on time and being well informed about the students' matters, this is what a teacher should do. Unfortunately, this does not exist in rural schools in these villages. The rate of absence among the teachers in the rural schools is very high and there is no supervision or follow up to control their actions. They take holidays whenever they want and sometimes without any justification. Also, I want to say that the quality of teaching is not good and this affects students' learning outcomes and as a result the majority of students leave school at an early age, mainly girls who already suffer from other barriers. To be honest, I do not blame teachers, I

do not blame teachers at all…I blame those responsible in the education sector because they do not pay any attention to the rural schools and they do not care about the quality of teaching or what teachers do and what students learn… [Laila NGO staff, Arabic face-to-face interview]

Laila's viewpoint revealed an important fact hidden by the high mountains. In addition to teachers' behaviours, in rural schools teachers teach less hours than their counterparts in urban schools. Very often, any trip away from the villages may involve long journeys and involve missed school days and as a consequence, students' outcomes decreased overall and their absence rates increased. Moreover, as Laila said *'the quality of teaching is not good'*. This means that in rural schools there is a lack of qualified teachers which negatively affected learners' achievements, as Monk (2007) states rural schools have less qualified teachers. Lifanda et al., (2004) and UNICEF (1999) agree that in rural schools there are issues not only with the quantity of available materials but also the quality and content of the materials. Perceptions about girls' schooling barriers in rural villages were diverse. Kenza, a dropout school girl's mother, argued that teachers should be more tolerant when dealing with students.

Teachers should be tolerant with students who are living in villages because the conditions of life in villages are different from cities [Kenza dropped-out schoolgirl's mother, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]

Tolerance, according to Kenza, is understanding the circumstances of rural life and the challenging school conditions. Teachers are invaluable in the success or failure of students because their attitudes and understanding are important for creating a safe environment, an essential factor to support students in their school progress (Irwin, 1999). Therefore, a lack of these values encourages students especially girls to drop out of school at an early age. Irwin (1999) adds that regardless of race, gender and cultural background, the provision of a favourable environment for students is the prime main duty teachers have to take into consideration, especially while dealing with female students because they have less chance to continue their schooling than boys do.

7.6.2 Lack of female teachers

A lack of female teachers in rural schools affects girls' schooling. The following extracts from participants discuss this.

When parents know there is a female teacher in the school, it becomes easier to convince them and use these teachers as an example to motivate them to believe that education is the future and without education, we cannot live different life…. I think we need more female teachers in these villages

> *because female teachers understand female students and help them if they have any problem at school or even personal matters… [Hiba female learner, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *Teaching is a responsibility. Teachers are role models, they have a big influence on students, and I think if we have more female teachers, parents will not fear to send their daughters to school [Noura female learner, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *When I was in primary school, there were only male teachers …if there were female teachers that would be a big support and also having a female teacher in the classroom gives a sense of security because at that age girls needed a teacher and a mother[laugh]… when we see female teachers at school we feel that there is no difference between male and female [Samiya female learner, Arabic face-to-face interview]*

According to Kane (2004), financial barriers alone cannot account for poor participation of girls in education, rather there are other factors that should be taken into consideration. Female teachers in rural schools is an additional factor that might assist girls to continue their education, and as Bernard (2002) points out the presence of female teachers in rural schools can help to make the school environment safer for girls. The 3 female students agreed that raising the number of female teachers in rural schools would be an effective strategy to create gender equality in education. For them, when there is the presence of a female teacher, girls feel comfortable and parents are encouraged to send their daughters to school. Samiya mentioned that a female teacher is like a mother figure in the sense that a mother is closer to her daughters than their father. Her view is supported by Dee (2005) who believes that both male and female students are more likely to be seen as disruptive by teachers of the other sex. With female teachers, girls can discuss private matters which is not possible with male teachers. '*because female teachers understand female students and help them if they have any problem at school or even personal matters.* Hiba added:

> *Providing female teachers in rural villages is a challenge…because the lifestyle in villages is different from cities, but I believe if schools in villages have more female teachers girls' participation will be increased [Rose NGO staff, English face-to-face interview]*
>
> *A female teacher is considered as a role model for a lot of female students especially in rural villages where gender discrimination is high. I believe that the classroom interaction is also important and if there is a female teacher in the classroom girls become more active than with male teacher [Machiala NGO staff, English face-to-face interview]*

According to Butler and Christiansen (2003), dropout rates are lower among girl students taught by female teachers. Dee (2005, p. 159) and Anderson (1988) state that the sex of a teacher also affects teacher-students' collaboration. Female teachers are considered as 'role

models' to girls by being inclusive, supportive and providing advice to girls more than male teachers do. Certainly, female teachers are needed, not only as source of encouragement and to provide advice to girls but also to serve as stimulating models who would raise motivation and inspiration among girls, and importantly to assure parents that their daughters are in safe hands. Guessous (2013) believes that promoting education among rural girls starts by increasing the role of women to inspire women. She calls for an increase in the number of female teachers in rural schools, women in education management and in positions of decision-making in the Ministry of Education in Morocco. In a similar vein, the Education for all Global Report (2003) agrees that in countries where a large percentage of school teachers are women, the enrolment percentage among girls has consistently increased. The report further emphasises that the presence of female teachers also has the effect of making parents feel more secure about sending their daughters to school. Therefore, providing facilities and compensation to female teachers to attract them to these positions and remain in rural areas could be effective strategies that should be taken into consideration.

7.6.3 School costs and lack of physical facilities

Improving learning and reducing costs in rural schools could significantly raise enrolment rates among marginalised students and assist them to complete their education. The following participants shed light on how school costs and the lack of the basic facilities in rural schools affected girls' education.

> *My daughter left school because we could not afford school expenses … [Rahma dropped-out schoolgirl's mother, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*
>
> *School means extra expenses and with my limited income I could not afford all my children's school expenses … [Hado, dropped-out schoolgirl's father, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*
>
> *As I said before, if we had the capacity to send all our children to school we would do that but school needs accommodation, food, school supplies and many other needs [Lahsen, dropped-out schoolgirl's father, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*

The harsh financial conditions in rural villages pushed many girls to drop-out of school at an early age. The analysis of the interview data indicates that there is a direct link between school costs and families' income affecting drop-out rates. In Malawi, for instance, a research study showed that between grades 1 and 2, both male and female students said girls dropped out of education primarily because of high school fees. As shown in the extracts, parents could not afford to send all their children to school because of the school expenses, and as a consequence girls were excluded from pursuing their schooling. Hanchett (2008)

believes that eliminating school fees for poor people or underwriting their costs through efforts like scholarships, providing bicycles for those who live far from schools, or creating micro-enterprise development projects could encourage and help low-income families to send their children to school and lower the dropout rates. Boyle et al., (2002) believe that for both the poorest and slightly better off groups, the costs of education, either direct or indirect, are the main reasons given for children never having attended school.

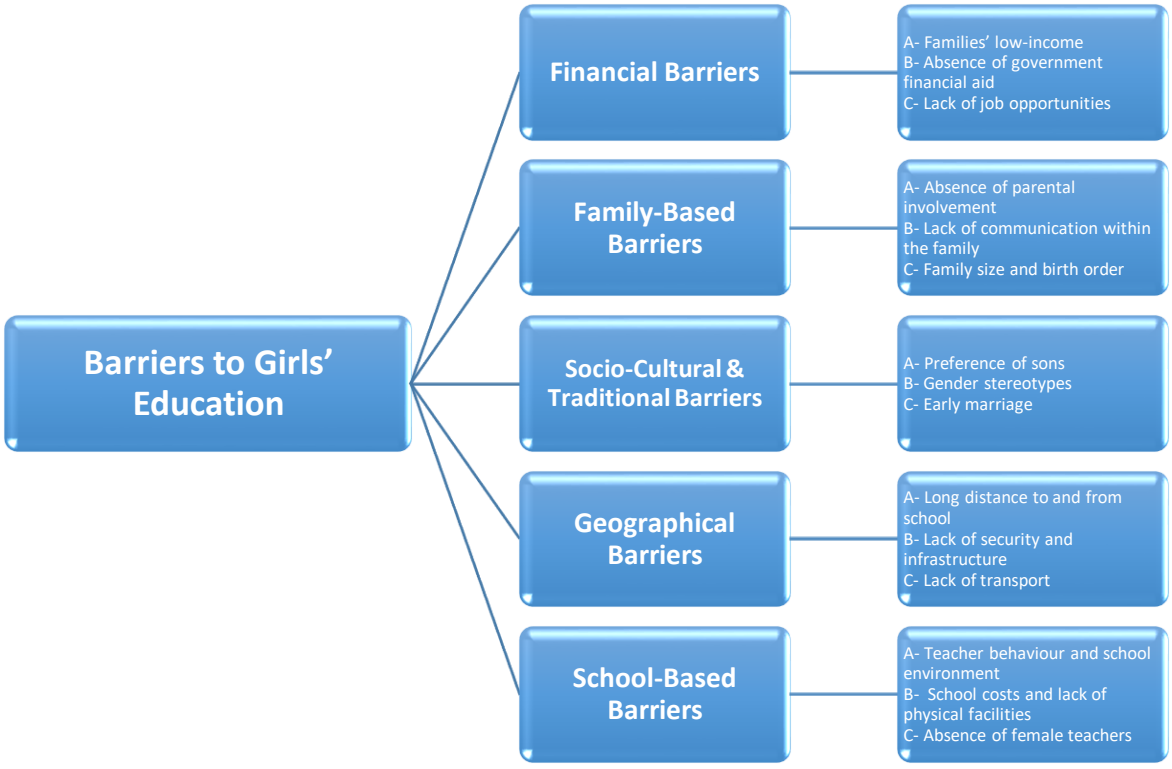
The final sub-theme emerged from school-based barriers addresses the absence of physical facilities in rural schools. Safina, Aya, Laila and Kaoutar reported that lack of separate toilets, heating, school supplies and the situation of crowded classrooms decreased girls' schooling in rural villages. According to Safina:

> *There are few toilets at schools for both boys and girls… this is a problem for girls because we do not have privacy and sometimes girls do not use these toilets to avoid any problem [Safina female student, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *There is no heating in the classroom, winter here is very cold… snow covers mountains and the roads get blocked. I still remember in winter when I was in primary school, we used to bring our own wood fuel to the classroom even when the distance was far [Aya dropout schoolgirl, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *If you want to know the classrooms where students study you have to come yourself and see the leaky roofs, broken doors and windows and the worst is most of the times there are two levels in one classroom… really schools in rural villages discourage not only girls but also boys… [Laila NGO staff, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *Besides other issues and challenges, rural schools are not equipped with the basic facilities. This condition affects girls more than boys because parents do not trust their daughters to use shared toilets [Kaoutar NGO staff, Arabic face-to-face interview]*

In Morocco's rural schools, for example, the lack of separate toilets is considered a serious issue as the majority of parents lose confidence over sending their daughters to school because there are no separate toilets which they consider may lead to physical or sexual assault. The four participants Safina, Aya, Laila and Kaoutar agreed that the crowded classrooms, the lack of separate toilets, heating, school supplies and the poor conditions of the classrooms discouraged girls from attending school regularly. Their viewpoints are supported by Lifanda et al., (2004) and Herz et al., (1991) who believe that the insufficiency of physical facilities in rural schools such as separate toilets, running water and other sanitary facilities may discourage girls from attending school regularly and increase their dropout rates. They believe that during menstruation periods, a large number of girls miss school because of a lack of sanitary towels and separate toilets.

Summary

This chapter has presented and discussed the first set of the study's findings, which comprise the thematic analysis results of the interview data. The respondents' views have produced five main barriers that could justify the high dropout rates among girls in rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains. Girls' educational barriers in marginalised areas are serious issues that prevent the development of the Third World countries and prevent girls from their rights to education. Therefore, all stakeholders, those responsible in the Education sector, parents and the various agencies (e.g. UNESCO, NGOs, UNICEF, World Bank, ISESCO and United Nations) should collaborate in order to reduce these barriers and create social justice in education for all citizens. Below is an overview of the findings.



Chapter Eight: Findings and Discussion of the Second Research Question – Thematic Analysis of Interview Data

8.1 Overview

The previous Chapter's findings discussed a variety of factors that prevent rural girls from completing their secondary education. This Chapter moves on to a discussion of the second and final set of study findings. In order to facilitate the presentation of themes, this Chapter is organised according to a thematic analysis of the collected data as identified by the researcher and NVivo Programme10, through examining transitions, repetitions, similarities and differences, and theory-related material (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). Additionally, quotations are provided from the dataset as illustrative examples and evidence alongside relevant theory to answer the second research question:

Research Question 2:

What are the perceptions of female learners, dropped-out schoolgirls, parents of learners and dropped-out schoolgirls and NGO staff with regard to NGO interventions to reduce girls' educational barriers in three rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains?

> *a) What has been done by this NGO?*
> *b) What is the effectiveness of this NGO's efforts to reduce girls' barriers to education?*

An accumulation of various barriers decreases girls' chances to continue their education, which was illustrated through the responses of participants in the previous chapter. This chapter presents and discusses the interventions and effectiveness of an NGO in supporting girls' education and promoting gender equality. An analysis of the dataset reveals the emergence of three main themes that significantly contribute to shape the viewpoints of participants and shed light on the second research question. The first theme looks at NGO interventions with the focus on financial support; the second theme examines NGO interventions that focus on academic support and the third theme discusses NGO interventions that aim to enhance girls' capabilities and change social norms. The chapter concludes with a summary.

8.2 NGO Interventions that Focus on Financial Support

8.2.1 The provision of boarding houses

According to participants' viewpoints, the provision of boarding houses for rural village girls has assisted many of them to continue their education. All female learners reported that NGO boarding houses were the main contributor to their move from the village provision of primary education to the following stage of their secondary education where they began to make connections with the outside world. Zahra, Noura, Hiba and Samiya were four female learners who made the following observations:

> *Without this boarding house, I could not be able to pursue my education. This house gives me the opportunity to develop my knowledge and work hard to get good marks. Here we do not need to worry about cleaning the house or washing clothes, the only thing we need to do is study hard to move to another level of study [Zahra female learner, English face-to-face interview]*
>
> *This boarding house gives me a chance to finish my high school in safe and comfortable conditions. It gives me chance to meet people from different countries and spend a nice time with them. In addition, I literally live within walking distance of my school and house [Noura female learner, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *This boarding house is my second home, I spend most of my time here. We have a lot of activities besides our study and this gives me a chance to get involved in different activities and gain new knowledge. This boarding house is a place where we meet girls from different villages and where we can share our thoughts and ideas to improve our capacities [Hiba female student, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *We learn a lot of things here, it is not only a place to continue our formal education. We build our character and learn to make our own decisions and to take responsibility. God' willing, after my exams I will be able to continue my education at the university. [Samiya female student, Arabic face-to-face interview]*

All female students expressed positive attitudes towards the provision of the NGO boarding houses which allowed them to continue their studies in a safe and supportive environment. They asserted that without these boarding houses it would not be possible to move to the secondary level of education. They added that the boarding houses were not only a place to sleep and eat but also a social space where they could share their experiences and develop a greater variety of academic and personal skills. This finding correlates with the study by Bista and Cosstick (2005) which sought to highlight the role and influence of boarding houses. This study has found that the boarding house setting is not only a place where students who are from disadvantaged communities and from different places gather and live;

it is, more so, a place where students can improve aspects of their academic, cultural and social life and build their self-confidence.

The boarding house atmosphere is also seen to be a place where students' personalities are forged to enable them to engage with new challenges and be instrumental in the development of their communities. Naylor (2009) points out that students' engagement and interaction with others can increase their resilience, and that living with other students is important to social development and well-being (Audin, 2003). In addition, the boarding environment is an ideal setting for promoting the development of young people by teaching a range of skills that focus on social and emotional competence, such as communication, controlling emotions and impulses, and handling responsibilities (Anderson, 2005; Hawkes, 2001; Holgate, 2007; White, 2004). According to Shah (2011); Jones et al., (2015a); Willemsen (2016), residence in boarding houses for rural girls means they are able to reduce their time spent on house work which allows them to focus on their studying. By doing this, girls can improve their academic skills because they have more time to concentrate on their studies.

In addition, the provision of boarding houses can decrease girls' educational barriers and increase gender equality in the home rural settings where their free movement outside of the home is not permitted and gives them security and protection. Statistical data from the Moroccan National Government has shown that building boarding houses is a significant approach to helping girls from poor marginalised families to access secondary school (Muskin et al. 2011). Safina, a female student, in her response about the NGO provision of financial support, raised another viewpoint when she talked about '*reciprocal benefits*'. In order to more fully understand her perspective and further clarify, probes were used by the interviewer.

> *I: Can you tell me what you mean by reciprocal benefits?*
>
> *R: This organisation reached poor people to voice their concerns and needs by supporting girls in their schooling, and to do this they need sustained financial income to build and run the boarding houses, provide daily meals, transport and other stuff. To support all these, they established their own business in the High Atlas region and through this business they can run their intervention and at the same time get personal benefits through their business.*
>
> *I: Can you give me some examples to illustrate what you mean by reciprocal benefits?*
>
> *R: Their business is based on tourism. Having a business in the High Atlas Mountains near 'Jabaal Toubkal' Toubkal Mountain, which is one of the most visited and busiest touristic destination in Morocco, helped both this*

organisation to maintain financial support for girls' education in these villages, and at the same time benefitted them from the local labour.

I: in your opinion, do you think this is a reasonable approach?

R: Yes! It is a smart idea. We wish people who are running their business in rural settings could help girls in those places to continue their education that would be 'Sadaka Jaria' [continuous charity]

I: Interviewer, R: Respondent.

Female learners' parents shared the same views as their daughters and added:

Without this boarding house, my daughter would never have been able to continue her studies [Rabha female learner's mother, Tachelhit face-to-face interview].

Her journey to the boarding house is a safe one now; before girls were not able to move from this Douar [village] [Saad female learner's father, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]

This organisation provided what the government failed to do for girls in these rural villages. These people[NGO] built boarding houses for girls where they can have free food and transportation at the weekend. Thank you to this organisation. My daughter can study now in good conditions, now she is nearly ready to finish and move to university [Aicha female learner's mother, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]

Without this boarding house, my daughter would not have been able to continue her education. We are not able to finance her study because secondary school means she has had to move to a town or city elsewhere, and this not in our capacity. Alhamdulillah [Praise to God] now we do not need to worry about her study because of the support of this organisation [Bachir female learner's father, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]

My daughter can live in a safe place with reliable people…she has free food and at the end of the week they provide buses for girls to take them back to their villages; these people have given many girls in these villages the chance to continue their education [Fatma female learner's mother, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]

When there is a trustworthy provision of education facilities, families feel justified in going against tradition and cultural norms; once girls begin to benefit from the provision of facilities their education rises in value and they attain status in the eyes of their community. All participant responses from female learners' parents showed a positive attitude towards NGO boarding house provisions because the overall environment had assisted their daughters to settle in and facilitated improvements in girls' studies. Before this intervention, many factors, especially the lack of security and financial income, meant girls had not been allowed to move to another town where education was provided, where they were required

to live independently, but now they felt justified in sending their daughters to other towns since they had the opportunity to live in these NGO boarding houses.

In Mongolia and Malawi, for example, a research study shows that rural parents are more likely to encourage girls than boys to continue schooling because they perceive that boarding houses offer personal protection and education that ensures their daughters' future jobs prospects (Bista and Cosstick, 2005). Mouna and Farah, two dropped-out schoolgirls explained why many rural girls dropped out of school after the primary level of education.

> *These boarding houses are the source of hope for many girls in these villages. Before it was very difficult for them to move to another town or city to continue their secondary school because of the limited income of their parents and besides other social constraints which assist in widen the gap between boys and girls [Mouna dropped-out schoolgirl, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *As I said before, if the government provided good accommodations for girls I would not have left the school…this organisation did what the government should have done. Now, and thanks to these boarding houses many girls can be able to continue their education in good conditions [Farah dropped-out schoolgirl, Arabic face-to-face interview]*

Said, Ali and Hada, three dropped-out schoolgirls' parents agreed with Mouna and Farah:

> *With the help of this organisation, many girls now can continue their education [Said dropped-out schoolgirl's father, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*
>
> *This organisation provides a safe place where girls can live and study. Thanks to God these boarding houses helped a lot of girls to continue their education [Ali dropped-out schoolgirl's father, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*
>
> *Because of this organisation many girls can move to another town and live with other girls in safe conditions [Hada dropped-out schoolgirl's mother, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]*

Evidently, the insufficiency of boarding houses in Moroccan rural villages has impeded many girls from completing their education. The majority of participants explained that distance from school and absence of the secondary level in their villages were contributing factors to girls' high drop-out rates. Mouna and Farah are examples of many rural girls who left school after primary level education because their families would not have been able to afford their school expenses if they had moved to live in independent lodgings in another town. Both of them agreed that the provision of boarding houses in the High Atlas towns greatly assisted in increasing girls' staying on in education and reduced their dropout rates.

Furthermore, parents agreed with their daughters and added that these NGO boarding houses brought positive change to girls' education.

Laila and Kaoutar, two NGO staff originating from the High Atlas villages had viewpoints from their own differing experiences. They talked about these experiences when they were in primary level education and the different challenges they faced in the absence of female boarding house provision near their villages. Laila said:

> *When I was at secondary level, no boarding houses were available for girls to continue their education. I was lucky because I had my relatives who hosted me when I was in my secondary and high school… Now it is a blessing from God to have these boarding houses in these villages…girls can pursue their education in a safe environment [Laila NGO staff, Arabic face-to-face interview]*

The same view was expressed by Kaoutar:

> *Life in these villages was different…there were not enough facilities for girls to complete their education…when I reached secondary school level I was obliged to either leave school because secondary level was not provided in my village or move to another town or city to complete my study. Due to financial issues, I could not rent a home on my own. The last option I had was to stay with my relatives to complete my secondary level. I think boarding houses in villages are the most important facilities to assist girls to complete their education [Kaoutar NGO staff, Arabic face- to- face interview]*

Laila and Kaoutar's viewpoints, extracted from their own experiences, showed when local secondary schools were not available it was difficult for rural girls to continue their studies. Kaoutar was lucky enough to have relatives who hosted her to continue her secondary school. Yet, still many conservative rural families refuse to allow their daughters to stay where there are boys present, even if they are their relatives. This is, again, another social and cultural norm, which has restricted the rights, opportunities, and capabilities of rural girls and caused significant discrimination leading to the diminution of their status in their society. Kaoutar's view was in consistent with what was reported about the socio-cultural barriers to girls' education by Salima, a dropped-out schoolgirl: "*I am not allowed to stay away from home before marriage; this is not acceptable in our tradition, especially when relatives have boys"*. Amar and Malik, two NGO staff, discussed the consequences of the absence of government educational interventions in the High Atlas villages, which leads to widening the gap between rural and urban provision of male and female education.

> *How come the government wants all children to enrol in schools and continue their education without preparing the conditions and providing facilities for these rural learners? The question is, people in authority and with responsibility in government have to take into consideration that achieving*

education for all in Morocco should start by providing for basic equal needs for all students in all part of the country and the focus should be more on supporting girls' schooling in marginalised villages where people are suffering more. This can work only if there is clear vision and designed plan. We do our best but the main work should be done by the government [Amar NGO staff, Arabic face-to-face interview]

The few available government lodgings were not enough for students in High Atlas villages. I am talking now only about this area because High Atlas Mountains is a huge area and the needs of support are needed more and more… that is why when we created this organisation in 2007, the top priority was to build new accommodation to give chances to rural girls to continue their education. The government should support all Moroccan students and not only students who are living in big cities…rural girls need many things to complete their education and accommodation is one of these where girls can live because there are no schools near their houses…serious actions should be taken to alleviate these problems in these villages [Malik NGO staff, Arabic face-to-face interview]

The Moroccan government shoulders ultimate responsibility of ensuring that all learners have access to the basic learning needs to complete their education. According to the World Bank (2011), in order to support the poorest students in Moroccan rural villages, investments under the control of the government are needed in the many areas that indirectly affect education, including infrastructure. However, so far the government has failed to upgrade infrastructure in rural areas and to direct equal educational investments throughout the country. The government promised to reduce the cost of schooling to parents of limited income, to build schools that were more accessible for villages, and provide girls with subsidies for school uniforms or food programmes, and provide scholarships for girls to attend boarding school where local secondary schools were unavailable. Unfortunately, none of these promises has yet come to fruition, and the situation in rural provision of schools remains unchanged and girls' needs outlined in the Education For All programme are still not being met.

Even though the Moroccan government has established new projects that aim to ensure the entire population has equal school access, this study aims to show that the real needs are not being met and significant gaps remain between urban and rural students, and indeed between males and females in rural villages beyond the level of primary education. Amar emphasises that in the absence of rational educational policies and well-designed strategies to support rural students, proposed educational reforms in Morocco will not fully succeed. He claims that to date the government has not used all its strategic power to support girls' education in these marginalised villages, and consequently the High Atlas region still has the country's highest illiteracy among girls of school age (UNESCO, 2012). Susan, an NGO staff member,

stated in her written response that the capacity of the NGO boarding provision houses a maximum of 40 girls, whereas government boarding houses have a capacity for upward of 200 girls. This significantly shows the compromise in policy of provision where rural female learners live and the challenges they face in the pursuit of their dreams of obtaining an education. The findings of this research are, therefore, an appeal to education policy-makers at grassroots and regional level, as well as the Ministry of Education in Morocco to assess the deficiencies revealed through these findings, to perform a reality-check in education provision and to take urgent action in the remote rural areas of deficiency within schooling provision for minority Berber girls.

8.2.2 NGO boarding houses versus government boarding houses

Many factors have prevented rural Berber girls from completing their education, and the condition of available government boarding houses emerged as only one of several barriers for rural girls' educational attendance. While discussing the role of the NGO boarding houses and their effectiveness in increasing girls' school attendance, a majority of the respondents seized the opportunity to report the conditions of the government boarding houses in the High Atlas towns. Their descriptions were a criticism of where girls live and study. Despite the importance of education, the government does not give attention to ameliorating the conditions of rural students' conditions of living and study, according to the responses of the majority of participants in this study. For them, boarding house is not a source of encouragement to continue their education. This study does not investigate the government's interventions to support rural girls' education, but it is hoped that through these findings further studies can examine the Moroccan government's interventions to support girls' education in rural settings. Also, attention needs to be paid to the quality of services provided as well as quantity to ensure that marginalised learners have the basic requirements they need to continue their education. In a discussion of government boarding houses, and to gain more informative detail, I used the probing technique with my participants and as ''the goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied'' (Creswell, 2014 p. 8).

Participants were asked for a description of their government boarding houses. The following are some of the probing questions that were employed: *Can you describe the government boarding houses in these towns? What is the difference between the condition of the NGO and the government boarding houses*? *Can you tell me why the majority of parents have no confidence to send their daughters to government boarding houses?* Below

is an excerpt from my interview with Hiba, a female student living in one NGO boarding house.

> *I: You have mentioned that the government boarding house is not a good place for girls to live in, why?*
>
> *R: Because many girls complain about living conditions in the public accommodation*
>
> *I: Can you describe the public boarding houses?*
>
> *R: No heating, no shower rooms, no food, no hall directors who can look after girls in dormitories. In one room there are many girls and this affects their learning progress. For me, if I did not get a place in this boarding house I would not accept a place in the government boarding house.*
>
> *I: But as I can see, the house is full?*
>
> *R: Yes! they are obliged because there is no alternative, and they cannot walk more than two hours every day to reach school.*
>
> *I: Can you tell me why these girls are not living in this boarding house as well?*
>
> *R: Because at this boarding house places are limited*
>
> *I: You have mentioned the word safety. What do you mean by this?*
>
> *R: In the public boarding houses there are no hall directors who can look after the residents, no regular inspections to ensure safe dormitories, no maintenance services such as plumbing, electricians, in case there is an emergency. In short, it is very difficult to live in these government boarding houses.*

I: Interviewer, R: Respondent

The same attitude was expressed by Amani:

> *We are living near a public boarding house. A huge difference between the two houses…in this public boarding house, students lack all kinds of support and facilities to assist them in their studies…there is no heating, no study rooms where they can revise their homework, no proper beds, no boarding house policies, no food and nobody makes an investigation [Amani female learner, Arabic face to-face-interview]*

Hiba and Amani described the government boarding houses in the High Atlas towns according to their own observations. Hiba said that the majority of female learners in the government boarding houses were obliged to live there because they had no other choice. They chose to continue their studies even the conditions were not conducive. Hiba's viewpoint showed how students in the government boarding houses struggled to continue their education. The same opinion was expressed by Salima, Majda and Sabah, three dropped-out schoolgirls:

In the public boarding houses, there is no heating, no facilities, and no hall directors to can look after students and guide them in their studies [Salima dropped-out schoolgirl, Arabic face-to-face interview]

No surprise! we are living in rural villages [strong voice] nobody pay attention to students who are living in these villages…nobody comes to check these houses and see where students live. I think if students both boys and girls leave school this is because they do not find the motivation and the safe environment for continuing their education [Majda dropped-out schoolgirl, Arabic face-to-face interview]

The conditions of studying in the government boarding houses can only be described as hopeless. Students do not have even proper beds where they can sleep, windows are broken, no heating, no hall directors, no food… [Sabah dropped-out schoolgirl, Arabic face-to-face interview]

The following extracts are drawn from dropped-out schoolgirls' parents and NGO staff:

We want our daughters to be in safe hands…in the public boarding houses there is no security…no body there to look after them, we do not know what happen there, my young daughter left this house because she got depression and she could not finish her study…and in boarding houses places are limited for students [Lahsen dropped-out schoolgirl's fathers, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]

The government should build boarding houses like the ones built by this NGO. In this house girls have free food every day and there are people who look after them and live with them in the same place so I do not worry about my daughter and in the weekend there is one minibus located to pick up girls on Monday early morning and drop them off Saturday evening… [Yato female learner's mother, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]

Even though there are public boarding houses in town a lot of parents do not trust to send their daughters because there is no security and no facilities. Now because of these people [NGO] my daughter is living in a secure place with nice people who look after them… [Ahmed female learner's father, Tachelhit face-to-face interview]

''…the EFA boarding houses are appealing as there is support with transport back home at the weekends, a safe and protected environment for them in the houses which they share with maximum 40 girls as opposed to 200 in the government houses''[Susan NGO staff, written response]

A lack of the basic facilities, such as heating, hot water, furniture, and the poor physical condition of the boarding houses, such as broken windows and doors, overcrowding, shared toilets, and sometimes lack of running water and lack of security can have a negative long-term impact on learners' well-being and on their academic outcomes. According to Pat-Mbano et al., (2012); Pascarella and Terenzini (2005); Thomas (2002) and Loots (2009), experience of accommodation can influence academic success, both negatively and positively. The length of time spent in overcrowded and physically poor conditions also appears to affect individuals' mental health, and in time they can be at high risk of becoming

depressed (Marsh and Gordon, 1999). The condition of 200 female students in a government boarding house can explain why most of the parents lost confidence over sending their daughters to continue their education in the government boarding houses, and the result was high drop-out rates among rural girls.

8.2.3 The relationship between female learners and boarding house staff

In the boarding houses, students spend most of their time within this enclave and visit their families only at weekends and for vacations. The responsibility of boarding house staff is to not only maintain a safe environment in the dormitories but also to interact with the learners and share their wealth of experience. Zahra, Samiya and Noura described this relationship:

> *Being with reliable people is very important. I considered them as members of the family when I have a problem I talk to them and they advice and support me all the times [Zahra female learner, English face-to-face interview]*
>
> *I feel like I'm at home, people here are listening to our concerns and treat us in a good way [Samiya female learner, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *We are very lucky to be in this house and be with these people…they are good listeners and always they provide us with advice and support [Noura female learner, Arabic face-to-face interview]*

Similarly, I was keen to know the NGOs' points of view regarding their interaction with the schoolgirls.

> *We try our best to keep a good relationship with all girls and provide advice as much as we can to help them in their academic progress and their personal matters [Kaoutar NGO staff, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *I am pleased with the quality of the services provided in these boarding houses, and the good relationship the boarding staff keep with these young learners [Rose NGO staff, English face-to-face interview]*

The role and impact of the boarding staff is not limited to one particular role; rather their responsibility includes supporting, guiding and providing advice for all female learners. As the teacher is the leader in the classroom, the boarding staff are those who lead the boarding houses to ensure that students have a supportive atmosphere. The majority of female students indicated that the positive and the friendly environment they live in assisted them to enhance their capacities, increase their social relations, and broaden their knowledge and imagination. Girls' interaction with boarding house staff strengthens their self-confidence and prepares them for leadership positions to make a positive contribution in society as well.

According to Anderson (2004); Hawkes (2001, 2010); Holgate (2007); Turner (2008); and Sanders (2004), the personal qualities that the boarding staff possess, such as kindness and

respect, in addition to professional skills such as knowledge of first aid and dealing with urgent and sensitive incidents [e.g. depression, anxiety, suicide] are important skills for the boarding staff. They add that the boarding staff are not only facilitators and guarantors of security, but also models for students, and their behaviours affect students' social and emotional development. Therefore, this mixture of skills and personal qualities is important for boarding staff to have in order to assist students to progress in their studies. In addition, such behaviours guarantee that female learners are in safe hands and increase parents' confidence about sending their daughters to live away from home.

8.2.4 The provision of transportation

According to Fuller and Laing (1999) and Grant and Hallman (2008), in South Africa a family's financial situation has a direct connection to the possibility of the daughter's likelihood of dropping out, because parents cannot afford the direct costs of education such as books, school fees, uniforms and travel expenses. Most of the participants agreed with the findings of Fuller and Laing (1999); Grant and Hallman (2008) and reported that financial support and the removal school fees would be of benefit to families who could not afford schooling costs. The following are quotations extracted from the participants' interviews:

> *''...Parents are too poor to afford the few available government lodgings and transport to get there... the EFA boarding houses are appealing as there is support with transport back home at the weekends'' [Susan NGO staff, written response]*

> *Transport is a big problem for both boys and girls, if you leave home at 6 in the morning, for example, you need at least one hour and half to reach school. For girls, it is hard because you do not know what could happen on the way. For this reason, many girls have been forced to leave school after primary level [Hiba female learner, Arabic face-to-face interview]*

These findings are consistent with Hunt (2008) who reported that schooling needs a range of direct and indirect costs including transport and travel expenses, which can be beyond parents' financial capabilities. Even when education is free to the general public and there are no tuition fees, parents with limited incomes still struggle with other incurred costs such as registration fees and transport (Herz, 2006; Seel and Clarke, 2005; UNESCO, 2005). The provision of transport by the NGO organisation at the weekend to drop girls near their villages and pick them up again on Mondays assured parents of their daughters' safety. Jalaluddin and Chowdhury (1997) believe that one of the reasons parents do not send their daughters to school is the long distance to travel to and from school. Similarly, Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) point out that the opportunity costs of attending schools are often higher in rural areas which is why the provision of financial support can be an effective strategy to

help rural girls to complete their education and to make very substantial academic progress. Research such as Alcázar et al., (2006) has shown that poor availability of services in rural schools affected teachers' performance as well. For example, when teachers are forced to arrive at school late and leave early to ensure that they can access the limited public transport available, this, undoubtedly, will negatively affect the performance of their students.

8.3 NGO Interventions that Focus on Academic Support

The provision of extra tutorials on subjects such as English, French, Physics and Mathematics can assist girls to gain high credits, thus increasing their subject choices in higher education. This intervention may have long-term implications by assisting to redress the imbalance in subject choice among the sexes. Furthermore, the provision of tutorials helps girls to recover what they have missed in previous levels, strengthens their knowledge, and gains them confidence when communicating with people of different cultures and nations.

> *As you know, the quality of teaching in villages is not advanced, in addition the majority of girls speak their mother tongue at home, Tachelhit, so we want them to improve their languages especially English because it is the key language they may need in the future along with other subjects [Laila NGO staff, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *Gender and subject choice in higher education in Morocco is a big challenge. Males usually dominate scientific subjects and females have very limited subject choices when they reach university. That is why we provide extra tutorials to all boarders in key subjects such as Mathematics, Physics, French and English [Laila NGO staff, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *We want our daughters [female learners] to have good marks that allow them to be engineers, doctors, pilots and their presence in all other domains. This NGO first mission is to provide the main support girls need to have good academic results and to be able to choose any subject at the university [Kaoutar NGO staff, Arabic face-to-face interview]*
>
> *Every year many volunteers from different countries come to support us in these boarding houses in English language…now we can speak English with confidence and have contact with the outside world. In the coming years, most Moroccan universities courses will be taught in English; that is why it is very important to learn English [Hiba female learner, Arabic face-to-face interview]*

Tutorials can help girls to gain higher credits in subjects where they used to struggle, and at the same time have a wider range of subject choices at higher education level. This intervention may, in the long-term, assist to change the traditional beliefs which assume that scientific subjects are traditionally masculine domains and classify humanities and social

sciences as female subjects. Thus, the provision of support in additional subjects can help girls to gain 'freedom of choice' and learn what is valuable for their future to lead lives they value.

In Morocco, unfortunately, there is no official statistics of academic studies which can investigate subject choice and its relationship to gender in higher education especially in rural areas where girls have less opportunities to broader knowledge of different subjects. However, gender and subject choice in higher education has been of interest for many researchers (e.g. Acker 1994; Thomas, 1990) who have asked many questions related to gender and subject choice in higher education. They studied why certain subjects have become synonymous with women studies, and others with men's, and why scientific subjects are seemingly more difficult for girls. Chanana (2007) argues that the segregation of girls into a study of humanities and arts and boys into science at higher education is a result of many general factors related to social stereotypes which devaluate girls' capabilities and put limitations on their skills. Therefore, it is argued that the channelling of women into specific subjects can lead to their occupational segregation in the future (Deem, 1978). In addition, a large body of literature has discussed social gender expectations about women's capacity to study scientific subjects. Recent statistics indicate that females continue to be less likely than males to study science subjects and mathematics (e.g. Bae and Smith, 1996; Stumpf and Stanley, 1996). The results of Seymour and Hewitt's (1997) study shows that women find it difficult to allow themselves to study scientific disciplines because of perceivable gender stereotypes.

To create a balance of power between the sexes in subject choices and overcome this issue, the NGO in this study has supported girls in their academic progress through the provision of tutorials in different subjects. This intervention is in line with many studies (e.g. Mathan and Koedinger, 2003; Boud et al., 2014) which show that tutoring has positive effects on the academic performance of those who received it. On the other hand, failure to obtain the required credits in subjects such as English, French, and Mathematics was the main obstacle for some girls to continue their education. For instance, as discussed in Chapter 6, all dropped-out schoolgirls' parents were illiterate and were unable to support their daughters with their progress in school because of their own limited knowledge (Taylor and Mulhall, 2001), and the result was that they dropped out of school at an early age. Sabah and Aya, two dropped-out schoolgirls, reported that they left school because they could not obtain the required scores to pass to the next level "…*I got lower marks because nobody was helping me, I was struggling to do all the exercises by myself"* Sabah added: "…*I failed to pass the*

French and Mathematics exams because nobody was helping me at home". Herz and Sperling (2004) report that many statistics indicate that at least one in every three girls who completes primary schooling in South Asia cannot read, write, or do mathematics. Consequently, many girls leave school and follow their mothers' footsteps to become housewives.

> *The quality of education in rural settings is not sufficient to prepare well-qualified individuals of the future… Students do not have any extra support out of the classes and this negatively affected their exams mark and affected their willingness to continue their education [Malik NGO staff, Arabic face-to-face interview]*

The provision of tutorials was justified by the low quality of education students receive in primary and secondary level in these villages. That is why this intervention aimed to combine physical support with academic support to provide girls with the skills they require to achieve success academically. Consequently, 97% pass rate was achieved across college and high school levels among girls who were living in the NGO boarding houses. According to Susan, an NGO staff member, the philosophy of this NGO is to prepare female learners to be presented with different fields and domains, to gain self-confidence to face the outside world, and assist with the progressive development of their families and communities. Shabaya and Konado–Agyemang (2007, p. 414) report that it is discriminatory when "girls cannot think as boys"; rather females are as capable of enroling on different subjects and gaining the same job positions as males do.

8.4 NGO Interventions that Aim to Support Girls' Capabilities

The provision of NGO boarding houses in the most excluded rural settings of the High Atlas Mountains helps not only the learning progress, but also supports girls' voices to claim their rights, helping them to engage with their social responsibilities, and expanding their capabilities. Machiala, an NGO staff reported that supporting girls' capabilities and helping to change the perceived social norms and all other forms of exclusion can be an effective strategy to create gender equality and give girls their rights to be part of the change in their communities. Out-of-class activities and programmes aim to raise awareness among rural girls about the importance of taking part in making changes and debating about the different challenges related to their Berber identity, culture, and languages, and supporting the development of their families and communities.

> *The different activities and events which we are engaged with can help us not only to develop our academic skills and knowledge which we need for the job*

market, but also they help us to be open to different cultures and be ready to face future challenges [Zahra female learner, English face-to-face interview]

we want through these activities and programmes which are not part of their school programmes to be able to lead their future successfully as Berbers and as Moroccans and to bring new changes to their families and communities who had difficult time in the past [Kaoutar NGO staff, Arabic face-to-face interview]

Learning can take many forms at different places outside the structures of the formal classroom or the classical learning methods. For me, these boarding houses are also a space where girls can cultivate their knowledge and extend their skills [Machiala NGO staff, English face- to- face interview]

'…They are growing in confidence and skills e.g. IT skills, speaking English (their 4th language!) giving presentations at colleges and winning awards!' [Susan NGO staff, written response]

The NGO created several activities and events to encourage girls to take initiatives to overcome their inhibitions and to be a part of the global learning group and engage with social and civic responsibilities, moving on from being local citizens to becoming national ones. This view is what Sen (2003, p. 35) explained in his capabilities approach, by encouraging people to lead the kind of lives they have reason to value and to enhance the substantive choices they have at their disposal. Furthermore, Nussbaum (1997, cited in Brown, 2015, p. 224) believes that capacity is a central feature to the capability approach for cultivating humanity. Nussbaum adds that people should see themselves not simply as citizens belonging to particular groups or local regions, but above all, as human beings bound to all other human beings by ties of recognition and concern. Therefore, creating supportive conditions for rural female learners is one way to increase their freedom to achieve well-being and agency. In addition, such capabilities are aligned with the development of the whole person, rather than focusing only on the acquisition of skills and knowledge required to adapt to the job market (Brown, 2015). In the same vein, these outcomes have been explored through Sen's capability approach that examines the impact of learning outside the structure of the formal classroom and encourages individuals to live a more fulfilled life.

At the time of colonialism, Berber women experienced different challenges that denied them their rights. They were not capable of communicating with other people [Arabs and colonisers]. Therefore, at that time hundreds of rights were lost because of the lack of capability of many Amazigh natives to claim them since all administrative procedures were carried out in French, Spanish or Arabic (Guerch, 2013). According to the United Nations (2010), throughout history indigenous peoples have been disadvantaged as a result of colonisation, typically marginalised and excluded from government policies, health and

education systems, and other important services. Today, indigenous peoples comprise approximately 15% of the world's poorest communities, and one-third of the world's rural poor (World Bank, 2016). Amazigh feminists assert that in being 'the colonised of the colonised', rural Amazigh women still suffer marginalisation at all levels. In the same vein, Moroccan feminism has affinities with Middle Eastern, Third World, and Eastern feminisms, and yet has its own historical, cultural and social conditionings that make it different from others (Sadiqi, 2003, p. 35) is criticised for discarding the Amazigh women's condition from its scope of interest (Demnati, 2013).

With the imposition of the coloniser's language onto the colonised country against its will, the indigenous population had to use a foreign language for communication in state and official matters and for education. While this placed a burden on the colonised population, it posed a huge limitation on women's access to education more so than men. The way a coloniser's language was learned was through contact, not formal learning. Contact with colonisers occurred through trade and employment which is more of a man's domain, especially in patriarchal societies. Because of traditional values and cultural norms in societies where the woman's role was predominantly in the home, the opportunity of exposure to the language was non-existent, and since education was delivered in the first language of the coloniser and not the native language, there was no possibility of school attendance for girls, thus removing them from the seat of learning. Without school attendance, girls' literacy plummeted, and being illiterate in their own language they could not learn the imposed language. Without schooling, they had no skills to pass on to the next generation. Thus, they embarked upon motherhood illiterate and academically uneducated in both languages, the native and the official; it was illiteracy in the absence of education that women conferred to succeeding generations of girls, so long as the coloniser's language remained dominant, in terms of officialdom and until the foreign language filtered into the indigenous vernacular. This resulted in some generic benefit, however, not in the short-term but in the long-term, since the addition of another language eventually brought linguistic enrichment to the native language and the colonised population attained the skill of bilingualism.

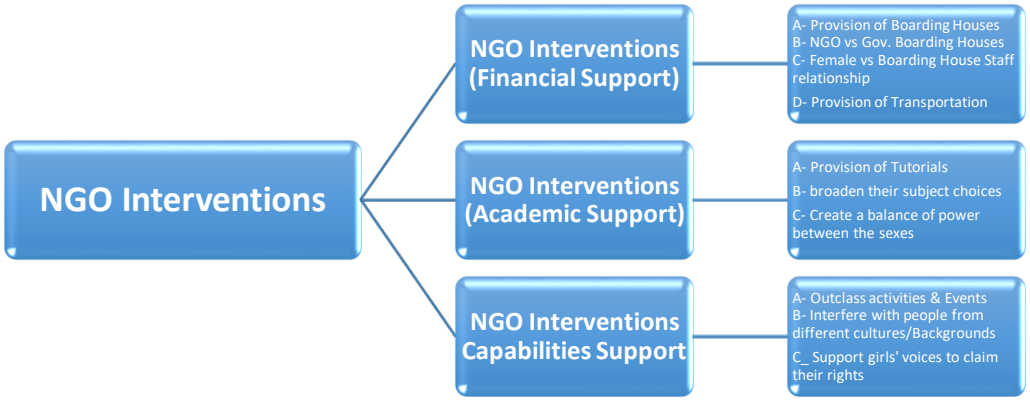
However, remote and rural communities did not absorb the additional language as readily as urban societies and some of the indigenous population is still very much monolingual, untouched by the adopted language of colonisation. Yet, the colonial harm inflicted upon girls by debarring them from education for so long has had far-reaching consequences, not simply educational. As a result of this illiteracy, girls and women are still viewed in their

own communities as hierarchically less-important, and their lack of social knowledge makes them vulnerable in society because of ignorance of their rights or lack of awareness about how to claim them and marginalised them in terms of opportunity; it lowers their self-esteem which often results in a lack of confidence and even mental ill-health. Through illiteracy they are not equipped to making informed choices for their children's education through their own illiteracy, and unable to offer help and support with their school work, and lack knowledge to make choices regarding health care and disease prevention such as the importance of immunisation, and benefits of family planning, with a negative impact on their health and family sickness and infant mortality. Their lack of schooling limited them in terms of employability because of their lack of skills which keeps them in poverty, not to be escaped except through farming out their children to other relatives, reducing the financial burden of children on the household or by marrying them off young to join another household.

Despite the historic effects of colonialisation on the disruption and stagnation of girls' education and their subsequent marginalisation, huge efforts are being made by NGOs to right wrongs and actively redress the balance through interventional activities. As noted by this study, the regional provision of activities by NGOs was selected to help integrate rural Berber girls in different aspects of their development, and to eradicate all forms of discrimination that Berbers have faced, from the time of colonialism until since independence. The initiative of provision of activities and events by NGOs was perceived as a need whereby Berber girls could begin to fulfil their potential, build on their knowledge, make life-long friends and develop their capabilities. In empowering Berber girls, who are the most marginalised group in Morocco, giving them a chance to be active and influential members in different sectors of society, can assist all Berbers in general, and Berber women in particular, to play a part in the development of their country. Malik, an NGO staff said: *"Our aim is to prepare girls to be part of a diverse community".*

Summary

This chapter presents, analyses and discusses the main findings that have emerged from the collected data in regard to the second research question. The NGO interventions under discussion were not limited to a particular area but rather showed an awareness of the importance of providing sustained tools which can benefit future generations in these rural Berber villages of the High Atlas Mountains. Below is an overview of the findings.


NGO Interventions
NGO Interventions (Financial Support)
A- Provision of Boarding Houses
B- NGO vs Gov. Boarding Houses
C- Female vs Boarding House Staff relationship
D- Provision of Transportation
NGO Interventions (Academic Support)
A- Provision of Tutorials
B- broaden their subject choices
C- Create a balance of power between the sexes
NGO Interventions Capabilities Support
A- Outclass activities & Events
B- Interfere with people from different cultures/Backgrounds
C_ Support girls' voices to claim their rights

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

9.1 Thesis Summary

This interpretitist, qualitative study has explored, through face-to-face semi-structured interviews, the perceptions of six female students, six dropped-out schoolgirls, parents of learners and dropped-out schoolgirls, and seven NGO staff regarding the main barriers that prevent rural Berber girls in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains from completing their education. The study has discussed the effectiveness of one NGO interventions to reduce the barriers facing rural Berber schoolgirls and to assist them to pursue their education. I have used field notes, not for the purposes of collecting data but as a source to provide myself with the insights into what was taking place in these rural villages to 'get inside', so to speak, and to describe the world in which the participants live. **Chapter 1** introduces the background to the study, specifies the research questions and outlines the approach, aims and significance of the study. **Chapter 2** presents an overview of the 'Kingdom of Morocco', its geography, history, economy, politics and socio-cultural life, in an attempt to assist the reader to understand the context of this project and grasp a general idea as to why girls' education in rural marginalised villages still falls far behind expectations. The second part of this chapter presents the history and growth of education in Morocco [during both the colonial and post-colonial periods]. **Chapter 3** encompasses the literature review. **Chapter 4** discusses selected theoretical frameworks. **Chapter 5** considers the role of Non-Governmental Organisations [NGOs] and their connection with this project. **Chapter 6** considers the research design and methodology for this project. **Chapters 7** and **8** present, analyse and discuss the research findings, and **Chapter 9** presents the conclusion.

9.2 Implications for Policy and Practice in Moroccan Education

Although government educational interventions are not the main focus of this project, nonetheless research findings in this study have indicated that current educational reforms in the rural communities Moroccan have not been successful. There is a clear need for the Moroccan Government to draft a clear and realistic vision of educational support for girls in rural villages to help them complete their schooling. This would be possible only by Government's adoption of a policy of transparency and honesty in delivering the educational interventions, and increasing efforts to reach marginalised communities. Thus, coordination between the government and non-governmental organisations can help to design a holistic map and focus more on the areas that are most in need of urgent interventions.

This study has sought to provide a holistic picture of the challenges facing rural Berber girls to complete their education. Socio-cultural practices have played a significant influential part in hampering girls' participation in education. For the effective support of girls' education in the rural Berber villages, the community needs to revisit, review and abandon those practices, which not only affect girls' education but also ruin their personal lives. The community needs also to promote cultural norms and practices that value girls' education, and girls should be allowed to have the freedom within their society to develop their capabilities, plan their own future, and achieve functioning. NGOs, on their own, cannot bring gender equality into education or bring changes into all Berber communities. Therefore, further resources and greater support are required from the government to create social justice and gender equality throughout the kingdom and for the benefit of all. Finally, this research has contributed to research literature by demonstrating the importance of understanding the educational context of the Berber communities and the capabilities they value for their functioning.

9.3 Recommendations for Further Research

Although primary school enrolment for both boys and girls is quite equal, nonetheless boys have better chances and greater opportunities to complete their schooling than girls do, Chimombo (1999). Holmes (2003) adds that girls generally obtain less education than boys because they face many barriers that make them drop out earlier. Many studies of girls' education in developing countries have concentrated on girls' access to school, but few of them have investigated the barriers and challenges that have prevented girls from completing their secondary education, especially in isolated rural communities. Therefore, this study is a call for further research in the Arab world to explore the main barriers that prevent girls from pursuing their education, to fill the gaps that exists within the literature.

It is anticipated that such a study in a country that is Arab, Berber, Muslim and African, will generate broader facts in relation to girls' educational challenges in marginalised communities among vulnerable female individuals. Thus, this thesis recommends further research in the fields of comparison between differing economic, social, cultural and geographical contexts, to provide clarification and further insight into existing barriers to girls' education. Another area worthy of further research is the form of relationship that exists between NGOs and governments in developing countries within the field of education. It would be of use and interest to replicate the present study to include a larger number of participants from both the NGOs and the government staff, to gain a deeper insight into how

girls' education could be improved in marginalised communities. Furthermore, it would be informative to explore the opinions of local councillors, authority stakeholders, school teachers and male learners' perceptions to gain multi-faceted views and attitudes for a rich extension to this investigation. Another recommendation is that in order to address and better understand girls' education barriers and the intervention of NGO, further studies could propose a mixed methods approach because statistical data would be able to provide more replicable results. This would enable the researcher to acquire more data from a larger sample and the research findings would be more comprehensive allowing for an analysis of the reasons of specific variance in gender.

This research study provides rich data and compelling knowledge based on first-hand experiences that can serve as raw data for decision-makers to plan a better future in a country where women comprise 65% of the population, but still have a very low participation in education. This study has investigated numerous barriers that restrict girls from pursuing their education. If these barriers can be reduced and ultimately eliminated, future statistics will indicate an increase in rates pf girls' school enrolment as well as their continuation from one school level to the next. Finally, I hope that this study will open up opportunities for further intensive research that will help girls in rural areas to overcome the restrictions that prevent them from pursuing their education.

9.4 Contributions of the Study

The significant original contribution emerges from small gaps within saturated research areas. This study represents a three-fold contribution: political, methodological, and theoretical.

Politically, the research attempts to take apart the discourse surrounding education in rural areas and construct new discourses. In so doing, the study reveals the tensions and contradictions that lie in the official discourse, and what happens in real life. This thesis brings up an alternative view which is usually a hidden agenda for political purposes, and shows the disconnect between official discourses and lived experiences. As illustrated throughout this study, the perceptions of participants demonstrate the reasons why women are 'marginalised' and describe the reality of girls' education in rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains. This latter clashes with the official educational reforms of Morocco, a set of reforms that remains a policy on paper and shows the failure of the state to put these reforms into practice in the real sense.

Methodologically, in this research project, there are practical issues associated with the interview process. This study addresses the complexity of researching among 'illiterate' and 'ethnic' groups when more than one language of communication is involved and contributes to current attempts at documenting the challenges of approaching illiterate participants with respect to ethical norms. As illustrated in Chapter 6, the study was enriched by the multiple linguistic repertoires [Standard Arabic, Moroccan Darija, Tachelhit dialect and English] spoken by the participants during the interviews. This diversity affected the translation analysis process, which required the use of special techniques in order to ensure the validity of the data. Furthermore, the data collected from interviewing illiterate parents in the presence of their daughters is an issue to be explored further. One has to be circumspect about the transparency of the translation as the daughters may be guarded in translating for their parents in an attempt to protect the dignity of their family. Therefore, interviewing members of the same family is a complicated situation that needs further investigation to highlight 'how' to deal with such situations.

The study has proven that applying post-colonial and post-feminist theories has worked to develop an understanding of the effects of colonialism on Berber communities as a whole and for the status of Berber women in particular in a patriarchal society. In addition, the research results have brought an enormous amount of insight into the Berber life in general and Berber girls' education in particular; this can be a valuable piece of research for international development and gender equality in education especially among indigenous groups in North Africa and in Africa in general. Finally, the study findings provide adequate evidence that local elements, such as native language, culture, religion, and history significantly influence the ways Berbers understand girls' education and what they want for their daughters after obtaining an education.

9.5 Limitations of the Study

Due to time constraints, policy-makers within the Ministry of Education and school teachers have not been included in this participatory research. Additionally, there was a scarcity of studies that examined girls' education in rural villages written in English because most Moroccan academic publications, books, and articles were written in French as Morocco is a francophone country. Also, the absence of official documents containing up-to-date statistics of rural schoolgirls' dropout rates, would not make it possible to use the quantitative approach. This is why this study did not include numerical charts or statistical data.

9.6 Critical Reflection on the PhD Journey

When I first began this PhD, I had little idea what the journey might entail, but what I did know was that I have to work hard along the way. This PhD has been a wonderful and rewarding experience, but the journey was not entirely smooth. My sojourn in the UK to investigate the events taking place in my home country helped me to view the world from a different perspective. It gives me the opportunity to learn different academic methodologies and develop my knowledge concerning theories and approaches to qualitative research, and to challenge the 'highs' and 'lows' of research. My four years as a PhD researcher has given me time to read more about Morocco and the Moroccans and to understand the various challenges to the sustainable development of the country. This thesis also gives me space to perceive things more critically and from a more detached perspective, a stance which would not have been possible four years ago. Finally, my exposure to academia in the UK has helped me to move from being a PhD student to a PhD researcher.

9.7 Conclusion

Education is a basic human right and a central factor in the development of nations. Providing education for all children, especially girls, helps break the intergenerational chains of poverty because education is fundamentally linked to all aspects of development, such as supporting gender empowerment, improving maternal and child health, reducing poverty, fighting against the spread of HIV and other diseases, prompting economic growth and for the prevalence of peace. It is observable that education enhances women's wellbeing and gives them a greater voice in household decisions, greater autonomy to determine the conditions of their lives, and improved opportunities to participate in the labour market and in community affairs (King et al., 2011). Girls' schooling has received considerable attention internationally. The World Bank reported that more than 80% of the 4.8 million school-age children who dropped out of education were girls, mostly living in rural and isolated mountainous areas and from marginal groups. Although there has been some progress for girls' enrolment at the primary level, little advancement has been achieved at the secondary level especially in rural areas in developing countries. Several academic studies have looked at the aspects influencing girls' enrolment at the primary level, but few of them have debated barriers and obstacles that prevent girls from completing their education particularly in remote rural areas.

In developing countries, girls' educational barriers mainly in disadvantaged rural areas have been the centre of many researches related to social justice and human rights agenda (Nussbaum, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000; Unterhalter, 1999; Unterhalter, 2003; Sen, 1999). This research sought to address this gap in the literature and boost interventions to girls' education challenges in developing countries. However, there have been few qualitative studies in developing countries which sought to examine both girls' education barriers in rural settings and NGOs' intervention to reduce these barriers. This research study is a contribution to knowledge by blending two related stories to present a wide picture of how and why girls' education in the High Atlas villages still lag behind boys'. In relation to girls' education barriers, the research findings in this study identified a list of obstacles that prevented the rural girls in Morocco's High Atlas villages from completing their education including: household poverty, parents' educational levels and involvement, insufficient qualified teachers, school fees, distance to school, quality of schooling, gendered division of domestic labour, and family and socio-cultural attitudes, (Colclough et al., 2000; Brock and Cammish, 1998; King and Hill, 1993; Swainson et al., 1998).

A note to add is that the main objective of this research study is not about investigating the relationship between the government and NGO strategies to support girls' education, but rather to explore perceptions of barriers to girls' education and perceptions about the extent to which one NGO intervention has succeeded in reducing some of the barriers that prevented girls from completing their education. In addition, it is a call to increase the chances of meeting the Dakar goals, for which all agencies, governments, and NGOs have to work together in order to create social justice for all citizens and in all areas in the world.

This research study is built on two main research questions and associated sub-questions, namely:

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of the female learners, dropped-out school girls, parents of learners and dropped-out schoolgirls and NGO staff regarding the main barriers that prevent girls from completing their education in rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains?

a) *What are these barriers?*
b) *What has caused these barriers?*

Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of the female learners, dropped-out schoolgirls, parents of learners and dropped-out schoolgirls and NGO staff with regards to

one NGO interventions in rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains to reduce these barriers?

a) What has been done by this NGO?

b) What is the effectiveness of the NGO's efforts to reduce girls' education barriers?

The findings of this study are meant to serve not as models but rather as starting points towards new strategies and as a reference for the Ministry of Education in Morocco to draw up new plans that effectively assist in promoting girls' education in rural Berber communities. It is an appeal to engage more effectively and to adopt transparency while dealing with rural girls' education needs to create accessibility and gender equality. Shah (2012) believes that it is the duty of the state to educate all children as future citizens. Finally, the findings will be a reference for other academic research investigating across similar areas in this or other developing countries to place emphasis on the importance of girls' education in the development of their nations.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Education Ethics Committee - Ethical Issues Audit Form

UNIVERSITY of York

Education Ethics Committee
Ethical Issues Audit Form

This questionnaire should be completed for each research study that you carry out as part of your degree. Once completed, please email this form to your supervisor. You should then discuss the form fully with your supervisor, who should approve the completed form. **You must not collect your data until you have had this form approved by your supervisor (and possibly others - your supervisor will guide you).**

Surname / Family Name:	Fadil
First Name / Given Name:	Amal
Programme:	PhD Education
Supervisor (of this research study):	Prof. Ian Davies

Topic (or area) of the proposed research study:

Girls' education barriers and NGO's intervention in the rural Berber villages of Moroccan's High Atlas Mountains

Where the research will be conducted:

Rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains.

Methods that will be used to collect data:

Face- to- face semi-structured interviews.

If you will be using human participants, how will you recruit them?

The way I followed to recruit the participants was snowball sampling to provide me with contacts of other members. e.g I contacted first two NGO members who assisted me to contact other participants.

Supervisors, please read *Ethical Approval Procedures: Students*. Note: If the study involves children, vulnerable participants, sensitive topics, or an intervention into normal educational practice, this form must also be approved by the programme leader (or Programme Director if the supervisor is also the Programme Leader); or the TAP member

for Research Students. It may also require review by the full Ethics Committee (see below).

First approval: by the supervisor of the research study (after reviewing the form):

Please select one of the following options.

I believe that this study, as planned, meets normal ethical standards. I have checked that any informed consent form a) addresses the points as listed in this document, and b) uses appropriate language for the intended audience(s).	☐
I am unsure if this study, as planned, meets normal ethical standards	☐
I believe that this study, as planned, does not meet normal ethical standards and requires some modification	☐

Supervisor's Name (please type):	
Date:	Click here to enter a date.

Supervisor - If the study involves children, vulnerable participants, sensitive topics, or an intervention into normal educational practice (see *Ethical Approval Procedures: Students*), please email this form for second approval to the Programme Leader (or Programme Director if the supervisor is also the Programme Leader); or the TAP member for Research Students. For this second approval, other documents may need to be sent in the same email e.g. the proposal (or a summary of it) and any informed consent and participant information sheets.

If the study has none of the above characteristics, the supervisor should email this completed form to the Programme Administrator. This signals the end of the approval process and data collection can begin.

Second approval: by the Programme Leader; or Programme Director; or TAP member for Research Students:

Please select one of the following options:

I believe that this study, as planned, meets normal ethical standards. I have checked that any informed consent form a)	☐

addresses the points as listed in this document, and b) uses appropriate language for the intended audience(s).	
I am unsure if this study, as planned, meets normal ethical standards	☐
I believe that this study, as planned, does not meet normal ethical standards and requires some modification	☐

Name of Programme Leader; or Programme Director; or TAP member (please type):	
Date:	Click here to enter a date.

The supervisor should now email this completed form to the Programme Administrator, unless approval is required by the full Ethics Committee (see below).

Approval required by the full Education Ethics Committee

If the application requires review by the full Education Ethics Committee, please select one of the following options then forward the application to the Research Administrator (education-research-administrator@york.ac.uk).

The study involves deception	☐
The study involves an intervention and procedures could cause concerns	☐
The topic is sensitive or potentially distressing	☐
The study involves vulnerable subjects	☐
A financial incentive is to be offered to participants	☐
Other reason:	

Name of Programme Leader; or Programme Director; or TAP

member (please type):	
Date:	Click here to enter a date.

FOR COMPLETION BY THE STUDENT

Data sources

1 If your research involves collecting secondary data only **go to SECTION 2**.

2 If your research involves collecting data from people (e.g. by observing, testing, or teaching them, or from interviews or questionnaires) **go to SECTION 1.**

SECTION 1: For studies involving people

3 Is the amount of time you are asking research participants to give reasonable? YES

4 Is any disruption to their normal routines at an acceptable level? NO

5 Are any of the questions to be asked, or areas to be probed, likely to cause anxiety or distress to research participants? NO

6 Are all the data collection methods used necessary? YES

7 Are the data collection methods appropriate to the context and participants? YES

8 Will the research involve deception? NO

9 Will the research involve sensitive or potentially distressing topics? (The latter might include abuse, bereavement, bullying, drugs, ethnicity, gender, personal relationships, political views, religion, sex, violence. If there is lack of certainty about whether a topic is sensitive, advice should be sought from the Ethics Committee.) YES

If YES, what steps will you take to ensure that the methods and procedures are

Searching girls' education in rural Berber areas could be a sensitive topic. To avoid any misunderstanding I will introduce the aim of the project to all my participants especially illiterate parents and if they have any questions or enquiries they are welcome to ask for further clarifications. Moreover, I will ensure that the methods I am going to use are not causing any kind of disturbance or troubles.

appropriate, not burdensome, and are sensitive to ethical considerations?

10 Does your research involve collecting data from vulnerable or high risk groups? (The latter might include participants who are asylum seekers, unemployed, homeless, looked after children, victims or perpetrators of abuse, or those who have special educational needs. If there is a lack of certainty about whether participants are vulnerable or high risk, advice should be sought from the Ethics Committee. Please note, children with none of the above characteristics are not necessarily vulnerable, though approval for your project must be given by at least two members of staff; see above). YES

If YES, what steps will you take to ensure that the methods and procedures are appropriate, not burdensome, and are sensitive to ethical considerations?

Interviewing vulnerable, illiterate or semi-literate people has its own challenges. This study will involve (illiterate parents) from rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains, therefore measures should be taken while collecting data. I will introduce fully the purpose of this project in a simple language that everyone can understand especially for illiterate parents. Also, to gain parents' consent to take part in this project, I will ask female students and dropped-out schoolgirls girls [their daughters] to read for them the consent form and if there is any clarifications I will be present to answer. Separate consent form will be addressed to female students and dropped-out schoolgirls girls to show their agreement and participation. Parents will also have the opportunity to comment on my written record with the help of their daughters [they will read for them what is written].

11 Are the research participants under 16 years of age?

If NO, go to question 12.

If YES, and you intend to interact with the children, do you intend to ensure that another adult is present during all such interactions? NO

If NO, please explain, for example:
i) This would seriously compromise the validity of the research because [***provide reason***]

ii) I have/will have a full Disclosure and Barring Service check (formerly Criminal Records Bureau check). Choose an item.

iii) Other reasons:

Payment to participants

12 If research participants are to receive reimbursement of expenses, or any other incentives or benefits for taking part in your research, please give details, indicating what or how much money they will receive and, briefly, the basis on which this was decided:

If your study involves an INTERVENTION i.e. a change to normal practice made for the purposes of the research, go to question 13 (this does not include 'laboratory style' studies i.e. where ALL participation is voluntary):

If your study does not involve an intervention, go to question 20.

13 Is the extent of the change within the range of changes that teachers (or equivalent) would normally be able to make within their own discretion? Choose an item.

14 Will the change be fully discussed with those directly involved (teachers, senior school managers, pupils, parents – as appropriate)? Choose an item.

15 Are you confident that *all* treatments (including comparison groups in multiple intervention studies) will potentially provide some educational benefit that is compatible with current educational aims in that particular context? (Note: This is

not asking you to justify a non-active control i.e. continued normal practice) Choose an item.
Please **briefly** describe this / these benefit(s):

16 If you intend to have two or more groups, are you offering the control / comparison group an opportunity to have the experimental / innovative treatment at some later point (this can include making the materials available to the school or learners)? Choose an item.

If NO, please explain:

17 If you intend to have two or more groups of participants receiving different treatment, do the informed consent forms give this information? Choose an item.

18 If you are randomly assigning participants to different treatments, have you considered the ethical implications of this? Choose an item.

19 If you are randomly assigning participants to different treatments (including non-active controls), will the institution and participants (or parents where participants are under 16) be informed of this in advance of agreeing to participate? Choose an item.

If NO, please explain:

General protocol for working in institutions

20 Do you intend to conduct yourself, and advise your team to conduct themselves, in a professional manner as a representative of the University of York, respectful of the rules, demands and systems within the institution you are visiting? YES

21 If you intend to carry out research with children under 16, have you read and understood the Education Ethics Committee's *Guidance for Ethical Approval for Research in Schools*? NO

Informed consent

22 Have you prepared Informed Consent Form(s) which participants in the study will be asked to sign, and which are appropriate for different kinds of participants? YES

If YES, **please attach the informed consent form(s).**

If NO, please explain:

23 Please check the details on the informed consent form(s) match each one of your answers below. Does this informed consent form:

a) inform participants in advance about what their involvement in the research study will entail?
YES

b) if there is a risk that participants may disclose information to you which you may feel morally or legally bound to pass on to relevant external bodies, have you included this within a confidentiality clause in your informed consent form? YES

c) inform participants of the purpose of the research? YES

d) inform participants of what will happen to the data they provide (how this will be stored, who will have access to it, whether and how individuals' identities will be protected during this process)? YES

e) if there is a possibility that you may use some of the data publicly (e.g. in presentations or online), inform the participants how identifiable such data will be **and** give them the opportunity to decline such use of data? YES

f) give the names and contact details (e.g. email) of at least two people to whom queries, concerns or complaints should be directed? One of these people should be on the Education Ethics Committee and not involved with the research. YES

g) in studies involving interviews or focus groups, inform participants that they will be given an opportunity to comment on your *written record* of the event? YES

If NO, have you made this clear this on your consent form? Choose an item.

If NO, please explain why not:

h) inform participants how long the data is likely to be kept for? YES

i) inform participants if the data could be used for future analysis and/or other purposes?
YES

j) inform participants they may withdraw from the study during data collection? YES

k) provide a date/timescale by which participants will be able to withdraw their data and tell the participants how to do this? (NB. If your data is going to be completely anonymised, any withdrawal of data needs to happen before this.) YES
**NA if your data will be anonymous at point of collection*

If your answer was NO to any of the above, please explain here, indicating which item(s) you are referring to (a-j):

24 Who will be asked to sign an Informed Consent Form? Please <u>select all</u> that apply:

CATEGORY	
Adult research participants	☐* female learners aged above 16
Research participants under 16	☐* Dropped-out school girls aged above 16
Teachers	☐

Parents	☐*
Head/Senior leadership team member	☐
Other (please explain)	☐* NGO members

25 In studies involving an **intervention** with under 16s, will you seek informed consent from parents?

NO

If NO, please explain:

Female and dropped-out school girls aged above 16.

If YES, please delete to indicate whether this is 'opt-in' or 'opt-out'
If 'opt-out', please explain why 'opt-in' is not being offered:

SECTION 2

Data Storage, Analysis, Management and Protection

26 I am accessing data from a non-publicly available source (regardless of whether the data is identifiable) e.g. pupil data held by a school or local authority, learners' work. NO

If YES, I have obtained written permission, via an informed consent document, from a figure of authority who is responsible for holding the data. This informed consent a) acknowledges
responsibility for releasing the data and b) confirms that releasing the data does not violate any informed consents or implicit agreements at the point the data was initially gathered.

NO

27 I have read and understood the Education Ethics Committee's *Guidance on Data Storage and Protection* YES

28 I will keep any data appropriately secure (e.g. in a locked cabinet), maintaining confidentiality and anonymity (e.g. identifiers will be encoded and the code available to as few people as possible) where possible. YES

29 If your data can be traced to identifiable participants:
a) who will be able to access your data?

b) approximately how long will you need to keep it in this identifiable format?

30 If working in collaboration with other colleagues, students, or if under someone's supervision, please discuss and complete the following:

We have agreed:
a) [*Insert name(s)*] will be responsible for keeping and storing the data
b) [*Insert name(s)*] will have access to the data
c) [*Insert name(s)*] will have the rights to publish using the data

Reporting your research

31 In any reports that you write about your research, will you do everything possible to ensure that the identity of any individual research participant, or the institution which they attend or work for, cannot be deduced by a reader? YES

If NO please explain:

Conflict of interests

32 If the Principal Investigator or any other key investigators or collaborators have any direct personal involvement in the organisation sponsoring or funding the research that may give rise to a possible conflict of interest, please give details:

Potential ethical problems as your research progresses

33 If you see any potential problems arising during the course of the research, please give details here and describe how you plan to deal with them:

If there is any problem arising during the course of research, I will inform first my supervisor to see how we can handle this problem.

Student's Name (please type):	Amal Fadil
Date:	24 August 2015

Please email this form to your supervisor. They must approve it, and send it to the Programme Administrator by email.

NOTE ON IMPLEMENTING THE PROCEDURES APPROVED HERE:

If your plans change as you carry out the research study, you should discuss any changes you make with your supervisor. If the changes are significant, your supervisor may advise you to complete a new 'Ethical issues audit' form.

For Taught Masters students, on submitting your MA dissertation to the programme administrator, you will be asked to sign to indicate that your research did not deviate significantly from the procedures you have outlined above.

For Research Students (MA by Research, MPhil, PhD), once your data collection is over, you must write an email to your supervisor to confirm that your research did not deviate significantly from the procedures you have outlined above.

Appendix B: Brief Description of the Study (English Version)

THE UNIVERSITY of York

Information Page

Title of study: Girls' education barriers and NGO interventions in rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains

Researcher: Amal Fadil, Ph.D. researcher, Department of Education, University of York, United Kingdom.

Brief description of the study

This study aims to investigate the main barriers that prevent girls from continuing their education in three rural Berber villages of the High Atlas Mountains in Morocco, and the role of NGOs (non-governmental organizations) to reduce these barriers. This study examines the perceptions of NGO members, female learners, dropped-out school girls, and parents of female learners and dropped-out school girls to answer the research questions. The participants will be asked to take part in face- to-face semi-structured interviews that last around 30 to 40 minutes and all interviews will be recorded using digital recorder to help translating from Arabic to English.

The project's data will be handled according to data protection guidelines and procedures. Data will be stored in computer by a code number and can only be accessed by the researcher.

No names will be mentioned and the participants will not be identified in any presentation or publication.

If you have any further questions concerning this research project, or you would like to comment, suggest or add any further information, please contact the researcher through this email. amal.fadil@york.ac.uk

If you have any concerns regarding this research project please refer them to the Department of Education Ethics Chair, Paul Wakeling: paul.wakeling@york.ac.uk

Appendix C: Brief Description of the Study (Arabic Version)

THE UNIVERSITY of York

صفحة المعلومات

عنوان الدراسة: عوائق تعليم البنات وتدخل المنظمات غير الحكومية في القرى البربرية الريفية في جبال الأطلس الكبير المغربي

الباحثة: آمال فاضل، باحثة دكتوراه، قسم التربية، جامعة يورك، المملكة المتحدة

تعريف موجز للدراسة

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على العوائق الرئيسية التي حالت دون مواصلة الفتيات تعليمهن في القرى البربرية الريفية في جبال الأطلس الكبير بالمغرب ودور المنظمات غير الحكومية في الحد من هذه الحواجز. وبهذا، تدرس هذه الدراسة تصورات أعضاء المنظمات غير الحكومية، والفتيات المتعلمات، والفتيات اللواتي تركن الدراسة، وأولياء أمور الفتيات المتعلمات، والفتيات اللاتي تركن الدراسة للإجابة على أسئلة البحث المتعلقة بالدراسة. سوف يطلب منك المشاركة وجها لوجه في المقابلات شبه

المنظمة والتي تستمر حوالي 30 إلى 40 دقيقة وسيتم تسجيل جميع المقابلات باستخدام مسجل رقمي للمساعدة في الترجمة من اللغة العربية إلى الإنجليزية.

سيتم التعامل مع البيانات، المتعلقة بهذا المشروع، وفقا للإجراءات والمبادئ التوجيهية لحماية البيانات. وسيتم تخزين هذه الأخيرة في جهاز كمبيوتر عن طريق رقم سري يخول للباحث فقط الوصول إليها.

لن يتم ذكر أسماء ولن يتم التعرف عليك في أي عروض أو منشورات.

إذا كانت لديك أي أسئلة أخرى تتعلق بهذا المشروع البحثي، أو كنت ترغب في التعليق، اقتراح أو إضافة أي معلومات أخرى، يرجى الاتصال الباحثة من خلال هذا البريد الإلكتروني **amal.fadil@york.ac.uk**

إذا كان لديك أي مخاوف بشأن هذا المشروع البحثي، يرجى إحالتها إلى رئيس قسم أخلاقيات التربية والتعليم، .

Paul.wakeling@york.ac.uk

Appendix D: Interview Informed Consent Form (English Version)

Informed Consent Form

I confirm that I have read the description of the study that I am being asked to take part in and I am happy to take part in this study.

I understand that I will be providing information through face-to-face semi- structured interview that will last around 30 to 40 minutes.

I understand that I will be answering questions that are linked to this project.

I understand that I will conduct the interview according to my calendar and thus no disturbance to my normal routines.

I understand that if there is any risk that threats the participants' life, the researcher has the right to pass on to relevant external bodies.

I understand that I may withdraw my agreement to participate for up to one week after completion of the interview and, at that point, any provided information will not be considered.

I understand that the interview will be audio recorded, and this recording will later be transcribed and translated.

I understand that I will have a chance to comment on the written record once it will be produced, and for illiterate parents, their daughters will read them what will be written in case they will have any comments or questions.

I understand that the data will be kept in a secure place and only the researcher will have access.

I understand that the data could be used for future purposes, e.g. online or in presentations, that I will be offered anonymity in any written presentation or oral conference and that I will have the opportunity to decline such use of data.

I understand that the data could be used for future analysis or other purposes

I understand that the data will be kept as long as the researcher needs it.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study during the data collection.

I understand that I am able to withdraw my data by contacting the researcher and inform her about my decision with respect to the timescale.

I understand that the researcher will recruit a back-translator who speaks Tachelhit dialect to check the recorded interviews.

I understand that this study has received ethics approval following the procedures of the Department of Education at the University of York, United Kingdom.

Do you agree to take part in this study? Yes……No……

Name of the participant:.....

Signature of the participant:.....

Date:.....

Appendix E: Interview Informed Consent Form (Arabic Version)

استمارة الموافقة المسبقة

أؤكد أنني قرأت وصف الدراسة التي يطلب مني المشاركة فيها، ويسرني أن أشارك في هذه الدراسة.

أفهم أنني سأقدم المعلومات من خلال مقابلة شبه منظمة وجها لوجه ستستغرق حوالي 30 إلى 40 دقيقة.

أفهم أنني سأجيب على الأسئلة المرتبطة بهذا البحث.

أفهم أنني سوف أقوم بإجراء المقابلة وفقا لجدول زمني وبالتالي لن يكون هناك إزعاج لروتيني العادي.

أفهم أنه إذا كان هناك أي خطر يهدد حياة المشاركين، فإن للباحث الحق في اللجوء إلى الهيئات الخارجية ذات الصلة.

أفهم أنني قد أسحب موافقتي على المشاركة في غضون أسبوع واحد بعد الانتهاء من المقابلة، وحينئذ سيتم حذف أي معلومات لا أريد إستخدامها.

أفهم أن المقابلة سوف تكون مسجلة الصوت، وهذا التسجيل سيتم نسخه وترجمته في وقت لاحق.

أفهم أنه سيكون لدي فرصة للتعليق على التسجيل المكتوب بمجرد إصداره. وبالنسبة للآباء الأميين، فإن بناتهم سوف يقرأن لهم ما كتبن في حال كان لديهم أي تعليقات أو أسئلة.

أفهم أن البيانات سيتم الاحتفاظ بها في مكان آمن وسيكون بمقدور الباحث فقط الوصول إليها.

أفهم أن البيانات يمكن استخدامها لأغراض مستقبلية، في العروض التقديمية أو عبر الإنترنت على سبيل المثال وأن هويتي لن يتم الكشف عنها في أي عرض مكتوب أو مؤتمر شفوي وأن تكون لدي الفرصة لرفض مثل هذا الاستخدام للبيانات.

أفهم أن البيانات يمكن استخدامها للتحليل في المستقبل أو لأغراض أخرى.

أفهم أن البيانات سوف تبقى محفوظة طالما يحتاج الباحث إليها.

أفهم أن الباحث سيستعين بمترجم.

أفهم أنني أستطيع الانسحاب من الدراسة خلال جمع البيانات.

أفهم أنني قادرة على سحب البيانات الخاصة بي عن طريق الاتصال بالباحث وإبلاغه عن قراري مع مراعاة الجدول الزمني.

أفهم أن هذه الدراسة قد حصلت على الموافقة الأخلاقية حسب إجراءات قسم التعليم في جامعة يورك، المملكة المتحدة.

هل توافق على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة؟ نعم..... لا.....

إسم المشارك:.....

توقيع المشاركين:.....

بتاريخ:.....

Appendix F: Interview Informed Consent Form for Female Learners and Dropped-out schoolgirls girls (Arabic Version)

THE UNIVERSITY of York

صفحة المعلومات

عنوان الدراسة: عوائق تعليم البنات وتدخل المنظمات غير الحكومية في القرى البربرية الريفية في جبال الأطلس الكبير المغربي

الباحثة: آمال فاضل، باحثة دكتوراه، قسم التربية، جامعة يورك، المملكة المتحدة

استمارة الموافقة المسبقة

ستوجه هذه الاستمارة إلى الطالبات والفتيات اللواتي تركن المدرسة، كطرف ثالث، بحيث سيحضرن أثناء مقابلة آبائهن لتجنب أي مسائل أخلاقية.

أعلم أنني سوف أكون متواجدة أثناء جمع البيانات من والداي، وأنني سأقرأ لهما كل أسئلة المقابلة لضمان فهمهما الغرض من هذا المشروع البحثي قبل التوقيع على موافقتهما.

إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة أخرى تتعلق بهذا المشروع البحثي، أو كنت ترغب في التعليق، اقتراح أو إضافة أي معلومات أخرى، يرجى الاتصال بالباحثة من خلال البريد الإلكتروني **amal.fadil@york.ac.uk**

إذا كان لديك أي مخاوف بشأن هذا المشروع البحثي، يرجى إحالتها إلى رئيس قسم أخلاقيات التربية والتعليم **Paul Wakeling**

paul.wakeling@york.ac.uk

هل توافق على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة؟ نعم..... لا.....

اسم المشارك (البنات)**:** .....

توقيع المشاركين:.....

بتاريخ:.....

Appendix G: Interview Informed Consent Form for Female Learners and Dropped-out schoolgirls girls (English Version)

THE UNIVERSITY of York

Information Page

Title of study: Girls' education barriers and NGO interventions in rural Berber villages in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains

Researcher: Amal Fadil, Ph.D. researcher, Department of Education, University of York, United Kingdom.

Informed Consent Form

This form will be addressed to female students and dropped-out schoolgirls girls, as a third part, who will be present while interviewing their parents to avoid any ethical issues.

I understand that I will be present while collecting data from my parents and I will read for them all interview questions to ensure that they understand the purpose of this research project before they sign their agreement.

If you have any further questions concerning this research project, or you would like to comment, suggest or add any further information, please contact the researcher through this email. amal.fadil@york.ac.uk

If you have any concerns regarding this research project, please refer them to the Department of Education Ethics Chair, Paul Wakeling: paul.wakeling@york.ac.uk

Do you agree to take part in this study? Yes……No……

Name of the participant (daughters):.....

Signature of participants:.....

Date:.....

Appendix H: Interview Questions for Dropped-out schoolgirls girls (English and Arabic Version)

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
2. In which age have you dropped out school?
3 In your opinion, what are the main barriers that prevent girls from completing their education in these villages?
4 Based on what you have said, can you tell me which of these barriers have more influence to hinder girls' education?
5 In your opinion, what has caused these barriers?
6 Can you tell me what do you know about this NGO?
7 Can you tell me what has been done by this NGO to assist girls to pursue their education?
8 Do you think these NGO's works will help in reducing these barriers?
9 Do you have any comments, questions, suggestions or additional information you would like to share with me regarding this project?

Thank you for your participation

أسئلة المقابلة للفتيات العازفات عن الدراسة

1. هل يمكن ان تحدثيني قليلا عن نفسك ؟
2. في أي سن تركت المدرسة ؟
3. برأيك ، ما هي المعوقات الرئيسية التي تمنع الفتيات من إكمال تعليمهن في هذه القرى ؟
4. بناء على ما قلته ، هل يمكن أن تخبريني أي من هذه المعوقات يكون له تأثير أكبر لإعاقة تعليم الفتيات ؟
5. برأيك ، ما هو سبب هذه العوائق؟
6. هل يمكن أن تخبريني ما الذي تعرفينه عن هذه المنظمة غير الحكومية ؟
7. هل يمكن أن تخبريني ما الذي قامت به هذه المنظمة غير الحكومية لمساعدة الفتيات على مواصلة تعليمهن ؟
8. هل تعتقدين أن أعمال هذه المنظمات غير الحكومية ستساعد في الحد من هذه الحواجز ؟
9. هل لديك أي تعليقات، أسئلة ، اقتراحات، أو معلومات إضافية ترغبين في مشاركتها معي بشأن هذا المشروع؟

شكرا على مشاركتكي

Appendix I: Interview Questions for Female Learners (English and Arabic Version)

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
2. In your opinion, what are the main barriers that prevent girls from complaining their education in these villages?
3. Based on what you have said, can you tell me which of these barriers have more influence to hinder girls' education in these villages?
4. In your opinion, what has caused these barriers?
5. Can you tell me what do you know about this NGO?
6. Can you tell me what has been done by this NGO to assist girls to pursue their education?
7. Do you think these NGO's works will help in reducing these barriers?
8. Do you have any comments, questions, suggestions or additional information you would like to share with me regarding this project?

Thank you for your participation

أسئلة المقابلة بالنسبة للفتيات المتعلمات

1. هل يمكن ان تحدثيني قليلا عن نفسك ؟
2. برأيك ، ما هي المعوقات الرئيسية التي تمنع الفتيات من إكمال تعليمهن في هذه القرى ؟
3. بناء على ما قلته ، هل يمكن أن تخبريني أي من هذه الحواجز يكون له تأثير أكبر لإعاقة تعليم الفتيات ؟
4. برأيك ، ما هو سبب هذه الحواجز ؟
5. هل يمكن أن تخبريني ما الذي تعرفينه عن هذه المنظمة غير الحكومية ؟
6. هل يمكن أن تخبريني ما الذي قامت به هذه المنظمة غير الحكومية لمساعدة الفتيات على مواصلة تعليمهن ؟
7. هل تعتقدين أن أعمال هذه المنظمات غير الحكومية ستساعد في الحد من هذه الحواجز ؟
8. هل لديك أي تعليقات، أسئلة ، اقتراحات، أو معلومات إضافية ترغبين في مشاركتها معي بشأن هذا المشروع ؟

شكرا على مشاركتكي

Appendix J: Interview Questions for Female Learners' Parents (English and Arabic Version)

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
2. In your opinion, what are the main barriers that prevent girls from complaining their education in these villages?
3. Based on what you have said, can you tell me which of these barriers have more influence to hinder girls' education in these villages?
4. In your opinion, what has caused these barriers?
5. Can you tell me what do you know about this NGO?
6. Can you tell me what has been done by this NGO to assist girls to pursue their education?
7. Do you think these NGO's works will help in reducing these barriers?
8. Do you have any comments, questions, suggestions or additional information you would like to share with me regarding this project?

Thank you for your participation

أسئلة المقابلة لأولياء الفتيات المتعلمات

1) هل يمكن أن تخبرني ما هي مهنتك ؟
2) هل يمكن أن تخبرني ما الذي تعرفه عن المنظمات غير الحكومية ؟
3) هل تعتقد أن هذه المنظمة تدعم الفتيات لمواصلة تعليمهن في هذه القرى ؟
إذا كان الجواب 'نعم'، كيف ؟
إذا كان الجواب 'لا'، لما لا ؟
4) هل تلاحظ أي تغييرات تتعلق بتعليم الفتيات منذ وصول هذه المنظمة غير الحكومية ؟
إذا كان الجواب 'نعم'، كيف ؟
5) هل يمكن أن تخبرني كيف تعاملت معك هذه المنظمة بخصوص تعليم ابنتك ؟
6) كيف يمكنك وصف اتصالاتك مع موظفي المنظمة غير الحكومية ؟
7) هل لديك أي تعليقات، أسئلة ، اقتراحات، أو معلومات إضافية ترغب في مشاركتها معي بشأن هذا المشروع ؟

شكرا على مشاركتك

Appendix K: Interview Questions for Dropped-out schoolgirls girls' Parents (English and Arabic Version)

1) Can you tell me what is your occupation?
2) Can you tell me what do you know about NGO?
3) Do you think this organisation supports girls to continue their education in these villages? Yes/no if yes in what way?
4) Do you notice any changes concerning girls' education since the arrival of this NGO? Yes/no if yes in what way?
5) Can you tell me how this organisation approached you regarding your daughter's schooling?
6) How can you describe your communication with NGO staff?
7) Do you have any comments, suggestions or questions you would like to add regarding this project?

Thank you for your participation

أسئلة المقابلة أولياء الفتيات العازفات عن الدراسة

1. هل يمكن ان تحدثيني قليلا عن نفسك ؟
2. برأيك ، ما هي المعوقات الرئيسية التي تمنع الفتيات من إكمال تعليمهن في هذه القرى ؟

3. بناء على ما قلته ، هل يمكن أن تخبريني أي من هذه الحواجز يكون له تأثير أكبر لإعاقة تعليم الفتيات ؟
4. برأيك ، ما هو سبب هذه الحواجز ؟
5. هل يمكن أن تخبريني ما الذي تعرفينه عن هذه المنظمة غير الحكومية ؟
6. هل يمكن أن تخبريني ما الذي قامت به هذه المنظمة غير الحكومية لمساعدة الفتيات على مواصلة تعليمهن ؟
7. هل تعتقدين أن أعمال هذه المنظمات غير الحكومية ستساعد في الحد من هذه الحواجز ؟
8. هل لديك أي تعليقات، أسئلة ، اقتراحات، أو معلومات إضافية ترغبين في مشاركتها معي بشأن هذا المشروع ؟

شكرا على مشاركتكي

Appendix L: Interview Questions for NGO Staff (English and Arabic Version)

1. Can you introduce yourself and describe the nature of your work/function?
2. Can you tell me what motivated you to work/found this organization?
3. In your opinion, what are the main barriers that prevent girls from completing their education in these rural villages?
4. Based on what you have said, can you tell me which of these barriers have more influence to hinder girls' education?
5. In your opinion, what has caused these barriers?
6. Can you tell me what is being done by this organization to reduce these barriers?
7. Can you tell me how do you evaluate these efforts (its effectiveness)?
8. Do you see any changes in the scenario of girls' education during the last years?
   If yes, what?
   If no, why not?
9. In the future, do you have a specific agenda to apply concerning girls' education in these villages?
10. Do you have any questions, comments, suggestion or ideas you would like to share with me concerning this project?

Thank you for your participation

أسئلة المقابلة لموظفي المنظمة غير الحكومية

1. هل يمكنك تقديم نفسك ووصف طبيعة عملك / وظيفتك ؟
2. هل يمكن أن تخبرني ما الذي دفعك للعمل من أجل / إيجاد هذه المنظمة؟
3. برأيك ، ما هي المعوقات الرئيسية التي تمنع الفتيات من إكمال تعليمهن في هذه القرى ؟
4. بناء على ما قلته ، هل يمكن أن تخبرني أي من هذه الحواجز يكون له تأثير أكبر لإعاقة تعليم الفتيات ؟

5. برأيك ، ما هو سبب هذه الحواجز ؟
6. هل يمكن أن تخبرني ما الذي تقوم به هذه المنظمة للحد من هذه الحواجز؟
7. هل يمكن أن تخبرني كيف تقيم هذه الجهود (من حيث الفعالية) ؟
8. هل ترى أي تغييرات في سيناريو تعليم الفتيات خلال السنوات الماضية ؟

إذا كان الجواب 'نعم'، ماهي هذه التغييرات ؟

إذا كان الجواب 'لا'، لما لا ؟

9. في المستقبل ، هل لديك جدول أعمال محدد لتطبيقه فيما يتعلق بتعليم الفتيات في هذه القرى؟
10. هل لديك أي تعليقات، أسئلة ، اقتراحات، أو معلومات إضافية ترغب في مشاركتها معي بشأن هذا المشروع ؟

شكرا على مشاركتك

Appendix M: Interview Questions for Pilot Study

Interview questions for NGO staff

1) Can you tell me what is your function in this organisation?

2) Can you tell me what motivate you to work in these rural villages?

3) Can you tell me what has been done by this NGO to support girls' education in these villages?

4) Can you tell me to what extent these NGO's works assist girls to continue their education?

5) Do you see any progress in relation to girls' education in these villages since the establishment of this organisation? If yes, what? If no, why not?

6) Do you have any comments, suggestions or questions you would like to add regarding this project?

Thank you for your participation

Interview Questions for Female Learners

1) Can you tell me your study level?

2) Can you tell me what motive you to continue your study?

3) Can you tell me what do you know about this organisation?

4) Can you tell me what has been done by this NGO to support girls' education?

5) Do you see any progress in relation to girls' education in these villages since the establishment of this organisation? If yes, what? If no, why not?

6) Do you have any comments, suggestions or questions you would like to add regarding this project?

Thank you for your participation

Interview Questions for Female Learners' Parents

1) Can you tell me what is your occupation?

2) Can you tell me what do you know about NGO?

3) Do you think this organisation supports girls to continue their education in these villages? Yes/no if yes in what way?

4) Do you notice any changes concerning girls' education since the arrival of this NGO? Yes/no if yes in what way?

5) Can you tell me how this organisation approached you regarding your daughter's schooling?

6) How can you describe your communication with NGO staff?

7) Do you have any comments, suggestions or questions you would like to add regarding this project?

Thank you for your participation

أسئلة المقابلة لموظفي المنظمة غير الحكومية

هل يمكن أن تخبرني ما هي وظيفتك في هذه المنظمة ؟

هل يمكن أن تخبرني ما الذي يدفعك للعمل في هذه القرى ؟

هل يمكن أن تخبرني ما الذي قامت به هذه المنظمة غير الحكومية لدعم تعليم الفتيات في هذه القرى؟

هل يمكن أن تخبرني إلى أي مدى تساعد أعمال هذه المنظمات غير الحكومية الفتيات على مواصلة تعليمهن ؟

هل ترى أي تقدم فيما يتعلق بتعليم الفتيات في هذه القرى منذ إنشاء هذه المنظمة ؟

إذا كان الجواب 'نعم'، كيف ؟

إذا كان الجواب 'لا'، لما لا ؟

هل لديك أي تعليقات، أسئلة ، اقتراحات، أو معلومات إضافية ترغب في مشاركتها معي بشأن هذا المشروع

شكرا على مشاركتك

أسئلة المقابلة للفتيات المتعلمات

هل يمكنك إخباري بمستوى دراستك ؟

هل يمكن أن تخبريني ما الذي يحفزك على مواصلة دراستك ؟

هل يمكن أن تخبريني ما الذي تعرفينه عن هذه المنظمة غير الحكومية ؟

هل يمكن أن تخبريني ما الذي قامت به هذه المنظمة غير الحكومية لدعم تعليم الفتيات ؟

هل ترين أي تقدم فيما يتعلق بتعليم الفتيات في هذه القرى منذ إنشاء هذه المنظمة ؟

إذا كان الجواب 'نعم'، كيف ؟

إذا كان الجواب 'لا'، لما لا ؟

هل لديك أي تعليقات، أسئلة ، اقتراحات، أو معلومات إضافية ترغبين في مشاركتها معي بشأن هذا المشروع ؟

شكرا على مشاركتك

أسئلة المقابلة لأولياء الفتيات المتعلمات

هل يمكن أن تخبرني ما هي مهنتك ؟

هل يمكن أن تخبرني ما الذي تعرفه عن المنظمات غير الحكومية ؟

هل تعتقد أن هذه المنظمة تدعم الفتيات لمواصلة تعليمهن في هذه القرى ؟

إذا كان الجواب 'نعم'، كيف ؟

إذا كان الجواب 'لا'، لما لا ؟

هل تلاحظ أي تغييرات تتعلق بتعليم الفتيات منذ وصول هذه المنظمة غير الحكومية ؟

ذا كان الجواب 'نعم'، كيف ؟

هل يمكن أن تخبرني كيف تعاملت معك هذه المنظمة بخصوص تعليم ابنتك ؟

كيف يمكنك وصف اتصاالتك مع موظفي المنظمة غير الحكومية ؟

هل لديك أي تعليقات، أسئلة ، اقتراحات، أو معلومات إضافية ترغب في مشاركتها معي بشأن هذا المشروع ؟

شكرا على مشاركتك

Appendix N: Participants

Female learners

	Categories	Nationality	Current function	Location
Zahra	FL01	Moroccan	High school student	Village (1)
Amani	FL02	Moroccan	High school student	Village (1)

Safina	FL03	Moroccan	High school student	Village (2)
Samiya	FL04	Moroccan	High school student	Village (2)
Hiba	FL05	Moroccan	High school student	Village (3)
Noura	FL06	Moroccan	High school student	Village (3)

Dropped-out schoolgirls

	Categories	Nationality	Current function	Location
Farah	DOSG01	Moroccan	----------	Village (1)
Mouna	DOSG02	Moroccan	Married	Village (1)
Salima	DOSG03	Moroccan	----------	Village (2)
Majda	DOSG04	Moroccan	----------	Village (2)
Sabah	DOSG05	Moroccan	----------	Village (3)
Aya	DOSG06	Moroccan	----------	Village (3)

Parents of female learners and dropped-out schoolgirls

	Categories	Nationality	Current function	Location
Ahmed	FLF	Moroccan	Farmer	Village (3)
Bachir	FLF	Moroccan	None	Village (1)
Saad	FLF	Moroccan	Farmer	Village (2)
Fatma	FLM	Moroccan	Housewife	Village (3)
Rabha	FLM	Moroccan	Housewife	Village (3)
Yato	FLM	Moroccan	Housewife	Village (1)
Aicha	FLM	Moroccan	Housewife	Village (2)
Mina	FLM	Moroccan	Housewife	Village (2)
Said	DOSGF	Moroccan	Labourer	Village (3)
Ali	DOSGF	Moroccan	None	Village (3)
Moha	DOSGF	Moroccan	Farmer	Village (1)
Hado	DOSGF	Moroccan	Farmer	Village (1)

Lahsen	DOSGF	Moroccan	Labourer	Village (2)
Rekaya	DOSGM	Moroccan	Housewife	Village (3)
Hada	DOSGM	Moroccan	Housewife	Village (3)
Kenza	DOSGM	Moroccan	Housewife	Village (1)
Saida	DOSGM	Moroccan	Housewife	Village (1)
Rahma	DOSGM	Moroccan	Housewife	Village (2)

NGO staff

	Categories	Nationality	Current function	Location
Malik	NGO staff	Moroccan	(1)	Village (4)
Machiala	NGO staff	Non-Moroccan	(2)	City
Rose	NGO staff	Non-Moroccan	(3)	Village (4)
Susan	NGO staff	Non Moroccan	(4)	Through email
Amar	NGO staff	Moroccan	(5)	City
Laila	NGO staff	Moroccan	(6)	Village (4)
Kaoutar	NGO staff	Moroccan	(7)	Village (4)

Abbreviations:

NGO staff: Non-Government Organisation staff
FL: Female learner
DOSG: Dropped-out schoolgirl
FLF: Female learner's father
FLM: Female learner's mother
DOSGF: Dropped-out schoolgirl's father
DOSGM: Dropped-out schoolgirl's mother