



NORWEGIAN
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Education's role in reducing poverty in Sierra Leone

Teachers' view in the poverty discourse

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Abstract

In 2015 The United Nations General Assembly committed to a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), among them, to end extreme poverty. The purpose of this thesis is to illuminate the role education may have for the individuals succeeding to get out of poverty. It is the proposition of this author that education have an impact on poverty reduction, and therefore follows the question of what role education can have in reducing poverty.

In Sierra Leone primary school is mandatory in law, nevertheless this is one of the poorest countries in the world, which raises the question of quality of education. To illustrate this idea the research is done in the form of a case study, interviewing teachers in Sierra Leone, and acquire their opinions about education, poverty, and their role as teachers. The above proposition is discussed through an analysis of their answers and earlier research. Trough the interviews, I searched for the answers to the following questions:

- 1. What is quality education for the teachers?*
- 2. What kind of education do the teachers perceive as important?*
- 3. How do the teachers perceive education's role in Sierra Leone?*

Prior studies indicates that there is a strong connection between education and poverty reduction. Findings confirm that education can contribute to reducing poverty, but they stress that the level of impact will depend on several factors.

Education have health benefits which have an impact on poverty reduction, and statistics connects a rise in educational attainment with a decrease in diseases. Education have a positive effect on the individual, and have a role in personal development. Nevertheless, because of the challenges the country faces, certain things need to be address in order for education to reach its potential. Education has to be adapted to the needs of the country, and there has to be jobs available to meet those needs. In addition, it is imperative to have quality education that is accessible for all children.

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The last year have been one of the most challenging years of my life. Balancing work, school and writing this thesis has proven to be a lot of work, but I am very proud of myself for doing it. 10 years ago, only 5 years after the civil war had ended, I had the opportunity to travel to Sierra Leone for the first time. It's fair to say that it changed my life.

First, I want to thank my family, who always encouraged me to experience everything and travel the world. Thank you for teaching me acceptance and compassion, which there is too little of in the world today. Thank you for raising me up to love my neighbour, no matter the colour of their skin, their religious belief or political view. For teaching me to stand up for what I believe in and accepting that others may have different opinions. I am especially grateful to my amazing mother, who always pushes me to work hard and try my best. Thank you for reading everything I have ever written, I would not have come this far without you.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	II
TABLE OF CONTENTS	III
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Focus Areas and Research Objectives	2
1.3 Overview of Methodology.....	3
1.4 Outline of Thesis.....	3
2. CONTEXT.....	5
2.1 History.....	5
2.1.1 <i>Civil War</i>	5
2.1.2 <i>Ebola Outbreak</i>	8
2.1.3 <i>Education in Pre-conflict Sierra Leone</i>	8
2.1.4 <i>Education in Post-conflict Sierra Leone</i>	10
2.1.5 <i>Adult Literacy Rate in Sierra Leone</i>	12
2.1.6 <i>Poverty</i>	13
2.1.7 <i>Poverty Reduction</i>	14
2.2 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.....	15
2.3 Challenges.....	17
2.3.1 <i>Governance</i>	18
2.3.2 <i>Youth, Education and Employment in Post-conflict Sierra Leone</i>	18
2.3.3 <i>Child Labour</i>	20
2.3.4 <i>Educational Challenge</i>	22
3. EARLIER RESEARCH.....	24
3.1 Education and Poverty Reduction.....	25
3.2 Education Practice and Policies in Sierra Leone.....	30

3.3	Quality of Education.....	36
3.4	Field-study of Education in Post-conflict Sierra Leone.....	39
4.	METHODOLOGY.....	43
4.1	Epistemological and Ontological Position.....	43
4.2	Research Strategy.....	44
4.3	Research Design.....	46
4.4	Method.....	47
4.4.1	<i>Interview</i>	47
4.4.2	<i>Selection, Selection Strategies and Criteria</i>	47
4.4.3	<i>Preparation of Interview Guide</i>	49
4.4.4	<i>The Interview Process</i>	49
4.5	Quality of the Research	50
4.5.1	<i>The Role of the Researcher</i>	50
4.5.2	<i>Reliability and Validity</i>	51
4.5.3	<i>Ethical Considerations</i>	52
5.	ANALYSIS.....	53
5.1	Poverty.....	53
5.1.1	<i>The Government</i>	53
5.1.2	<i>Free Education</i>	56
5.1.3	<i>Job Opportunities</i>	57
5.1.4	<i>Poverty Reduction</i>	58
5.2	Quality Education.....	60
5.2.1	<i>Quality Material and School Supplies</i>	61
5.2.2	<i>Relevant Curriculum</i>	62
5.2.3	<i>Classroom Interaction</i>	64
5.2.4	<i>Qualified Teachers</i>	66
5.2.5	<i>Public Exams</i>	67
5.3	Gender Equality.....	69
5.4	The Role of the Teacher.....	70

5.4.1	<i>Becoming a Teacher</i>	71
5.4.2	<i>The Teaching Occupation</i>	72
5.4.3	<i>Goals with Teaching</i>	74
5.5	Conclusion.....	75
6.	DISCUSSION: EDUCATION'S ROLE IN REDUCING POVERTY IN SIERRA LEONE.....	78
6.1	Education and Poverty Reduction.....	79
6.1.1	<i>The Connection between Education and Poverty Reduction</i>	80
6.1.2	<i>Literacy</i>	82
6.1.3	<i>Challenges</i>	84
6.2	Quality Education.....	89
6.3	Gender Equality.....	96
6.4	The Role of the Teacher.....	98
7.	CONCLUSION.....	103
7.1	Education's Role in Reducing Poverty in Sierra Leone.....	103
7.2	Conclusion.....	107
7.3	Thoughts for the Future.....	108
	REFERENCES.....	109
	APPENDICES.....	113
A.	The Interview Guide.....	113

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In September 2000, UN General Assembly, where representatives from almost every country in the world attends, gathered to adopt the United Nation's Millennium Declaration. The declaration contains a series of goals known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The leaders committed their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and the declaration sat out a series of time-bound targets, which was to be reached by 2015. One of the goals was to half the number of people living in extreme poverty, which was reached already in 2010, however, the number of people living in extreme poverty is still high. 2015 marked the deadline of the MDGs, and to continue the global partnership's work, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) was created. One of the goals is to end extreme poverty by 2030. In addition to eradicate extreme poverty, the SDG also include a goal regarding education. The goal contains several targets, including securing quality education for all children everywhere.

Despite the fact that the number of people living in extreme poverty has decreased since 2000, a very small portion of the reduction has taken place in African countries. Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries in the world, where a large part of the population lives below the poverty line. From 1991 to 2002 Sierra Leone experienced a horrible civil war, killing and molesting a large percentage of the inhabitants. The destructions the war left was huge, both on people and their homes. To arise from the destructions and trauma caused by the war is a tremendous challenge. In addition to other things, the war had a very negative effect on the education system. In Sierra Leone, 9 years of primary school is mandatory by law, even though they struggle with a low number of children attending school, and a high percentage of child labour.

A significant amount of research has been done on education, poverty, poverty reduction, as well as a combination of these. The existing research is based on various aspects of the education and poverty discourse. Therefore, existing research is a substantial part of this thesis. Research indicates that background is a very important aspect, and therefore countries need different approaches to poverty reduction. Although I acknowledge that there are existing studies on education in Sierra Leone, and poverty reduction in Sierra Leone, I see a lack of

research on what role education can have in poverty reduction. I will try to identify the challenges and opportunities through this thesis

1.2 Focus Areas and Research Objectives

In this thesis I investigate to find what role education can have in reducing poverty in Sierra Leone. I do not aim at finding the solution on how the education system should be, nor how the government should build the education system. In developing countries, education and human capital lead to economy growth and state prosperity, but in this thesis I look at the education's role – and the positive impact – it may have on the individuals to get out of poverty. I have looked at how the current education system are, as well as aspects of the system that could be changed in order to have an impact on poverty reduction. It is reasonable to presume that education has different roles in different countries, and this thesis is limited to the role education have in Sierra Leone. It is highly relevant to look at the history of Sierra Leone, one of the poorest countries in the world, and at the same time this country is making progress towards securing macroeconomic stability. I see education as an important aspect in a country's goal to get properly developed, and the poverty discourse. The nature of the topic requires some level of knowledge of what the country has been through to create a better understanding of the challenges connected to education and poverty. In addition to history and circumstances, earlier research on education and poverty in Sierra Leone is highly relevant. Both circumstances and earlier research will play a major role, and will be the backbone of this thesis. In this thesis I want to identify the following:

- 1. What is quality education?*
- 2. What is the teacher's role in the poverty reduction process?*
- 3. What role does education have in reducing poverty in Sierra Leone?*

I will use existing literature, which I will refer to as earlier research, to compare with my own research, when discussing the focal points mentioned above. The SDGs have a part of this thesis for two reasons;

- They include goals for education and poverty reduction that is relevant.

- Sierra Leone is very dependent on aid from actors with an interest in the SDGs, and its therefore important to take in to consideration that aid is given in the framework of these goals.

I acknowledge that the SDGs are not the solution to fixing education or reducing poverty in Sierra Leone, however, I do consider them to be a good guideline, and will therefore use them as that. It should also be mentioned that due to the limits of this thesis, I will not go into poverty reduction approaches that is not in connection with education. There are several approaches that could be argued to reduce poverty in Sierra Leone, however, that is not the focal point of this thesis.

1.3 Overview of Methodology

The research that is done as a part of this thesis is qualitative, taking form of a case study. Trough the case study I search to find the answers to the following key questions:

- 1. What is quality education for the teachers?*
- 2. What kind of education do the teachers perceive as important?*
- 3. How do the teachers perceive education's role in Sierra Leone?*

In early January 2017, I travelled to Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, to conduct a case study. I stayed for two weeks, where I interviewed teachers in two schools about education and poverty in Sierra Leone. I conducted five semi-structured interviews in that period. All the interviews where one on one, and they provided me with their perspectives on education and poverty reduction. I will get deeper into the methodology in chapter 4.

1.4 Outline of Thesis

In this thesis, there are seven chapters, this being the first chapter. In chapter 2, the circumstances that form the setting for Sierra Leone, will be presented. History, and current situation is important to take in to consideration when addressing what role education can have in reducing poverty. The history of Sierra Leone, the SDGs, and challenges the country faces, are presented

in this chapter.

Prior research will be addressed in chapter 3. Presenting and discussing what other authors have written on the subject, is a major part of the thesis. The existing research presented here are on the subjects of education and poverty reduction, on educational practises and policies in Sierra Leone. A field study of education in post-conflict Sierra Leone will also be presented here. Quality education is a focus in the education and poverty discourse, and therefore will earlier research on quality of education be addressed. What is being presented in this chapter, lay the ground work for the remaining parts of the thesis.

Chapter 4 is the methodology chapter, which starts with explaining the epistemological and ontological position, research strategy and research. Here method will be addressed, including the choice of interview, how the selection of participants took place and the strategy and criteria involved in the process. Here the field work will be explained, with looking at preparation of interview guide and the interviewing process. This chapter will also contain a discussion on the quality of the research.

The analysis of the interviews will be presented in chapter 5. The chapter is divided into sub-chapters relevant for the subjects addressed in the interviews and earlier chapters. The participant's statements will be, sorted, compared and evaluated.

In chapter 6, earlier research and fieldwork are brought together in a discussion of the focal points in this thesis. The chapter is divided in to sub-categories, where each category is linked to earlier research and the findings that emerged trough the fieldwork.

In the seventh, and final chapter, the conclusion to the discussion is presented. The central questions of the thesis are tried answered, and offers a few thought for the future.

2. Context

It is important when reading this thesis to have some background and context of Sierra Leone, a country which have faced many challenges. I will start with some historical aspects that have a huge impact on the people and government of Sierra Leone today, the civil war and the Ebola outbreak. I will look at the education in Sierra Leone, before and after the civil war. Poverty reduction and education has a central place in the development discourse, I therefore find it important to explain those things in the context of Sierra Leone, as well as the place it has in the international community. The SDGs has a focus on eradicating poverty and secure education for all, and therefore it will be natural to look at some of the relevant goals. Lastly, I will look at some of the challenges Sierra Leone faces that has an effect on the education and poverty reduction discourse.

2.1 History

The history of Sierra Leone is important to know in order to understand why the current education system is as it is today. When discussing the challenges connected with education and poverty reduction in Sierra Leone, it is evident that it is closely connected with the country's history. I will therefore look at some of the events that has affected the country in recent years, like the brutal civil war and Ebola outbreak. I will also address education in pre-conflict and post- conflict Sierra Leone. Before ending this subchapter with addressing poverty and poverty reduction in the current Sierra Leone, I will look at the adult literacy rate in Sierra Leone. Low literacy numbers are often in connection with poverty, and is therefore highly relevant.

2.1.1 Civil War

Sierra Leone is a small country on the coast of West Africa with 6,7 million habitants (Countrymeters, 2016, 08.09.). The capital is Freetown, with the country's largest population. In 1787 Freetown was given to the English settlers from the Portuguese and became the home for blacks who were discharged from the British Army and runaway slaves. In 1808 the coastal areas in Sierra Leone became a British colony and almost 90 years later, the hinterland was also

proclaimed. On April 27, 1961 Sierra Leone became an independent state and had a few years of functioning democracy before the election of Siaka Stevens in 1967 (infoplease, 2016, 08.09). Stevens led an opposition party that put the country under a long era of repressive rule and military coups. The country declared itself a republic on April 19, 1971 with Stevens as executive president. From 1978 Sierra Leone was a one-party state, increasingly crippled by high-level corruption with diamonds. After eighteen years of ruling, Stevens retired and chose the head of the army, Joseph Momoh, as his successor (historyworld, 2016, 08.09). The guerrilla force, The Revolutionary United Front (RUF), led by Foday Sankoh invaded Sierra Leone March 1991 (undp.org, p.6, 10.09.16). Warlord, and later president of Liberia, Charles Taylor, started launching attacks to the southern regions of Sierra Leone from his base in Liberia. This was the beginning of the 11 year long civil war.

Momoh continued to rule in the same repressive rule as Stevens until a coup overturned him in 1992. The new military junta respected the existing election rules and a civilian, Ahmad Kabbah, was elected president in 1996. Kabbah was only sitting president for 1 year, before a new military coup took place in May 1997, and the leader, Johnny Koroma declared himself president. By June 1997 Koroma and Sankoh were partners, with Sankoh being a part of Koroma's military government. The neighbouring countries did not support Koroma's leadership, and troops from neighbouring countries, led by Nigeria, arrived in Sierra Leone with the intention of restoring Kabbah as president. At this time Sierra Leone is facing a violent anarchy and people are getting their limbs cut off by villains supporting Sankoh and Koroma. This terror was only a part of an attempt to grab the nation's diamonds. In February 1998 the Nigerian forces expelled Koroma from Freetown and reinstated the legitimate president, Kabbah, but only 11 months later Kabbah was driven from Freetown by Sankoh and the RUF. At this point the civil war was taking place in other parts of the country (historyworld, 2016, 08.09).

In July 1999, Kabbah and Sankoh reach a controversial peace agreement. The agreement involved Sankoh occupying the role of vice-president to Kabbah's presidency, in addition to the potentially lucrative post of head of the nation's Mineral Resources Commission. At the same time Koroma and his rebel troops are granted amnesty. The agreement was supported by foreign governments, however, a lot of people disliked the fact that it put the diamonds of Sierra Leone in the hands of the people who hurt so many civilians. In October the same year, Sankoh and Koroma travelled to Freetown to apologize and ask for forgiveness for the horrible atrocities they

committed during the civil war. At the same time, the UN Security Council dedicated 6000 troops to a peace-keeping role in Sierra Leone. When the civil war seemed to come to an end, the situation suddenly turned to a renewal of civil war. As part of the peace agreement, Sankoh was given a government position. However, he failed to disarm his troops in the RUF as promised, and in the start of 2000, the violet troops of the RUF moved towards Freetown. In May the rebels took 300 members of the UN force, and as a response, Britain sent 700 paratroops and two warships to safeguard the evacuation of foreigners. A few days later a pro-government demonstration turned violent outside the Freetown house of Sankoh. He escaped, but was found 10 days later. Sankoh got caught, but the situation still remained tense and uncertain, and many of the diamond mines were under the RUF's control. Sankoh's partner, Koroma, while proclaiming his intention of cooperating with the government, had a history of violent insurrection. In 2001, around 60 percent of the country was ruled by the RUF, who terrorized local populations by chopping off the limbs of children. The corrupt president of Liberia, Charles Taylor, wanted a share of Sierra Leone's diamond wealth and supported the RUF regime (historyworld, 2016, 08.09).

During the civil war, the people of Sierra Leone suffered terrible abuse from RUF. The estimated number are some 70,000 casualties and 2.6 million displaced people. More than 50 percent of the population were displaced from their homes. The civilians on both sides of the battle were victims of hideous violence, including widespread execution, amputation of limbs, lips and ears, decapitation and gang-rape (Kaldor & Vincent, 2006, p.6). Children were made into soldiers, and it is estimated that of the 137,865 members of Sierra Leone's armed forces, 48,216 were children (Paulson, 2011, p.122). Children were abducted to fight, and they were given drugs and alcohol to give them courage (Kaldor & Vincent, 2006, p.6). In 2002 a new peace treaty was signed by president Kabbah and the rebels, and the war was finally declared over. An election was held, and Kabbah won with 70 percent of the votes (historyworld, 2016, 08.09). Today, Ernest Bai Koroma is sitting president, he has been elected two times and has served as president since 2007 (BBC News, 2017, 04.01).

2.1.2 Ebola Outbreak

After the civil war Sierra Leone has struggled to emerge from instability and conflict, and it's fair to assume that the Ebola outbreak in 2014 slowed down the development progress. In July 2014, Sierra Leone declares a state of emergency to tackle the Ebola outbreak. At this point the deadly virus has killed more than 700 people in West Africa (BBC News, 2017, 04.01). Ebola is a severe, often fatal illness, and the average fatality rate is around 50 percent. The virus is often transferred from wild animals to humans, and then spreads through human-to-human transmission. There are no licensed Ebola vaccines or treatments proven to neutralize the virus, but early care with rehydration and symptomatic treatments improves the probability of survival (World Health Organization, 2016, 01.01). The World Health Organization (WHO) declared Sierra Leone Ebola free March 17, 2016 (World Health Organization, 2016, 17.03). In almost two years, Sierra Leone had 14,061 cases and 3,995 deaths caused by the Ebola virus (World Health Organization, 2015, p.2). Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone were severely affected by the outbreak, all being countries that recently had struggled with long periods of crises and instability. According to WHO, it is important to have control when a country is exposed to outbreaks like Ebola. Community engagement, management, surveillance and contact tracing is essential to successfully control outbreaks. A good laboratory service, controlled burials and social mobilization is necessary. These countries, still recovering from crisis, do not have a strong healthcare system, and lack human and infrastructural resources. All of those factors made the outbreak difficult to control (World Health Organization, 2016, 01.01).

2.1.3 Education in Pre-conflict Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone started to focus on education and building schools early on. Fourah Bay College (FBC), located in Freetown, was established in 1826 and was the first college in West Africa. It was a popular school for students and scholars from all over sub-Saharan Africa. The educational enrolment in Freetown was high in all levels of school. By 1900, 7,000 out of 14,000 children in primary school age, were enrolled in primary school. After independence in 1961, the young people of Sierra Leone benefited from the development of primary and secondary schooling. However, there were not many employment opportunities, which led many young people to drop out of school. When looking at the major groups of young people who were mobilized to fight in

the civil war, many of them had dropped out of school. Mitsuko Matsumoto argues that the elite nature of the education could have been a contributor towards conflict in the country (Paulson, 2011, p.122). While Freetown had high numbers of children attending school, with a percentage of 50, the rural areas in the north had 0,97 percent and the south 4,75 percent. Since Sierra Leone was under British colonial rule, the curriculum had a "British style" which was not useful for the daily lives of the students.

In 1980 the academic situation got worse, as Sierra Leone declined into a long era of repressive rule, where the economy got worse, and with the rise of political corruption. There was still a big regional discrepancy in school enrolment. The elitist nature of education got bigger, and former president Momoh stated that education was a privilege and not a right. According to Matsumoto, this illustrates the degree of exclusivity inbuilt in the country's educational system before the civil war (Paulson, 2011, pp.122-123). When the war started in 1991, the educational system was already dysfunctional. It was a problem that teachers did not get paid, and therefore found other jobs. In addition there were "ghost" teachers fabricated by schools, who reported they had more teachers working there. This was done in order to receive more financial support. The system was at a downfall with a decay of schools, a lack of school supplies and a number of boarding schools being closed. Parents could not afford school fees, but were charged the fees despite their children not attending school. This was a result of the dramatic inflation of Sierra Leonean currency since 1978 (Paulson, 2011, p.123). Among scholars, there are different opinions about how the education system is connected to the conflict. Some argue that the RUF was led by highly educated rebels, who rebelled against the education system they felt had failed them. Others argue that the radical groups that started the war, were not frustrated at the education system itself, but at the whole political system (Paulson, 2011, p.124).

When looking at education in the history of Sierra Leone, it is fair to assume that higher education provided higher social, political and economic status. The Creoles, the descendants of repatriated Africans from the Caribbean, North America and England received the highest level of education in Sierra Leone. They would get jobs in the government during the colonial period, and took over the employments of the Europeans after independence. Some schools are more preferable, and school credentials play a huge role when seeking employment. The school attended is argued to be more important than the quality of the education, as the right school

provided the right connections. For example, students from Bo Government Boy's School have provided many politicians. This may indicate that education was not so much about what was learned in school, but more about what kind of qualifications and connections it provided. By the 1980's, when the corruption increased and the economic deterioration worsened, those with education struggled to find desired employment, while those with political connection secured prestigious jobs. The young people saw that high education did not provide employment unless you had the right political connection, which made them frustrated. What education represented and how it was built in the political system and society can be seen as a part of what caused the youth to react and cause conflict, according to Matsumoto (Paulson ,2011, pp.124-125).

2.1.4 Education in Post- conflict Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries in the world and is highly dependent on external aid and donor countries goodwill. According to Kargbo, it is important for the country to get resources that will be translated into job creation, which also reaches the high unemployment rates that characterized ex-combatants (Kargbo, 2014, p.168). Since the war ended in 2002, the foreign investment in the country has been low, and so has the labour market demands (Kargbo, 2014, p.171). The 11 year long war almost lead to a total state collapse, and the economic problems led to mass poverty. The education system was affected by the war and became challenging. There were not enough schools and other educational facilities, the cost of schooling was high and teaching and learning had low quality. Social customs and traditions also led to education having a lower priority, and boys was more preferred to attend school then girls (Kargbo, 2014, pp.180-181). Despite some reactions against the education system before the war, the people of Sierra Leone wanted education for their children after the war. After securing basic needs such as healthcare and shelter, their first priority was providing education for their children (Paulson, 2011, p.8). The reformation of the education system was in focus after the war, and the expenditure on education was increased from 14 percent in 1996 to 20 percent in 2003. The reasons behind the focus on education was both the role it had in causing conflict, as well as education being seen as a key element for peace-building in Sierra Leone (Paulson, 2011, p.125). In 2010, President Dr. Ernst Bai Koroma stated in his speech at the African Union Summit:

By making all children attend school, we will be ensuring that our people have the knowledge, skills and confidence to make informed choices to sustain our achievement and secure the future of this continent. Getting all our children to school is a moral and developmental imperative (Paulson, 2011, p.126).

After the war, a key educational change was made by establishing a new educational system replacing the 7-5-2-4 system (Paulson, 2011, p.127). The new system was 6-3-3-4, 6 years of primary school, 3 years of junior secondary school (JSS), 3 years of senior secondary school (SSS) and 4 years of university. In 2011, they added 1 year to SSS, making the system 6-3-4-4. Vocational and technical training have an important place in the national education system, and are implemented from primary to university level, as well in both formal and informal education. The goal with vocational and technical training is to develop self-reliance and self-actualization for individuals, and create gradual development of society and the country's economy (Kargbo, 2014, pp.170-171). Mandatory basic education start at age 6, and includes 6 years of primary and 3 years of junior secondary school. The Education Act of 2004 makes it a criminal offence for parents to not send their children to school, and the punishment can be up to a Le 500,000 (90.63 USD 14.09.16) fine or up to 1 year in prison.

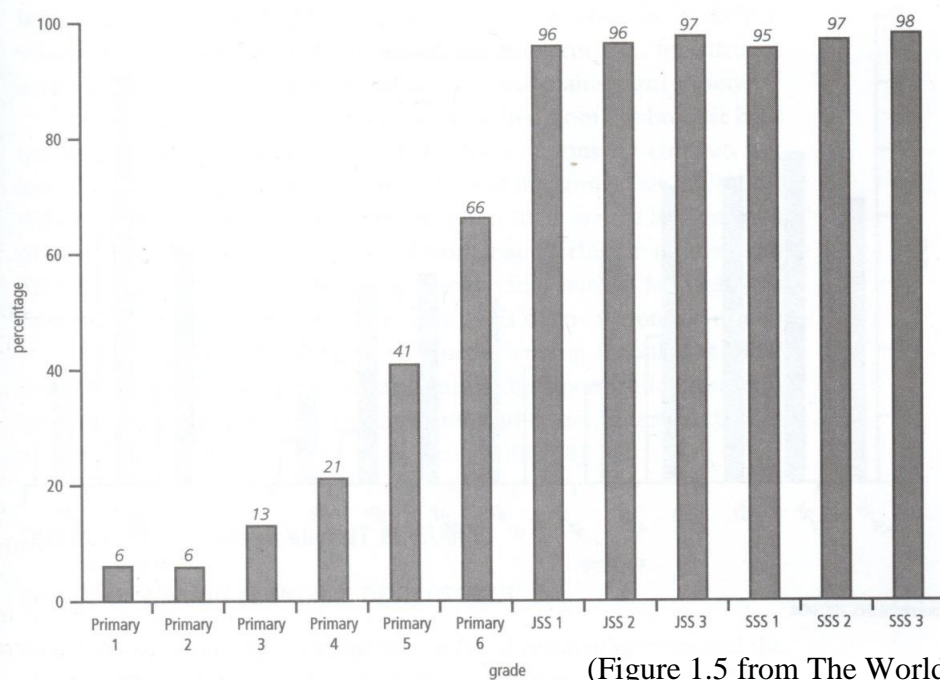
For the students being able to move forward in school, they need to pass exams between the levels. To get from Primary school to JSS they need to pass the National Primary School Exam (NPSE). To move from JSS to SSS, the student must pass the Basic Education Certificate Exam (BECE). The West African Senior School Certificate Exam (WASSCE) must be passed to be able to go to the university level. The NPSE and BECE fees are paid for by the government. The government have decided to abolish all tuition and exam fees for all students in grade 1 to 6, and for girls in secondary school, in some parts of the country. In addition they will provide free basic school supplies. The lack of recourses, however, makes it hard for the government to make it a reality. Schools are allowed to charge fees up to LE 20,000 per term for JSS and LE 25,000 per term for SSS (Kargbo, 2014, pp.193-194). By making primary school and JSS free, the gross enrolment rate increased, and the total number of schools has doubled from 2,240 in 1989 to 4,578 in 2004. The World Bank described these results as a "remarkable recovery" in Sierra Leonean education. To reach this recovery, Sierra Leone has been dependent on external support and donors. Almost 40 percent of governmental budget comes from outside support, support which often comes with conditions. The focus on primary education can be seen as driven by the

international community and the desire to reach the MDGs. In addition, donors aim much of their support at basic education. One example is the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which made conditions concerning teachers' wages as a part of the poverty reduction strategy (Paulson, 2011, p.127).

2.1.5 Adult Literacy Rate in Sierra Leone

Literacy is in this context defined as being able to read and write in any language (The World Bank, 2007, p.24). According to The World Bank, the number of qualified primary graduates has increased from 21,700 in 2001 to 55,800 in 2008. To complete the 6 years of primary school is important because it takes approximately 6 years to become literate in Sierra Leone (The World Bank, 2007, p.4). However, 4 years of education is average for men, and only 2 years for women in Sierra Leone. The low educational attainment makes the literacy rate low, with 50 percent of men and 29 percent of females being literate. The rates varied greatly by gender, location and age. In the Western areas the rates are double as high as in other regions and men in urban areas have three times as many years of education as men in rural areas (The World Bank, 2007, pp.24-25). The following figure, figure 2.1, illustrates literacy rates by grade.

Figure 2.1 Literacy Rates by Grade, 2003/04

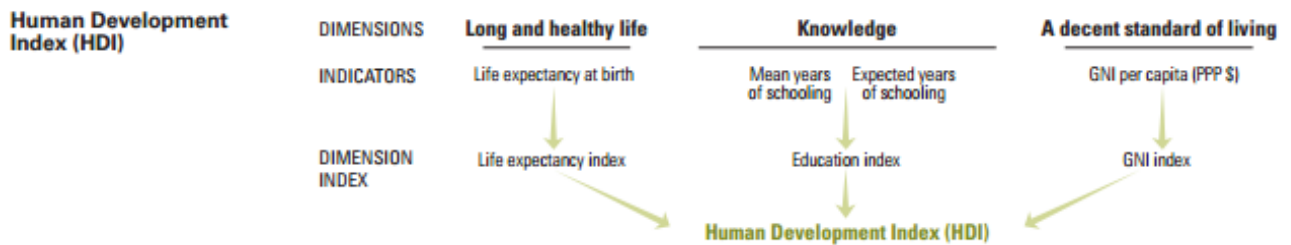


(Figure 1.5 from The World Bank, 2007, p.25)

2.1.6 Poverty

Despite the high rise of enrolment in primary school the last 20 years, the poverty levels are still high. The Human Development Index (HDI) can be useful when discussing poverty reduction and education. The HDI is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living. The HDI is the geometric mean of normalized indices for each of the three dimensions (United Nations (2015) Human Development Index). According to the index Sierra Leone is nr. 181, being one of the ten poorest countries in the world. To put it in perspective, Norway is nr 1 (United Nations, 2015, pp.208-210). The Human development Index is explained in figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2 Explanation of Human development Index



(Explanation of United Nations (2015) Human Development Index)

The government of Sierra Leone and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) aim on pursue economic, social and public rebuilding. It recognizes that human resource development is a crucial element for poverty reduction and sustainable development (The World Bank, 2007, p.15). Poverty in Sierra Leone can be divided into two lines: the food/extreme poverty line, and the full poverty line. Numbers from 2003/04 shows that 70 percent falls below the full poverty line, while 26 percent live under the food/extreme poverty line. In rural areas 80 percent are poor, while 54 percent in urban areas. Freetown have the lowest proportion of poverty at only 15 percent. In the urban areas outside Freetown however, are 70 percent living in poverty (The World Bank, 2007, pp.21-22).

2.1.7 Poverty Reduction

According to The World Bank, there has been progress in reducing poverty over the past decades. The first MDG target, was to half the 1990 poverty rate by 2015. The goal was reached in 2010- five years early. Despite this, the number of people living in extreme poverty are still unacceptably high. The poverty reduction may not be fast enough to reach the SDG of ending extreme poverty by 2030. Numbers from 2013, indicates that 10,7 percent of the world's population live on less than US\$1,90 a day, which means that 767 million people live on less than \$1,90 a day. The number are high, nevertheless, it has gone down from 35 percent and 1.85 billion people in 1990. Approximately half of the 767 million extreme poor live in sub-Saharan Africa, and the number of poor people in the sub-Saharan Africa was only reduced by 4 million. The majority of the global poor live in rural areas and are poorly educated, many of them being children. It's becoming harder to reach them, because they often live under fragile conditions and in remote areas. Access to good schools, healthcare, electricity, safe water and other critical services remains elusive for many people, often determined by socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, and geography. For people who have broken out of poverty, economic shocks, food insecurity and climate change threaten to rob them of their hard-won gains and force them back into poverty. The World Bank states that it will be critical to find ways to tackle these issues towards 2030 (The World Bank, 2016, 02.10).

That education leads to accelerated human development, poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth is a general assertion among researchers and development workers. Simeon Maile, who works as a research director, states that this assertion is a result of thorough research on poverty reduction strategies (Maile, 2008, p. xi). However, researchers also argue that eradication of poverty is not possible through education alone and that the MDGs is not the only solution to the development problems many African countries are facing. They argue that leaders who have committed themselves to the MDGs and aims for better education for children, equal rights for women and a healthier environment, despite their efforts, have not been able to eradicate poverty in their countries. There are several countries with high enrolment numbers in primary and secondary school, that still have poverty as a challenge (Maile, 2008, p. xiii), and Sierra Leone is one of those countries. According to The New Partnership of African Development's (Nepad) action plan and strategies, African countries can't resolve their development problems individually. It is essential to have a coherent effort, where each country

participate and have a role. This is particularly important in eradicating poverty and hunger, and achieving universal primary education. Education may not be the answer alone, but education is argued to increase productivity and earnings, and to be a powerful tool in reducing illiteracy, one of the strongest predictors of poverty (Maile, 2008, pp. xii-xiii).

2.2 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Sierra Leone is committed to the global initiatives of Education for All (EFA) and the educational targets set by the MDGs (The World Bank, 2007, p.15).

On September 25th 2015, countries adopted a set of goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years. (United Nations, 2015, Sustainable Development Goals)

These goals replaces the UNs MDGs which had a target date in 2015. The SDGs are in large degree a continuation of the MDGs. The MDG no.1 was to half extreme poverty by 2015, which have been accomplished. The SDG no.1 is to get rid of poverty, and the goal targets are:

- By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day
- By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions
- Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable
- By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance

- By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters
- Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions
- Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions

(Sited from: United Nations, 2015, Sustainable Development Goals).

According to the UN, education is fundamental for improving people's lives and sustainable development. The SDG no.4 is to secure quality education for all, and the goal targets are:

- By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes
- By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
- By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
- By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
- By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

- By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
- By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
- Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
- By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries
- By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states

(Sited from: United Nations, 2015, Sustainable Development Goals).

According to Matsumoto are the MDGs and other international goals a contributor for the focus on education (Paulson, 2011, p.127).

2.3 Challenges

Sierra Leones faces challenges in different areas, areas that needs to be addressed in order to secure poverty reduction. I will now look at some of these challenges, starting with governance which have a significant impact on the educational system. I will then address issues connected

to youth, education and employment in Sierra Leone, and child labour. Lastly I will address some educational challenges.

2.3.1 Governance

I will not go deep into the political system in Sierra Leone, but to understand the challenges connected with education and poverty reduction, it is important to understand why the government have a major role and impact on the education system. Bad governance was, according to Abubakar Hassan Kargbo, one of the reasons for the civil war. There were no attempt to create the necessary institutions to strengthen the governess process (Kargbo, 2014, p.99). Kargbo, who is chairman of the National Commission for Democracy, believe that some basic principles has to be followed by the state, in order for a well-functioning government to be possible. Such principles have been absent in Sierra Leone, and has caused chaos and anarchy. One of these principles are that the people shall participate in the political process. By involving the general public and hold elections, the democratic society is ensured, and the possibility of abuse of power is reduced (Kargbo, 2014, p.8). Despite improvement of governance since the end of the civil war, there are still things in need of improvement. The country has struggled with corruption, and it can be argued that corruption is more likely to occur because of weak institutions, and therefore it is important to make the institutions stronger (Kargbo, 2014, pp.12-13). How to make them stronger is a discussion I will not go into, but the point is that the government needs to have a system that includes all citizens and reduce the risk for conflict. For Sierra Leone to stay in peace, it's necessary to create a new political culture in which democracy can grow and gain a foothold. Where the population, together with political leaders and parties can have political expressions. The civil society in Sierra Leone have been playing a huge role in the democratic process and restoration of constitutional order (Kargbo, 2014, pp.118-119).

2.3.2 Youth, Education and Employment in Post-conflict Sierra Leone

The National Youth Policy defines a *youth* as all Sierra Leonean females and males between the ages of 15 and 35 (Kargbo, 2014, p.163). Poverty profile over the years indicates that 60 percent of youths live in poverty, which can be related to the high unemployment rate. There was little

investment in youth education and development before the war, and there was no real job opportunities for young people. During the war many young men and women witnessed and participated in horrible violence. The war increased the youth crises, which Sierra Leone will struggle with unless a solution is found that will empower the youth (Kargbo, 2014, p.162). According to the 2009 Report of the Africa Commission on Realising the Potential of Africa's Youth, half of the ex-combats struggles to be integrated into Sierra Leonean society because of being unemployed. The Africa Commission and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Denmark emphasizes that the young people are central to Africa's development, and that it's necessary to create jobs (Kargbo, 2014, p.163). According to the 2004 Population and Housing Census Analytical Report on Employment and Labour Force, the educated youth were at the highest risk for unemployment (Kargbo, 2014, pp.163-164). "The government views the Sierra Leone youth as a human development challenge that must be given the attention it deserves in the context of post-conflict peace building and sustainable poverty reduction" (Kargbo, 2014, p.165). President Koroma established a Youth Commission to facilitate youth affairs in Sierra Leone, which was a part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC was set up after the war to heal wounds caused by war. The youth commission works to get more concrete actions from the government, to empower the youth and give them more involvement in the country's decision makings. According to Kargbo, the level of education and professional skills in Sierra Leone is low and there is no employment opportunities for the youth (Kargbo, 2014, p.165).

It could be argued that education is an important part of peace-building in post-conflict countries. Mitsuko Matsumoto argues that on one hand education can create stability in society, however, at the same time it can make the existing tensions in society worse. Education can also be argued to have a positive effect on societies in post-conflict countries. One argument is that education can restore normality, promote reconciliation and tolerance, as well as be helpful to prevent new conflicts. Another argument is that education can drive economic and social development, which will have an impact on poverty reduction. The youth is often the largest population cohort in post-conflict countries, including Sierra Leone (Paulson, 2011, pp.120-121). In Sierra Leone, the population of youths, aged 15 to 18 years, was 33,3 percent in 2003, and the numbers are increasing (Kargbo, 2014, p.162). To not provide education or employment to the largest group in society, can be a potential risk for social tensions and conflict. To engage the youth through education and training can be meaningful, and provide them with tolerance for

other members of society. However, it could be questioned if education can have the capacity to contribute to such changes (Paulson, 2011, pp.120-121).

2.3.3 Child Labour

Child labour is a result of socioeconomic difficulty, characterised by poverty in Sierra Leone (Kargbo, 2014, p.181). Child labour has many consequences, like deprivation of education and normal development. Children in child labour are more likely to end up in early marriage, teenage pregnancy, rape and acquire health problems. It also contributes to an anti-social behaviour, underdevelopment and keeps people in the poverty cycle (Kargbo, 2014, pp.179-180). Sierra Leone Citizenship Act of 1973 defines a child as "a person under the age of 21 years", as well does the Education Act and Cap.10 of the Laws of Sierra Leone. The constitution of 1991 and the Minimum Age Convention of 1973 on the other hand, defines a child as a person under the age of 18 years (Kargbo, 2014, pp.176-177). The country signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in February 1990. However, they have not been able to follow through because of the socioeconomic and political environment. The war caused the standard of living for children to deteriorate, with an increase in the infant mortality rate caused by diarrhoea, malaria, acute respiratory infection, and measles. In most cases was malnutrition a contributing factor. To better the situation, Sierra Leone have a long term strategy for improving the health sector and provide quality healthcare. In addition, because of the horrible situation of child labour in the country, there has been ratified a convention against child labour (Kargbo, 2014, pp.177-178).

An UNICEF research found that over 80 percent of children aged 15 to 18 years old are working. The high numbers can be connected to the high early school dropout rate and non-schooling among children (Kargbo, 2014, p.177). On a more positive note, if we look at the Education For All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report 2015, we can see that the percentage of children in the age 7-11 years old who only worked has gone from 39,2 percent in 2000 to 7,9 percent in 2010. The report also shows that in 2000, as low as 14,6 percent only went to school, whereas 50,7 percent in 2010 (UNESCO, 2015, p.98). We will see similar results if we look at school and employment status age 12 to 14 years. Figure 2.3 and 2.4 illustrates the status of children 7-11 years and 12-14 years.

Figure 2.3 Percentage of children of 7-11 year olds by schooling and employment status

	Only in school	Employed and in school	Only employed	Neither
2000	14,6%	32,9%	39,2%	13,3%
2010	50,7%	29,4%	7,9%	12%

(Fig. 2.10 from UNESCO, 2015, p.98)

Figure 2.4. Percentage of children of 12-14 year olds by schooling and employment status

	Only in school	Employed and in school	Only employed	Neither
2000	11,5%	37,5%	41,2%	9,8%
2010	47%	34,3%	9,8%	8,9%

(Fig. 3.5 from UNESCO, 2015, p.118)

The numbers of children who are employed are still high. According to the EFA report, child labour affects educational attainment and achievement. By reducing child labour the result can be improved educational outcomes and reduced poverty (UNESCO, 2015, p.97). However, it also goes the other way around, with the high numbers of child labour can be connected to the high early school dropout rate and non schooling among children (Kargbo, 2014, p.177).

Therefore it is fare to assume that if these numbers are correct, and the children aged 7 to 14 years stay in school, the percentage of children in child labour aged 15 to 18 years, will decrease over time. On the other hand, when looking at the number of children moving up in the educational ladder, it indicates that very few climb up. Only 50 percent of class 1 children are expected to reach class 6, and only 22 percent of JSS1 are expected to reach SSS3 (Paulson, 2011, p.130).

2.3.4 Educational Challenges

There are several obstacles within the educational system that needs to be challenged in order to make education a tool in poverty reduction. Education may not be a privilege for the elite anymore, however, it has not become an entitle right for all (Paulson, 2011, p.132). Despite primary school being free, there are "hidden fees", estimated by UNICEF to be as much as 39,15 USD a year. In addition to the regular school fees at secondary level, the "hidden fees" are higher than at primary level (Paulson, 2011, p.130). The EFA goal for Sierra Leone require universal education with 6 years primary and 3 years junior secondary school for all children. In 2004/05, 65 percent of primary school children graduated, but only 31 percent graduated junior secondary school the same year. This illustrates the challenges with reaching the EFA goal of securing education for 100 percent of the children. In addition, the EFA require quality education, meaning providing quality material in a well-structured school environments with the goal of superior learning outcomes. However, the schools in Sierra Leone are in very poor conditions and lack school supplies and trained teachers (The World Bank, 2007, pp.4-5).

Another challenge is to keep children in school. One of the reasons for high dropout numbers before the war, was that the curriculum was a not relevant for the daily lives of the people of Sierra Leone. The curriculum has not been changed or improved after the war, which have made the new education system unsuccessful (Paulson, 2011, p.130). When looking at examination results, they confirm low quality of education in Sierra Leone, with under 4 percent of SSS3 student passing the WASSCE. When not passing the exams, the only option in order to move to a higher level is to bribe the teachers, an option most Sierra Leonean cannot afford. According to Matsumoto, the massive failure at public exams is a critical issue in the educational system (Paulson, 2011, p.131).

Teachers have low salaries, but have the highest of civil servants in the country, even higher then police officers. Despite this, they both rely on bribes, and teachers accepting bribes have affected the education system. The IMF have sat a "ceiling" condition on how high the teacher salaries can be, which have contributed to the corruption and the low quality of the education system. Sierra Leone is still affected by economic instability, which have made it difficult for families to provide for school fees and basic supplies, such as textbooks for their children (Paulson, 2011, p.132). Another issue is that after the war, many of the teachers have been unemployed for several years, which has resulted in them becoming unqualified since they

are not updated on knowledge and skills. Many schools struggles with unqualified teachers and 40 percent of teachers at primary level are unqualified. In order to create quality education and enhance student learning outcomes the percentage needs to be higher (The World Bank, 2007, pp.7-8).

The access to schooling differs of many reasons, gender and wealth of the family being two. The access is not the same in all parts of Sierra Leone, in rural and urban, north and south. Those who struggle the most to access school and climb the educational ladder is female children, rural children, children outside Western Area and children from poor families. According to The World Bank, the government has to focus on reducing gender disparity in access to JSS and SSS. The fees for girls to attend JSS are abolished in the Northern and Eastern regions, but should be extended to other regions as well. In many rural areas, children don't attend primary school because of the long way to school, and the costs connected to it. Attending JSS is difficult, and SSS and college are almost impossible. Equal access for everyone, no matter location, gender and wealth level of the family, should be a priority (The World Bank, 2007, pp.9-10).

3. Earlier Research

In order to create a better understanding for this thesis, and the link between education and poverty reduction, it is highly relevant to look at earlier research. There is a lot of literature and empirical papers dealing with different strategies to assist with poverty reduction and eradication, see for example Dr. Fidelis O. Ogwumike or Gould, Jeremy. Furthermore, there are large quantities of research and literature on how education can be a factor in poverty reduction and eradication, see for example Harber, C, Zhang, T. & Minxia, Z or Jandhyala B. G. Tilak. If we look at research on education in developing countries, the focus is often on how to increase enrolment in schools, with high enrolment rates as the main goal. When looking at numbers from UNESCO and The World Bank, the enrolment rate have increased in Sierra Leone, which suggest progress in education. However, other research indicates that high enrolment rates are not equivalent to good education, and that the quality of the education is more important than high enrolment rates. Lately, there has been a greater focus on the importance of providing quality education. Especially the poor quality of education, and the high number of unqualified teachers are receiving attention. The quality discourse is central in some of the earlier research I present in this chapter. Research is seen in the context of the focal points in this chapter:

- Availability
- Quantity and quality of education
- Education practice and policies in Sierra Leone

In order to create an understanding about how some of the employees in the educational system perceive the education system and quality, earlier research is highly relevant. It also highlights the discourse of quality education. Since quality of education is central in this thesis, it is essential to look at how quality can be understood, and demonstrate that there are different aspect of quality education. I have chosen not to focus a great deal on the pedagogic aspect and classroom interaction in my research, however, I acknowledge its role and that it is important to this thesis. I will address research on education practice and policies in Sierra Leone, to illuminate how some of the employees in the educational system perceive the education system and quality. It also shows some of the challenges of quality education. Lastly, I will explore a field study of education in post-conflict Sierra Leone. The study investigate how a few students, former students and others, perceive education and job opportunities in Sierra Leone.

As mentioned before, this field contains a lot of different research and it would be too comprehensive to incorporate all in this thesis. I believe that the earlier research presented in this chapter covers diverse aspects of the education and poverty discourse, and is a representative selection of research relevant for this thesis and my field work.

3.1 Education and Poverty Reduction

Research on education and poverty reduction is central in this thesis, and Yusuf Sayed has examined education as a key driver for poverty reduction and elimination. He addresses different frameworks in order to understand the link between education and poverty. The relationship between quantity and quality of education, as well as the connection between education and different types of growth is discussed here. It is a challenge that education don't reach the poorest households, and Sayed discuss the importance of reaching those households. He also addresses what role the state has in providing education and reducing poverty. He examines how education can be a factor in poverty reduction and what needs to be addressed to make it possible.

According to Sayed (2008), the link between poverty and education is complex, but the lack of education is perhaps one of the most powerful determinant of poverty. However, the millions of children without access to education are not only poor, but don't have access because of the multidimensional nature of poverty (Maile, 2008, p.53). Agreeing with the link between poverty and education, is Mihaela Mihai, Emilia Titan and Daniela Manea, who states "The lack of education perpetuates poverty and poverty limited access to education" (Mihai, Titan & Manea, 2014, p.856). The reduction and elimination of poverty is an important aspect of the education discourse because of the major emphasis the donors and international agencies have given poverty reduction as a key component of aid (Maile, 2008, p.54).

For understanding the link between education and poverty, Sayed provides four different frameworks. The first one argues that education provide people with skills and knowledge that can be transformed into increased productivity, resulting in increased earnings and economic growth. This human capital approach, means that investment in education is important in order to create economic growth. This is in contrast to the second framework, the human rights approach, where education can be seen to have value to the individual. According this approach, education should be provided to all human beings without limitations. By giving people the right to

education, it opens up for people to access other human rights such as healthcare, freedom and security. The third approach sees education as an opportunity, an entitlement and a means for improving life. In this context, poverty can be seen as a capability deprivation, because it reduces a person's ability to give value to their lives by their "doings" and "beings". The last approach is promoting inclusion through education, with a social exclusion perspective enables the policy-makers and analysts to understand processes of marginalisation and deprivation within and across countries. It enables an educational focus which looks at who are poor/not poor, who exclude/ include and who are excluded/ included. All the people in the different groups will have different experiences, and this approach asserts the need for a refined group-based differentiation and strategies which also takes into account the excluded groups (Maile, 2008, pp.54-56).

That education result in increased earnings and economic growth, which again leads to poverty reduction, may not be definite. One can argue that the strong correlation between economic growth and poverty reduction is useless because it's compatible with the following arguments " (1) only policies that target growth can reduce poverty, and (2) only policies that reduce poverty can boost overall growth" (Maile, 2008, p.57). When looking at what kind of education policies brings the poor out of poverty, Sayed argues that there is not one straight answer, and that it's probably more relevant to ask what works, how and under what circumstances. "The poor" are not one standard group, but consist of different people with different backgrounds and circumstances (Maile, 2008, p.57).

In addition to focus on providing education to those who need it most, the quantity and quality of education has received a lot of attention in the poverty discourse. Mihai et al. argues that there are several statistics and reports showing that the level of schooling is correlated with the level of economic development (Mihai et al., 2014, p.857). According to Sayed, both the quantity measures in the years of schooling and quality proxy by learning attainment measured on standardised test are instrumental in economic growth and increased earnings. Recent research suggests that quality education is more significant for growth, and that the more years of schooling and higher education provides higher income. Looking at other countries, the well educated, literate population is simply not poor, according to Sayed. There are other benefits with education and research indicates that education have positive health effects, especially for women. When looking at increased levels of education, there is a decrease in fertility rates and a rise in age of marriage. Other improvements are higher life expectancy, and a decline in child

mortality and HIV. Sayed argues that because of this, there are two key areas for intervention. The first is improving educational factors, including availability, quality and equity. The second set of factors includes direct and opportune costs and the low level of earnings which inhibits the demand and entry into education (Maile, 2008, pp.58-59).

Even if the improvements are made, it is not easy for everyone to reach the things that can improve their quality of life, and the poorest households are effected the hardest. For example, early childhood care and education (ECCE) is important for improving health and nutrition, however, the poorest children, who needs it the most, don't have access to ECCE. Many of the poor don't have access to school because schools are not available in the areas in which they live, or where they are available they are not responsive to need. Good quality education is also a challenge, because for the poor, quality school matters more than the number of years in school. According to Sayed, an inclusive and responsive learning environment where the teaching and learning is effective, has to be created. Quality school resources such as textbooks and classrooms are vital, as well as qualified teachers. Lastly, the institutional capacity needs to be improved, making the schools accountable and ensure that the schools focus on and promote effective learning. Still, supplies and quality of school facilities is not sufficient. For the poor to be able to benefit from schooling, the cost of education needs to lower for poorer households. To increase educational attainment, one strategy could be to abolish school fees (Maile, 2008, pp.59-62).

When looking at quality of education and how to reach the poorest households, it is important to note that 144 million adults in sub-Saharan Africa lack basic literacy skills (GMR, 2007). Sayed believe that in order to eliminate poverty, the government need to have a focus on educating adults and higher the literacy rate across age groups (Maile, 2008, pp.59-62). According to The World Bank, there is a strong connection between poverty numbers and education attainment in Sierra Leone. More than 70 percent of the households where the head of the family have no education, live under the full poverty line. Table 3.1 shows that the percentage of families living below the poverty line, is lower in families with higher education (The World Bank, 2007, p.22).

Table 3.1 Poverty Incidence by Formal Education Attainment, 2003/04

<i>Percentage below the poverty line.</i>		
<u>Educational level</u>	<u>Male-headed household</u>	<u>Female-headed household</u>
None	74.5	72.2
Primary education	63.2	57.9
Junior secondary school	52.7	*
Senior secondary school	45.2	28.2
All	70.2	67.6

(Poverty line is estimated at Le 770,648 per year (USD per day equivalent).
 * =Sample size too small to display a reliable estimate.

(Table 1.3 from The World Bank, 2007, p.22)

There has to be created education policies that makes education accessible for a larger amount of people. According to Sayed, there are numerous of policy drivers that may be popular in education policy, that don't necessarily give more education opportunities for the poor. Decentralisation is a popular policy, but Sayed argues that it is not enough evidence to support that it can result in educational development. The extent to which it can result in improving education quality depends on the motivation for its introduction and the form it takes. There is also a popular thought that spending more money on education alone will improve education. Research on this finds no link between resources and improving the quality of education. However, when schools lack basic resources such as textbook or toilet facilities, resources do matter. Despite that they do matter, the quality of learning also depends on other factors, like quality teachers. Another theory is increasing the availability of schooling and lower the dropout rates. High enrolment is not the same as attending, and attending does not equal learning. The last policy Sayed questions, is that primary and basic education is sufficient for poverty reduction. Higher levels of growth, capacity and technological skills requires investments in all levels of education in order to have effective poverty reduction (Maile, 2008, pp.62-63).

According to Mihai et al., poverty reduction entails ensuring access to quality education (Mihai et al., 2014, p.856). Education is about learning, and according to Sayed there is no easy solution for ensuring that education leads to poverty reduction. He argues that the goal should be

to provide good quality learning by mixing policies and strategies that focus on effective teaching and learning. Education can not alone reduce poverty, poverty reduction needs a national development strategy where poverty are addressed at all levels. The poor households will prioritize basic needs such as housing and healthcare before education. Therefore it's necessary to have an economical framework with the poor in the centre, to secure that the poor don't have to trade off education. Poverty reduction is on the global agenda, and despite the positive sides of globalisation, it also creates challenges. Globalisation limits the actions of nation states in pursuing their own national development strategies. The global agenda and conditions connected with international aid often constrains the poor countries to act as sovereign states. Despite the constrains, it is essential that the nation state is active, and doesn't only rely on other actors. Poverty reduction is a matter for public-policy choice and intervention, which cannot be met by charity. In a democratic society, the state has the mandate and power to enable policies favouring the poor. It has to be an effective state with the mandate to intervene, and that can be held accountable for its actions. There is a need for greater policy coherence to integrate different strategies and interventions initiated and implemented at state level (Maile, 2008, pp.63-65).

For all of this to be possible, Sayed concludes that there needs to be a political commitment and willpower to eradicate poverty in and through education, as well as a strong focus on policies in favour of the poor. However, the poor have to take participation and active involvement in policies, to ensure that differences for the poor are explicitly recognised and acknowledged in policy planning. It is also necessary to find strategies for improving inequality. The poor need quality education more than others, and an unrelenting focus on quality underpins and influences all aspect of the education system. Quality teaching is the core of good education, and it requires comprehensive education planning that is integrated with other aspects of national development strategies at all levels of the educational system. Finally, the state needs to be pro-poor, with a society that collectively challenges the global inequities. According to Sayed, poverty reduction is not only a goal, but a moral, political, social and economic imperative to enlarge freedom of those who have their freedom limited and constrained (Maile 2008 pp.65-66).

Here we have addressed one interpretation of the connection between poverty and education trough four frameworks. Education and poverty can be put in a circle, where one effects the other. By improving the quality of education, it is possible to say that there will be

economic growth, individual growth, and health improvements. There has also been a focus on quantity and quality of education, where the quality seems to be the most vital. By making education more accessible and affordable it will be possible for the poorest households to send their children to school. According to Sayed, education can not alone reduce poverty, but have vital a role in process. He has examined how education can be a factor in poverty reduction and what needs to be addressed to make it possible.

3.2 Education Practice and Policies in Sierra Leone

Educational practice and policies vary in different countries, and since this thesis is focused on Sierra Leone, I consider it important to look at research on education practice and policies in Sierra Leone. Ebenezer Solo Collier have studied policies, programmes and statistical outcome of Sierra Leone's educational system. This section has a focus on enrolment- and pass rates in the different levels of school. The lack of quality education, with a focus on unqualified teachers, and inadequate school resources will also be addressed here. The research examines how some teachers and school administrates perceive the school system, the quality, and what they think is necessary to improve. Collier questions if education can help improve the country, and addresses the gap between educational demand and supply.

Collier's (2012) research finds that school enrolment in primary and secondary school has increased in the period 1960 to 2010. In the same time period, the student- teacher ratio has gone from 29:1 to 50:1 in primary school, and 16:1 to 35:1 in secondary school (Collier, 2016, p.46). The World Bank Report (2006) indicates that only 50 percent of primary school attendants complete the basic 6 years of education without repeating a grade. The report also noted that 70 percent moved on to JSS, however, only 50 percent of the JSS graduates moved on to SSS. According to Collier, the Ministry of Education's focus on providing basic education to disadvantaged groups, has led to an increased student enrolment in the years after the civil war. In addition, the enrolment increased rapidly at all levels after the government introduced the Free Primary Education Policy in 2001, doubling the enrolment in primary school between 2001 and 2010. The enrolment rate have had a steady annual growth about 27 percent between 2010 and 2011 (Collier, 2016, pp.49-50). The number of students per teacher in 2010 was on an average 50 students on primary level, and 35 students on secondary level. This can be seen in connection

with the high enrolment rates, which has caused overcrowding in schools, mostly in the Western Area. This has resulted in the government setting a limit to how many students each school can have. A limit of 50 students per class in primary school, 30 students per class in JSS and 25 students per class in SSS. Outside the Western Area, the limits are mostly not reached, but within the Western areas many classrooms have more than 60 students (Collier, 2016, p.50).

It is debatable what the student - teacher ratio should be, and how to lower it, and I will not go further into that discussion now. Another problem often pointed out in the education and poverty reduction debate is that the teachers need to be more qualified (Collier, 2016, p.77). In Sierra Leone unqualified teachers is "those teaching at a higher level than appropriate for their academic qualification" (Collier, 2016, p.51). To illustrate why unqualified teachers is a challenge in Sierra Leone, it could be relevant to look at statistics. Table 3.2 illustrates the percentage of qualified teachers in Sierra Leone.

Table 3.2 Percentage of qualified teachers

School year	Primary schools	Secondary schools
1960/61	54	53
1970/71	40	68
1980/81	47	37
1990/91	41	33
2000/01	55	75
2009/10	47	38

(Table 4.3 from Collier, 2016, p.50)

According to these numbers, Sierra Leone struggles with a high level of unqualified teachers, which can be related to the history of the country. During the civil war, many of the qualified teachers fled to other countries for safety and searched for other employment. In order to be officially qualified to teach in primary and secondary school, the teachers has to obtain relevant teachers certificates or advanced education degrees. The higher school level the teacher is going to teach, the higher education the teacher need. The number of qualified teachers are higher in the urban areas, as teachers tend to be more attracted to the urban areas (Collier, 2016, pp.51-52).

In order to see why teachers should be qualified, it could be interesting to see how the

students perform, and as already mentioned, students need to pass an exam to reach the next school level. To get from primary school to JSS they need to pass the NPSE, to move from JSS to SSS the students must pass the BECE, and for being able to go to university, the students have to pass the WASSCE. The pass rates have increased in primary levels, but the numbers are still low. In 1960, 32 percent passed the NPSE, versus 74 percent in 2010. The BECE had a pass rate at 9 percent in 1995/96 and 50 in 2009/10. The WASSCE on the other hand, has gone from a 51 percent pass rate in 1960/61 to 26 percent in 2009/10. The number of students taking the exams has increased on every level, for instance, 35,341 took the WASSCE in 2009/10, contra 367 in 1960/61 (Collier, 2016, pp.53-56). There are regional differences in pass rates at all levels, and many candidates from other areas go to the Western Area for JSS in the belief that the schools there are of better quality (Collier, 2016, p.61).

Since the pass rate continue to be low at all levels, there is in my opinion, reason to assume that the education provided today needs improvement. Trough his research, Collier wanted to "obtain the perceptions of stakeholders in educations on the needs to improve education in Sierra Leone" (Collier, 2016, p.62). He conducted interviews with school administrators, primary and secondary school teachers from the four regions of the country in 2008 and 2010 (Collier, 2016, p.62). I will look at some of the findings in the research. A large majority of the school administrators agreed that the school policies were clearly defined. However, 70 percent of them stated that the lack of teaching and learning materials, computers and other supplies necessary to support the instructions, were not easy available. All of the school administrators indicated that there was a teacher shortage in both primary and secondary school. They also indicated that the teachers morale was low, which could be as a result of low salaries and conditions of service. According to 2/3, the space for teaching was adequate. But overcrowded classrooms has been a problem in the Western Area due to the massive migration to the capital city during and after the civil war. The survey showed that there was a consensus among all the administrators in the Western region on inadequate classroom space. All of the primary school administrators agreed that the school curriculum meet the needs of the country, while 75 percent of secondary school administrators agreed (Collier, 2016, pp.62-66).

Further, 33 percent of the primary school teachers agreed that school policies was clearly defined, and no one thought that the school curriculum meets the need of the country. On the other hand 80 percent of teachers in secondary school agreed with school policies being clearly

defined, and 60 percent agreed that the school curriculum meets the need of the country. Collier explains that one reason for this discrepancy can be connected to the high numbers of unqualified teachers in primary school, who may not understand the policies. 100 percent of primary school teachers and 69 percent of secondary school teachers said that they saw no opportunities for staff development. A majority also complained about the lack of learning support materials. When asked about what could be improved, the response from both administrators and teachers was: higher salaries, improvement in conditions of service, more opportunities for staff improvement, building more school facilities in the Western area, reducing the number of students in each class, and more autonomy for school administrators to manage schools (Collier, 2016, pp.67-71).

These findings indicate that something in the school system has to change. Collier states that his findings suggest that Sierra Leone has emerged from a brutal civil war, a war that destroyed most of the country's social, economic, and physical infrastructure. The education sector was hit hard, with a broken infrastructure, severe shortage of teaching materials, overcrowding classrooms, displacement of teachers, trauma among children, poor learning outcomes, and weakened institutional capacity to manage the system. Since the end of the civil war, there has been a demand for basic education, and one of the main problems are the high dropout numbers. Sierra Leone cannot afford to waste money, and it is a problem for both students and the society that resources are being used on students who only stay in school for 1 to 3 years, which is too short to gain anything from it. Another problem is that the educational service delivery has struggled to cope with the sudden and huge expansion of the education system after the government introduced the Free Primary Education Policy in 2001. This has resulted in the lack of qualified teachers, adequate classrooms and teaching materials. Quality materials must be provided in well-structured learning environments in order to achieve better learning outcomes (Collier, 2016, p.76-78).

According to Collier, it is important to focus on providing students with quality education, instead of only focusing on getting high enrolment rates. Because of the high enrolment rates and a shortage of qualified teachers, the government has been forced to hire unqualified teachers. The government is providing in-service training for unqualified teachers, however, the process is slow and the capacity limited (Collier, 2016, pp.77-78). Collier argues that the management of teachers are crucial since the teachers are the core of education delivery,

they are the one responsible for providing skills and knowledge to the students. To get as high quality learning outcomes as possible, the teachers need to be qualified. It is also important to downsize the number of students per teacher, in order for the teachers to focus more on each student and avoid work-overload, which leads to less quality learning outcomes (Collier, 2016, p.78). However, according to Frank Hardman, Jim Ackers, Niki Abrishamian and Margo Sullivan, where material conditions are poor in terms of the availability of teaching and learning resources, and the classrooms are often overcrowded, there are limits to what teachers can do to change their teaching practice (Hardman, Ackers, Abrishamian & Sullivan, 2011, p.675).

It is fair to assume that quality of education ought to be a focus for the government. A basic assumption that has guided educational policy development in Africa, according to Collier, is that education is the key to economic growth and rebuilding the country. However, he argues that not any education can do that, because education itself does not have that ability. In Sierra Leone, the current educational policy was formulated through commissions on education, and serves as the basis of education policy implementation. Colonial education has impacted the current educational system that Sierra Leone has today, and the overall structure and academic aims of traditional colonial-influenced curricula remain. Education has to be development-orientated and focus on skills needed for the development in the country, and here has to be an openness for new ideas and skill-learning that the Sierra Leone society demands. Today, the educational system is not flexible enough to cope with the changing needs of the country. The educational system is in a crisis of maladjustment, including the gap between educational demand and supply, and the difference between contents of education and the real needs of society. One reason for not connecting demand and supply is that the educational system doesn't work together with the country's economic ability to support it. When it comes to the contents of education and the needs of society, Sierra Leone has not found its economic niche, so they don't know what skills are required in the future. According to Collier, it is imperative to find the country's human resource development priorities and labour market needs, so that the distance between demand and supply gets smaller and economic profit can be created (Collier, 2016, pp.81-83).

According to Collier, it would be impossible for Sierra Leone to provide "Education for All" by 2015, because of the low number of children attending school and the low quality of the education. The education system is dysfunctional, and in order for efficient delivery of education

services to be possible, it is necessary to have good governance and management of the educational sector. Sierra Leone has to work out new policies, with education that is relevant for society, in order to create social and economic development. Education should be the backbone for the individual to do a job with such skill and intelligence that his/her occupation becomes the source of creative and satisfying living (Collier, 2016, pp.84-88). The formal education has made the expansion of education in all sectors possible, but it is not possible to continue the pattern further in to the 21 century. The system has to prepare young people for modernization, without separating them from their culture, because the education needs to be appropriate, as well as appropriate applied. To become a proper working educational system, the country has to have a functional government, even if the government is affected by many years of corruption. Sierra Leone is moving away from decentralization, and in order to succeed, local capacity play a key role. The government and local councils have to work together to ensure that the developed functions can be effectively managed, and that schools and children benefit from decentralization (Collier, 2016, pp.88-89).

It is evident that after the government provided basic education to disadvantaged group after the civil war, the student enrolment has increased, however, the pass rate in all levels of education are low. Because of the high and fast enrolment rate, the government have had to employ unqualified teachers, and still the number of students per teacher is very high. Sierra Leone have a high number of unqualified teachers and since the teachers are the core of education delivery, they need to be qualified in order to get the highest possible quality learning outcome. It's also important in order to prevent high drop-out numbers, which is a current problem in Sierra Leone. All of the teachers in Collier's case-study wanted improvement, including higher salaries, improvement in conditions of service, more opportunities for staff improvement, building more school facilities and downsizing the number of students in each classroom. To improve the educational outcome it is necessary with qualified teachers, adequate classrooms and quality teaching materials. In order to make the education more desirable, education have to meet the needs of the country. Based on this research, without meeting the needs of the country and focus on quality education, there is little probability of Sierra Leone providing education for all.

3.3 Quality of Education

Research indicates that there is a link between education and poverty reduction, and that quality of education is imperative. Therefore it can be important to examine what quality of education entails. Here I will explore Herbert Bergmann's study of the quality of education concept, before looking research by Frank Hardman, on quality of education and classroom interaction. I see pedagogy as important, and acknowledge that classroom and lesson analysis can be used in education research. The aim is to demonstrate that there are different aspect of quality education, and why quality of education is an important aspect of the education and poverty reduction discourse.

According to Herbert Bergmann, the quality of education influences the demand for education. I will start with his study on the concept of educational quality. In his analysis of educational statistics, four types of educational quality are postulated: value, output, process and input quality. Value quality is connected with enrolment. Output quality is the criterion for selecting a school. Output, process and input quality involve dropping out and irregular attendance. Repetition, justified on unsatisfactory output quality, is related to input quality (Bergmann, 1996, p.581). Bergmann acknowledges that "quality education" is a central issue, but also that the concept is hard to define. However, I believe that it could be useful to define it in order to create greater understanding of the concept. In his analysis, he finds that an OECD report defines quality education as "the level of cognitive results" (Bergmann, 1996, pp.585-586). One of the reasons the concept is hard to define, is that quality education can have a descriptive and a normative dimension. The most common implicit meaning is student achievement. Some argue that student achievement is the ability to function in the student environment and meet its needs. Others argue that students' achievement, repetition and promotion rates as indicators of quality. While other connotations are seen in terms like "school quality" and "improved school practice". Bergmann argues that quality is not a system, but an attribute of any element which can vary according to at least one aspect or dimension. Further, education is a subsystem of human actions, and it could be useful to break it in to different components. According to Bergmann, "education quality is the quality of the system components, and the overall quality hence depends on the quality of these components" (Bergmann, 1996, p.586). The different types of educational quality put forward by Bergmann, have several aspects. *Output* can be student achievement. *Process* can be teaching/learning

interactions in the classroom, curriculum. *Input* can be human resources, material resources and time. The *value* is the quality of the overall goals and objectives of education. These aspects are again made up by several variable elements. The process quality is the quality of the teacher-pupil interaction in the teaching-learning process. This involves using teaching methods suited to the situation, to provide the pupils the best possible learning opportunities (Bergmann, 1996, pp.586-587).

One who has done research on the subject of quality of education and the teacher-pupil interaction, is Professor Frank Hardman. Hardman's research recognises that quality of education in developing countries, is equally important as the access to education. According to Hardman, a focus on pedagogy has to be the centre of the commitment to improve student retention, progression and learning outcomes (Hardman et al., 2011, p.669). He argues that the 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report calls for a commitment to policies that focus on the creation of an effective learning environment for all children regardless of background, through the provision of adequate facilities, well-trained teachers, relevant curriculum and clearly defined learning outcomes. The report acknowledges that educational quality in a large degree is connected to the pedagogical processes in the classroom, and that the teachers' knowledge, skills, dispositions and commitment have an impact on student achievement. However, comparative research indicate that the teacher reform has to combine the culturally or nationally unique with what is universal in classroom pedagogy. Culture has to be taken in to consideration if internationally driven reforms to teacher education are to be embedded in the classroom reforms. This is based on an extensive review of research on teacher professional development in developed and developing countries. The review concluded that the way contextual factors interact with learning-needs varies depending on the traditions, cultural mores, policy environments and school conditions of a particular country (Hardman et al., 2011, pp.669-670).

Further I will look at prior study on quality of education and classroom interaction, in order to see why the process quality is important to Hardman. Given the need to place pedagogy and it's training implications centre stage in the quality debate, Hardman have studied case studies on teacher development initiatives in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, where more flexible and decentralized approaches network for delivering training have been developed. The three countries illustrate three different cases of in-service education and training (INSET). Kenya provides a case of a country where national systems for INSET linked to other key systems were

established before the rapid expansion of enrolment due to free primary education in 2003. It also provides evidence to demonstrate that a well-designed INSET programme, supported by other key interventions, can have an impact on teaching and learning practices. The Tanzania case focuses on the challenges of designing a new INSET system from scratch, while Uganda focuses on how systems can be strengthened through identifying and addressing critical capacity gaps within the system (Hardman et al., 2011, p.671). According to the University of Portland, there are some benefits with student-centred teaching: "When a classroom operates with student-centred instruction, students and instructors share the focus. Instead of listening to the teacher exclusively, students and teachers interact equally. Group work is encouraged, and students learn to collaborate and communicate with one another" (University of Portland, 2016, 06.01).

In Tanzania, Hardman analysed 300 lessons from eight districts, covering several subjects at primary level. The aim of the classroom interaction analysis was to see what took place in the classroom. Teacher directed activities, as explaining and answering questions, writing on the chalk board, reading to the class, asking pupils to read, lesson summary, took up 55 percent of the lesson time. Individual seatwork accounted for 25 percent of the lesson time, while 20 percent of the lesson time was used for paired/group work and pupil demonstration. The classroom interaction analysis suggested that teachers used the same teacher approaches regardless of the subject they were teaching, and there were few opportunities for students to contribute their own ideas through paired or group work. There were no significant differences found between urban and rural schools. The analysis found that the shortage of teaching and learning resources in Tanzanian primary classrooms, made the teachers spent an excessive time writing on the chalk board, so the students could copy it. The observations showed teachers working in inadequate schools, with bad conditions and a lack of recourses. According to Hardman this sat limits for what teachers could accomplish (Hardman et al., 2011, p.672-675). In Kenya, research found that school based training offered the most potential for changing pedagogic practices, especially in developing countries, where teachers lack training. The findings indicated that there had been a major development in the pedagogic in the primary schools, with an increase in group work and more alteration of the classroom to fit different learning tasks. The teachers who had received the most training showed the biggest improvements, and they appeared to be creating a more positive classroom based on praise rather than criticism (Hardman, Abd-Kadir, Agg, Migwi, Ndambuku & Smith, 2009, pp.80-81).

Here I have tried to explore the concept of quality education, since quality education is an important aspect in education and poverty reduction. Bergmann has provided a definition that hopefully have given a greater understanding of the concept. Trough Hardman, the quality concept has been tested in classrooms and trough teacher-student interaction in African countries.

3.4 Field-study of Education in Post-conflict Sierra Leone

Even though it's not the focal point of this thesis, it is nevertheless relevant to be aware of the fact that Sierra Leone is a post-conflict country. The country is still effected by the civil war, which impacted the educational system in the country. I will now look at a field-study conducted in Sierra Leone, where the researcher studied education and peace. This field-study was conducted with people receiving education, people that are out of school, and others relevant to the subject. It gives another view point than my field-study, which is conducted with the givers of education. Mitsuko Matsumoto's focus was on education a post-conflict county, which illustrate some of the challenges the country faces, which I find relevant for my thesis.

Matsumoto conducted fieldwork, studying education and peace in post-conflict Sierra Leone. He talked to adolescents about their experiences and perceptions of education and job opportunities in Sierra Leone. He met with three groups of people once a week for three months to conducted group discussion, individual interviews or tasked based activities. The groups looked like this:

Table 3.3 Interview groups

Group	1	2	3
	Adolescents in senior secondary school	Adolescents in vocational training programme.	Adolescents who are out of school
Participants	15	15	10

In addition, he conducted 49 interviews with key adult informants under three categories. Key informants in; (1) understanding the relationship between education and society before and after the war at international level; (2) informants who worked closely with adolescents on a daily

basis; and (3) informants who experienced secondary schooling immediately before the war (Paulson, 2011, pp.128-129).

How the research was conducted is not the focus here, but what information the participants provided, which I will present here. The participants in the study all agreed that the access to education have increased since the war, but the adolescents responded that it was only available for those who could afford it. Some argued that the curriculum that is learned in school are irrelevant for the Sierra Leoneans life, and therefore they did not attend school. The adults perceived education as irrelevant. However, the adolescents Matsumoto interviewed, who were in SSS responded that the curriculum was relevant and useful, for example one said that math was useful in the trading business. Almost all of the SSS students Matsumoto talked to, said that most of what they learned in school was useful and important for their future. The adolescents were also concerned about the quality of the education, quality here meaning being good enough to pass the exams. Under 4 percent of SSS3 students pass the WASSCE, and two of Matsumoto's participants had failed two times. One of them wanted to teach at secondary level, but in order to go to college he has to pass the WASSCE. Then he has to complete college to receive the right qualifications. The alternative is to bribe the teachers, which he cannot afford (Paulson, 2011, pp.130-131). Matsumoto's findings indicates that the education system in Sierra Leone is affected by it being a post-conflict society. Despite the greater access to education, the quality and implementation of curriculum is poor, and are not in line with the positive reports from international actors regarding education in the country (Paulson, 2011, p.132).

A greater access to school implies that many are able to enrol, however, when talking about being able to attend school, adolescents in all three groups said that only those who have "an opportunity" or "a chance" can move up the educational levels. This indicates that education is not a possibility for everyone, and some of the adolescents said that they felt bad when they went to school, knowing that some of their friends don't have the same opportunity. Nevertheless, the adolescents perceived education as a key to success, and believed that by getting a college degree, they would get jobs as lawyers, bankers and doctors. The adults on the other hand, see education as an instrument to development. The importance of education has increased since the war, however, education is still seen as symbolic capital. For example: one of the adolescents said that his father used to be rich, but lost everything to the rebels during the war, and he now lived in poverty. He believed that if his father had been educated, he would be

able to acquire a job after the war. This experience made him view educated people as better than uneducated people (Paulson, 2011, pp.132-133). It is reasonable to assume that there were more people in similar positions, who were able to find jobs. It is possible that this have made others see the significance of education, and in addition have NGOs helped increase the awareness of education. Many job advertisements required qualifications after the war and this helped people see the importance of education, and how it was relevant for their future. Today, more jobs require credentials, and without credentials, the opportunities for employment and engagement in society is limited for young people. Many of the adult participants expressed concern about young people not getting employment because they don't have high enough qualifications. As well as the high status of being educated, there is a low status connected with being uneducated. When describing the difference between the two, many adolescents portrayed the uneducated as a farmer, with bad clothes and shoes. The educated man on the other hand, was portrayed well dressed with nice clothes and shoes (Paulson, 2011, p.133-134).

The expectation of education is that it is the key to individual success, and therefore the opportunity to attend higher education is critical. However, the reality is that connections and/or money is the way to get such an opportunity. According to Matsumoto, people need to have money or connection to an influential person in society to have the "opportunity" to attend higher education. Most of the adolescents responded that the alternative to attend higher education is to get a job and save money to be able to attend college later. One option is to teach in the meantime. Some wanted to start their own business or find jobs where they could use the skills they had learned in school. The adolescents were hopeful and believed that a college degree would help them get good jobs and high salaries. The young people, on the other hand, acknowledged that there are limited jobs available for college graduates. In addition to have the right connections, it is also helpful to be "blessed". Being blessed entails being a good student, respectful and obey the teachers, as well as serving their parents and the elderly (Paulson, 2011, p.135-137).

Matsumoto have examined the importance of education in post-conflict Sierra Leone from the view point of different people, who have some kind of connection to the education system. The different groups have different experiences and perceptions of education. It has been pointed out the power of money and connections, which can have an impact on who can access

education. The challenges with making people see the importance of education is ongoing, as well as making the education relevant for the Sierra Leonean life.

4. Methodology

In this chapter I will look the epistemological position and research strategy I have chosen to use in this thesis. I will explain the method have I chosen, as well as selection, selection strategies and criteria. Further I will explain how I have collected the material, and my role as researcher for analysing the material. Lastly, I will assess the quality of my research and talk about the ethical considerations taken during the research process. In this thesis I want to identify the following:

- 1. What is quality education?*
- 2. What is the teacher's role in the poverty reduction process?*
- 3. What role does education have in reducing poverty in Sierra Leone?*

4.1 Epistemological and Ontological Position

A research project often starts with wanting to know more about an aspect of the world (Johannessen, Tufte & Christoffersen, 2010, p.32). According to Alan Bryman, there has to be taken epistemological and ontological considerations in social research (Bryman, 2016, pp.24-30). Epistemology are different perceptions about how to get knowledge about the world, society and people. The question of how to proceed in collecting knowledge, and how to sort out the "true" knowledge (Johannessen et al., 2010, p.54). I will not go deep into the different positions, but explain the positions relevant for my research. This research is limited and does not focus on finding material for developing laws. Positivism have that focus, which applies the methods of natural science. However, interpretivism is the position of my research, which contrasts with positivism. Interpretivism requires a different logic of research procedure, one that reflects the distinctiveness of people and the objects of natural science. My job as a researcher is to find the subjective meaning of social actors, and to interoperate their actions and social world from their own point of view (Bryman, 2016, pp.24-27). Knowledge is something that can be collected or created trough research. In my research, knowledge was created during the research and did not exist before. I wanted to know the participants point of view, which emerged during the research. Everyone is affected by background, both personal and professional, and my background will

have an impact on the process of establishing knowledge (Johannessen et al., 2010, pp.54-55).

Ontological considerations are concerned about whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or if they can be considered social constructions built up from the perception and actions of social actors. Constructionism falls under the latter, that culture and social order is in a constant change, which is the position of my research. Instead of seeing culture as something that restrains people, it can be seen as an emergent reality in a continuous state of construction and reconstruction (Bryman, 2016, p.30). Knowledge being something that emerges through the research, I consider myself to have a part in the construction. If someone else had been the researcher, it is fair to assume that the knowledge would have been constructed differently.

4.2 Research Strategy

In this thesis I have chosen to use a qualitative research strategy, by conducting qualitative research interviews. Qualitative research focus on words rather than numbers, and on understanding the social world through its participants (Bryman, 2016, p.375). According to Repstad it goes deeper than quantitative research (Repstad, 2007, p.17). Qualitative research can seem to have "claimed" the monopoly to study meanings, however, it is possible and fairly common to study meanings through quantitative research (Bryman, 2016, p.624). In this research I want to know what school teachers think about education and poverty, more specific, what quality education are to them. I also want to know what kind of education they perceive as necessary to reduce poverty in Sierra Leone. It is not my aim to generalize, which according to Pål Repstad is not always important in qualitative research (Repstad, 2007, p.25).

I am interested in what teachers think about education in Sierra Leone. I want to know how they act in educational settings, for example how they chose to teach and why. What are important for them to teach, and if they believe the curriculum they are teaching is important for the students' daily life. It is also interesting to know how they perceive the educational system and their role in the system. How do they perceive themselves, their qualifications and how important is it that the teachers are qualified? These are questions that could be answered by using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. However, I have chosen to conduct qualitative interviews. My aim is to get information about how the educational system can

become a resource from the ground up, by interviewing a few teachers who work at the ground. I want to see what they think about education, and use it to see what role education have in poverty reduction. I do not wish to find the solution for fixing Sierra Leone's educational system, but I want to know what research and the teachers in Sierra Leone believe is important for quality education and poverty reduction. Because research indicates that qualified teachers are important and there is a connection between education and poverty reduction, it is interesting to see how the teachers see themselves. Do they perceive themselves as important means in the fight against poverty? Different research strategies can provide different information. The information the participants give, are their own perspectives, which have both strengths and weaknesses. By using observation it is possible to see things that can't be said, and it can provide detailed data about human activities and behaviour (Johannessen et al., 2010, p.117). But observation does not provide the insight to people's thoughts and meanings, which I am seeking in this thesis. Therefore, I argue that interview is a better research strategy than observation in this project.

According to Johannessen, Tufte and Christoffersen, to combine theory and empirical data is a goal in social science, and I will end this subsection with explaining the relationship between theory and empirical data in this research (Johannessen et al., 2010, p.50). In this thesis I search for what role education can have in poverty reduction, and my research project focuses on the perceptions from people working on ground level in the educational system. By interviewing a few of the people who work on ground level, I believe I get an aspect that is important when discussing education's role in poverty reduction in Sierra Leone. Different research projects can have different approaches. One approach is deductive, where the research is grounded in one specific theory which shall be tested. My research does not fall under deductive, but an inductive approach, where the research often leads to a theory (Bryman, 2016, p.375). Semi-structured interviews are often used so that the researcher can have an open mind about what is interesting to know during the interviews, in order for concepts and theories to emerge from the data (Bryman, 2016, p.10).

Grounded theory has been defined as "theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analysed through the process. In this method, data collection, analysis, and eventual theory stand in close relationship to one another" (Bryman, 2016, p.381). Those who practice grounded theory stresses the importance of allowing theories to emerge from the data collected

(Bryman, 2016, p.381). According to Bryman, grounded theory most likely represent the most influential general strategy for conduction qualitative data analysis (Bryman, 2016, p.581).

4.3 Research Design

The basic case study entails a detailed and intensive analysis of one single case, and I have chosen to conduct one case study in Sierra Leone (Bryman, 2016, p.60-64). Based on research indicating big difference in school attendance in urban and rural areas in Sierra Leone, I have chosen to interview teachers from two different schools. It is important to note that this is one case study, even though I interview teachers from two different schools. One of the schools is a junior secondary school in a rural area, a village. The other school is a primary school in an urban area, the capital Freetown. The junior secondary school is a private school with resources donated from Norway. The school in Freetown is a public school with little resources. This distinction I believe could have an impact on the teachers' views on education, poverty and poverty reduction. It was important for me to have teachers from different areas and different work-environments. On occasions I will compare findings from the two school in order to create a better understanding, however, comparison is not the main focus of the research (Bryman, 2016, p.65). The comparison might suggest concepts that are relevant to an emerging theory, which is highly relevant for my research (Bryman, 2016, p.67).

There are a couple of reasons for choosing the two schools, the first is that these were the schools I was able to get access to trough my contact in Sierra Leone. Second, it was important for me that the schools had some kind of contact with Western actors before me. The private school is driven by Norwegian donations, and the public school have had Norwegian students volunteering as teachers. It is fair to assume that both reasons made them more open to work with me. However, it is important to note that even if the participation is voluntarily, because of the bond to my contact and Norwegian actors, they may feel obligated to participate. I assured them that they didn't have to participate if they wished not to.

4.4 Method

Trough the case study I search to find the answers to the following key questions:

- 1. What is quality education for the teachers?*
- 2. What kind of education do the teachers perceive as important?*
- 3. How do the teachers perceive education's role in Sierra Leone?*

4.4.1 Interview

Unstructured interview is rather common to use in case studies, and I have chosen to use semi-structured interviews in order to be open for information that may emerge in the interviews (Bryman, 2016, pp.60-61). I want to know *what* teachers think, not only *how many* interviewees give the same answers, but it is also valuable to know how many who shares the same opinions. When analysing, the goal is to find the meaning behind the words and statements, and everything that the teachers verbally say is what is being analysed (Johannessen et al., 2010, p.164). The focus in this thesis makes qualitative research strategy and qualitative interview a natural choice. The goal with qualitative interviews are often to understand or describe something (Johannessen et al., 2010, p.135). In addition to knowing what the participants think, the context is important. In qualitative research, details of the setting is helpful in understanding why participants see the world like they do. When describing social behaviour, qualitative researchers emphasizes the important of context. Sometimes behaviour and perspectives of people can seem odd, but when looking at the context, it makes sense (Bryman, 2016, pp.494-395).

4.4.2 Selection, Selection Strategies and Criteria

When conducting qualitative research, the goal is to come close to the group that is studied, by getting much information out of a limited number of people - called informants. There is no high or low limit to how many interviews that should be conducted, and it can be big variations depending on the project. When conducting a research project with limited time and resources, like this one, it can be reasonable to limit it to under ten interviews (Johannessen et al., 2010,

pp.103-104). I could have conducted group interviews, but with so few informants it could be limited how much information I would get and it could be difficult to start a discussion. Despite the positive aspects of group interview, I believe that by conducting one on one interviews, I would get closer to the informants and obtain more information (Johannessen et al., 2010, p.105).

In addition to decide how many informants to interview, it is necessary to select who the informants should be. In this research project, like in many other qualitative research project, generalisation is not the goal, and random selection is therefore not a option (Johannessen et al., 2010, p.106). When selecting the teachers, I did not have many criteria. I wanted the teacher to have worked as a teacher at least for a couple of years. It was important for me to have both men and women informants in the research. There are not many teachers in each school, so by setting to many criteria I would not get enough informants. The informants comes from two different schools, in different parts of Sierra Leone and I have 3 participants from the public primary school and 2 participants from the private junior secondary school. When recruiting the informants, I used someone I knew and asked him if he could find informants for me. I presented my project for my contact, knowing that education in Sierra Leone is an important case for him. He said yes to contact the schools for me and ask if anyone would be willing to participate in the research and being interviewed. In addition, he helped me make all the appointments.

My contact is a leader of a union, helping schools in Sierra Leone, and is a very trusted man in the country. There are strength and weaknesses by using this contact to get informants. The informants might be more open to participate and talk to me since they know the man who asked them, but on the other hand they may feel pressured or obligated to participate. I am aware of the possibility of the informants participating because they feel obligated by their relationship with my contact. Another weakness with this selection is that I have little control over who my informants are, however, it would be hard for me to get informants without a contact to the school system in Sierra Leone. According to Bryman, ethnographers often have to use whatever sources that are available for them, who are willing to provide the researcher with information (Bryman, 2016, p.415). I relate to using the sources available to me and I acknowledge that with different informants the findings may be different, however, I do not believe that this sampling has had a negative effect on the case study.

4.4.3 Preparation of the Interview Guide

The preparation of the interview guide and interview questions was based on the theoretical perspectives used in this thesis, as well as the projects research question and literary framework. When constructing the interview guide, I created questions on different levels. A common way is to start asking about facts and slowly introducing the informants for the topic of the interview, so the informant can give information which can be used to new questions later. After asking introduction question, Johannessen et al. states that there needs to be some transition question leading to the key questions. By doing it this way, the informant can build up trust to the researcher and the course of the interview will go more natural. Since Sierra Leone is a post-conflict country, I had to be careful asking sensitive questions that could put the interview in jeopardy. I however, chose to ask the big questions first, in order to see if they started talking about things that covered some of the smaller questions. The formulation of questions and choice of words are linked to create a meaningful discourse, and I chose to conduct a semi-structured interview and to encourage meaningful reflection by asking follow up questions (Johannessen et al., 2010, pp.140-143). (See Appendix A). It is helpful to use a language that is relevant and understandable to the informants, however, it is important to not lead them (Bryman, 2016, p.471).

According to Bryman, it could be helpful for people with no experience with interviewing to conduct some pilot interviews. This can be helpful in order to get experience and test if the interview flows (Bryman, 2016, p.472). I did not conduct any test interviews, which can have affected the interviews. However, based on my experience of the interviews I am fairly confident that the interviews went well.

4.4.4 The Interview Process

During my stay in Sierra Leone, the interviews was not easy to get even with my contact. In Africa there is a culture of coming unpunctual, which is called "African time"(African time, 2017). "African time" was a challenge in the case study, which led to much waiting and calling after the teachers to ask if they were coming. However, many of them showed up on short notice which was positive for me. All of the participants seemed in a good mood and the conversations felt light and easy. All of the participants were very cooperative. The interviews was conducted

at the home of my contact, outside in the day time. Even though we were at my contacts home, it was in the same neighbourhood as the participants lived. It can be argued that the place was not a neutral place, but I do not think that had a negative effect on the interviews. The interviews was recorded and I took short notes. Each interview lasted 20 to 30 minutes. I used a good recording device, which made it easy to transcribe the interviews. Sometimes it could be difficult to understand what the informants was saying. However, that was not because of bad recording or external noise, but because of blurred speaking (Bryman, 2016, p.471).

4.5 Quality of the Research

4.5.1 The Role of the Researcher

It is important that the researcher can get close to the informants, but also have the ability to take a step back and analyze what is observed. It can be hard to draw a line between the friend role and researcher role. Nevertheless, it is important to draw that line, so the participant give information based on the right pretences and don't feel used by the researcher (Johannessen et al., 2010, p.134). I had not met the teachers before the interviews, with the exception of one, which I did not consider to be an issue. I did not want anyone to feel used, but the teacher I had met before asked me why I had not called since the last time we met, which made me feel bad. However, it is important to note that I was not aware that I was expected to call. It is important that I as a researcher are aware of the possible affect I may have on the informant. How the informant perceives me can affect the relationships between us and influence the answers. The researchers gender, age, ethnicity, behaviour and clothing can affect the informants (Johannessen et al., 2010, pp.138-143). During the interviews I was wearing "normal" clothes for a warm sunny day, a simple t-shirt, a shorts and no makeup. How my gender, age, ethnicity, behaviour and clothing affected the informants, is hard for me to say, because I did not notice anything obvious. The only thing I noticed was the use of "you people", which I believe is used to refer to people from outside Africa. I am a fairly shy person, which could have affected the interviews and resulted in a lack of answers. On the other hand, I work with people on a daily basis, which made it easy for me to communicate with strangers.

In addition to be aware of me affecting the interviews during the interviews, it is important to acknowledge that my background, worldviews and expectations affect the analyzing

of the research material. Another researcher could have interpreted the findings differently than I. However, I do consider my analysis to cover the subject I am researching on in a good way.

4.5.2 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity is common criteria in quantitative research, and it's debatable if the same criteria should apply to qualitative research. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Lincoln and Guba (1994), it's necessary to specify terms and ways of establishing and assessing the quality of qualitative research that provide an alternative to reliability and validity. They propose truthfulness and authenticity (Bryman, 2016, pp.383-384).

Truthfulness makes four criteria, the first being credibility. Credibility of findings entails that the research is carried out according to the principles of good practice and member validation. I have not obtained conformation from the participants, however, I believe that I have interpreted their statements in a reasonable way. The next criteria is that the researcher has made a rich account of the details of culture, so that others can make judgment about the possible transferability of findings to other social environments (Bryman, 2016, p.384). In my case study, the context is highly relevant for the research, and I have explained the context well in chapter 2 (See chapter 2). In my opinion, this research has transferability. The third criteria is dependability, which entails ensuring that complete records are kept of all phases of the research process. This means making sure that problem formulation, selection of participants, fieldwork notes, interview transcripts, data analysis decisions, and so on are kept in an accessible manner. The peer acts as an auditor, making sure that proper procedures are being followed. I have kept all of my research records, and everything has gone through my supervisor. The last criteria for truthfulness is confirmability, which means that the researcher have acted in good faith, and not let any personal values or theoretical inclinations to sway the conduct of the research and the findings deriving from it (Bryman, 2016, pp.385-386). Complete objectivity is impossible, however, I do not believe that any personal or theoretical beliefs have swayed the research.

In addition to truthfulness, Lincoln and Guba propose the criteria of authenticity, which have an emphasis on practical outcomes. I believe that the research fairly represent different viewpoints among members of a social setting. But if the research have helped any of the

members to a better understanding, or empowered them to make changes in their circumstances would only be speculation on my part (Bryman, 2016, p.386).

4.5.3 Ethical Considerations

When conducting a social research project, there are several ethical principles that the researcher has to address. For example if the research likely to harm the participants, in any way. I do not believe that any of the participants that I talked to took any harm in being interviewed. It is also important to know if the participants know and agree to that they are being researched. All of the participants had to sign a consent form, informing them about the research project and their rights to withdraw their consent at any time. It is also important to note that I did not invade any privacy or deceive any one. I was very clear and honest about what the research was about (Bryman, 2016, pp.125-134).

When the participants give their consent, they should have good knowledge about the research and that they surrender their right to privacy on that specific domain. However, the consent does not mean that the participant don't have the right to refuse answers during the interview. It is also important to respect the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, and personal information should be kept confidential (Bryman, 2016, pp.131-133). The names and personal information about the informants is confidential, and they were made aware of that. I chose to keep the informants anonymous in order to protect them and hoping that they would be more honest knowing that no one would know what they said. Because of the low number of participants and the use of only two schools, I saw it as necessary to keep the school names hidden to protect the identity of my informants. I have interviewed five teachers, one of them being the headmaster at one of the schools. Since the headmaster also is a teacher, I have chosen to categorize them all as teachers, so the headmaster don't stand out, and also to protect the headmaster's identity.

5. Analysis

In this chapter I have interpreted the findings that emerged during the interviews with the five teachers. I have categorised them in relevant subjects, and in order to get a better overview, I have divided some of the categories into subcategories. "Poverty", "Quality Education" and "The Teacher's Role" are all categories based on the research question and earlier research. In addition, educating women was a subject that I addressed in chapter 2 and 3, and that four out of five participants talked about. I therefore decided that "Gender Equality" had to be a category.

5.1 Poverty

Since education and poverty reduction is the focal point in this thesis I will start the analysis with addressing poverty. I have divided this part into four subcategories, starting with "The Government". The government is in control of the education system in Sierra Leone, and the teachers I interviewed were asked about the government's focus on education and poverty reduction. The government have created the Free Primary Education Policy which is supposed to be a positive initiative against poverty, and therefore the second category is "Free Education". I continue with "Job Opportunities", as education is perceived to give more job opportunities, and employment and income could help bring people out of poverty. In the last category "Poverty Reduction", I will address at what the teachers consider necessary for poverty reduction.

5.1.1 The Government

Since the government is in control of the education system, it is interesting to see how the teachers perceive the government's focus on education. When asked about the high enrolment rates, one of the teachers stated that it was a result of the government's decision to provide free education for all primary school children. The government wanted all children to know that education is the key to the future. The teacher said that they had experienced more children in school after the implementation of the policy, mostly because people take anything that is free:

After the war, the government decided that everyone in Sierra Leone should be educated. That is why they brought out this free education, so that every child would know that

education is the only key to the future. Then you learn that it is for yourself, so that is why they made it this way, so that everyone will get educated ... Yes more kids, because everything that is free, people will love to come to (Teacher E).

The government provides children with 6 years of free education, but the teacher stated that the government doesn't provide any help beyond that. If you are lucky, they might hire you when you are graduated: "The government is only responsible for school, so when you have graduated they have no business with you, they only give you the foundation. We have government offices, so if you are lucky you will get a job there" (Teacher E). According to Teacher B, the government does focus on education and has tried to improve the quality of education by adding 1 year to SSS. Teacher B personally thought that there should be a focus on encouraging the teachers, and that the encouragement should come from both the government and private actors. When asked about the government's focus on poverty reduction, the reply was that the government focuses on it through providing free basic education. However, it seems like the focus stops there. Teacher C said that they are watching out for help from anyone because they don't depend on the government for support:

... In Sierra Leone education is lack in terms of government support, it is very lack. Mainly in our own school we are in search of agents or any help in school activities. We are watching out for them for their help, because we don't depend on the government, because in Sierra Leone government now days lack in terms of education support. We are highly watching out for help from any NGO or any agents or organizations that wants to help in terms of education in Sierra Leone (Teacher C).

If you are educated, but have no money, you are nobody in this country according to Teacher C, who was very concerned about the educational system in Sierra Leone being based on finance. The statements about schools being based on finance and accepting money, I interpreted as bribes and corruption. According to Teacher C, you should get the grade you work for and deserve, not the grade you pay for. The teacher wants to change the current system:

The government is not working directly with the syllables, they are not working with the skim of work, all is based on money issues, like the private schools.... Our school is strictly working with the skim of work and the syllables, we are not focusing on money. We don't go out and ask for money so we can give something back, no they have to work

for their marks. This is the system. One of my aims is that I want the system of education to be free and fair, not in terms of finance, where you get bribed to give max. This is the system that is presently going on in Sierra Leone, for the government schools. So I want this system to be stopped, I want free and fair education where you work for it, what you gain is what will be given to you (Teacher C).

When asked about the government and their policy on poverty reduction the answers were diverse. Teacher E and Teacher D said that the government is planning a "feeding program" that will provide every child with one meal during the school day. Many of the children don't get food at home, and two of the teacher explained that sometimes they give children money to buy bread. Teacher D believed that food could serve as a motivator for children to attend school:

The government talks about food, they want to make a food feeding program in some of the government schools. So that can motivate them, because some of the children go to school with empty stomach, no food and no lunch. Some of us give them lunch out of our own pocket, so they can go and buy bread. It is not easy (Teacher D).

Despite the government's wish to implement a feeding program, Teacher E was sceptical to the government's ability to afford it. According to Teacher E, the government can start the program, but will rely on outside support to keep the program going: "If you want to feed 200 children everyday it involves money. You can start it, but you need someone else to help you because of the constrains the government is facing" (Teacher E).

Here we can see what the teachers think about the government's focus on education and poverty reduction. According to one of teachers, The Free Primary Education Policy has made more children enrol in school. The teacher assumed that the reason for that is that people in Sierra Leone take everything that's free. That people come for anything that's free, could be understandable, considering the fact that many people in Sierra Leone live in poverty. The teacher said that a feeding program in school could make more children attend school, if in fact people come for everything that is free. Nevertheless, in my opinion it seems like a good initiative to feed children if they can't afford food themselves. One of the teachers saw the educational system as corrupt and wants education to be both free and fair. On one hand the government want children to know that education is the key to the future, but at the same time they take no responsibility for what happens to you after you finish free education. When one of

the teachers states that they are looking out for help from NGO's or others who wishes to help, and that the educational system is in need of help, I get the impression that there is a lack of trust in the government.

5.1.2 Free Education

All the participants agreed that not everyone have the opportunity to attend school or pursue education. Many children come from families that are financially weak, and who can't provide them with the support they need. Teacher B mentioned that Sierra Leone are at bottom four on the HDI and because of poverty, many can't afford sending their children to school. Teacher C argued that education in Sierra Leone is highly connected with the challenges connected with school fees:

There are some school going pupils that find it very difficult in term of fees, school fees, especially the private schools.... Yes some want to go to school, but due to finance problem they find it difficult. They have no support, and I think they are in high need of support (Teacher C).

In order to motivate children to attend school, one teacher said that there has to be something done with the school fees. The school fees prevents children from going to school, and the teacher suggested that someone could provide scholarships for those children: "If people can come in and provide scholarship for them" (Teacher B). Many of the teachers said that the children need motivation and encouragement to go to school, and that they had to encourage them to learn. One example:

Last year, the Norwegian government have tried a lot, sending bicycles for children that are coming far away from here. But the bicycles have become so destroyed they are beyond repair. The only way I think, is that we need to give them courage, we have to encourage them to learn (Teacher A).

The Free Primary Education Policy entails that all children have the right to free basic education, however, according to the teachers, the education is not as free as portrayed. They propose initiatives like scholarships and help with transport for the children, so the children are

able to attend school. "If people can come in" indicates to me that they want external help, and not help from the government.

5.1.3 Job Opportunities

It is reasonable to assume that education leads to more job opportunities, and that employment and income, will help with poverty reduction. According to one of the teachers, they are told by the government that they are the future leaders of the country, and that education is the key to success. However, all the participants agreed that it is very difficult to acquire jobs in Sierra Leone, for example:

Presently in Sierra Leone, I think even if you are educated it is very difficult to find a job. They say that we are the future leaders, but when we get out of college and start searching for job, it is difficult to find one (Teacher C).

Teacher B argued that education is important and that it has benefits, for example that it will help you acquire a better, comfortable job with convenient work hours: "Another important thing is that when you are educated it will help you get a better job. Not an odd job, but a comfortable job, you work conveniently. When you are educated you will get a better job" (Teacher B). At the same time, Teacher B acknowledged that it is difficult to acquire a job even if you have an education, and that many educated people struggle to find work: "We have a lot of people out of college and universities that don't have jobs" (Teacher B). According to Teacher A, it is difficult to find a job, both with and without education. Either you are overqualified or unqualified: "You have your masters, your PhD and sometimes you find it difficult to find job because when you apply, they can say you are overqualified. If you have a lower education they can say you are not qualified" (Teacher A).

According to Teacher E, the low numbers of available jobs are one of the biggest problems the county has. Teaching has been one of the easiest jobs to get, but it's also getting difficult in the teaching field. One of the teachers said that friends with the same education struggles as teachers, because they worked at different schools that has lower salaries:

The school that I am teaching at are doing well, but my colleagues who don't have the opportunity to go to this school and teach, are suffering. They have the same paper that I have, but I am teaching at *[school name]*, and my salary is better than theirs (Teacher B).

When it comes to getting a job, Teacher C explains that a problem in Sierra Leone is that people often hire family members or friends instead of those who are qualified: "They will only consider their own people, if you are the boss you will help your own family instead of hiring someone who is qualified for the job. This is a problem in Sierra Leone" (Teacher C). The only possible jobs that got mentioned by the participants were police, nurses, teachers and construction-workers. One said that the government had been focusing on creating jobs in the mining industry, but the industry had recently taken a hit, so now it's difficult to find a job there as well. Currently the only job creation Teacher D could see was through the Chinese, in construction. According to Teacher D there are no factories in Sierra Leone, however, by using local resources, like expanding the farming industry it should possible to create jobs.

... But for now job facilities are down because of no factory. We should have more factories in our country, so it could be more jobs.... Try to expand the farming industry now. They are trying their best to use local recourses (Teacher D).

According to the participants, there are not many job opportunities in Sierra Leone. Nurse, police, teacher and construction-worker are the few professions they see available. The teaching field, which is the easiest field to get employment, are getting harder to get into. When it comes to finding a job, your connections, who you know or who your family are seems more important than what education you have. The findings indicate that there is a need for job creation, which one of the teachers thought were possible by using local resources.

5.1.4 Poverty Reduction

School fees and free education was subjects all the participants addressed, though, only one of the five participants mentioned poverty reduction before I asked about it. When questioned what kind of education they saw as essential for poverty reduction, Teacher E answered that all education should start and end free. According to the teacher, many parents are unable to pay school fees, which results in many children dropping out of school after 6 years:

We want the children to have the foundational education for free, but when you go to college you start to suffer. So if we want education to start for free, we have to end it for free. When you attend higher education you are a long way from your parents, and if you are lucky, you have a scholarship that they give to the smartest students. College cost money, and many parents can't afford sending their children to school. There are 6 years of basic education and many quit after 6 years (Teacher E).

According to Teacher B, it is vital to focus on the children in order to reduce poverty. It's necessary to involve the children more in the learning process, for example by using the "child centred teaching technique", which will help the child to grow and understand better:

You have to focus on the child, allow the child to be involved in the teaching and the learning process. That will help the child to grow, and to understand well and do better. So now we are doing child centred teaching technique (Teacher B).

Further, Teacher B saw education as a way to more job opportunities, and that employment automatically brings people out of poverty: "Because, when you get employment you automatically reduce families out of poverty" (Teacher B). In addition to education being important, Teacher A stated that formal education and basic literacy skills are essential in order to reduce poverty. Having the ability to read and write makes it easier for people to learn other things, like for example computer. According to Teacher A, many of the drop-outs in Sierra Leone would benefit from learning basic skills:

Formal education is good, that people can read and write. Sometimes we have some dropouts, and it could be good for them to learn in case they want jobs. As long as you can read and write you can learn other things, like computer (Teacher A).

When asked about Sierra Leone's ability to eradicate poverty by 2030 and reaching the SDGs, Teacher A was positive and said that it would happen. Teacher B on the other hand answered that the UN have to do more for it to be possible. The teacher was sceptical because of the many challenges Sierra Leone struggles with. Because of the culture, Teacher D argued that practical education is most important, and by using local resources and expanding the farming industry, eradicating poverty by 2030 could be possible: "Yes it is possible, because they build our culture, they try to dry rice, try to expand the farming industry now. They are trying their

best to use local resources" (Teacher D).

Only one of the five teachers mentioned poverty reduction before I asked about it, which can indicate that they don't automatically think of education as a tool in reducing poverty. That being said, when the subject was addressed, they all had opinions about what kind of education they perceived as important to reduce poverty. One of the teachers said that education should be free from start to finish, in order to ensure that all children are able to finish school and are not stopped by school fees. The child centred teaching technique was also mentioned as important to poverty reduction, which is seen as a teaching method where the child is more involved in the learning process. This indicates that more active and independent children are important to reduce poverty. Another important thing that was mentioned was the importance of learning basic literacy skills, because it makes it easier for people to learn other things necessary to be a part of society. There was no agreement about the likelihood to eradicate poverty in Sierra Leone by 2030, but one of the teachers said that in order to achieve it practical education is crucial. According to the teacher, practical education build the culture, and teach how to use local resources and expand the farming industry. All these different instruments of learning indicate that obtaining knowledge which makes the person a resource in society, like for example through a job, is seen as important. I will get deeper into this in the next chapter.

5.2 Quality Education

When addressing education as a contributor to poverty reduction, the quality of education has received a lot of attention. I began my interviews with asking about quality education and what quality education was for the teachers (See appendix A). What quality education entails are addressed in chapter 3, and I have therefore categorized the teachers' replies into five categories, which all are based on earlier research: "Quality Material and School Supplies", "Relevant Curriculum", "Classroom Interaction", "Qualified Teachers" and "Public Exams" are all subjects that have been addressed in the discussion of what quality education is.

5.2.1 Quality Material and School Supplies

The teachers all agreed that certain things are essential in order to provide quality education, mainly financial support, but also other things. One of the teachers said that the learning environment needs to be conducive for the children: "If you want the education to improve, first you have to think about the building, the accommodation for the children. Make sure the learning environment is conducive for the children" (Teacher E).

According to Teacher B, the teachers don't have enough money, but if they would receive more money they would do a better job. In addition to higher salaries, the teacher wants the government to improve and provide school facilities to the teachers. The teacher argues that the teachers are the ones doing the work, and the idea is that by providing good facilities to the teachers, the teachers will be encouraged to improve their teaching:

The only thing, money is not enough.... Because the world is getting difficult every day and the cost of living is getting higher every day, especially in our country. They need to encourage us more, so that we do more in the school. ... The only thing is to improve and encourage us more. I promise if they encourage us more we will do more than this.... So the only problem now is that they (the government) need to bring, as well as improve school facilities to the teachers, because if you want to improve on the education and the system, you have to encourage the workers who are doing the work (Teacher B).

Teacher B continues to say that there are things that the school need, but since they have the necessary schoolbooks the school is doing well: "Well, we need more, but we are getting the books and that is why the school is doing well" (Teacher B). According to Teacher C, the school needs furniture and financial support, and wants someone to come and help them. Many children don't go to school and are only staying home. The teacher argued that by providing financial support more children will be able to go to school. In addition, Teacher C believed that with financial support, the school would also be able to get the necessary school materials:

The school needs furniture and financial support. Academically, there are some pupils that want to go to school but due to fees, they relax themselves at home ... I think we are highly watching out for help, help for those school going pupils in terms of scholarship and school materials (Teacher C).

When addressing what the schools were in need of, one of the teachers said that the school is doing well since they have the necessary schoolbooks. This illustrates the importance of having the right books. Two of the teachers talked about the importance of school facilities, which is important for both teachers and students. It is fair to assume that by building more school facilities, more children can attend school and more jobs can be created. However, they also discussed improving the existing facilities, which would serve as motivation for the teachers. Improving facilities can create a good learning environment for the children. I understand that the schools need financial support to improve both school facilities and school supplies. On one hand, financial support to enrol more children in school could indicate that high enrolment rates are seen as quality education. On the other hand, the teacher might have the child's interest at heart, and want children to have the opportunity to attend school. In that case, financial support and scholarships is something the school need in order to help more children, and not something they need to improve quality. I will get further into this discussion in the next chapter.

5.2.2 Relevant Curriculum

All the participants agreed that the curriculum they teach is right for Sierra Leone, and it's very relevant according to most of them. Despite the curriculum being relevant, some of the teachers saw a need to learn about technology and computer. In addition, one of the teachers questioned the curriculum teaching at primary level, based on experiencing children missing basic knowledge when coming from primary school to JSS.

According to Teacher E, the teachers prepare everything they do from the curriculum, and stated that there would be no better learning without the curriculum. This is a good example of the teachers' perspective on the relevance and importance of the curriculum: "The curriculum is what the teachers work from, they have to plan everything themselves and how to run their time. Without the curriculum settings it will be no better learning" (Teacher E). However, Teacher A thought the curriculum was relevant, but that it contained some flaws. The teacher explained that they often experience children coming from primary school, who don't have the basic knowledge required to understand the curriculum in JSS. The teachers therefore have to teach them what they should have learned in primary school, before they can teach them the JSS

curriculum. According to teacher A, this indicate that there are some lapses in the curriculum at primary level:

Yes, it is relevant, but maybe the education have some lapses at the primary level. When you look at the primary school we have class one to class seven. The child spends seven years in primary and five years in secondary level. The children needs to get basic knowledge in primary, so when they come from class one to class seven, they should have the basic foundation. But they have made it too easy on primary level, so we have to start fresh when they come to secondary level in order for them to learn. So the teachers have to go the extra mile to teach the child basic knowledge and being able to learn. You have to use simple calculation like $1+1 =$ this, and so on (Teacher A).

Two of the teachers believed that technology is highly relevant for improving education, but said that they don't have the knowledge and resources to teach it. Teacher B argued that is important to know what is happening around the world and how to use the internet to acquire information: "Trough education, you open your horizon. Now we use the internet and other things to get information, if you don't know the technology you cannot use the internet to get information" (Teacher B). Teacher D argued that by improving people's knowledge about technology, they can use those skills to learn about diseases and other things relevant for them. Children need to learn the value of education and create technological ideas that will help evolve the country. The teacher acknowledged that the number of people with technological skills in Sierra Leone are low. The teacher wants "you people", which I assume means people from outside Africa, to come and help with educate about technology and computer. In the statement, the teacher mentioned education of women, which I will get further into in chapter 5.3. Teacher D stated:

Quality education now, because of the help of technology, we have to synthesize our young ladies, our sisters to try to do something so that we push our country forward. Try to bring up technology ideas. Must be creative and try to explain to them the essential benefit of education. Try to put things together so that we are able to bring our own ideas and push things in a better way for our country ... Not all of us know computer so we need you people to come and assist us with computers and this modernised technology so

that we will be familiar with it. We are not familiar with modernised technology, the internet and so on will make us more essential to education (Teacher D).

On the topic of the current curriculum, all the teachers thought the curriculum was relevant for Sierra Leone, but they gave simple responses without in-depth discussions on the content of the curriculum. One of the teachers talked about how important it was that they had the curriculum to plan from, which gave me the impression that they liked the curriculum because it help them to plan their time, not because the content of the curriculum was good. Despite seeing the curriculum as relevant, some of the teachers stated that technological skills are important in order for the country to develop. They also acknowledged that they had little knowledge on the subject and wanted help. Help from "you people" which I believe is people like me, from outside Africa. The only criticism of the curriculum given by any of the teachers, was that the students don't learn well enough at primary school level. However, that might be in connection with other factors than the content of the curriculum.

5.2.3 Classroom Interaction

Four of the participants talked about interacting with the children in the classroom, using the "child centred teaching technique" and working with them one on one. Teacher E argued that teachers can't just talk to the children, but they have to let the children participate in the teaching process. By making learning fun, for example trough games, it is easier for the children to learn. However, with many children in class, the teacher are not able focus on all of the children and some children will struggle to concentrate. According to the teacher, with overcrowded classrooms have an impact on the learning outcome:

You as a teacher, you don't just depend on talking, you have to allow the children to talk so that they will learn. Let them participate, let the participation come from the children more. You have to apply play method, for instance, you want to teach the alphabet, you put it in a play method so that the children can understand what you are trying to learn. That makes the learning become interesting for the children.... If the classroom is overcrowded there will be no better learning ... It effects the learning in the classroom because not everybody will concentrate. For instance, if you have 50 children in a classroom and you are just one teacher, you will not be able to focus on everybody. It is

very difficult, only a few, maybe only those who understands that it will have value to them, will focus ... The school has to set the limit, because the government has no limit and want everyone in school (Teacher E).

By using the child centred teaching technique the teachers can focus more on each child, and give everyone the chance to participate. According to Teacher A, it is also important to adapt the teaching method to the learning ability of the children. The teacher has divided the students into three levels of learners: the fast learner, the average learner and the slow learner. The different levels require different approaches in order for the student to understand and learn. The teacher aim at getting 65 percent of the students to understand the subject before moving on to the next topic:

... You look at the level of understanding of the child. We have three stages of learners; we have the average learner, the fast learner and the slow learner. So if you find out you have these three levels of learners in the classroom, you have to take you time teaching them. You have to take your time to learn who are weak, who are fast and who are slow. So you have to play your technique as a teacher, you have to play a role for the children to learn ... until you get 65% of them to understand the topic.... We befriend them, interact with them, show them where they have weaknesses so that they can learn more" (Teacher A).

One of the teachers said that one of the qualities of good education is that it makes children become independent persons. According to Teacher E, quality education makes you an independent person with a role in society, which society will appreciate: "One of the qualities of education is that it makes you become self-reliant, not depending on someone else. Society will appreciate you very much, that makes education become quality" (Teacher E).

Most of the teachers saw the importance of using the child centred teaching technique, because it involves the children in the teaching process. Some wanted to focus on each child, however, one of them said that it could be hard to follow through when the classrooms are overcrowded. The teachers know the negative sides of having overcrowded classrooms, and since overcrowded classrooms makes it harder for the children to concentrate in class, it is fair to assume that it has an effect on those who drop out of school. I acknowledge that adapting the teaching method to the children's learning abilities is a positive measure. Even so, it could be

challenging to work on an individual level in overcrowded classrooms. Therefore it's reasonable to assume it could be difficult to put into practice, which I will discuss further in chapter 6.

5.2.4 Qualified Teachers

That you have to be qualified to work as a teacher was something all the teachers considered to be imperative. For example, according to Teacher E you have to be qualified and received the right training to be a good teacher. The children come to school to learn new things, and therefore you need to have the accurate education and training, so you are able to provide the children with knowledge in the best way possible:

First, you have to be qualified for the job, you need to train, go to college and train as a teacher. So when you go to work, you will be perfect in the classroom. You are educating someone who doesn't know anything, so you have to train for it so that when you come that person will be able to learn from you (Teacher E).

Teacher D stated that the government is trying to educate and upgrade some of the teachers in Sierra Leone, as an attempt to provide quality education. The teacher wished to be upgraded, and saw upgrading to be positive and essential in order to provide the right education to the children: "They want to put more emphasis on education and they want to go out and try to upgrade some of the teachers. We want to upgrade ourselves so we are able to meet the children" (Teacher D).

When asked if they saw any opportunities for staff development in their current jobs, most of the teachers said no. The only positive response to the question came from teacher B who said that the principle and the senior teachers attend seminars. When they come back from seminars, they teach what they have learned to the rest of the staff:

The principle normally attend workshops, they don't need to call all the teachers, then the school will remain empty. So most times the principle and the senior teachers will go to workshops in the big cities, like Freetown. So when they come back they train us, they help us so we learn from them (Teacher B).

There are several reasons for why it is important to be qualified for a job. Teacher E argued that one of the reasons is that when you work as a teacher, you are a role-model: "Yes, you as a

teacher are a role model" (Teacher E).

All the teachers thought that teachers need to be qualified for the job. Qualified teachers are the ones who get the right education and go through teacher training. One of them said that the government wants to upgrade some of the teachers, which indicates that both teachers and the government are aware of the problem of unqualified teachers. Though, I did not get the impression that any of the teachers knew how the government were planning to do this upgrade. None of the teachers received any training or opportunities to develop in their current job, except from one teacher who said that they occasionally received training.

5.2.5 Public Exams

All the teachers had a focus on the public exams. When asked about what quality education was, one teacher responded that quality education was getting good results on the public exams, and that they wanted to prepare the students for the exams:

We target the examination classes, so that they will get a good score on the public exam, a good result. You prepare children to be a successful child, for their future. For example, for us here, we prepared so many children for their external exams and they did well (Teacher A).

When discussing how to improve the quality of education, Teacher B and Teacher D talked about improving the public exam results. Teacher B was very proud of the students' examination results, but still wanted them to improve. The teachers' goal is to go from being best in the region, to be the best national:

We are doing our bit, but it needs to be improved ... if we look at the result of the students, the results was good from the time I started the school, but every year since, the school is improving. This year's BECE results, we are second in the whole south region. We have never reached this peak before, we are going from the bottom to the top, so we are gradually improving. If you ask me, we need to improve, because we want to move from regional to national (Teacher B).

It can in this context be important to include what some of the participants said about motivating and preparing the students for the public exams. They all prepared their students with tests, but had different approaches. Teacher A was very firm about grading and stated that they don't give the students better grades than they deserve. The teacher explained that they are there to guide them and help them to understand their weaknesses. This way, when the students don't perform well, they will try harder the next time in order to do it better the next time:

We do not manufacture grades. When you have 10, you deserve 10. When you have 10 we don't give you 30 so you can pass, no. When you have 5, we give you 5, so that tomorrow you will try. So we try to make the children learn more. We befriend them, interact with them, show them where they have weaknesses so that they can learn more (Teacher A).

Teacher C said that they only test the students on what they have taught them. However, in contrast to Teacher A, they make the questions easier for those who don't understand to help them get a higher score. They do it in order to encourage them:

We go strictly by what we have taught them, we give them advice. For the test we normally do five questions and they answer all, and for the exam it is ten questions. We make the questions more easy for them, especially because there are some pupils who have a hard time understanding. But even if they took the test and they did not do well, then we try to prepare another test for them just for us to encourage them (Teacher C).

It was important for Teacher C that the students do well on their exams. The teacher was under the impression that if their students score high on the public exams, the government and NGOs would notice the school and provide them with aid: "Because with a good result, like the pupils taking the national school exam and let's say they came out with flying colours, I think some of the government or the NGOs to give their aid to us" (Teacher C).

Public exams were something all the teachers talked highly about, and all of them said that they were important. However, they had different approaches to prepare student for the test. On one side Teacher A, being a JSS teacher, was very determined on giving the students the deserved grade, so that the student would learn what needs to be improved to perform better. On the other side, Teacher C, a primary school teacher, makes the test questions easier so the student will know the answer and be motivated by receiving a high score. This illustrates two different

teaching approaches to the identical goal of high examination results. By getting a high score, one of the teachers believed that the government or NGOs would notice the school, which indicates how important the exams are. I will come back to the public exams when discussing quality education in the next chapter.

5.3 Gender Equality

A part of the SDG no.4 is to ensure equal access to education for boys and girls. During the interviews, four out of five teachers addressed the importance of educating women, referring to it as "educating the girl child". When asked what role education had in society, three of the participants mentioned the girl child. Teacher E stated that providing education for girls is prioritised, in order to make them become independent. This is to ensure that they learn that they have the same rights as men, and that there are other opportunities than early marriages. According to the teacher, it is common in Africa to enter a early marriage if you are not educated:

In Sierra Leone we concentrate on the girl child education, we give them preference. We give them priority to be educated, so that in near future they will become self-learners ...We focus on the boys, but because women always have problem in the world ... now we focus more on the girl child so that they know that it is not just early marriage for girls. Especially in Africa, when the woman is not educated, the parents will just allow you to get early marriage (Teacher E).

According to Teacher D, earlier generations are uneducated, and therefore the benefits of education are not commonly known. Because of culture and tradition, boys are prioritised in education. Teacher D said that especially those who depend on traditional work, such as farming do not see the value of education:

The problem is that our forefathers did not educate, fortunately we have been to school, but some of our fathers have not been to school because of ethnic group, background, society and culture. Some of them say that education should not be for girls, only for boys, this comes from some of the ethnic group traditions, especially those who only depend on farming or other things. So it is controversial, because of the problem created

by our forefathers. That is why it becomes so wrong here, because we don't know the benefits of education (Teacher D).

Teacher A addressed the girl child when asked about the government's policy on poverty reduction. According to the teacher, the focus needs to be on securing education for girls, and in order to eradicate poverty by 2030, they have to motivate women to learn. Teacher B said some of the challenges Sierra Leone faces with eradicating poverty by 2030 are teen-pregnancy and poverty:

One challenge is to educate the girls and guys about teenage-pregnancy. Another one is poverty, some because their parents cannot afford, one man will just come and say "ok I pay for you". Even if the man does not go to the parent, the man will begin to provide lunch, transportation, dresses for girl child before getting into sexual intercourse with the girl (Teacher B).

I see education for girls as an important aspect of the poverty discourse, especially when almost all the teachers address it. According to Teacher D, many of the people in Sierra Leone don't know the benefits of education and therefore don't consider it important. Teacher E said that it's important that girls learn that they have the same rights as men. It's common for girls in Africa to marry early, and they need to know they have other options in life. This can be seen in connection with the challenge of teen-pregnancy, which hinders girls to focus on education. That the government have a focus on educating girls, indicates to me that they want equality and acknowledge that they have to work on implementing equality in school. It is also indicates that the government wishes to teach the people of Sierra Leone that education of all children is important.

5.4 The Role of the Teacher

According to earlier research, which I addressed in chapter 3, teachers are the key to provide education that can help people arise from poverty. I will now look at how the teachers perceive themselves, because it is interesting to see how they place themselves in the education and poverty discourse. I have divided the findings into three subchapters, starting with "Becoming a Teacher", where all the teachers explain why they chose the profession. I then move on to "The

Teaching Occupation" where they talk about their perceptions of the occupation, before I lastly present their goals with teaching in "Goals with Teaching".

5.4.1 Becoming a Teacher

The teachers had various reasons to choose the teaching profession. Teacher E wanted to see children become someone in society and therefore chose to become a teacher. Teacher A said that the choice to become a teacher was made by someone else. Even though the choice was not self-made, Teacher A was happy about the choice, and would not choose to do anything else. By not teaching, the children will not learn and stay uneducated:

When I finished school in 1990, my family wanted me to become a police officer or a soldier, but I did not want that. Later, someone told me they wanted me to teach, so I said ok if you choose me to become a teacher I will not deny ... So now I have become a teacher to educate other people that don't have the learning education. I could choose to do something else, but I have my children, I have to educate them and send them to school to learn. If I remain without learning, they also will remain without education (Teacher A).

Teacher B wanted to become a lawyer, but because of the financial cost linked to it, the choice became to teach instead. The family did not have the finance to pay for law school and the teaching field was easy to get into, which made it an easy choice:

I wanted to become a lawyer, my aim was not to become a teacher, but my family cannot afford me to become a lawyer. To become a lawyer in this country, or elsewhere, is huge money. So I decided to jump into the teaching field. If you want to get job easier you go to the teaching field. So to answer your question, that is what prompted me, the finance (Teacher B).

To become a lawyer was also the dream for Teacher C, but like Teacher B, the finance was an obstacle. However, to study law in the future is still the goal. By teaching in the meantime, Teacher C believed that teaching will provide valuable knowledge to bring into a new occupation:

... Even if my aim is to study law, but due to finance problem I started teaching.... I believe that by being a teacher I can be able to achieve my goal and be what I want to in the future, I am aiming at continuing my education. So I believe that teaching will help me understand and to gain much knowledge about what I want to become in the future (Teacher C).

Teacher D admitted that teaching was a choice made in order to survive, but still loves the job. However, the dream is to work as police, and teaching is just a temporary job until the enrolment to become a policeman starts: "I did not have a job. I love the profession. My aim is, now I want to go for police, but they have not yet started to take now so. I want to become a teacher first, I have to survive" (Teacher D).

Only one of the teachers said that children were the reason for wanting to be a teacher, still, all of them liked working as teachers. Three of them wanted to become other things, but did not have the money to study for those professions. This suggest two things; the first is that teaching is an easy job to get, and that the requirements for the job are low. The second is that as a result of high school fees, people can't educate themselves to what they want, and are forcing them into the teaching field. One of them said that working as a teacher was necessary in order to survive, and I believe it could be possible that there are other people in the same position. Yet, even if some of the participants don't have their desired jobs currently, they are positive that they one day will be able to get the job they want.

5.4.2 The Teaching Occupation

All the participants agreed that teaching was a respected occupation that gave them respect in the community. A representative example is Teacher B who said that people don't refer to them by name, because they are teachers. They explained that this is a sign of respect:

Oh my God, I like teaching. It is a profession I like. I feel that I get respect from others, even in the community. When I pass through the community, they don't call me by name, they say Mr/Mrs., if I were not a teacher they would just say my name (Teacher B).

Teacher E said that teaching is noble work where you everyday will teach someone, and you will learn from them at the same time. The teacher expressed passion for the children and wanted to see them become someone in society:

I have passion for the children. I want to see them become someone in society. I love the children and that made me take this job. It is a noble job and I like it so much. It is a job that makes you become knowledgeable and I learn from the children. The children can also teach me, it is a passion (Teacher E).

According to Teacher B, teaching is a profession that keeps you learning and develop. Before going to college the teacher had worked as a teacher for several years, which provided much knowledge about the occupation and made college easy:

When you are a teacher you will learn a lot, I have learned a lot. I started teaching after my WASSCE exam, I worked as a teacher for seven years before going to college. I entered the teaching field very young, so after teaching 7 years I decided to go to college to get my teachers certificate. College was very much simple for me, because most of the things I was teaching in school they were teaching in college. So teaching is good, it develops somebody (Teacher B).

When asked about their role as teachers, Teacher B responded that they have a responsibility to serve as role models and guidance counsellors for the children. The teachers gain the students trust, and try their best to help them with advices and have a positive outlook:

One responsibility I have as a teacher is to serve as a role model and to serves as guidance counsellor. You have to help the child turn the negative things into positive things. I know many of the secrets of my students ... the students trust me. I give them the correct advice and tell them to be careful with boys. You as a teacher has to serve as a role model (Teacher B).

All the teacher saw teaching as a respected profession and experienced that people respected them because they were teachers. Many of them saw their job as important, and that they had a responsibility to the children. They thought that by teaching the children to be independent they will one day become someone in society, which indicates that they see education as important for society. Some of them considered it their job to be role models and

help the children with other things than the syllabus. This indicates that they care for the children and how they are. Some of them talked about how much they learn by teaching, and that they learn from the children. That one of them said that college was easy because of the years of experience as a teacher, suggest to me that teacher training colleges don't require much of the students. It also indicates that you learn the same at college as you do in the teaching job. However, other factors may have played in, like the teacher working at a good school, or being a "fast learner". Nevertheless, it indicates that attending college will prepare you good for the teaching job.

5.4.3 Goals with Teaching

It is important to this thesis how the teachers view themselves in the poverty discourse and what their goals are with teaching. All the teachers agreed that education is important, for example, like discussed in chapter 5.1.3, one of the teachers said that education is the key to success. The teachers wants to see the children evolve, and Teacher E wish to provide education and see the children become important in society: "My goal is for the children to get educated. I want to see them become important in society, let them know that they also are important. They have done something not everyone has done" (Teacher E). A common answer among the participants was that they wanted the child to grow and become educated, so that the child can be the best they can be and go to college. For example, Teacher A said:

My most important role is to teach, for him or her to be educated ... I as a teacher will try to make you as a pupil well educated so that in the end you will achieve your goals. So when you become educated you will be able to achieve what you are looking out for (Teacher A).

One of the teachers who wanted to become a lawyer, answered that teaching was a stepping stone towards becoming a lawyer, and did not mention children at all.

All the teacher considered it as a goal to educate the children in the best possible way. They want to see them accomplish their own goals and become someone in society. This indicates that they work as teachers because they want to help children go far in life and achieve things for themselves. However, one of the teachers did not mention children and only talked

about personal achievements non-related to teaching. This indicates to me that the teacher teach mostly for personal reasons, like money. I will discuss the teachers role further in next chapter, since is an important aspect of this thesis.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have analysed the findings that emerged during the interviews with the five teachers. I categorised them into relevant subjects "Poverty", "Quality Education", "Gender Equality" and "The Teachers Role". Many of the teachers discussed challenges that Sierra Leone struggles with, that has to be addressed in order to reduce poverty in the country.

When addressing poverty and the governments focus on education, one of the participants mentioned that the Free Primary Education Policy is an example of the government's focus on enrolling children in school. Since the policy was implemented, the teacher had experienced more children in school, which was explained with that people come for everything that is free. This indicates that more children would take higher education if the education policy covered more than the first 6 years of school. The same teacher argued that education should start free and end free, and stated that after the 6 years the government takes no responsibility for you. The government have added 1 year to SSS, which is seen as an attempt to improve the quality of education. However, some of the teachers did not see any support from the government, and are waiting for others agencies and organizations to help them. This indicates that the government don't have control over the educational system, and that the people have more faith in help from others. One of the teachers said that the educational system is corrupt, and wishes to create an educational system where it is not possible to buy grades. Most of the children who attend the schools are poor, and many of them don't have money for food. According to two of the teachers the government are working on a program to provide one meal a day for all school going children. However, one of the teachers said that it will be expensive and that the government can start it, but need help to keep it going.

All the teachers agreed that many children don't have the opportunity to attend school despite of the Free Primary Education Policy. The number one reason for this is that the parents can't afford sending their children to school. Other reasons are that some don't see the value of education, or that the school is far away from the home. Solutions the teachers provided to these

problems, in addition to free education from start to finish, were scholarships and school materials to motivate the children. To reduce poverty, many argued that the school fees has to be removed in order for children to stay in school for more than 6 years. Some of the teachers said that education leads to jobs, which help people out of poverty, which indicates that education and finishing school is important.

It is reasonable to assume that education ought to lead to job opportunities and that having employment and income, will reduce the level of poverty. All the teachers agreed that it is hard to get employment in Sierra Leone, regardless of educational level, and the only jobs they saw accessible were police, nurses, teachers and construction-workers. They experienced no effort from the government in creating jobs, however, some of them suggested how jobs could be created, for example by using local recourses. Despite knowing the struggle with getting jobs, many of the teachers still saw education as a tool to get good jobs. In addition, they also mentioned other benefits with education. For example, learning basic literacy skills makes it easier to learn other useful things. In addition they believed that education makes people independent and important in society.

All the teachers agreed that certain things need to improve in order to provide quality education. For the teachers, "quality education" was a good learning environment, adequate facilities, school supplies, the right school books, qualified teachers, the use of "child centred teaching technique" and good results on the public exams. The public exams was important for all the teachers, and they saw the curriculum as relevant for the people of Sierra Leone, but a few of the teachers said that they need to learn more about technology.

To educate women is a focus for the teachers and the government, which emphasizes the importance of securing equality. According to one of the teachers, girls has to be educated in order for Sierra Leone to eradicate poverty, which indicates that educating women are imperative. To educate women is also important to lower the number of early marriages and teen-pregnancies. A challenge is that people don't know the benefits of education, and therefore don't see how important it is to attend school.

The teachers are the ones responsible for providing good education to the children and therefore it was interesting to see how they perceived their own role. They all had different reasons for choosing to become teachers. They wanted to see children grow, they were guided in that direction, or they were not able to afford a different profession. However, they all love the

profession and said that it gives them respect from others. As a teacher you have to be a role model and teach the children what's important, and every day you develop and learn from the children. All the teacher considered it a goal to educate the children the best they could and wanted to see the children accomplish their own goals and become someone in society.

The teachers all agree on certain things, like the importance of free education and the fact that not all children have the opportunity to attend school. On other subjects they gave diverse answers. However, the answers are equally important, and indicates that there are many aspects in the education and poverty discourse.

6. Discussion: Education's Role in Reducing Poverty in Sierra Leone

The purpose of this thesis is to find what role education can have in poverty reduction in Sierra Leone. According to earlier research, education and poverty reduction are connected, and in this chapter I will discuss my research findings in the light of history and other circumstances in Sierra Leone (See chapter 2), and earlier research (See chapter 3). The goal with this thesis is not find a solution to how the educational system in Sierra Leone should be, nor the right strategy for the government. My research aims at how education can be a tool in poverty reduction, with the help from the teachers' perspective. However, in order for education to have a role in poverty reduction it is necessary to question the current educational system. The teachers are the ones who are responsible for educating the children, and in order for education to contribute to reducing poverty, it is important to cooperate with the teachers and take their perspectives in consideration. In this discourse I will incorporate the teacher's perspective on education and poverty reduction.

I have divided this discussion into subchapters relevant to previous chapters, the first being "Education and Poverty Reduction". Since education and poverty reduction is the main focus in this paper. One of the targets in the SDG no.4 is to provide quality education. Quality education have been a focus in earlier research (See chapter 3), as well as my fieldwork (See chapter 5), and therefore "Quality Education" is the next subchapter. Another of the SDG's targets is to ensure that boys and girls have equal access to all levels of education, and therefore the next subchapter is "Gender Equality". Earlier research indicates that the teachers have an important role in poverty reduction, since they are the ones responsible for educating the children. During my fieldwork I was interested in how they placed themselves in that important role, and the poverty discourse. Based on that, the last subchapter is "The Role of The Teacher".

The SDG no.1 is to eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere by 2030, while goal no.4 aims at securing quality education for all, and all the goals are listed in the chapter 2 (See chapter 2.2). Many of the targets sat in SDG no.4 came up during my fieldwork, even if none of the participants mentioned them as the SDGs. There is a common assertion among researchers that education leads to human development, poverty reduction and economic growth (Maile, 2008, p.xi). However, researchers also argue that education alone cannot eradicate poverty, and that the MDGs and SDGs are not the only solution to the problems African countries are facing (Maile, 2008, p.xiii). I acknowledge this, and it is not my aim to find a

solution to how poverty can be eradicated in Sierra Leone, but rather how education can be a factor in reducing poverty in the country. African countries are not all alike, which means all of them cannot have the same approach on poverty reduction. Sierra Leone has been through a horrible civil war that had a huge impact on the country, and effect on the educational system (See chapter 2.1). These are things that need to be taken in to consideration when looking at how education can be a tool in poverty reduction.

I acknowledge that the SDGs are not the solution to reduce poverty, but in my opinion, they can be useful guidelines to what goals education should have in order to give the best outcomes. By aiming at the best possible outcomes, it is reasonable to assume that education can be a useful tool in poverty reduction. I have therefore chosen to use the SDGs as guidelines throughout this discussion. It is also important to mention that Sierra Leone is highly dependent on donations and aid from other actors, and those donations often comes with conditions connected to the SDGs, which underlines the relevance they have in education in Sierra Leone (Paulson, 2011, p.127).

6.1 Education and Poverty Reduction

Educations role in poverty reduction in Sierra Leone is the focus on this thesis, and according to Yusuf Sayed the lack of education is perhaps one of the most powerful determinant of poverty (Maile, 2008, p.53). As addressed in chapter 5, only one teacher mentioned poverty reduction before I asked about it. They all mentioned poverty and the need for support, but not poverty reduction. Sayed argues that it is a circle where the lack of education cause poverty, and poverty limits the access to education (Maile, 2008, p.53). I will start with looking at different approaches to understand the link between education and poverty, provided by Sayed. The current education status in Sierra Leone will be the main theme, and I will discuss how it is working, and what could be improved in order for it to play a part in poverty reduction. I will not go into the quality of education here, as it will be addressed later in this chapter.

6.1.1 The Connection between Education and Poverty Reduction

If we look at the different approaches provided by Sayed in chapter 3, we can see his interpretation of the connection between education and poverty reduction. The first approach argues that education provide people with skills and knowledge that can be transformed into increased productivity, resulting in increased earning and economic growth (Maile, 2008, pp.54-55). According to all of the teachers in my research, education can provide more job opportunities and better jobs. One teacher said that when you are educated you will be able to get a good, comfortable job that pays well. By getting education and a good job, you will earn money that will help bring your family out of poverty. At the same time, they all acknowledged that there are limited job opportunities in Sierra Leone (See chapter 5.1.3). All of the participants considered education to be important, stating that it creates more job opportunities, but at the same time serves as a tool for personal development. Despite one of the teacher's statements about education providing a comfortable and well paid job, the teacher also said that education is no guaranty for securing a job. Many of the participants focused on the fact that there are few job opportunities, both for those who are uneducated and those with education (See chapter 5.1.3).

In Matsumoto's research the adolescents were hopeful and believed they would get good jobs that paid well. The young people however, like the teachers in my research, were aware of the few job opportunities Sierra Leone have for college graduates (Paulson, 2011, p.135-137). According to the teachers, people are told by the government that education is the key to the future. However, none of the teachers saw any effort from the government in creating jobs (See chapter 5.1.3). One of the teachers said that one of the major problems in Sierra Leone, is that people often hire family members or friends, instead of those who are qualified for the job (See chapter 5.1.3).

Another teacher argued that a major problem is that many of the people in Sierra Leone don't know the value of education (See chapter 5.3). This indicates that the value of education has to be learned in order for parents to see why they should send their children to school. According to Matsumoto, people are starting to see the importance of education when they struggle to find employment. The NGOs have helped creating awareness of the importance of education, however, the participants in Matsumoto's research had different opinions about the value of education. On one hand, the adolescents perceive education to be the key to success and by having higher education they would be able to get good jobs as lawyers and doctors. The

adults however, saw education as an instrument for development (Paulson, 2011, pp.132-133). I come back to the aspect of development when discussing the third approach provided by Sayed.

The second approach sees education as a right, something that should be provided to all human beings without limitation, and here education is perceived to be valuable for the individual. According to Sayed, by providing education as a human right, other rights such as healthcare, freedom and security will follow. Research indicate that education have positive health benefits, especially for women (Maile, 2008, p.55). According to one of the teachers, educating women is a priority (See chapter 5.3), and earlier research indicates that the focus on educating women have positive effects. Some of the improvements are according to Sayed, higher life expectancy, and a decline in child mortality and HIV (Maile, 2008, p.59).

The third approach recognize education as an opportunity, an entitlement and a means for improving life. For example, the adults in Matsumoto's research viewed education as an instrument for development (Paulson, 2011, p.133). Sayed argues that this approach can portray poverty as a capability deprivation because it reduces people's ability to give value to their life (Maile, 2008, pp.55-56). When I interviewed the teachers, many of them said that they loved their job because they liked sharing their knowledge, but also because they liked to learn and considered teaching to be a learning experience. They saw value in education, and one of the participants pointed out that education makes people independent and valuable in society. One of the teacher said that education would help the children to can go out in the world and excel (See chapter 5.4). In this context, poverty prevents the people of Sierra Leone to provide value to their life trough education.

The last approach promotes inclusion trough education, with a social exclusion perspective enables the policy makers and analysts to understand processes of marginalisation and deprivation within and across countries (Maile, 2008, pp.56-57). None of the teachers mentioned anything about the government having a focus on providing education for those in need of it, with the exception of securing education for girls (See chapter 5.3).

By looking at the four approaches on the link between education and poverty reduction, we can see that the teachers' perspectives are relatable with the different approaches. This indicates that there are several positive benefits with education, which is seen by both researchers and teachers.

6.1.2 Literacy

One of the SDG no.4 targets is to ensure that all men and women achieve literacy and numeracy (See chapter 2.2). 114 million adults in sub-Saharan Africa lack basic literacy skills, and to eliminate poverty Sayed stresses the need to address that issue. According to Sayed, the government need to has to focus on educating adults and higher the literacy rate (Maile, 2008, pp.59-62). Numbers from The World Bank indicates a strong connection between poverty numbers and education attainment in Sierra Leone. The number of families living under the poverty line are high, and are higher with the lower level of education. 52,7 percent of the families where the head of the family has finished JSS, lives under the poverty line. When it comes to families where the head of the family don't have any education, the number of families living under the poverty line are 74,5 percent (The World Bank, 2007, p.22).

As I presented in chapter 5.1.4, one of the teachers in my research stated that by having the basic skills to read and write, there are more opportunities to learn other things that are useful in life. By having literacy skills, it is easier to learn things like how to handle computers (See chapter 5.1.4). According to The World Bank, it takes 6 years in school to become literate in Sierra Leone (The World Bank, 2007, p.4), which indicates that finishing the first 6 years of education is imperative. It can also explain why the government only provides free education for the first 6 years of school. The literacy rate in Sierra Leone is low, and the average years of education is 4 for men and 2 for women (The World Bank, 2007, pp.24-25). It is important to know that the numbers from The World Bank are 10 years old. However, it is reasonable to assume that the education system have not undergone great changes the last 10 years, and that the literacy numbers in Sierra Leone still are low.

The World Bank has stated that Sierra Leone has had a remarkable recovery in education, because the number of schools in the country has doubled from 1989 to 2005, and their enrolment numbers are high (Paulson, 2011, p.127). Sierra Leone have high enrolment rates, but at the same time they struggle with high dropout numbers, which means there is money spent on students who only stay in school for a couple of years. In other words, the government are using money on students who gain close to nothing, because they don't stay in school long enough. This indicates that money are not being spent right, which is not positive, since Sierra Leone don't have the economy to waste money (Collier, 2016, p.76). It is reasonable to question the education system when the average years of education is 2 to 4 years. If you need at least 6 years

of education to become literate, it's fair to assume that 2 to 4 years in school is not enough, and it will not be possible to reach the SDG target of securing literacy for everyone. This indicates that a focus should be on keeping children in school, in order for children to become literate. It is possible to argue that the government have tried to keep children in school by providing 6 years of free education. In addition to getting more literate, research indicates that more years in school provides growth and higher income. However, it could be argued that this is only possible if the education has quality. According to Sayed, the literate, educated population is simply not poor (Maile, 2008, pp.58-59).

Two of the teachers in my research said that they occasionally experience children coming to school hungry, because their parents can't afford to buy them food (See chapter 5.1.1). According to another teacher, the government are planning a feeding program, but knows that improvements like that are expensive. To feed 200 children each day, at one school, will cost a lot of money, money the government don't have. So according to the teacher, someone has to come and help with keeping the program going (See chapter 5.1.1). This indicates that the teacher don't trust that the government have the finances to provide one meal a day to all children in school, without the help of others. Because Sierra Leone is a country dependent on international aid, is it fair to assume that the "someone" is international aid givers and NGOs. According to Sayed, the global agenda and international aid often constrains the poor countries to act as sovereign states. However, the nation state still have to play an active role and use its mandate and power to enable policies. Sayed argues that poverty reduction is a matter of public-policy choice and intervention that cannot be met by charity (Maile, 2008, pp.63-65). During my research, the teachers talked very little about what the government could or should do, which gave the impression that they don't rely on the government alone to get things done. What was mentioned was that the government should remove all school fees, and that they should create a corruption free education system. One of the teachers said that if the school did well, maybe NGOs or the government would notice them and provide aid. However, when talking about improvements, outside help was almost always mentioned (See chapter 5.2.5). This assumption also came from a teacher who stated that they don't depend on governmental support, and therefore looks out for help from any NGOs or agents that are willing to help (See chapter 5.1.1). Sayed argues that even if the country have constrains, it is important that the country doesn't only rely on other actors (Maile, 2008, pp.63-65).

The numbers from The World Bank, even though they are 10 years old, indicate that the literacy rate in Sierra Leone is very low. According to earlier research, it takes 6 years in school in order to become literate in Sierra Leone. It is fair to say that literacy skills are important, as it provides a foundation to learn other skills, as well as being more functional in society. Based on this, there should be a focus on keeping children in school for at least 6 years, especially since the average years of schooling is 2 to 4 years. Even if the teachers may have more confidence in outside actors, than the government, it is important that they don't only rely on outside help.

6.1.3 Challenges

There are several challenges connected with education and poverty reduction and in Sierra Leone, many of them are connected to the school fees. It is also a problem that some don't know the benefits of education. In the rural areas, there is a lack of schools, and many find it difficult to attend because of the travel. Sierra Leone is still effected by the civil war, and struggles with corruption, which have impacted the education system. In addition, the country relies on donations and support from others, support which is often given with conditions. In this subchapter I will discuss all of these challenges, in addition to challenges connected with child labour.

As a part of the SDG no.4, a target is to ensure that men and women, have equal access to affordable quality education, including university (See chapter 2.2). One of the things that the government did in order to secure education for more children, was implementing the Free Primary Education Policy in 2001, which entailed 6 years of free basic education. I see this as an initiative for improvement, but free education has caused high enrolment rates, which has resulted in unqualified teachers, inadequate classrooms and a lack of teaching materials (Collier, 2016, pp.76-78).

During my fieldwork, one of the teachers confirmed that they experience more children in school and said it was a result of the Free Primary Education Policy. According to the teacher, people will come for anything that is free (See chapter 5.1.1). All the participants addressed the Free Primary Education Policy, and they all agreed that despite primary education being free, not everyone have the opportunity to attend school. The first 6 years in school are free, but according to some of the participants, all years in school should be free. They argue that many students

drop out of school because their parents can't afford to pay for further education when they finish the first 6 years (See chapter 5.1.2). Despite the rising enrolment rate, Colliers research indicate that the percentage of students moving on to a higher lever get smaller and smaller the higher the educational ladder. The World Bank Report (2006) stated that 70 percent of primary school attendants moved to JSS, and only 50 percent of the JSS graduates moved on to SSS (Collier, 2016, pp.49-50). This can indicate that parents don't have the money to pay the school fees and/or that something is wrong in the educational system.

Agreeing with the teachers is the participants in Matsumoto's field study in Sierra Leone. According to them, the access to education have increased since the war, but it is only available for those who can afford it (Paulson, 2011, pp.130-131). Supporting these statements are numbers from UNICEF. According to UNICEF, despite The Free Primary Education Policy, there are hidden fees at all the educational levels, including primary. They have estimated fees as high as 39,14 USD a year at primary level (Paulson, 2011, p.130). This indicate that the free education is not actually free. As I stated in chapter 2, Sierra Leone is nr 181 on the HDI (See chapter 2.1.6), and one teacher mentioned that Sierra Leone is at the bottom of the HDI during the interview, showing knowledge about how poor the country is (See chapter 5.1.2). The teacher argued that being so low on the HDI illustrates that people are poor and cannot afford sending their children to school. According to the teacher, education in Sierra Leone is highly connected with the challenges connected to school fees, and people are in need of support (See chapter 5.1.2).

If people can't afford to continue their education after 6 years, there is little chance of them pursuing a university degree. The goal is affordable education, and based on how poor Sierra Leone is, I believe that affordable education is free education. Since one of the teachers said that the reason for the high enrolment rates are that people come for everything that is free, it is fair to assume that more people would get an education if it was entirely free of charge. According to Sayed, by abolishing school fees, there would be an increase in educational attainment. Educational attainment could be an important focus, because according to The World Bank, there is a connection between educational attainment and poverty in Sierra Leone. More than 70 percent of the households where the head of the family have no education live below the poverty line (Maile, 2008, pp.59-62). This is a very high number, and the numbers suggest that without education, there is a higher risk of staying in the poverty cycle. This again indicates that

in order to help people out of poverty, education has to be available. As stated in chapter 5.2.1, some of the teachers wanted people and organisations to come and help them with providing scholarship for the children, so they are able to attend school (See chapter 5.2.1). This underlines the problems connected to school fees.

However, school fees are not the only problem linked to education. According to Sayed, many don't have access to school because there is no schools located where they live, and the travel to school is difficult (Maile, 2008, pp.59-60). When discussing free education, one of the teacher mentioned that a few years ago, the school received bicycles for the students that lived far away. By providing bicycles, it became easier for the students to travel to school. In addition, it also served as a motivation for the students (See chapter 5.1.2). In other cases, there are schools available, but the locals don't see the need to attend (Maile, 2008, pp.59-60). When people don't see the value of education, it is understandable why they don't send their children to school. This indicates that there is a need to show people the benefits of education.

The government in Sierra Leone have improved since the civil war, but corruption is still a challenge. Kargbo argues that corruption is more likely to happened in weak institutions, and therefore it is important to make weak institutions stronger (Kargbo, 2014, pp.12-13). According to one of the teachers, the educational system in Sierra Leone is only based on money and bribes, and those who can afford it pay for good grades. The teacher argues that the government don't focus on the teaching being correct and good, but only on receiving money (See chapter 5.1.1). One of the participants in Matsumoto's research said that he failed to pass the WASSCE and was therefore not able to get the right qualification to work as a teacher. He explained that one option was to bribe a teacher in order to pass, but this was not an option he could afford (Paulson, 2011, pp.130-131). This can be an example of the problem the teacher I interviewed tried to explain (See chapter 5.1.1), and it indicates that if you have money, you are able to pay your way through school. This suggests that there are corruption taking place, and to me, this creates another problem. If it is possible to pay for the right education to become a teacher, when not being able to pass the exams, there is a risk there will be teachers with the right qualifications on papers, who actually are unqualified for the job. This makes it possible for unqualified teachers to work as qualified teachers. According to the teacher, the current educational system is not good and is in need of a change. The educational system has to be free and fair, where it is not possible to buy your grades (See chapter 5.1.1). I will not discuss how Sierra Leone can improve

their government, but it is important to question the current educational system. For education to be a tool in poverty reduction, the educational system has to work. If the system allows people to buy qualifications, it is in my opinion reason to consider that the system doesn't work.

Sierra Leone is highly dependent on external support, and 40 percent of governmental budgets comes from external support. By receiving support from others, there is often given conditions with the donation, and a large amount of the donations goes towards education, which can be explained by the international community's desire to reach the UN's educational goals (Paulson, 2011, p.127). According to Kargbo, Sierra Leone is highly dependent on external aid and goodwill. He argues that the recourses must be translated into job creation (Kargbo, 2014, p.168). When looking at both my fieldwork in chapter 5, and Matsumoto's research in chapter 3, many of the participants stated that it's hard to acquire a job, and they don't see any jobs being created. Therefore it is fair to profess that there has to be a focus on creating jobs, in order to for people to understand that getting an education has a purpose. This again underlines the importance of doing something with the educational system, to avoid people buying education and the right credentials. If jobs are created, people need to have the right qualifications for those jobs so they are able to do the work properly. As Kargbo stated, donations has to be used to create jobs. According to one of the teachers, it could be possible to create jobs by using local resources, like for example farming (See chapter 5.1.3).

Sierra Leone faces many challenges, but according to Kargbo, one of the biggest ones are child labour. Children that work are more likely to end up in early marriage, teenage pregnancy, rape and have health problems. It contributes to underdevelopment and keeps people in the poverty cycle (Kargbo, 2014, pp.179-180). My research did not go into the subject of child labour, still, it is an important aspect of the education and poverty discourse in Sierra Leone. Kargbo's research indicate that making more children attend school, and make them stop working, will help them develop and hopefully risen the chance of them getting out of the poverty cycle. Kargbo argues that the high number of children in labour can be connected to the high dropout numbers. If we look at figure 2.3 and 2.4 in chapter 2, they illustrate how many children attend school and how many children who works (See chapter 2.3.2). The numbers indicate that from 2000 to 2010, more children are only attending school, and less children are only working. The number of children doing both or neither are approximately the same (UNESCO, 2015, pp.98-118).

UNESCO agrees with Kargbo that educational outcomes can be improved, and poverty reduced, by reducing children in labour (UNESCO, 2015, p.97). This indicates that it is important to get children to attend school, however, the numbers does not say anything about dropout numbers or how long the children stay in school. To make children attend school and make the enrolment rates higher have been a focal point in Sierra Leone, and when you look at the numbers, they indicate that more children attend school now than before. The numbers does not say anything about the quality of education. If you look at the numbers of students passing the public exams, they get lower for each level of education. According to Collier, the high numbers of student failing the public exams is a confirmation of the low quality of education in Sierra Leone (Paulson, 2011, p.131). If this is correct, it is reasonable to assume that the quality of education has to be improved in order for it to be a useful tool in poverty reduction. I will discuss quality of education in the next part of this chapter.

Here we have seen some of the challenges Sierra Leone struggles with, which has an impact on poverty reduction. Both earlier research and my research indicates that there are challenges connected to school fees. It is understandable that children can't attend school when their parents are unable to pay the school fees. In addition to school fees, there is also a concern regarding people not knowing the benefits of education and therefore don't having education as a priority. This suggest that it is important to teach people about the value of education, like for example that education leads to more job opportunities. However, when there is a lack of jobs, and no job creation, it could be difficult to make people understand the value. In some areas of Sierra Leone, there are not many schools, and the travel from home is difficult. This indicate that there has to be more schools available, so more children are able to attend school. According to earlier research and one teacher in my research, Sierra Leone still struggles with a corrupted education system. The opportunity to buy examinations results and the right credentials, opens up for several problems. Those with money can buy their way through school, while the poor are lucky if they are able to pay the school fees. With the possibility to buy credentials, there is a risk of having people with the right credentials who are not fit for their job. Since Sierra Leone are dependent on international aid, they have to follow the constrictions that are given with it. Since there are some challenges in the education system, it could be positive that the government are bound to some constrictions. Lastly, I discussed some of the challenges connected with child labour. According to earlier research, by securing education for more children, less children are

in labour. When children are working, they are less likely to get out of poverty and more likely to end up in marriage and teenage-pregnancy. Both researchers and teachers have meanings about the challenges in Sierra Leone. In my opinion, these challenges are things that has to be addressed in order for education to have an important role in poverty reduction.

6.2 Quality Education

According to Mihai, poverty reduction entails ensuring access to quality education (Mihai, 2014, p.856). To guarantee that education can lead to poverty reduction is not that easy, nevertheless I will try to cover some aspects of quality education and how it can help in poverty reduction. As mentioned in chapter 6.1.3, Collier stated that the high numbers of student failing the public exams is a confirmation of the low quality of education in Sierra Leone (Paulson, 2011, p.131). If this is correct, it is reasonable to assume that the quality of education has an impact on what role education have in poverty reduction, and that it needs to be improved in order to be a useful tool. According to Collier, the education sector was hit hard by the civil war, resulting in a lack of teaching materials, a broken infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms and a shortage of teachers. In the aftermath, the Free Primary Education Policy created at sudden and huge expansion of the education system (Collier, 2016, pp.76-78). The SDG goal number four aims to "ensure that all boys and girls complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes" (See chapter 2.2).

Quality education have received allot of attention in the poverty discourse, and as we have seen in the previous chapters (See chapter 2 and 3), what quality education entails can be several things. There are different views on what quality is and what kind of education that is needed on order to reach the desired learning outcomes. All of the teachers in my research agreed that there are several things that needs to be improved in order to provide quality education (See chapter 5.2). What quality of education entails can, as stated before, be many things, and Bergmann has divided it into four types of educational quality. When discussing quality of education, it can be useful using Bergman's categorization, *value*, *output*, *process* and *input*, and I have therefore chosen to use these in my discussion. I will put earlier research, and my research in the context of Bergmann's categorization.

The first type of quality education is *value* quality, the value is the quality of the overall

goals and objectives of education. For example, one goal can be to make sure every child have the opportunity to attend school, which would be equal to aim for high enrolment rates (Bergmann, 1996, p.581). According to Colliers research on educational practices and policies in Sierra Leone, as well as numbers from EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015, the enrolment rate in Sierra Leone have increased after the civil war (UNESCO, 2015, p.98). The enrolment rates illustrates that more children are attending school, which can be a result of the Free Primary Education Policy. This can suggest that the education is improving and that more people are getting educated. However, the numbers do not say anything about the quality of the education. According to Collier, the focus need to include quality education, not only high enrolment rates. High enrolment rates does not equal quality education, and since the Free Primary Education Policy was introduced it has put pressure on the education system. There have been a shortage of things that can have an effect on the education quality like, qualified teachers, classrooms and teaching materials (Collier, 2016, pp.76-78).

The second category is *output*, which can be student achievement, for example how the students perform on national exams (Bergmann, 1996, p.586). In Sierra Leone, you have to pass a public exam in order to reach the next level, for example, to move from primary school to JSS you have to pass the NPSE (Kargbo, 2014, pp.193-194). All the teachers in my research addressed these exams and when asked about what quality education was, one of the teachers responded that quality education was getting good results on the public exams. This indicates that the quality of education can be measured on the result of the public exams. When talking about improvement, several of the teachers talked about improving the examination results. One wanted the school to be the best and having the highest score, and worked towards that goal. Another teacher believed that if they got an excellent result on the NPSE, the government or organizations would notice the school and provide them with aid (See chapter 5.2.5). This indicate that they see the public exams as having a powerful effect. The focus on the exams could also be explained by the fact that the students have to pass them in order to move on. This indicate that they want the students to move on to the next level of education, which is supported by the teachers' statements about wanting the students to grow (See chapter 5.4.3). Despite wanting high examination results, research shows that there is a high number of failures at public exams, which according to Matsumoto are a critical issue in the educational system (Paulson, 2011, p.131).

Input, which is the third category, can be human resources, material resources and time (Bergmann, 1996, pp.586-587). Research indicates that different measures are required to ensure quality education, and the need for qualified teachers is receiving a lot of attention. After the civil war, many teachers fled to other countries, and with the Free Primary Education Policy there became shortage in qualified teachers. The government had to hire unqualified teachers in order to cope with the high enrolment rates (Collier, 2016, pp.76-78). According to one of the teachers, the government is now trying to educate more teachers in order to improve education. The government wishes to upgrade teachers and I got the impression that the teachers wanted to upgrade themselves (See chapter 5.2.4). The teachers was also aware that it is important to be qualified for the job, however, what they consider as qualified to teach may not be unanimous (See chapter 5.2.4). Collier argues that qualified teachers are imperative, since they are the one responsible for providing skills and knowledge to the children (Collier, 2016, p.78). According to one of the teachers, you have to be qualified because when you teach, you are teaching someone who knows nothing/little about the subject. In order to become qualified, you have to go to college and train as a teacher, so when you go to teach in the classroom you will be perfect. One of the teachers agreed that teachers need the right level of education, while another put weight on qualified teachers being those who use the syllables (See chapter 5.2.4).

In order to be able to teach in Sierra Leone you need to have the right qualification. For each level of school more education is required. If you teach at a higher level than you are educated for, you are seen as unqualified (Collier, 2016, p.51). When Sierra Leone have standards for what it means to be qualified to teach, it could be argued that the government should be focusing on educating teachers in order to provide quality. However, because of the high enrolment rates, it could be difficult to educate teachers in the same speed. As I stated earlier (See chapter 6.1.3), in order to get qualified teacher, it is necessary to end the opportunity to buy the right qualifications. When looking at statistic on qualified teachers, it is clear that the percentage of qualified teacher never have been high, which can indicate that it has not been a priority to educate teachers (Collier, 2016, p.50). According to one of the teachers in my research, the government wishes to educate more teachers (See chapter 5.2.4), so perhaps the percentage will increase with time. But based on what the teachers have stated about the government's effort, the increase is questionable. Four out of the five teachers did not see any afford from the government in educating teachers or experienced any opportunities for staff

development in their current jobs. One of the teachers said that the headmaster and senior teachers attend workshops in the big cities, and when they return, they pass on what they have learned to the rest of the staff (See chapter 5.2.4).

Despite being important, qualified teachers alone can't provide quality education. According to Hardman et al., there is not a lot teachers are able to do to change their practices if the material conditions are poor in terms of availability of teaching and learning resources, and the classrooms are overcrowded (Hardman et.al, 2011, p.675). Colliers research indicated that teachers morale was low, which could be because of salaries and conditions of service (Collier, 2016, pp.62-66). During my fieldwork, some of the teachers wanted to have more "encouragement" and if they were to receive that, they would do more. Based on how they answered, I got the impression that encouragement meant more money/higher salaries. For example, when asked if they had the support they need, the answers was mostly about the lack of money (See chapter 5.2.1). At the same time, one teacher acknowledged that the salary level was good at the school compared to teachers with the same education, who worked at other schools (See chapter 5.1.3). This indicates that the salary levels are different from to school to school. Despite the fact that teacher earn more than others with the same profession, the teacher still wishes to earn more, which among other things, can indicate that the salary level is low.

Since the teachers in my research came from two schools, from different areas and socio-demographics, it was expected that they need different things. But participants from both school mentioned money as the first thing when asked what the school needed. Some of them didn't specify what the school needed, but just answered that the school need more money. One of the teachers said that, in addition to financial support, the school was in high need of furniture. According to another teacher, the school environment has to be conducive for the children, and in order to improve education, the first thing that needs to be taken care of is the building and the accommodation for the children (See chapter 5.2.1). Sayed argued that research finds no link between resources and improving the quality of education. Nevertheless, he also argued that when schools don't have basic school supplies or facilities like toilet, resources does matter a lot (Maile, 2008, pp.62-63). In Colliers research 70 percent of the school administrators complained about the shortage of teaching and learning material, computers and other things necessary to support the teaching instruction they are given (Collier, 2016, pp.62-66). None of the teachers in my research said that they needed learning material, they were more focused on money and

school facilities (See Chapter 5.2.1). They wanted help with learning computer, and it is reasonable to assume that they don't have the skills or resources to teach computer at this point in time.

The next category is *process*, which can be the teaching/learning interaction in the classroom, and curriculum (Bergmann, 1996, pp.586-587). According to Collier, high enrolment numbers has been a factor in causing overcrowded classrooms, and therefore the government has set a limit on how many students each class can have (Collier, 2016, p.50). However, according to one of the teachers in my research, there is no limit given by the government, and it is up to the teacher to use their own initiative to decide how many children that should be in each class (See chapter 5.2.3). Collier states that it's debateable what the student- teacher ratio should be, but it's reasonable to believe that there should not be too many children in each class (Collier, 2016, p.77). The teachers I interviewed agreed that with the rising number of children attending school, the classrooms are often overcrowded, and stated that it has an effect on the learning outcomes. With overcrowded classrooms, the students can't concentrate, and the teacher will not be able to focus on each child (See chapter 5.2.3). According to Collier it is important to reduce the number of students per teacher in order for the teacher to focus on each student, and avoid work overload (Collier, 2016, p.78). According to Hardman et al., overcrowded classrooms obstruct teachers in changing their teaching practice, which indicates that by having too many children in each class, the teachers are not able to do much (Hardman et.al, 2011, p.675).

According to Collier, the curriculum in Sierra Leone has not been improved since before the war, and the current curriculum is not relevant for the daily lives of the people in Sierra Leone (Paulson, 2011, p.130). In Colliers research, the number of teachers who considered the curriculum to meet the needs of the country was low, only 60 percent of the senior school teachers, and none of the primary school teachers agreed (Collier, 2016, pp.68-69). In my fieldwork on the other hand, all of the teachers in both schools answered that the curriculum was relevant for Sierra Leone (See chapter 5.2.2). There could be several reasons for the discrepancy, and one could be that I had very few participants in my fieldwork, limited to one part of the country, while Collier interviewed teachers from all over the country. I do not think that few participants make my research less important or right, nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that it could be a weakness. Despite the low numbers of agreeing teachers in Colliers study, all of the primary school administrators and 75 percent of secondary school

administrators agreed that the school curriculum meet the needs of the country. According to Collier, a reason for the different results between the teachers and the school administrators, could be that many of the teachers could be unqualified and may not understand the policies (Collier, 2016, pp.62-66). This does not mean that the teachers in my research are more qualified, just because they agree with the curriculum. There could be various other reasons for them to agree or disagree with the curricular settings. Nevertheless, Colliers research underlines the importance of qualified teachers. In Matsumoto's research the adults saw education as an instrument for development, but at the same time they considered the current curriculum as irrelevant for Sierra Leone. The adolescents on the other hand, consider the curriculum to be relevant and useful, and one of them said that for example math could be practical to know in the trading business (Paulson, 2011, pp.132-133).

Even though all the teachers in my fieldwork agreed that the curriculum was right for Sierra Leone, some of the teachers saw it as important to learn computer. When addressing the curriculum, as seen in chapter 5.2.2, the lack of technological skills were mentioned by participants from both schools. They acknowledged that technology and computer competence is necessary to make education better. One of the teachers said that "you people" have to come and teach them, which indicates that they don't have the necessary technological skills to teach to the children computer, and wants outside assistance (See chapter 5.2.2). The statements indicate that they want to learn computer, so they are able to teach it to the students. By wanting outside help, I got the impression that they don't receive a great deal of computer training. On the other hand, this can also be linked to the educational level of the teachers. It can also be because of the poverty level in the country, and that computers are not very common. According to Collier, education needs to be development orientated, which entails being open to customize the education to the needs of the country. He argues that it is imperative to find the country's human resource development priorities and labour market needs, so that the curriculum can be based on the skills needed in the labour market. By adapting education to the skills needed for labour, the distance between demand and supply gets smaller, and it is possible to create economic profit (Collier, 2016, pp.81-83). I will not take the curriculum discussion any further, but it is important to mention that curriculum can be a resource to future economic profit. It is fair to assume that economic profit would reduce poverty in Sierra Leone.

In addition to curriculum, the *process* value is also about classroom interaction.

According to Hardman, the quality of education is equally important as the access to education, and he argues that there has to be a focus on pedagogy (Hardman et al, 2011, p.669). Pedagogy is not the focus of this thesis, however, according to the 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report, quality education is linked to pedagogical processes in the classroom (Hardman et al, 2011, pp.669-670). I therefore see it as an aspect that has to be included in the discussion. When asked about how the children learn best, four of the five teachers I interviewed, answered that the children learn best when they use a child centred teaching technique. They focused on working with the child one on one, and letting the children participate in the teaching process (See chapter 5.2.3). By using this technique, the teachers argued that they can focus more on each child, and adapt the teaching to the children's level of understanding. One of them said that by dividing the children into three categories based on how fast they learn, the teacher can use different approaches to help them understand. The teacher's goal is to get 65 percent of the children to understand the subject before moving on to the next subject (See chapter 5.2.3). It's debatable if 65 percent is a good enough goal to have before moving on, but at least this indicates that the teacher are aware of different learning techniques. However, as Hardman acknowledges it is hard to change teaching practise in bad learning environments (Hardman et.al, 2011, p.675). It is hard to focus on each child when the classrooms are overcrowded, since there are too many children, as one teacher pointed out. With many children in the classroom it's hard for the children to concentrate, and they will struggle to participate and learn (See chapter 5.2.3). According to earlier research and my research, overcrowded classrooms are normal in Sierra Leone (See chapter 2 and 3). Therefore it's reasonable to question how implementable the child centred teaching technique is, and how much it is currently being used.

Here I have discussed different aspects on quality of education by using Bergmann's categorization. When looking at the enrolment rate in Sierra Leone, the numbers indicate that more children are enrolled in school, but the numbers don't say anything about the quality of education. As pointed out in chapter 3 and 5, quality of education is important for education to have an impact on poverty reduction. Quality can be measured in results, which also was evident in my research, where some of the teachers answered that good education was good results on the public exams. When discussing the curriculum, it is hard to conclude if the curriculum is good or not. However, based on research, the curriculum should be adapted so it can meet the needs of the country. In addition to having the right curriculum, research indicates that teachers

must be qualified, especially since they are the one responsible for providing skills and knowledge to the children. Sierra Leone struggles with a large number of unqualified teachers, which is a problem that has to be addressed. Qualified teachers alone can't provide quality education, and it is also important to have the right teaching and learning resources. Another problem is overcrowded classrooms, which hinders the teachers to use the child centred teaching technique. By reducing the number of children in each class, it is fair to assume that the learning outcome would improve. These are all things that influences on the quality of education. It is reasonable to assume that in order to reduce poverty in Sierra Leone, it is necessary to aim at quality education and the best possible learning outcomes.

6.3 Gender Equality

To eliminate gender disparity and ensure equal access to all levels of education is one of the SDG targets (See chapter. 2.2). Here I will look at why it is imperative to ensure that women and ensuring them access to education are a priority in Sierra Leone. Female children are in the group of those who struggle the most to access school and climb the education ladder. According to The World Bank, Sierra Leone has to focus on reducing gender disparity in JSS and SSS (The World Bank, 2007, pp.9-10). Therefore it is reasonable to assume that in order to reduce gender disparity, the female children has to have a high priority.

In some parts of Sierra Leone the school fees at JSS are abolished for girls, however, The World Bank argue that it should be extended to the whole country (The World Bank, 2007, pp.9-10). The fact that the government have abolished some of the fees for girls, indicate that they have a focus on educating women. That the school fees are not abolished for women in the whole country, or at all levels of education, I assume can be in connection with the government's limited resources. According to one of the teachers, the goal with educating women, is to make them understand that they have the same rights and opportunities as men. Education makes people independent, and they want women to become independent. Another teacher stated that in order to eradicate poverty by 2030, they need to motivate girls to learn (See chapter 5.3).

The SDGs aim for equal access to education for boys and girls, but according to research, social customs and traditions have made education a lower priority in Sierra Leone. Because of culture, have boys been more preferred to attend school then girls (Kargbo, 2014, pp.180-181). If

parents don't have the money to send all their children to school, they may choose to send the boys, since they are more preferred to attend school. By abolishing the school fees for girls, it may open up for parents letting more girls attend school. Free education for all should be the overall goal, however, based on the little resources the government have, it might be an important initiative to focus on the girls in order to create equal opportunities. According to one of the teachers, many people don't know the benefits of education, and especially some of the ethnic groups believe that education is only for boys. The teacher blamed their uneducated forefathers for the people of Sierra Leone not knowing the benefits of education. But on a positive note, it seems that gender equality are receiving more attention. Four out of the five teachers mentioned the importance of educating women, referring to the female children as "the girl child". One of the teachers said that women always have problems in the world (See chapter 5.3), which can be interpreted as women having a history of being viewed as less important than men. The teachers also said that educating girls is a priority in Sierra Leone, and by educating them, less girls will get married young (See chapter 5.3).

Early marriage is common in African countries according to one of the teachers, who emphasised the importance of educating girls, in the belief that education will to keep them away from early marriage (See chapter 5.3). According to Sayed, research indicates that with increased levels of education, there is a rise in age of marriage, and at the same time a decrease in fertility rates (Maile, 2008, pp.58-59). This indicate that education have a positive effect on society. Supporting Sayed's statement is one of the teachers, who said that one of the biggest challenges with eradicating poverty in Sierra Leone relates to teenage-pregnancy and poverty (See chapter 5.3). Educating both genders is important, and one of the teachers pointed out that both girls and boys need to be taught about teenage-pregnancy in order to avoid it. The teacher explains that many young women are being used by older men. The men buy the women things, like for example food and clothes, and after a while introduces them to a sexual relationship (See chapter 5.3). It is fair to assume that these relationships expose girls to a higher risk of early marriage, abuse and pregnancy, factors that drive them away from education. There are many problems connected with this, and earlier research indicates that children who enter early marriage, are victims of rape, or go through teenage-pregnancy are more likely to stay in the poverty cycle (Kargbo, 2014, pp.179-180). If education can help women avoid this and help them get out of the poverty cycle, it is reasonable to assume that there should be a focus on securing education for

women.

As I addressed when discussing literacy, the average years of schooling is 2 for women and 4 for men (The World Bank, 2007, pp.24-25). Although the numbers are low, they indicate that on the average, men have 2 more years of education than women. The literacy rate varies greatly by gender, age and location, but the literacy rate in 2 years of education is 6 percent, while 4 years of education is 21 percent (The World Bank, 2007, pp.24-25). This indicates that more men than women are literate in Sierra Leone.

In this part I have discussed gender equality in Sierra Leone. According to The World Bank, the government in Sierra Leone are providing free education to girls in some parts of the country. It is reasonable to assume that the reason for it not being provided to girls all over the country, is based on economic resources. However, it illustrates that the government has a focus on educating women, which according to earlier research is important. According to prior studies, girls are less likely to enter early marriage, become victims of rape, go through teenage-pregnancy, and stay in the poverty cycle if they get education. Based on this, it is imperative to secure education for women in Sierra Leone, in order to higher the likelihood of breaking out of the poverty cycle.

6.4 The Role of the Teacher

The teachers are the ones who interact with the children on a daily basis, and are responsible for teaching them, and providing them with the best possible learning outcome. According to Collier, that is why it is important to have qualified teacher to do the job (Collier, 2016, p.78). Since there is put much emphasis on the important job of the teachers and the role they have, it could be interesting to see how they perceive themselves in the education and poverty discourse. It is reasonable to assume that the teachers should be involved in the process of creating quality education, since they are the ones working with the children. Through my fieldwork I tried to uncover why the teachers chose the profession, how they perceived it, and what quality education was for them. In addition, I tried to get their views on poverty reduction.

The teachers I interviewed had different reasons for choosing the teaching profession (See chapter 5.4.1). One of them said that they wanted to see the children become someone in society, and that the love for the children was the reason for choosing the job (See chapter 5.4.2).

Another teacher said that the teaching job was chosen by someone else. Even though the teacher didn't chose the job, the teacher stated that it was a good choice and did not wish to change occupation. According to the teacher, the teaching profession is based on providing people with knowledge and help them become educated (See chapter 5.4.1). Three of the teachers did not desire to become teachers, but because of money they did not have a choice. As stated in chapter 5.4.1, two of the three teachers wanted to become lawyers, while one wanted to become a police officer. They all stated that their choice was driven by finance, and that teaching was only temporary before moving on to their desired jobs (See chapter 5.4.1). This indicate that there are other jobs available, but because they don't have the money, they cannot afford to pursue the desired education. This can be seen in connection with the issues linked to school fees, which was discussed in chapter 6.1.3 (See chapter 6.1.3). This suggest that there are more teachers who have chosen to become teachers only because they need the income. Based on the poverty level in the country, it is in my opinion understandable that people take the job opportunities they get.

One of the teachers said that teaching was a choice made based on survival. Considering what the other teachers said about choosing to teach because of finance, it is reasonable to assume that they also chose it in order to survive. I question if this can result in a lack of enthusiasm to improve their skills in this profession. According to the school administrators in Collier's research, Sierra Leone has a teacher shortage in both primary and secondary school (See chapter 3.2). Although the research is a few years old, it indicates that the lack of teachers have made it is easier to get a teaching job. According to one of the teachers, the teaching field is the easiest field to get a job, but recently it has gotten more difficult to get jobs there as well (See chapter 5.1.3). Earlier research indicates that the classrooms are overcrowded, which suggest that it is necessary to hire more teachers (Collier, 2016, p.50). At the same time, earlier research shows that Sierra Leone struggles with a high number of unqualified teachers (Collier, 2016, pp.51-52). If it is harder to get teaching jobs like the teacher stated, it is possible to speculate if they are working on hiring qualified teachers. However, it could also be that the government don't have the resources to hire more teachers.

Despite the fact that only one of the teachers became a teacher out of a desire to get into the field, all the teachers liked their job (See chapter 5.4.1). As can be seen in chapter 5, all the teachers, except one, talked about their passion and dreams for the children (See chapter 5). The not mentioning of the children, gave me the impression that the teacher was not too passionate

about the job. There could be several reasons for this, but the teacher did state that it was only a temporary job in order to make money (See chapter 5.4.1). In Sierra Leone, the teacher's salaries are low, however, they have the highest of civil servants in the country, including police officers (Paulson, 2011, p.132). Based on the "high" salary level, it's fair to assume that money was the teacher's reason for starting teaching, but the teachers need to be educated, and motivated, because of the importance of this profession. Some of the teachers wants to pursue other things in the future, which can indicate that the teaching profession is not an easy job.

All of the teachers agreed that teaching was a respected occupation (See chapter 5.4.2). They mentioned that people refer to them as Mr. /Mrs. rather than using their first name, and they all perceived that as a sign of respect (See chapter 5.4.2). The fact that teachers are one of the highest paid professions in the country, indicates that it is an important and respected occupation.

As stated above, all the teachers liked their job. One of the teachers said that teaching is not only positive for the students, but it also makes the teachers more knowledgeable (See chapter 5.4.2). Every day the teacher learns something from the students, and the teacher appreciated that the students could teach them as well. Another teacher agreed with this, and stated that the teaching profession was helpful in gaining knowledge and for personal development (See chapter 5.4.2). The teacher had worked as a teacher for several years before attending teacher's college. The teacher learned much trough working and found the experience useful in college, and therefore the teacher found college to be easy (See chapter 5.4.2).

To be a teacher entails more than teaching the curriculum to the students. According to one of the teachers, they have a responsibility to be role models and guidance counsellors for the children. The teacher stated that it is important to guide the students and help them with any problems they may have, by giving them good advice, for example about boys (See chapter 5.4.2). To give advice about non-related school issues indicate that the teachers have a bigger role than only teaching the students the curriculum. This indicates that the teachers have a great impact on how the students turn out to be in society. One of the teacher's goal with teaching was to educate children, so they would grow to become important in society, where they know that they are important (See chapter 5.4.3). The teacher used the term important, but I interpret what the teacher said as wanting to educate children to become resourceful and useful. Making them feel like they have a useful and important role in society. In addition to give advice and help the

students with personal issues, they also help the students with food. According to two of the teachers, many of the children come to school hungry and without food. Sometimes the teachers therefore help them with money, so they can go buy food (See chapter 5.1.1). This indicates that the teachers have an interest in the welfare of the children.

All of the teachers saw education and the teaching profession as important (See chapter 5.4.3), and one of the teachers stated that education was the key to success (See chapter 5.1.3). When asked about their role as teachers, the most common answer was that their most important role was to educate the children. Through education, the children will be able to reach their own goals in life (See chapter 5.4.3). This suggests that the teacher is aware of their role in providing children with essential knowledge which will help them to evolve, and that they have an impact on who they will become. The teachers saw it as their role to educate the children the best way possible, which can explain why quality education is important to them. Like discussed in chapter 6.3, the likelihood of girls entering early marriage, gets smaller if they pursue education. One of the teachers argued that avoiding early marriage is one of the benefits of education, and stresses the importance of educating girls in Sierra Leone. The teacher wants girls to know that they have the same rights as men (See chapter 5.3). This indicates that teachers have a role in creating gender equality, through educating women.

As addressed in chapter 5, financial support appeared to be important to the teachers (See chapter 5). The teachers want money, which can indicate that they desire to use the money to improve the quality of education. One of the teachers said that the school might receive financial support if they performed well on the national exams, and the national exams were clearly important to them. This indicates that they work towards good results in order to secure aid and support for the school. This can imply that the teachers take responsibility for making quality education be possible. Only one of the participants mentioned poverty reduction before I addressed the issue. This indicates to me that the connection between education and poverty reduction is not obvious to most of them. However, when discussing poverty, many of them had opinions about poverty in Sierra Leone. For example, they all addressed the problems connected with school fees and that parents could not afford to pay for their children's education (See chapter 5.1.2). They also perceived education as a means to get more job opportunities and higher salaries, but at the same time they acknowledged that there are very few job opportunities in Sierra Leone (See chapter 5.1.3). All the teachers had opinions about what was important in

order to reduce poverty, and one teacher said that education should be free from start to end, so that everyone gets the opportunity to acquire an education (See chapter 5.1.4). According to another teacher, for poverty reduction to be possible, the focus has to be on the children. The teacher argued that by using the child centred teaching technique, the child will easier understand and have a personal development (See chapter 5.1.4). As said before, one of them argued that education leads to employment, and employment brings people out of poverty (See chapter 5.1.4). Another teacher argued that formal education and basic literacy skills are important to reduce poverty. With literary skills, it's easier to learn other things necessary in society (See chapter 5.1.4).

When looking at how the teachers perceive their role in the education and poverty discourse, it is important to address what they responded throughout the interviews. What they said can give an indication of their perceptions and how they see their role as teachers. Here I have discussed what the teachers said about the teaching profession, their role and their goals with teaching. All the teachers were satisfied with their job, and liked the teaching profession. Three of the teachers did not initially desire to become teachers, but chose it because of money. Many can't afford to pay for college and the right education, and therefore are unable to get their desired jobs. However, the teachers were positive they would afford it in the future. All the teachers took pride in their profession, and were pleased with the fact that it gave them respect in the community. When asked why they liked their job, four out of five teachers stated that they liked to teach because of the children. It gave me the impression that they genuinely cared about the children. They saw their role as important, and stated that their main role is to educate the children in the best possible way. They want the children to grow and become independent people, with the ability to accomplish their own goals. Based on what they said about how education can help reduce poverty, I got the impression that they have some idea about how education could be a factor in reducing poverty. Though, I did not get the impression that they saw themselves as important resources in that process. The answers indicate that the teachers have a clear opinion of what quality education is, and why. This suggests that they could be a good resource in securing quality education. Based on the teachers' statements, it is fair to assume that the role of the teacher is securing quality education for the children. It also entails helping them to become people with a purpose in society. The fact that they help children with food, and advise them on personal issues, gives the teacher an important role in society.

7. Conclusion

The goal in this thesis has been to figure out what role education can have in reducing poverty in Sierra Leone. The proposition was that education has a role, and through looking at earlier research and conducting fieldwork in Sierra Leone, I have tried to find what that role may involve. In this final chapter I will present a summary of my findings on the central questions to this thesis:

- 1. What is quality education?*
- 2. What is the teacher's role in the poverty reduction process?*
- 3. What role does education have in reducing poverty in Sierra Leone?*

I will end this thesis with a final conclusion and further thoughts on the potential role education could have in Sierra Leone.

7.1 Education's Role in Reducing Poverty in Sierra Leone

#1: Context is critical

First, the Sierra Leonean context is important for any role education may have in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone is a post-conflict country, who still struggles with corruption. Research shows that the civil war impacted the country's infrastructure and economic status. A dysfunctional government, provides a difficult climate to create a good educational system. Even if it is not the focal point of this thesis to create a good governmental system, it is important to emphasize that the circumstances in Sierra Leone had an impact on several aspects of education in the country. It has also led to limitations of what could be achievable in the country in short term.

According to prior studies, and one teacher in my fieldwork, the highly corrupt educational system is one of the core challenges in Sierra Leone. The teacher explained that it is possible to pay for good examination results, and the right credentials. When this is an option, I see a few consequences; education is only for those who have the financial resources to pay their way through school. People can get qualification papers for jobs they are not actually qualified for. It can give people the impression that education is only for people with money, and they may

choose not to pursue an education.

The teachers do not trust a great deal on the government to provide aid for the schools, they believe the government does the best it can, but they expressed more faith in outside support. On the positive side, they stated that in Sierra Leone, the focus is now on educating girls, and the teachers perceive that to be important. As one teacher said, boys have been more preferred to attend school because of tradition, hence culture needs to be taken into consideration in the current educational situation.

#2: There has to be quality education

Prior study suggest that the quality of education is equally important as attendance. Sierra Leone has high enrolment rates, but also high dropout numbers, which may be caused by insufficient access to quality education. The teachers in my fieldwork want more children to attend school, but they also desire quality of education to improve. The current education system have not undergone a lot of changes the last decades. There have been added one year in school, and primary school is mandatory in law, but the curriculum has been the same for a long time. And according to the teachers, the curriculum is very relevant to Sierra Leone, and not in need of upgrading. The teachers explained that they have started to use a new teaching method, the child centred teaching technique, putting the child in centre. This is a positive initiative, but based on the high dropout numbers, I do believe more improvement can be made.

The SDG no.4 aims at securing quality education for all children, and quality education can be several things. The teachers pointed out what improvements they want, and what they perceive quality education to be. Their statements are parallel to what earlier research consider is a part of quality education. First, the classrooms have to be conducive to the children, they need to have adequate facilities and teaching materials. Secondly, the teachers have to involve the children in the teaching process, and use the child centred teaching technique. This was according to one teacher vital to reduce poverty. Third, there cannot be too many children in each class, because it hinders what the teachers are able to do in the classroom. With too many children around, it can be challenging for the children to concentrate. Fourth, the teachers are the ones responsible for educating the children, and therefore it is imperative that they have the right education and are qualified for the job. Lastly, the curriculum has to be relevant for the people of Sierra Leone. According to prior studies, the curriculum must be adapted to the culture, and

labour demands in the country. Therefore Sierra Leone have to find out what kind of education is relevant for their people, and what skills set is required to develop their country. Nevertheless, the teachers considered the current curriculum as relevant. However, it is fair to argue that education has to be at a certain quality level in order to provide children with good education.

3: Education can lead to job opportunities

It is a common assumption that education leads to more job opportunities, and with employment comes income. Research indicates that, and the teachers consider education to have that ability. This can only be a motivating factor if people believe there is jobs waiting for them after they complete their studies. According to the teachers, both pupils and parents in Sierra Leone don't see the value of education and therefore don't prioritise it. Several of them argued that there are not a lot of job opportunities, regardless of educational level. It is understandable that people don't go to school when they don't see it as useful, and for that reason it is important to show people the benefits with education.

If education is going to provide job opportunities, it is vital that there are jobs available. According to the teachers, there are very few job opportunities in Sierra Leone, and many graduates struggle to find employment. Therefore, there has to be a focus on job creation, for example through the use of local resources, like one teacher suggested. By creating workplaces, there will be more job opportunities. With employment, the individual will have an income that can help them out of poverty. At the same time, the economic growth in Sierra Leone is likely to increase. With increase in income and economic growth, there will be a reduction of poverty.

#4: There are health benefits

When pursuing education, there is a greater chance for the individual to break out of the poverty cycle. Research illustrates that with an increase in educational attainment, there is higher life expectancy and a decrease in diseases. It also shows that there is a smaller chance of entering early marriage and teenage-pregnancy. Teachers I interviewed support that it is important to educate girls in order to reduce the likelihood of them getting married early. One teacher argues that the youth must be educated to avoid teen-age pregnancy. Furthermore, child labour is a major challenge in Sierra Leone, which increases the risk for health issues. Health benefits like those mentioned, enhances the likelihood of getting out of the poverty cycle. To put it short, education can give a longer life, lower the risk of diseases and reduce the individual's possibility

of entering child labour, early marriage and teenage-pregnancy. Increasing the health benefits is positive for the people living in Sierra Leone, as well as for poverty reduction.

#5: There is a connection between education attainment and poverty numbers

Research indicates that there is a significant connection between low literacy numbers and poverty. In parts of the world where the literacy rate is high, the poverty numbers are low. In Sierra Leone, the literacy rate is low, and so are the average years of education. It takes 6 years in school to become literate in Sierra Leone, but the average years of education is 4 years for men, and 2 years for women. This illustrates the importance of securing 6 years of education, to secure peoples basic skills. One teacher stated that by only having the minimum of literary skills, the opportunity of learning a various of other skills increases. Education is imperative to improve the literacy rate in Sierra Leone, and literacy is a tool against poverty.

#6: Education has a socially significant role

In addition to preparing children for employment, education have a role in preparing children to become adults. Education provides skills that are necessary for work, but also for personal development. One teacher stated that they teach children to become independent, and want them to achieve their own goals. The children are taught that they will play a role in society, which indicates that education has a socially significant role. This underlines the importance of the curriculum settings being adapted to Sierra Leone.

#7: Education creates gender equality

The SDG no.4 aims to secure gender equality and provide education for all. According to research, in Sierra Leone, boys are more preferred to attend school. This is also stated by the teachers in the fieldwork. The teachers wants girls to know that they have the same opportunities as men, and give them other options than early marriage, through education. The government and the teachers focus on educating girls, and to teach the children and society that girls have the same value as men, which shows that they are working towards gender equality. By creating equality and keeping girls away from early marriage and teenage-pregnancy, education may help girls out of the poverty cycle.

#8: The teachers have multiple roles

According to the teachers, they are responsible for teaching the curriculum to the children, but they also see themselves serving as role models and guidance counsellors. They do work beyond their job description, like for example helping hungry children with money to buy food. They give them advice, and help them with making good decisions. Everything the teachers said through the interviews, gave me the impression that they are the children's advocate. Many of the parents don't know much about education, and the teachers are the ones who fight for everyone's right to education. The teacher's role seems unusually strong, even taking into account that this is largely based on teachers' own statements.

#9: The education has to be free

All the teachers agreed that education is only available for the people who can afford it, which is related to tuition fees and child labour. This is also backed by earlier research. Based on the statements of the teachers, and the poverty level in Sierra Leone, education should be free. Education should be free from start to finish, so that all the children in Sierra Leone gets a fair chance at education and an opportunity to develop and rise from poverty.

7.2 Conclusion

The historical context is a highly relevant part of the role education has, and could have in Sierra Leone, and the country's poverty reduction. The strongest argument for pursuing education is that it leads to more job opportunities, however, the labour market in Sierra Leone is low. Despite the lack of jobs, by learning basic skills people are more capable to learn other things and be a recourse to society. Low literacy has a connection with poverty, and therefore education to higher the literacy rate is imperative. Today, Sierra Leone focus on educating girls, and securing them equal opportunities as men. It serves to teach girls to become independent, and all children to become a part of society. Education has proven to have positive health benefits, like higher life expectancy and a decrease in diseases. When children chose education, the chance of them becoming victims of child labour, are smaller. In addition to child labour, the children are less likely to enter early marriage and teenage-pregnancy, which often keep children in the poverty cycle. Health benefits are good for the people of Sierra Leone, and are helpful to reduce

poverty. The teachers encourage children to become independent individuals, and they want the children to reach their own goals. To educate children are the teachers main role, but they also provide to an extent services as social workers to support children and their parents. The teachers help the children with personal issues, and guide them to make good life choices. They want everyone to know the benefits of education, so that more children can attend school. Education is helpful in reducing poverty, but there are several factors that effects the speed of the process negatively that needs to be addressed.

7.3 Thoughts for the Future

There are three key factors who have the largest influence on educations impact on poverty reduction in Sierra Leone, and I believe that education has the potential to have a significant role in poverty reduction. First, it is important to make education free, so that everyone has the opportunity to attend school and pursue an education. Secondly, to create job opportunities for those who graduate, both to secure income, but also because it has social benefits. Workplaces provide good income for the country, have social benefits and it shows people that education is important. Third, the focus has to move from only focusing on enrolment rates to a larger focus on improving the quality of education. Even though it is evident that it is necessary to improve the quality of education in Sierra Leone, I do not conclude that the education offered in schools today is useless. On the contrary, I strongly believe that education still serves a purpose on its way to refinement, and we cannot give up on education in Sierra Leone based on it not being perfect. The teachers are a valuable resource that should have a voice in developing education, and its future role in poverty reduction.

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Appendix A

The Interview Guide

<p><i>(School system)</i> What role does education have in society?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- In your opinion, what is quality education- How can the quality of education be improved in your school? <i>(School resources, higher salaries)</i>- Are there other things you believe the school needs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- More children are enrolled in school every year, do you experience that?- Does the number of students effect the quality of the teaching?- Do you have high drop-out numbers?- When the government talks about education, what do they focus on?- Are there jobs for the educated, or do many seek jobs in other countries?- Do you see any efforts from the government in creating jobs? <i>(Availability and poverty)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- To gain a better economic situation- Higher position in society- For personal development- Do you see job opportunities for those who graduate?- What do you think of the government's policy on poverty reduction?- Do you think it is possible to eradicate poverty by 2030?<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Why?/Why not? <i>(challenges)</i>- How?- How can you as a teacher participate in this?
<p>What type of education/teaching, do you think is important for poverty reduction?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Do you believe that all children have the opportunity to attend school?<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Why?/Why not?- Is all children offered – or can apply – to go to this school?- Are the students who attend this school from poor households?- What do you think is the motivation for students to get an education?	<p><i>(Teachers role)</i> What is the most important task of a teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- What is expected from you as a teacher?- What is your goal with teaching?- Why did you choose to become a teacher?- How can you improve as a teacher?- Do you get the support you need?- Do you think there are opportunities for staff development? <i>(Higher education/in-service training)</i>	<p><i>(Teachers role)</i> What is the most important task of a teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- What is expected from you as a teacher?- What is your goal with teaching?- Why did you choose to become a teacher?- How can you improve as a teacher?- Do you get the support you need?- Do you think there are opportunities for staff development? <i>(Higher education/in-service training)</i>
<p>What role does education have in society?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- In your opinion, what is quality education- How can the quality of education be improved in your school? <i>(School resources, higher salaries)</i>- Are there other things you believe the school needs? <p>- Do you think that the school curriculum is relevant for Sierra Leone?<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Why?/Why not?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Do you perceive teaching to be a respected occupation?- Do you perceive teaching to be an important occupation?- Do you think education is important?<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Why?/Why not?- Are you happy with the result of the students?- How important are the national tests?- How do you think students learn best? <i>(Learning/rememering)</i> <p><i>Questions only for the headmaster</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Do you/teachers get any guidance or course from the government or other?	<p>What type of education/teaching, do you think is important for poverty reduction?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Do you believe that all children have the opportunity to attend school?<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Why?/Why not?- Is all children offered – or can apply – to go to this school?- Are the students who attend this school from poor households?- What do you think is the motivation for students to get an education?	<p><i>(Teachers role)</i> What is the most important task of a teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- What is expected from you as a teacher?- What is your goal with teaching?- Why did you choose to become a teacher?- How can you improve as a teacher?- Do you get the support you need?- Do you think there are opportunities for staff development? <i>(Higher education/in-service training)</i>