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# **SCHOOLING FOR CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION**

## **A case study from Northern Uganda**



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## **Schooling for Conflict Transformation: a case study from Northern Uganda**

### **Abstract**

Civil wars impede progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. As many conflicts re-erupt within a short time, it is important to know what may increase the chances of sustainable peace. Access to education is a factor but relatively little is known about the contribution of what students learn in school. This thesis aims to respond to a research gap by addressing the following question: 'How can schooling contribute to conflict transformation?'

Significant curricular approaches that may be used after civil war - peace education, human rights education and citizenship education - are assessed for their strengths and weaknesses. As no single approach is found to be sufficient for conflict transformation, a framework is proposed based on three fundamental concepts: (i) truth seeking; (ii) reconciliation; and (iii) inclusive citizenship.

This framework is examined through a qualitative case study of curriculum in seven schools in a district in northern Uganda that is emerging from a twenty-year civil war. The curriculum of four primary schools, two secondary schools, one special school and one teacher training college was studied over a three-month period. A structure of knowledge, skills and values was used to research the framework at a detailed level. It is found that schools exhibit good socialization of reconciliation values and some development of problem-solving and communication skills. There is some understanding of human rights, but little knowledge of history, or of local, national and international political/legal systems. There is minimal development of discussion and critical thinking skills.

It is argued that the framework can be used to investigate other schools and to inform the design of a curriculum that can contribute to conflict transformation, with the ultimate aim of reducing the risk of civil war re-eruption.

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## INTRODUCTION

During a teacher-education consultancy in Africa, in 2007 I made a brief visit to Gulu in northern Uganda to explore possible research directions. As a result of peace talks, there was a lull in the twenty-year civil war, which had devastated that part of the country. I have long been interested in human rights and citizenship education, and in response to people's accounts of their suffering, I started to think about schools' role in peace-building. With the help of a local non-governmental organization involved in supporting former combatants and children in Internally Displaced Persons camps, I carried out informal interviews with some head teachers and teachers. Some had received specific training in peace education and a head teacher had abolished corporal punishment in his school after attending such a course. Several teachers mentioned 'Peace Clubs', aimed at developing commitment to peace and reconciliation and at developing skills, and I observed part of a student-run debate on the peace process.

The history textbooks I saw barely touched on any of the history of Uganda since the end of the colonial period in 1962. This made me wonder whether the teachers who suffered from the war understood its deep roots, and whether understanding and teaching about the historical background might contribute to peace-building. I came across some peace education materials and met a peace education co-ordinator in a school for ex-combatants. I noticed that the peace education materials had little direct reference to human rights articles, although it was clear that they were conveying values such as peaceful resolution of disputes, and respect for other people. I was not sure if the examples I had seen were isolated or common, or whether they

were the result of government or NGO activity, and I was curious as to why such texts might neglect to teach people basic knowledge of human rights.

This visit and subsequent reading on the role of education in causing and repairing conflict led to a proposal for doctoral study on how schools may contribute to peace. Education is the holistic process of learning from a wide variety of sources in family, community and state provision. Generally, when people talk of education they mean ‘formal education’ – the largely state-organized process from pre-school to university provision. Formal education covering the years between three and eighteen, overwhelmingly provided in schools, can be succinctly termed ‘schooling’. This includes institutional arrangements, funding and the political context. This research is primarily concerned with the school curriculum, which is defined as “the totality of the experiences the pupil has as a result of the provision made” (Kelly 2009:13).

I found that some theorists argue that there is a correlation between the lack of access to formal education and the likelihood of civil war and armed conflict. Formal education is frequently referred to in peace agreements as a contributor to sustainable peace.<sup>1</sup> The role of education after civil wars is implied in general statements about institutional reform and social or political re-vitalization. This, however, is seen mostly in terms of access and equitable provision; there is little reference to the nature and quality of the school curriculum. Nevertheless, there have been calls for more research into the potential contribution to be made by schools towards durable peace. I consulted a range of agencies working in the field of

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<sup>1</sup> The terms ‘sustainable’, ‘durable’ and ‘long-term’ peace are used interchangeably throughout this thesis to refer to peace which is more than simply an absence of fighting and violence, and which is not broken by a recurrence of civil war.



education after civil war and armed conflict<sup>2</sup> in order to understand the issues as they saw them and the context in which fieldwork could be undertaken.

The idea of conflict transformation, “[A] complex process of changing the relationships, attitudes, interests, discourses and underlying structures that encourage and condition violent political conflict” (Austin 2011:9-10) offers a deeper, and more nuanced conception of ‘peace’ than whether it lasts or not. This thesis proposes a conceptual framework for understanding the contribution to conflict transformation that may be made schooling and in particular by the curriculum, which is explored through a case study of schools in a war-affected district of northern Uganda.

The main question is:

**‘How can schooling contribute to conflict transformation?’**

The argument of the thesis is that conflict transformation after civil war means accepting that the interests of individuals and groups will inevitably differ, but conflicts of interest can be transformed into productive energies, instead of destructive violence. For this to happen, there is a need for (i) truth-seeking - the effort to give meaning to the range of experience of those who participated and suffered in the war rather than the search for one uncontested story; (ii) reconciliation – the readiness to forgo revenge and the ending of a cycle of hatred and fear; (iii) inclusive citizenship - the collective effort of previously warring groups towards the elimination of social injustice and structural violence. Among other institutions, schools have a part to play in conflict transformation, because of their widespread access to young people who will influence society in future. These include those who have been involved in

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<sup>2</sup> UNESCO-International Institute for Educational Planning, UNICEF, Save the Children, Norwegian Refugee Council, Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, People’s Voice for Peace, Conciliation Resources.

armed conflict or suffered from it directly and indirectly, and those further removed. Schooling can play a part in conflict transformation through access - the process of enrolling, attending and finishing – but at a deeper level through the curriculum, the overall experience of the learner in school. A structure of knowledge and understanding, skills development and values socialization is employed to investigate whether and how truth-seeking, reconciliation and inclusive citizenship are evident in the school curriculum in northern Uganda. The combination of conceptual framework and research approach provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the relationship between the school curriculum and conflict transformation.

In Chapter One, I explain how civil wars are impeding progress towards the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The international community has created a wide range of institutions and agencies aimed at building sustainable peace and preventing civil wars from starting or recurring. These efforts are influenced by the analysis of the causes of conflict. I clarify peace-related agencies and terms used by the United Nations, national governments and non-governmental organizations. I distinguish between the dominant approach to peace-building, known as ‘the liberal peace’ and conflict transformation. The liberal peace, consisting of the rule of law, human rights, democratization and open markets, is criticized by some scholars for tending to restore the status quo without addressing the forces which turn normal conflicts of interest into civil wars. These scholars use the term ‘conflict transformation’ in preference to peace-building in order to express the impact of changing economic, social and political structures and institutions. Education is one such institution. Where it is insufficient, of poor quality or distorted, education is implicated in civil wars. As such, its transformation has the potential to contribute to sustainable peace. There is, however, limited research that explains the role of primary and secondary schooling in this process.

Conflict transformation theorists and practitioners argue that conflict is natural and inevitable. The challenge is how to transform violent conflict into peaceful forms. It is necessary to understand the roots of violence and war through an analysis of the historical background and present social and economic conditions. They suggest that equal respect in inter-personal and inter-group relationships will lead to a positive sense of identity. Peace depends not simply on periodic elections, but on active participation in politics and society aimed at addressing structural violence. A conceptual framework of how the school curriculum may support these processes is developed in Chapter Two. I examine three existing curricular approaches -peace, human rights and citizenship education– for their applicability to conflict transformation, finding that no one is sufficient on its own. I argue that three core concepts of ‘truth-seeking’, ‘reconciliation’ and ‘inclusive citizenship’ can form the basis of an original framework for a curriculum that supports conflict transformation.

The rationale for an empirical investigation is outlined in Chapter Three. First, I explain an operational structure of ‘knowledge and understanding’; ‘skills development’; and ‘values socialization’ which articulates in detail the three core concepts referred to above - ‘truth-seeking’, ‘reconciliation’ and ‘inclusive citizenship’. This detailed framework was used for a case study of seven schools and a training college in a district of northern Uganda in the early stages of recovery after twenty years of civil war. The aim was to explore and explain how the institutions were contributing to conflict transformation. The design was largely qualitative. The methods were participant observation and ethnography, as well as semi-structured interviews with head teachers, teachers, students, and officials. A sample of teachers completed a questionnaire on human rights knowledge and values.

The context for the study is addressed in Chapter Four. The causes and impact of the civil war in northern Uganda are explained. Although there has been no formal peace agreement, peace talks brought the ideas of truth, reconciliation and reparation into public discourse. There are implications stemming from what is taught in schools about the historical origins of the war, and the suffering and experiences of victims. The reintegration of abducted young people into schools and the community create a challenge for fostering reconciliation values. The perception of the neglect of northern Uganda by the central government and the issue of inter-ethnic understanding raises the question of how schools may contribute to inclusive citizenship through political understanding and participation skills.

These challenges are explored in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, which present an account of schooling for conflict transformation, using the framework developed in Chapter Two. Empirical findings on truth-seeking, reconciliation and inclusive citizenship are organized under the headings of knowledge, skills and values - a combination derived from Taba (1962), Hicks (1985) and Heater (1990), and widely used by scholars of citizenship education. Findings are reported at the end of each chapter and there is an account of the role of the government in providing the necessary support for schools to act as agents of conflict transformation.

The conclusion draws together the conceptual and empirical elements of this research. A case has been advanced that conflict transformation will be affected not only by school access, but also by curriculum quality; for an unreformed curriculum may carry within it the seeds of future violence. A framework of truth, reconciliation and inclusive citizenship has been developed, through which the school curriculum may contribute to conflict transformation. The framework has been used to analyse the practice of schools in a post-conflict district,

using the operational structure of knowledge, skills and values referred to above. It has been found that the schools are exhibiting some socialization of reconciliation values and some development of problem-solving, and communication skills. There is some knowledge and understanding of human rights, but little of history, or of local and national political/legal systems. There is little development of discussion and critical thinking skills. Since every civil war has its own characteristics, the framework is proposed as a starting point for future conceptualizations and case studies as it enables an in-depth and nuanced understanding of what and how people learn in schools. It could also inform education and school curriculum policies. Suggestions are made for future research in different post-civil war educational contexts aimed at building an understanding of the role of the curriculum in contributing to sustainable peace and thereby to future world development goals.



# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **CIVIL WAR and PEACE-BUILDING**

This thesis is concerned with the contribution of education to sustainable peace. In this chapter, I explain the damage caused by civil wars to the progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, and the way in which education is both a victim of such wars, but also implicated in their causes. I then outline the United Nations' peace and development system, clarifying a range of peace-related terms and noting the role of education in humanitarian and development processes. The main approach to peace-building, 'the liberal peace,' is examined and contrasted with 'conflict transformation', which is concerned with deep structural change. Although both approaches imply a role for education there are as yet few specific attempts at explaining how and why it may contribute to peace. My thesis is a response to this gap in understanding and to the resulting need for research.

### **1 Civil war impact on the Millennium Development Goals**

The United Nations and its member states are committed to improving the lives of millions of people, as expressed through the United Nations Millennium Development Goals agreed in 2000. The eight goals are: the eradication of poverty and hunger; universal primary education; the promotion of gender equality; the reduction of child mortality; the improvement of maternal health; the combating of HIV/AIDS and other diseases; environmental sustainability; and a global partnership for development. The goals are derived from human rights norms enshrined in United Nations Covenants, such as the International Covenant on Economic,

Social and Cultural Rights, 1976.<sup>3</sup> At the review meeting of 2010, the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon reminded the world that:

“The Millennium Declaration in 2000 was a milestone in international cooperation, inspiring development efforts that have improved the lives of hundreds of millions of people around the world... There is no global project more worthwhile. Let us send a strong message of hope. Let us keep the promise.” (Ban 2010)<sup>4</sup>

According to the UN, much progress has been made towards the Millennium Development Goals, but targets set for 2015 will not be met in many regions (UN 2010). One reason for this is the direct, negative impact of civil war and armed conflict (UN 2010, UNESCO 2011).<sup>5</sup> Such conflicts have caused immense suffering and continue to do so. The millions of deaths, and injuries, are not merely of combatants but extend to large numbers of civilians. Between 1990 and 2010, 90% of deaths related to armed conflict were of civilians and 80% of these were children and women.<sup>6</sup> According to the UN office for children and armed conflict, between 1995 and 2005, two million children were killed in armed conflict, and six million seriously injured (UN 2006). Indirect deaths caused by widespread poverty and weak health systems greatly add to the toll. As another result of civil war, displacement has a significant impact on mortality, disease and poverty. By 2009, 42 million people had been displaced by

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<sup>3</sup> This was agreed in 1966 and came into force in 1976: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm> (last accessed 8/9/11).

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/> (last accessed 10/9/10) <http://www.un.org/en/mdg/summit2010/> (last accessed 22/9/10).

<sup>5</sup> A war is defined by more than 1000 battle-related deaths (Uppsala Conflict Data Programme 2010). An armed conflict is a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory, where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year. An intrastate conflict is defined as “a conflict between a government and a non-governmental party, with no interference from other countries,” (UCDP 2010). For the sake of clarity and simplicity, in this thesis the term ‘civil war’ will be used, even though in some instances battle-deaths may number less than 1000 in a year.

<sup>6</sup> Claims and counter-claims produce very large variations. For example, Roberts (2010) points out that many conflicts, such as those in Colombia and Sri Lanka, had a much lower proportion of civilian to military deaths. Taking indirect deaths into consideration, for example in DRC, Sudan and Uganda, certainly increases the civilian proportion.



civil war or persecution, four fifths of them in developing countries. There were an estimated 5.8 million refugee children and 8.8 million internally displaced children (UNICEF 2009).

The overall economic damage caused by civil war is immense. Collier (2007:27) describes war as ‘development in reverse’ and estimates the cost of a ‘typical’ civil war to a country and its neighbours at £64 billion, owing to the destruction of agriculture, industry, transport and communications infrastructure. Resources for health and education are diverted into military forces and debt tends to soar. Conflict-related population movements damage the environment, while natural resources are over-exploited to fund military action. Multiple claims to land and assets may be difficult to resolve and lead to new or renewed social tension (Ball 1996).

There is a strong correlation between states that have suffered or are suffering civil war and slow progress towards the Millennium Development goals. Two thirds of children under five years old who are malnourished are found in around thirty of the so-called ‘conflict-affected states’.<sup>7</sup> Two thirds of these states have made no progress on under-five mortality rates. More detailed educational targets set for 2015 under the UNESCO programme ‘Education for All’ are not going to be achieved (UNESCO 2011), with the lowest performance being in conflict-affected countries. In 2009, 39 out of a world total of 72 million out-of-school children were in conflict-affected states, the proportion being extraordinarily high in countries like Liberia (73%) and Somalia (81%), (Save the Children 2006, UNICEF 2009). Civil wars cause serious

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<sup>7</sup> The Save the Children (2006) list of ‘conflict-affected fragile states’ numbers 28 states, 18 of which are in Sub-Saharan Africa. The UNICEF (2009) list of 33 ‘conflict-affected states’ includes some states that Save the Children does not consider ‘fragile’, such as the Russian Federation, Israel and Turkey. The terms refer to states with civil wars or armed conflicts (see note 6 above).

indirect damage to education, but there is also an increasing number of direct assaults on students, teachers, academics, and against educational infrastructure (O'Malley 2007, 2010).<sup>8</sup>

“There have been thousands (of) reported cases of students, teachers, academics and other education staff being kidnapped, imprisoned, beaten, tortured, burned alive, shot, or blown up by rebels, armies and repressive regimes; or recruited or sexually violated by armed groups or armed forces at school or on their journey to or from school.”  
(O'Malley 2010:14)

Schools may be attacked for their perceived role in the imposition of an alien culture, or ethnic identity, or to undermine symbols of government power. Students and teachers may be targeted for their involvement in political activity. The consequences include damaged infrastructure, halted investment and a drop in staff and student attendance through fear, grief and psychological trauma. Attacks on primary schools, especially girls' primary schools, are particularly damaging for development (O'Malley 2010).

## **2 Civil war causation**

Understanding the causes of civil wars may help the prevention of their re-eruption and, thus, assist the global community in achieving future development goals. Almost half of civil wars re-erupt within ten years, (Collier 2007:34) and as such, a 'post-conflict' phase can turn out to be 'pre-conflict'. There are significant correlations between poverty and the risk of civil war. Globalization, falling commodity prices and structural adjustment policies have also contributed to the economic problems of countries in the poor South, where the majority of

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<sup>8</sup> O'Malley cites examples from Nepal, Colombia, Afghanistan, Gaza, Sri Lanka and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The damage to schools in Uganda is discussed in Chapter Four.

civil wars have taken place (Collier 2007).<sup>9</sup> Privatization can fuel group tensions, as economic problems encourage people to use ethnic connections to climb the ladder (Stewart 2002). Poor migrants in urban slums are marginalised and easily mobilized by sectarian and criminal leaders (Bardhan 1997). The export of diamonds, oil and timber has fuelled wars by allowing rebel movements to maintain their funds. The arms trade has made access to cheap weapons far easier (Hanlon 2006b). Hanlon (2006c:130) illustrates the connection between economic factors and the grievances that can lead to wars:

“Government corruption is another form of greed, which seems to play a role in creating grievances: as resources are siphoned off by corrupt groups they are not available for other groups or for development or social services in general.”

As well as poverty, ethnic and identity factors are also significant causes of civil war. Ethnic- or identity-based groups create the benefits of boosting self-esteem and cultivating a sense of belonging, which is validated by group interactions. Since, however, social identity is constructed through contrast with other groups, the tendency to trust one’s own community can lead to the treatment of outsiders as potential threats. Although the majority of ethnic groups have conventional, non-violent, albeit tense, political relations with governments, there is a substantial risk that violent forms of contention will occur, which will escalate into civil war. There is a strong correlation between ethnic heterogeneity and armed conflict (Oberschall 2007; Sambanis 2004).

The mere existence of outsider groups or minorities then, may increase the likelihood of civil war, but does not make it inevitable, as humans have evolved instincts of social cooperation,

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<sup>9</sup> ‘Structural adjustment’ refers to policies implemented in developing countries by the IMF and World Bank, which set conditions for obtaining new or reduced-rate loans. They generally implement ‘free-market’ programmes and the reduction of trade barriers.

alongside those of competition and self-interest (Pinker 1998, 2011; Ridley 1996). The important question is why some groups pursue their goals peacefully, while others pursue them through violence. It may be a matter of how those in power treat minorities. Stewart (2002, 2006) argues that political domination by one group over another is responsible for horizontal inequalities, where a minority identity or ethnic group suffers multiple disadvantages across a broad range of socio-economic contexts.<sup>10</sup> Gurr (2001) identifies 17% of the world population as part of 275 politically significant national and minority peoples. All but 33 of those were subject to one or several kinds of discrimination in the mid 1990s. Quinn and Gurr (2003) estimate that out of 700-800 substantial minority groups, 70 pursued political objectives through armed struggle, while the conflict was settled in only 12 cases. Minority groups may perceive violent resistance as a justified response to state violence and injustice (Ballentine and Sherman 2003; Buijtenhuijs 2000; Nafziger and Auvinen 2002). A recurring theme in accounts of rebellions is the importance of dignity, of not being treated like a dog or a slave (Keen 2002). Fanthorpe (2003) found that youth in Sierra Leone rebelled against a gerontocracy that seemed to block opportunity, even if violence was not the economically rational course. Addison and Murshed (2006) and El-Bushra (2006) explain how gender identities can be critically important in determining whether people respond to conflict in destructive and violent ways or by redefining values and relationships positively.

Poverty and discrimination are inextricably bound to education, in terms of both access and quality.<sup>11</sup> Lack of access to school is cited as a major obstacle to improving the economy and

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<sup>10</sup> For Stewart, horizontal inequality is assessed by groups not individuals, the latter being termed as 'vertical inequality'. Indicators include unequal access to assets, wage employment, public services, burden sharing in crisis and benefits in windfall. Differences in the quality of life between groups are more important than within groups.

<sup>11</sup> 'Educational access' is the combination of enrolment in school, the level of attendance and the completion of the provided programme. It is possible to enrol, but not to attend at all, or only rarely; to attend for several years but not complete the programme; to complete it, but fail to reach a pass level in a final examination. In most war-affected countries, actual attendance is frequently much lower than enrolment figures, and completion is usually

people's lives; for example, it perpetuates high adolescent birth rates, jeopardizing the health of girls and diminishing their opportunities for social and economic advancement (UN 2010). The higher the level of access to secondary schooling access, the less likely a country is to suffer civil war (Barakat and Urdal 2009; Collier 2007; Thyne 2006). There is a clear relationship here with the Millennium Development Goal of 100% primary completion, as in many poor countries primary education completion is a pre-requisite for enrolment into secondary education, which is neither free nor compulsory. As lack of education leads to unemployment, young men may find war as a means of earning a living and raising their status (Collier 2000, 2007). Fanthorpe (2003), however, found that educated youths and employed men as well as young unemployed males were readily recruited by both sides in the civil war in Sierra Leone.

It is not only a matter of overall educational access. The frustration of groups suffering discrimination in access is a contributory cause of some civil wars. For example, in Cote d'Ivoire, resentment over the poor state of education in northern areas where attendance was less than half than those in the south figured in the political mobilization leading to civil war in 2002 (UNESCO 2011). Ostby and Strand (2010) found that educational inequalities, especially along ethnic lines heighten the risk of conflict. However, even in areas where there are relatively equal levels of enrolment, there may be a discriminatory school curriculum which has direct consequences on attendance and completion of courses and contributes to a sense of grievance about horizontal inequality (Bush and Saltarelli 2000; Stewart 2006). Cultural repression, as illustrated by Serbian attempts to eradicate Albanian culture in Kosovo, and the divisive issue of language instruction as seen in the Kurdish areas of Turkey and the Muslim regions of Thailand can lead to insurgencies (UNESCO 2011:168). Furthermore, it

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lower still. Primary education completion in northern Uganda averages 20%, and in one district in particular only 1.5% of those who embarked on primary education completed the secondary (Robinson and Young 2007).

has been argued that education that results in low self-esteem leaves individuals and groups susceptible to manipulation and to their stereotyping of others. Without planned learning about how peacefully to resolve differences, people can come to believe that their own needs justify the application of violence to their competitors (Staub 2002).

In summary, civil wars are damaging global efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All targets. Among the causes are poverty and discrimination in educational access. Additionally, the nature and quality of school curricula may contribute either to violence or to long-term peace-building. Blatant indoctrination can inflame recent or historical grievances, while a good quality school curriculum may play a part in reducing fear and discrimination, thereby enhancing security and contributing to sustainable peace (Bush and Saltarelli 2000).

## **2 The United Nations peace and development system**

The United Nations has become increasingly involved in peace-building since the end of the Cold War. In this section, I aim to clarify the position of education in the United Nations peace and development structure. One clear distinction within the UN system is between humanitarianism and development. According to Helsing and Mertus (2006), subdivisions of the UN between humanitarianism and development, peace-making and human rights, create significant obstacles to the broader aims of ending and repairing the damage of civil war. Humanitarianism prioritizes the amelioration of suffering, sometimes at the expense of negotiating an end to violence. While human rights advocates prioritize respect for civilians and protected persons, conflict resolution specialists may be prepared to work with people who have committed serious human rights violations (Helsing and Mertus 2006). In order to

place education correctly within UN peace-building, it is necessary to clarify its terms and to seek common elements.

Upon recognition that the distinction between humanitarian assistance and long-term development within the UN structure was hindering international peace-building and natural disaster recovery efforts, a Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) was established in 2001 as “a bridge between the humanitarian agencies that handle immediate needs and the long-term development phase following recovery.”<sup>12</sup> This is concerned with the prevention of violent conflict and natural disasters and the restoration of the quality of life afterwards. The BCPR distinguishes between humanitarian assistance and ‘early recovery’ programming, describing the former as focusing on individuals and the latter as focusing on their support systems, namely their basic services and governance functions. Although it uses the term ‘phases’, these are not necessarily consecutive and can be addressed simultaneously. The BCPR further distinguishes between ‘early recovery’ and ‘recovery’, the latter concerned with the long-term restoration of the society and its political and economic structures.<sup>13</sup> ‘Recovery’ is therefore identified with ‘development’.

Until recently, in the United Nations system education was seen as part of longer-term development work, rather than a necessary response to emergency. During and immediately after armed conflict, however, education can be treated as a humanitarian response. As such, it is known as the fourth ‘pillar’, after water, food, shelter and health (Retamal and Aedo-

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<sup>12</sup> [http://www.undp.org/cpr/we\\_do/early\\_recovery.shtml](http://www.undp.org/cpr/we_do/early_recovery.shtml) (last accessed 14/9/10).

<sup>13</sup> ‘Early Recovery’ is defined as “a multidimensional process of recovery that begins in a humanitarian setting. It is guided by development principles that seek to build on humanitarian programmes and to catalyse sustainable development opportunities. It aims to generate self-sustaining, nationally-owned, resilient processes for post-crisis recovery. It encompasses the restoration of basic services, livelihoods, shelter, governance, security and rule of law, environment and social dimensions, including the reintegration of displaced populations. It stabilizes human security and where the opportunity exists begins to address underlying risks that contributed to the crisis.” UNDP policy on ‘Early Recovery’ 2008: 8, <http://www.undp.org/cpr/iasc/content/docs/TBWMarch08/Doc1.pdf> (last accessed 14/9/10).

Richmond 1998). Even in the midst of violence, schooling seldom ceases completely and is quite resilient in the immediate aftermath, as people prioritise a return to normality and concentrate on the future (Buckland 2005). It is the view of UNESCO that education has been neglected by peace-building agencies, as it falls in a 'grey area' between emergency humanitarian work and long-term development and that therefore its place should be in 'early recovery' (UNESCO 2011:160). A coalition of UN agencies and NGOs, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) has lobbied for a seamless approach, clarifying education as both a right and a practical approach to supporting people in violent conflict and early recovery: "[i]n emergency situations through to recovery, quality education provides physical, psychosocial and cognitive protection that can sustain and save lives" (INEE 2010:2). Schools provide physical protection against the risks of sexual or economic exploitation and the knowledge of how to avoid risks, such as landmines. They may offer psychosocial support through routine, stability, structure and hope for the future. Schools can also provide entry points for other service support, such as nutrition, sanitation and health.

There has been considerable work across disciplines to explore the connections between conflict and development, but the overlap between the terms used by different agencies or scholars, and a lack of agreed definitions can mask the assumptions made (Caddell and Yanacopulos 2006). For example, some of the language of the BCPR, such as 'restoration' suggests that going back to the *status quo ante* is sufficient for a quality of life. Yet the BCPR also mentions the need to understand the 'root causes' of civil war. The term 'restoration' and implies putting things back together, whereas the idea of dealing with root causes suggests 'reform' or 'transformation'. One reason for this apparent ambiguity may be that restoration and reconstruction are more appropriate for recovery following a natural disaster, while 'addressing root causes' may be more relevant to post-civil war situations. This discrepancy



becomes more apparent in the use of the terms ‘peace-building’ and ‘conflict transformation’. As this thesis is concerned with conflict transformation it treats the reform of schools as a gradual process, which may indeed start while there is a state of emergency, but which is likely to have more beneficial consequences in the gradual change from the so-called ‘early recovery’ to the ‘recovery’ phase.

#### **4 Peace-making and education**

The terms ‘peace-making’, ‘conflict resolution’ and ‘peace-keeping’ are briefly discussed here in order to distinguish them from ‘peace-building’, which is more central to the main thrust of the argument of this thesis. The place of education in peace-making is addressed through the study of references to education in peace agreements.

Peace-making is the “action to bring hostile parties to agreement, essentially through such peaceful means as those foreseen in ... the Charter of the United Nations.” (Boutros-Ghali 1992).<sup>14</sup> In this sense, peace-making is the diplomatic effort intended to move a violent conflict into non-violent dialogue, where differences are settled through representative political institutions. The objective of peace-making is thus to end the violence between the contending parties. Peace-making can be pursued through negotiation, mediation, conciliation, and arbitration. International law provides another channel through international courts (Quellet 2003).

A closely related term is ‘conflict resolution’. It has been described as a situation “where the conflicting parties enter into an agreement that solves their central incompatibilities, accept each other’s continued existence and cease all violent action against each other” (Wallenstein 2007:8). Where conflict resolution is linked to mediation between parties at a relatively high

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<sup>14</sup> Boutros Boutros-Ghali, ‘An Agenda for Peace’, <http://www.un.org/Docs/SG/agpeace.html>, (last accessed 10/9/10).

political level, skilled negotiators are part of the élite. The problem is that this may neither address matters at a local level nor deeper, underlying issues (El-Bushra 2006; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall 2011).

The term ‘peace-keeping’ is not found in the United Nations Charter and defies simple definition. It lies between traditional methods of resolving disputes peacefully, such as negotiation and mediation, and action requiring the use of military force. Until the end of the Cold War, UN peace-keeping operations were primarily limited to maintaining ceasefires and stabilizing situations on the ground, so that efforts could be made at the political level to resolve the conflict by peaceful means. The increase in civil wars in the 1990s led member states to request UN involvement in a range of disputes that previously would have been considered distinctly domestic. The number of Security Council resolutions on peace-keeping has therefore increased significantly (UN 2010).<sup>15</sup> UN peacekeepers are involved in human rights monitoring, as well as building sustainable institutions of governance; for example, through security sector reform. Some actions, such as the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, have educational implications and merge with peace-building.

Education is a feature of peace-making, as it frequently appears in peace agreements:

“Peace agreements are political solutions to armed conflict, and education is fundamentally a political matter because education is a central component of the production and reproduction of power structures in society. In this way, education is strongly connected to the root causes of conflict, which include distribution of resources, access to political power in societies, recognition of identity and cultural development, and poverty.” (Degu 2005:158)

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<sup>15</sup> In the 41 years between 1947 and 1988 there were a total of 348 resolutions on peace-keeping, an average of 8.5 per year, while in the short six-year time span covering 1989 to 1994, there were 296 resolutions, or 49 per year, <http://www.un.org/en/peace-keeping/> (last accessed 14/10/11).

An examination of how education is addressed in full and partial peace agreements between 1989 and 2005 illustrates how warring parties perceive its importance (Dupuy 2008b). Education is referred to in over half the agreements available to study. The terms, however, vary considerably according to the context.<sup>16</sup> Some agreements simply refer to resuming education services, but most of the references are about educational access; for example, specifying free compulsory education, based on equal opportunities and non-discrimination.<sup>17</sup> Fair distribution of educational resources - buildings, teachers, books - is a feature of these agreements. Fair examinations, transparent governance, decentralization and mother-tongue teaching are responses to grievances related to group identities (Dupuy 2008b). Some agreements specifically mention conflict-related issues in the education system, such as the integration of ex-combatants.

Few agreements contain references to the curriculum. Where it does appear, the reform of curriculum specifies the teaching of the values of tolerance, forgiveness, cooperation, solidarity and respect for diversity. Human rights and peace education are seen as critical mechanisms to transmit these values, and civic education is thought necessary in order to support the development and strengthening of democratic forms of government (Dupuy 2008b). These processes are considered to be part of the peace-building agenda, which is discussed in the following section.

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<sup>16</sup> Out of the available 103 full or partial peace agreements between 1989 and 2005, 55% refer to education in one form or another, (Dupuy 2008b).

<sup>17</sup> Examples are the 2000 Arusha Peace Agreement for Burundi and the 2001 Macedonia agreement, which calls for affirmative action.

## 5 Peace-building

Peace-building is a broad term for a wide range of activities taking place over the long-term, aimed at preventing the outbreak, continuation and recurrence of armed conflict. It follows on from peace-making and peace-keeping, which were clarified in the preceding section. The term appeared in UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali's 'Agenda for Peace' (1992:19-22), which contained ten paragraphs under that title. Scholars, such as David (2002:19), note that the definition of peace-building is very 'elastic', but that essential elements are the cooperation of the UN and other international bodies, and the development of lasting infrastructures, both contained in the term 'durable' or 'sustainable' peace (Jeong 2002:3, 2005:1). A significant independent panel report on UN peace operations (Brahimi 2000), stated that the essential goals are to give the people of a country the opportunity to do for themselves what they could not do before: namely, to build and hold onto peace, to find reconciliation, to strengthen democracy, and to secure human rights. The UN Security Council in 2001 described peace-building as encompassing:

“A wide range of political, development, humanitarian and human rights programmes aimed at preventing the outbreak, recurrence and continuation of armed conflict. It requires short and long term action to foster sustainable development, eradicate poverty and inequalities, the promotion of democracy, human rights and a culture of non-violence.” (Quoted in Philpott 2010:8-9)

Although events in Somalia, Chechnya, Rwanda and the Balkans in the 1990s dented post-Cold War optimism about peaceful change, post-conflict peace-building has grown (Ryan 2007). The UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was established in 2005 as an inter-governmental advisory body to support peace efforts in countries emerging from conflict.<sup>18</sup> It brings together major donors to marshal resources for early and longer-term recovery and to

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.un.org/peace/peace-building/> (last accessed 18/9/10).

develop best practice in collaboration with political, security, humanitarian and development actors. More than one hundred projects in fifteen countries support peace agreements, conflict resolution, political dialogue and economic recovery.<sup>19</sup>

The dominant approach to peace-building after civil war, which was developed after the end of the Cold War, is known as ‘the liberal peace’.<sup>20</sup> It is based on the idea that states will act in their own interests, but the emergence of international institutions will allow states to reach superior outcomes in their effort to balance state and collective interests. In that war and violence harm long-term collective interests, they are seen as irrational (Goldstein and Pevehouse 2011). The foundations of the liberal peace are security, the rule of law, democratization, human rights and free, globalized markets (Richmond and Franks 2009:1). Although the liberal peace varies according to the context, usually where the UN has been involved in peace-making, very specific qualifying conditions have been imposed. Those who fail to accept them are generally excluded from a peace process, or sometimes coerced to abide by them, as in the Balkans (Richmond and Franks 2009:9).

In the early 1990s, there was an assumption that liberal peace would lead to stability, but this proved illusory, despite the huge amount of academic discussion and relevant publications, the political efforts and the large amounts of aid dispensed (Paris 1997). One is forced to consider *why*. One reason is the tension created by two elements inherent in liberalism. Ideas of individual political freedoms, democratic, and civil rights have become norms enshrined in the UN Convention on Civil and Political Rights. The Convention on Economic and Social Rights, however, propagates different standards of human well-being, such as the right to

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.unpbf.org/index.shtml> (last accessed 18/9/10).

<sup>20</sup> This is to be distinguished from ‘the Democratic Peace’, originating in Kant’s ‘Perpetual Peace’ (1795), which is concerned with inter-state war and which proposes that democracies seldom go to war with each other.

food, shelter, education, and work. The liberal peace follows classic liberalism in holding that free markets will achieve these collective goods, but also proposes mechanisms to ensure that societies have more to lose than gain through armed conflict (David 2002). Yet the sudden opening up of markets to global economic forces often undermines the efforts to improve individual agency, participation and freedom. For example, liberal peace-building in Sierra Leone contributed to the peaceful resolution of social disputes through the promotion of human rights and democratization. The associated economic policies, however, fed patrimonial networks through exploitative international mining ventures, and there was insufficient social re-integration of ex-combatants (Sola–Martin 2009).

Following ethnic- or identity-based violence, externally imposed elections can lead to destructive social competition in which manipulative leaders can exploit the past for political advantage. Where economic liberalization has had destructive effects, local saboteurs can seek to undermine democratic approaches to peace (Paris 2004). It is suggested that civil wars occur frequently when autocratic regimes are embarking on elections for the first time, with a higher likelihood of vote-fixing and corrupt practices (Ayoob 2001:138). Losing an election in such circumstances may have very high costs, as the winner may cancel future elections and consolidate autocratic power. A sense of trust and confidence that losing an election does not mean permanent exclusion from power takes time to develop (Gleditsch, Hegre and Strand 2009).

Under the liberal peace approach, there is also a tension between security and justice. To insist on non-violence removes the idea of 'just cause'. Duffield (2001) argues that violence may be transformative, leading to new forms of political organization and should not be problematized, regardless of whether people are involved in criminal war or simply defending

themselves from aggression. Much of what is done in the name of liberal peace may have precisely the opposite effect, as local actors may take the opportunity to transform society according to their own agenda (Goodhand 2006).

For those scholars who do not accept that civil wars and armed conflict are caused by economic factors alone, the liberal peace has too often turned out to be an empty shell, a 'virtual peace'. In that it is based on the notion of people as separate and self-interested rational actors, where the individual quest to maximize personal gain will result in the collective good, it is thought not to address underlying and/or local issues (El-Bushra 2006). State-building is not the same as peace-building, and democracy is not just a matter of institutions and elections. A formal democratic process may be dominated by an élite or serve the interests of developed countries (Philpott 2010). For Goodhand (2006) intervention under the label of liberal peace tends to be less an expression of humanitarian concerns than an assertion of the national interests of those intervening.

A more comprehensive and nuanced way of looking at these tensions is to consider what is meant by 'peace'. In a seminal paper, Galtung (1969:167) noted of 'peace' that "few words are so often used and abused." Defining peace as complex social goals and "the absence of violence", he went on to explain that violence has many dimensions. One important dimension is 'structural violence' (Galtung 1969:169-173) where life spans are reduced, people are socially dominated, politically oppressed, or economically exploited, but where the particular agents of the violence may not necessarily be identified. Structural violence may be manifest

of latent, physical or psychological and is associated with family violence, racial violence, hate crimes, terrorism, genocide, and war.<sup>21</sup>

To achieve peace defined in this way the deep causes of conflict have to be identified and changed and new relationships have to be developed between former adversaries at all levels of society (Jeong 2002; Philpott 2010). The liberal peace has not resulted in this kind of peace because it has not succeeded in fundamentally changing the political, economic and social conditions that led to war and violence in the first place (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall 2011).

## **6 Conflict transformation**

An expression of the demand for fundamental change is 'conflict transformation'. Below are two definitions from noted conflict transformation scholars:

“Peace-building occurs in its fully realized mode when it addresses every stage of the conflict cycle, and involves all members of society in the non-violent transformation of conflict, the pursuit of social justice and the creation of cultures of sustainable peace... activities includ[e] violence prevention and early warning, conflict management, mediation and resolution, social reconstruction and healing in the aftermath of armed conflict, and the long complex work of reconciliation.” (Lederach and Appleby 2010:23)

“Conflict transformation is a complex process of changing the relationships, attitudes, interests, discourses and underlying structures that encourage and condition violent political conflict.” (Austin 2011:9-10)

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<sup>21</sup> Galtung (1969:171) stated that in order not to overwork the term 'structural violence', he would sometimes refer to 'social injustice'. Where 'social justice' is used in this thesis, it means the opposite of 'structural violence'.



These definitions suggest that conflict transformation is less of a grand plan than a repertoire of approaches, which lack clarity and precision (Ryan 2007). The core ideas, however, as presented by Lederach (1995) show ways in which schools might contribute to sustainable peace. First, to tackle structural violence, people need access to political processes and a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. As people learn through experience, schools can model participation and teach young people specific skills that will increase their agency. Second, conflicts of interest are natural and present opportunities for constructive growth. The primary task is not to find quick solutions to immediate problems, but to use creativity to address underlying social structures. While schools alone cannot shape social structures, they can provide the opportunities for people to learn cooperative problem-solving. Third, conflict transformation emphasizes the development of positive identity and increases understanding and respect for others, using creative imagination. Schools have an important role to play in the socialization of such values. The following section investigates the extent to which this relationship has been identified and explained to date.

## **7 A role for schools?**

To what extent is the potential contribution of education in general and schooling in particular to sustainable peace or conflict transformation recognized by practitioners and scholars? The UN recognizes the socio-economic causes of conflict and the importance of long-term development in post-conflict countries.<sup>22</sup> There is implicit reference to primary schooling in statements about basic services. Education is also implied in references to the need for economic revitalization, especially in terms of livelihoods for young people and former

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<sup>22</sup> Two recent reports of the Secretary General to the General Assembly on the activities and progress of the Peacebuilding Commission in 2009 and 2010 and a statement of the Secretary General to Peacebuilding Fund stakeholders in November 2011 provide evidence of the current position, <http://daccess-ddsny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/367/70/PDF/N0936770.pdf?OpenElement> [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/64/866](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/64/866) [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/64/866](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/64/866) (all last accessed 8/12/11)

combatants and for the way in which women's capacities to engage in decision-making can contribute to economic recovery and social cohesion. There is, however, relatively little specific reference to education as a peace-building priority in the public statements of the Peacebuilding Commission.

One reason for the lack of explicit reference to education may be that the Peacebuilding Commission sees itself as a coordinating mechanism for different parts of the UN system where education may be a clearer priority, for example UNICEF. A briefing on the 2009 report for UNICEF's executive board affirmed that UNICEF is "a key partner and player in peace-building", and that its main approach is through social services (which term may include education).<sup>23</sup> UNICEF emphasizes the importance of schooling during conflict through emergency education for displaced people and schools as 'zones of peace'. Half of UNICEF's expenditure is on 19 conflict-affected fragile states. In the immediate post-war period, school reconstruction and provision of psycho-social support are key approaches. Curricular reform can also play an important role in the longer development phase. Examples of such reforms include 'child-friendly' schools, peace education and life skills. The UNESCO monitoring report for the Education for All targets (2011:21) states that education can play a pivotal role in peace-building through developing attitudes conducive to mutual understanding, tolerance and respect. It also argues that it should be given a far more central role in the post-conflict reconstruction agenda and proposes an expanded role for UNESCO and UNICEF.

Academic literature on peace-building barely mentions education. Scholars have examined processes such as: 'institutional building and regeneration'; 'rule of law, voice and

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<sup>23</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/about/excecboard/files/HFJ\\_PB\\_ExBoard\\_Informal\\_PPT\\_Final.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/about/excecboard/files/HFJ_PB_ExBoard_Informal_PPT_Final.pdf), (last accessed 9/12/11).

accountability'; 'political stability and control of corruption through an effective regulatory framework' (Addison and Murshed 2006:159); 'justice', 're-integration' (Uvin 2004:24); 'promotion of human rights and democratization' (Sola-Martin 2009:305); 'security', 'democracy', and 'socio-economic restructuring' (David 2002:23-24). Education is merely implied here as part of a more general social and economic restructuring or institution-building. Where education is mentioned, it is usually treated as if it is a known and constant process and is considered, without much discussion, to be one of the least problematic of restructuring tasks. This situation seems to reflect the top-down, institutional approaches of the liberal peace, as opposed to conflict transformation.

A central tenet of conflict transformation, as explained above, is to develop processes that encourage people to embrace a positive sense of identity in relation to others, and not in reaction to them. Deep change needs an increase in understanding and equal respect in relationships at inter-personal, inter-group and societal levels. People need to have access to politics and a voice in the decisions that affect their lives (Lederach 2003). It is hard to imagine any of these processes taking place without preparation or learning. Some of this may take place in schools and universities, some in more informal settings. If schooling has a role to play in this, it is necessary to explain how it will be achieved. It is, therefore, pertinent to turn to the academic literature on conflict transformation to explore the extent and manner in which schooling has been treated so far.

### **8 A useful framework by Dupuy**

The only significant study of the relationship between conflict transformation and schooling that I could locate is that by Dupuy (2008a). She proposes a framework with four 'conflict transforming concepts' to explain the relationship between schooling and peace, supporting

her argument with empirical examples from Guatemala, Nepal and Liberia. The first concept is 'access and inclusion'<sup>24</sup>. Equitable enrolment and access to resources is related to human capital, economic development and the mitigation of horizontal inequality. Ethnic and gender equality and the inclusion of disabled people are vital. How the curriculum is organized is also considered important, but Dupuy does not expand further. The second concept is 'values socialization'. School is the critical place for teaching children the values of tolerance and mutual respect, and non-violent methods of conflict resolution. Individuals taught this way may be less likely to endorse the use of violence to solve problems. Psychosocial support and positive discipline reinforce these values. The third concept is 'school-based participation' in order to build trust and cooperation between people in and out of school, through management committees, parent groups, and other links to the community. The fourth and last concept is the idea that education can instil 'a sense of hope for the future' and the practice of goal setting. The way that education is managed within a society, however, can entail significant costs that threaten social stability, especially if there is a weak link between formal education and employment opportunities.

Values socialization in school and participation are useful elements of this framework because they suggest how people may be motivated either to use violence or to refrain from doing so. Socialization is just one of possible links between motive, opportunity, mobilization and actual participation in armed conflict. Citing Harber (2002, 2004) and Davies (2004b), Dupuy (2008a) argues that violent socialization in school provides people with motivation and opportunities to use violence against others. It teaches the young that violence is acceptable and can also play a role in the formulation of feelings of humiliation, shame, and revenge that

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<sup>24</sup> In education, the term 'inclusion' is applied to the policy of educating disabled or disadvantaged learners alongside their peers. In wider social contexts, inclusion is a sense of belonging, feeling respected, valued for who one is, feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that one can do their best work (Miller and Katz 2002). It may also be used, however, as the antonym to 'social exclusion'.

may motivate and, thus, mobilize people to join rebel groups and participate in armed conflict (Davies 2004b). It is not just a question of the values that prevent violence, but also of those that promote reconciliation and accountability. Empirical evidence from Guatemala suggests that schools were ‘critical sites for teaching the values of friendship, respect, tolerance and honesty’ (Davies 2004b:77). In this section, however, Dupuy uses the term ‘peaceful values’ without explanation or elaboration, while there is no mention of skills or behaviour.

Dupuy’s discussion of participation emphasizes the emergence of cooperative, trusting relationships in the world outside the school. Although relationships within the education system operate at different levels, they are inter-connected. What happens in the school reflects society at large, and divisions and inequalities outside the school are replicated within it. This influence, however, is not uni-directional. The actions of schools can influence society. This is illustrated by a discussion of children’s clubs in Nepal, identifying the way young people’s participatory skills can be developed. A group of teachers said that: “when there is democracy inside the school, inside the classroom, when children are grown up, the democratic values and culture they have learned in the school will be reflected in the society and community and that in the long run will help peace and democracy” (quoted in Dupuy 2008a:62). Several members of children’s clubs mentioned that they actively worked to encourage out-of-school children living in their communities to attend school and that they had successfully worked to combat discrimination. Apart from this example, however, the focus is largely on the way in which social networks of adults may contribute to sustainable peace. This element of Dupuy’s framework can be further developed by more detailed consideration of students’ participatory and communication skills.

Although this framework is useful, then, there are some points of criticism. First, the section outlining the economic and social benefits of education is ambiguous. The economic benefits are based on the value of education as a portable form of capital. A Liberian primary school teacher emphasized that: “[e]ducation is your sole property, anywhere you go you take it with you. Material gains will only remain for those who are left behind. The education you get, you will have it until you die. And you can pass it to your children” (Dupuy 2008a:78). Educated people have greater private benefits than the uneducated, but their education also accrues benefits to the wider society. Educated people have higher opportunity costs for joining a rebellion, while poorly educated people have lower ones. Education as portable capital, however, is not necessarily at the service of conflict transformation. Educated people have knowledge and skills, access and control over information, which can be used to mobilize people for civil war. A widely expressed view in Liberia was that formal (‘western’) schooling was responsible for the war, as it was schooled individuals who, by and large, started and continued the war and organized the mostly uneducated populace to participate in it. Uneducated people may lack the skills, knowledge, resources, and confidence to pressure leaders and their fellow citizens to resolve problems peacefully and democratically. Dupuy tries to resolve these contradictory elements by arguing that education leads to ‘confidence’ and ‘a sense of hope for the future’. These elusive feelings may be difficult to identify or explain.

‘Access’ is certainly important. As noted earlier in this chapter (section 2) there is a correlation between secondary school attendance and the absence of armed conflict in a state (Barakat and Urdal 2009; Collier 2007; Thyne 2006). Researchers have correlated secondary educational access with the development of democratic values, which contribute to sustainable peace. It is argued that people are more likely to grasp the benefits of democracy if they have

received post-primary education, regardless of whether they enjoy these benefits or merely cherish hopes of doing so one day. “It is in the interest of autocrats to keep people ignorant; the most effective way of promoting democracy is by promoting education” (Hanf, Bauerle and Hampel 2009:2). There are three cautionary points to consider here. First, in conflict-affected countries, the proportion of people accessing secondary education is usually low. Second, the assumption appears to be that simply accessing secondary education results in increased knowledge, without consideration of how knowledge relates to understanding, skills, and/or values.<sup>25</sup> Third, it cannot be assumed that democratic attitudes alone guarantee peace. These can only be some of a wider range of factors.

Dupuy’s treatment of the curriculum under the same heading as access is unhelpful. Equitable access to the benefits of education is a different matter entirely from what is provided when people are in school. Educational access does not explain why countries with high education levels such as former Yugoslavia, Georgia, Russia, Lebanon, and Cyprus have had civil wars (Sambanis 2004). In order to highlight the role of education in the outbreak of conflict in such countries, it is necessary to point to the curriculum and what is being taught in schools. Building on Dupuy’s ideas, the practice of NGOs, peace-related curricular approaches and fieldwork insights I propose a more comprehensive conceptual framework. This usefully distinguishes between access and the school curriculum, and shows through an articulation of knowledge, values and skills how the curriculum can contribute to conflict transformation.

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<sup>25</sup> Most sub-Saharan African countries exhibit secondary enrolment figures of below 50%. [http://www.childinfo.org/education\\_1057.htm](http://www.childinfo.org/education_1057.htm), (last accessed 3/11/11). The figures from the rural areas in the district of Uganda covered by this thesis are below 25% (data from fieldwork).

## **Conclusion**

Civil wars are holding up progress towards the current Millennium Development Goals and are likely to act as a brake on future global development priorities. The prevention of civil war and its re-eruption is important. Education has a role to play, but the relationship between education and peace is poorly understood and scantily theorized. The orthodox approach to peace-building, known as the liberal peace, is concerned with the rule of law and institutional change, but does not sufficiently recognize the link between structural violence and civil war. Conflict transformation provides a better means for exploring in detail how education can contribute to sustainable peace.

Unreformed education systems are unlikely to challenge inequalities and contribute to improved relations between previously warring groups. Yet, education systems have remarkable resilience and cannot easily be replaced by new frameworks, no matter how rational or progressive they may appear (Sommers and Buckland 2004.) Education is unlikely to contribute to conflict transformation simply as part of a general process of re-structuring. Although equal access is undoubtedly important, the type and quality of the curriculum is too, as it is often complicit in civil war through reproducing the knowledge, skills and values of dominant groups (Buckland 2005).

There have been widespread calls for more and better research on education for peace-building and conflict transformation, (Davies 2004a; Harber 2004; Phillips 1998; Smith and Vaux 2003; Tawil and Harley 2004). There is a need for qualitative work on teacher perceptions of the work of schools following violent conflict (Miller and Affolter 2002), for comparative work on how schools approach the teaching of conflict (Davies 2004a), and for research on the link between peace education and citizenship education in conflict-affected



countries (Tomlinson and Benefield 2005). Conceptual frameworks are needed in order to explore and explain which strategies are most likely to contribute to conflict transformation. This thesis aims to contribute to our understanding by developing a conceptual framework for investigating the curriculum in some schools. In the following chapter, I explain the development of this conceptual framework.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **CURRICULUM FOR CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION**

This chapter seeks to develop a conceptual framework to show how the school curriculum could contribute to conflict transformation. The curriculum refers to the whole experience of the student in school, not simply programmed lessons. Parts of the curriculum can be directly planned by the government and management, but there may also be unplanned parts. The curriculum can contribute to the promotion of physical and structural violence, to the maintenance of the status quo, or to conflict transformation. Three well-known curricular approaches that can be applied in schools after civil war, namely peace, human rights and citizenship education, are examined in order to assess their potential contribution to conflict transformation. No single approach is sufficient on its own. Each, however, has valuable features that can contribute to a conceptual framework for a conflict transformation curriculum. This framework consists of three key concepts that can be applied to schools: 'truth-seeking', 'reconciliation' and 'inclusive citizenship'. These are the distillation of the study of the current conflict transformation literature, an investigation of the practice of non-governmental organizations, and the author's career and field experience. The framework is used to explore the contribution of the school curriculum to conflict transformation in a district of northern Uganda.

## 1 Curricular approaches

As I have already noted, there is little focus in the peace-building and conflict transformation literature on the role of the school curriculum in contributing to sustainable peace. Kelly (2009) explains that the term 'curriculum' is used for many different kinds of teaching programme. He distinguishes between a common and simplistic interpretation applying only to the content of subjects, and what he terms the total programme which includes moral implications and the educational purpose. The common denominator here is the sense of a planned programme. For example, what are commonly called 'extra-curricular activities', or clubs, are still, in fact, part of the curriculum because they are planned for. As learning extends beyond the process of studying school subjects in classes, the curriculum includes the rituals and habits of school life, relationships between staff and students, the environment and displays, the care of buildings, health and hygiene. Many, but not all, of these features are planned, either by the state or by the school's senior management and staff.

There is a further distinction between the *planned* curriculum and what is *received* by the students (Kelly 2009:9). The outcomes may not be those intended. There can be a disjuncture between what a school is ostensibly teaching, and what is being learned by the students; for example, while order and fairness may be preached in lessons and assemblies, the social relationships between staff and students may be based on fear and violence (Harber 2004). Methods and approaches to issues and problems, often the result of traditions or habits rather than conscious planning, convey important lessons about what is valued. Teaching and assessment methods are integral to the type of learning envisaged, for example if the examinations require much factual recall, then the lessons will concentrate on memorization. The student learns to be a passive recipient of received knowledge. Methods that encourage

critical and independent thinking may teach people how to question received wisdom or inequalities (Davies 2004b)

Tawil and Harley (2004:15) provide a detailed definition which comprehends the planned and the unplanned aspects of the curriculum:

“The curriculum may be broadly conceived to encompass educational philosophy, values, aims and objectives, organisational structures, teaching and learning materials and methods, student experiences, assessment, and learning outcomes. It is a process that includes both intended or officially prescribed curriculum, as well as actually implemented or real curriculum.”

In adding the ‘hidden’ learning that occurs as a by-product of the organization of the school, and not necessarily intended by the planners, Kelly’s final definition is simple: “the curriculum is the totality of the experiences the pupil has as a result of the provision made” (Kelly 2009:13).

These two definitions describe the way ‘curriculum’ is to be understood in this thesis.

According to Obura (2003:29-30), the idea of restoring the formal education system as a force for social and national reconstruction after a civil war has become established. ‘Restoration’, however, may imply reconstruction of failed systems, which were implicated in the causes of the war. A continuing risk of renewed violence in Burundi, for example, is ascribed to a failure to reform the education system (Obura 2008). Hanlon and Yanacopulos (2006:8) point out the problem inherent in the idea of restoration:

“Aid agencies sometimes put a stress on rebuilding which restores what was there before. But that may be seen as restoring serious discrimination or inequity. Fairness means rebuilding in a new way.”

One locus for reform is the curriculum. Where the curriculum may have contributed to civil war, either directly or through its involvement in structural violence (explained in Chapter One), by remaining unreformed it cannot prevent a return to war. Alternatively, a reformed curriculum may promote conflict transformation and strengthen constraints against violence.

“Curricular renewal is the crux of the process of reform of school education. [...] The types of knowledge, skills, values, norms attitudes, and behaviours that encourage respect for human dignity and diversity are mainly located within often sensitive areas of learning that touch upon [...] collective memory or [...] amnesia, identity, [...] citizenship, and of shared destiny.” (Tawil and Harley 2004: 15-16)

Whether the curriculum is reformed or not, will depend on the way the war ended. Where a war has ended with negotiations, curriculum reform may be possible, but issues of state legitimacy, citizenship and national identity may impact strongly on the direction taken. The curriculum can be used to recognize and respect diversity. For example, after the 1989 Peace Agreement in Lebanon, the education ministry introduced civic education<sup>26</sup> in an effort to counter political sectarianism. In Guatemala, the emphasis was on the need to recognize the story of the enduring social exclusion of indigenous people and their resilience (Tawil and Harley 2004).

Where one side has prevailed, attitudes to the curriculum will depend on the winners' view of any role it may have played in causing the war. This is particularly true for school history,

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<sup>26</sup> Civic education and its relationship with citizenship is discussed in section 1.3 below

where the prescribed schemes of work and textbooks can be particularly divisive (Sigsgaard 2009).<sup>27</sup> As noted by Fernandez-Armesto (1997:193):

“History is written by victors. In social terms, the victors are the élites who build the monuments, control the organs of record, compile the archives and hold the chroniclers, annalists and journalists in the palm of their patronage.”

A good example is Rwanda, where the government’s view of a distorted curriculum resulted in the prohibition of history teaching in schools (Freedman, Weinstein, Murphy and Longman 2008). In Sri Lanka, history teaching is a contentious area as there is lack of agreement on whose history to teach, who selects it, and for what purpose (Tawil and Harley 2004). In the hands of an authoritarian government, the curriculum can be used to indoctrinate and forge a national identity that ignores cultural and ethnic diversity.

There are three significant, well-known and broad curricular approaches that may be applied to the school curriculum in a post-conflict or early recovery stage after civil war: ‘Peace Education’, ‘Human Rights Education’ and ‘Citizenship Education’. Each has an extensive literature. They will be examined here in order to identify their characteristics and their capacity to contribute to conflict transformation.

### **1.1 Peace Education**

By its title peace education suggests a curriculum for peace-building and conflict transformation. Peace education is used around the world in post-conflict contexts (Reardon 2000; Salomon and Nevo 2002). Its proponents claim it is more than a school subject: it is a

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<sup>27</sup> Peled-Elhanan (2010) has studied images of Palestinians in Israeli school books, finding that they are portrayed in an entirely negative light. Massacres of Palestinians in 1948 are represented as necessary for the survival of the Jewish state.

'process', a whole approach to education to be conveyed through a variety of subjects across the curriculum, whose breadth allows for adaptation to local needs. Aspeslagh (1996:334) has identified several main strands to this approach. In one, peace education focuses on relationships between richer and poorer states with a normative position on reform. Another strand derives from non-violent movements with religious origins, such as Quakers and Buddhists, and looks towards disarmament, conflict resolution and peer mediation in schools. A third strand concerns the fostering of values of human dignity, the development of the ethics and skills of non-violence, and the internalization of environmental awareness (Reardon 2000).

Common to all three strands is an emphasis on values. Peace educators argue that empirical evidence from a range of countries suggests that successful peace education requires the development of 'emotional intelligence' (Kupermintz and Salomon 2005; Luzincourt and Gulbrandson 2010; Malm and Lofgren 2007; Wessells 2005; Zbar, Russell and Weston 2005). Emotional intelligence as used by Goleman (1995) refers to competences in two main dimensions: 'intra-personal', including self-awareness and self control, and 'inter-personal' relating to sympathy for others, sensitivity and cooperation skills. A good example of this approach is the programme developed by UNHCR and disseminated through the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE):

"The peace education programme teaches the skills and values associated with peaceful behaviours. The programme is designed to enable and encourage people to think constructively about issues, both physical and social and to develop constructive attitudes towards living together and solving problems that arise in their communities through peaceful means."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> [http://www.ineesite.org/post/peace\\_education\\_programme/](http://www.ineesite.org/post/peace_education_programme/) (last accessed 19/4/12).

Critics of peace education point to its conceptual weaknesses, resulting from the effort to address all approaches and forms of violence under one heading (Harris 2002; Salomon 2002). In areas of relative tranquillity the stress may be on values such as tolerance, respect and kindness to one another, but in regions of intractable conflict, peace education is about changing the mindset concerning the collective other, understanding each other's narrative and one's own group's responsibility for others' suffering. This requires knowledge and understanding. 'Knowledge' refers to the recall of events, facts and ideas, and 'understanding' means being able to address, compare and synthesize the complex roots of conflict, as well as the interests and relationships of different groups. This is explained in more detail in section 2 of the next chapter. Yet, the UNHCR programme is devoid of any knowledge content, and even a list of basic human rights, a surprising omission for a UN agency. Reardon makes a distinction between 'peace studies' - educating *about* peace, which includes knowledge, information and critical analysis, and 'peace education' - educating *for* peace, which is about values and skills (Reardon 2000). If peace education, however, is to be used for conflict transformation after civil wars, it is questionable whether it is helpful to separate knowledge from values and skills in the way advocated by Reardon (2000).<sup>29</sup>

A detailed peace education framework, prepared for UNICEF by Fountain (1999), unusually includes knowledge. Peace education is here defined as:

"The process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the

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<sup>29</sup> This point is taken up in a discussion on knowledge, skills and values in the curriculum in section 3.2.



conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, inter-group, national or international level.” (Fountain, 1999:1)

Examples of the knowledge suggested by Fountain include understanding rights and responsibilities, an awareness of cultural heritage, recognition of prejudice, and the identification of causes of conflict and community mechanisms for conflict resolution. The necessary skills include cooperation, critical thinking, problem-solving and participation. The identified values are tolerance, empathy, reconciliation, solidarity, justice and equality.<sup>30</sup>

There are also criticisms of peace education from a practical point of view. According to Salomon (2002), there is insufficient empirical examination of the way peace education works and the results it achieves. In analysing 300 programmes, Nevo and Brem (2002) showed that only 100 had an evaluation element, while the majority took place in the developed world. Cairns (1996:183) suggests that peace education focuses too much on interpersonal conflict as opposed to inter-group conflict. As the group is the crucial element in the construction of identity, rather than the individual often targeted in peace education, the view young people have of the future depends on what is happening to and within their group (Bird 2007; Cairns 1996). Furthermore, critics point out that state-organized peace education is almost non-existent and only rarely appears in schools as a subject in its own right (Harber and Sakade 2009). This is probably due to the fact that there is an essential conflict between the transformative aims of peace education and the state’s use of a didactic curriculum teaching the ‘right’ answer to passive students in an effort to build loyalty and unity (Harber and Sakade 2009). Teachers may feel that peace education threatens to undermine their authority.

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<sup>30</sup> Fountain labels these as ‘attitudes’ but they are really ‘values’: deep beliefs or psychological states that lead to a propensity to act in a certain way. Attitudes, although based on values, are more temporary responses. An example is an opinion about a government policy (Carlton 1995). Fountain appears to be following the ideas of Heater (1990), discussed in 2.1.3 below.

Those who think that peace education will never find a secure place in the mainstream state-organized curriculum say that it is better located within the community's non-formal education consisting of stories, dance or music (Jones 2005; Lopes Cardozo 2008).

## **1.2 Human rights education**

If it is difficult for peace education to secure a position in the school curriculum, it may be thought that human rights education has a greater possibility, since it is based on widely accepted and published global norms. Human rights are universal claims based on the capacity of normal adult humans to make reliable judgements about what is morally right (Donnelly 2003:51). They were developed and argued for in opposition to sovereign or unlimited authority, and they represent the choice of a particular vision of human potential (Talbot 2005:184). They are defined and tabulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) adopted by the General Assembly in 1948 and given legal force by international covenants (UN 1948). Almost all contemporary states have ratified these and thereby accept that every human has certain equal and inalienable rights and is thus entitled to equal respect from the state.

Human rights underpin a wide range of social institutions and international efforts to prevent wars but the consensus on human rights is limited: not every person, every society, at all times is certain to accept every article. The rights outlined in the Universal Declaration can be seen in terms of two categories: civil and political rights and freedoms, originating in claims of freedom against arbitrary authority, and economic and social rights which are claims for the essentials of a quality life, including the right to family life, the right to work and the right to health care. These categories are interdependent. On the one hand, a starving person is in no position to exercise her civil or political rights; on the other, a society that is denied political

freedom and participation has limited opportunity to improve economic and social conditions (Howard 1995).

The supposed division between categories of rights led to specific challenges. Some modern neo-liberals disregard economic and social rights, believing that as long as property is protected, contracts are honoured and competition is fair, then the markets alone will lead to the best possible quality of life for the greatest number (Howard 1995). Before the collapse of the communist system in the Soviet Union in 1989, there was support from both sides of the political spectrum for dictatorships, which suppressed civil and political rights in the name of development (Pollis and Schwab 1980). The argument that the western origin of the concept of human rights makes them inappropriate for the needs of the developing world was taken up by China and other Asian states, who proposed an alternative group of 'Asian values' (Lee 1985). However 'The Bangkok Declaration' 1993 which proposed greater emphasis on collective economic and social rights was opposed by several Asian governments and more than one hundred Asian-Pacific non-governmental organizations, who warned that such claims were designed to mask authoritarian government (Lauren 2003:263).

Douzinas (2000, 2006, 2008) attacks the 'institutionalization' of human rights. He argues that the implicit promise to the developing world is that the adoption of a neo-liberal model of good governance and codified rights will inevitably lead to western economic levels. However the current global rights architecture actually increases state power, contributing to the massive inequalities of modern capitalism. The codification of rights into law renders them vulnerable to legal changes made by sovereign states, the greatest violators of rights. For Douzinas, the power of rights has always lain in their use to resist oppression and to lead towards a better society. "Priests, princes and prime ministers are the enemy against whom

[...] human rights were conceived as a defence [...] The usefulness of rights comes to an end when they lose their aim of resisting injustice" (Douzinas 2008). Douzinas gives a useful warning against assuming that human rights will inevitably lead to a better future, but perhaps he over-states the case. He accepts that the universalism of rights, invented by the West and promising equality and dignity, will now be used by the South and East to make claims on the distribution of world wealth, for human rights are not static (Douzinas 2006).

As many oppressed groups and populations are ready to use the language of rights as claims for equality and better treatment, there are constant demands for new rights. Technological and economic change, developing ideas and philosophies generate new and competing claims. The development of the majority of international human rights instruments out of the core principles of the Universal Declaration of 1948 has stemmed from concerns of the global South for women's and children's rights, as well as cultural and environmental rights (Myburgh and Scanlong 2007). The concept of group rights has developed since the 1965 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination and has been extended to ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (Lerner 2003). An example of the way that the foundation principles of the Universal Declaration are developing can be found in the field of children's rights. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted in 1989 and is the source of further developments in children's rights. Some issues, such as children's labour migration and unaccompanied minors as refugees, are currently not covered by the human rights regime, but are likely to be incorporated in the future (Brysk 2005).

Education appears not only as a specified right in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration, but as a requirement used to strengthen respect for human rights. The preamble makes clear the educational obligation of governments and individuals:

“[...] every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by **teaching and education** [author’s emphasis] to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance...”  
(UN 1948:1)

Under the UN’s ‘Agenda of Peace’ (Boutros-Ghali 1992) the UN Security Council began to support human rights education as one among many mechanisms for institutional change, democratization and reconstruction. The El Salvador, Haiti and Cambodia peace-keeping operations all included human rights education components (Osler and Starkey 2010). In 1994 the UN declared a ‘Decade for Human Rights Education’.<sup>31</sup> The aim was to build ‘a universal culture of human rights’ in order to strengthen freedom, participation, ethnic tolerance, gender equality and peace-building. The UN, governments and many NGOs seem convinced that human rights education can contribute to peace-building. Bernath, Holland and Martin (1999) advocate that once a peace accord has been signed after a civil war, the most important function for local, national and international groups is to teach people about their rights and build the capacity of the government to recognize and protect them.

The definitions and frameworks of human rights education employed by the United Nations community, governments, non-governmental organizations, academics and practitioners are quite fluid (Flowers 2004). Experienced practitioners, however, are in agreement on some key points. First, human rights education differs from other related educational approaches, such as peace education, precisely because it takes its authority and its relevance directly from the universal values and binding covenants of the United Nations. It is necessary to learn the

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<sup>31</sup> <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/decade.htm> (last accessed 1/12/10).

fundamental rights of the main covenants, the idea and history of rights, their dependence on laws for their protection, and how violations are identified and examined (OHCHR 2004). Second, the methods used must be consistent with human rights values, respecting individual and cultural differences while affirming universal principles. The values, described somewhat differently in various frameworks, include equal treatment, trust, tolerance and fairness (Bernath, Holland and Martin 1999; Osler and Starkey 2010). Third, it must involve the whole person and build up skills elements, such as mobilizing, organizing, collecting, processing and promoting through various media. Fourth, it must lead to action, both in individuals' lives and in the local and global communities (Bernath, Holland and Martin 1999; OHCHR 2004; Osler and Starkey 2010).

Osler and Starkey (2010:102) argue that young people in school should learn to expect their rights to be respected. They should also learn about democratic processes through the experience of school daily life. Others disagree, stating that there is a fundamental contradiction between such aims and the structure of formal education. Schools have an invested, hierarchical power structure. Membership is steeped in ritual and an extension of invested power is offered to those of the next generation who are considered most likely to consolidate the status quo (Harber 2002; Steutel 1991). For Griffiths (1998:35), prefects, school councils and team captains represent:

“the doctrinaire inculcation of favoured pupils into the existing hierarchy of invested power [...] a view of society is offered in which responsibility is synonymous with institutional authority. In such a society the few people with authority are invested with the monopoly of civic responsibility and the majority is effectively disempowered from individual or partisan agency.”

One disadvantage of using human rights education as a means of ensuring that the school curriculum contributes to peace is that there is a widespread lack of familiarity with human rights instruments among educators in many countries (Osler and Starkey 2010). Furthermore human rights education is mistrusted by governments who then fail to provide programmes with enough time and resources (Lord and Flowers 2006). I would speculate that many governments think that an emphasis on rights over duties increases the likelihood of disunity and separatism. The incorporation of human rights within a government citizenship education programme might overcome this disadvantage, where the relationship between human rights, responsibilities and the obligations of the state can be clarified. It is to the third curricular approach - citizenship education - that I now turn.

### **1.3 Citizenship education**

Citizenship education is derived from developments in thinking about citizenship over the past twenty years. The concept of citizenship has a long pedigree dating from Greek and Roman civilization and including significant elements from the Enlightenment and, especially, from the American and French Revolutionary periods (Faulks 2000). It refers both to membership in a political system and to the delineation of freedoms, rights and responsibilities within that membership. There are different perspectives on citizenship: the liberal, individual view emphasizes rights, while the republican ideal of civic virtue emphasizes solidarity and fraternity (Janoski 1998; Turner 2001). While these perspectives are not necessarily opposed to each other, different states have held varying conceptions of the extent of citizenship and its nature. For example, at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the new American Republic, slaves were not citizens for they were not members of the political system, but although women were citizens, they had limited rights, as they were not entitled to vote (Ellis 2007).

Citizenship education, used in many countries around the world, can be understood as the preparation of each generation of young people to be members of a political system, with an understanding of the extent of their rights and duties (Kymlicka 2004). It developed from civic education, which is concerned with the simple transmission of knowledge about a country's government, institutions and history (Alexander, Pinson and Yonah 2011). Citizenship education practitioners argue that civic education tends to serve authoritarian states that expect citizens to know their place and not to challenge the political system by becoming energetic actors. Citizenship education specifically demands participation and action and its growth in western countries is less the result of concerns about authoritarianism and more a response to individualism, political apathy and alienation (Ichilov 1998). The focus on participation can be seen in Griffiths's (1998:49) definition :

“An education that prepares pupils for global citizenship by granting them active, democratic citizens' rights throughout their education; and that uses the curriculum as a vehicle for developing young citizens' explicit awareness of those rights and their ability to act upon them in an ethically informed critical context of distanced reflection.”

Under this definition, citizenship education involves some understanding of membership of a world community, but there may be a variety of views about the extent of the political system to be embraced. Like Griffiths (1998), Osler and Starkey (2010) think that the ethical foundations of citizenship are human rights, through which people can feel themselves to be members of a wider human community, as well as that of their local community and the state. Isin and Turner (2007) approach the issue from another perspective. They argue that citizenship should be regarded as the foundation of human rights. Human rights are bound to seem abstract and distant unless we contribute to their protection:



“Having an active, dynamic and vital citizenry is an absolute precondition of democracy that upholds human rights. There is currently no community within which to have an educational experience of human rights, apart from the somewhat abstract community of humanity.” (Isin and Turner 2007:13)

Although they sound different, these positions are not dissimilar. The important common element between them is that action and participation create the meaning of human rights in daily life.

An emphasis on rights may be thought of as belonging to the liberal individual concept of citizenship, but Osler and Starkey (2005:162) have produced a list of accompanying responsibilities, which are perhaps more aligned with the tradition of fraternity and civic virtue. Individual and collective responsibility to others means considering the impact of one's actions, treating others with respect, and working for equity. The language of this list is action-oriented, although the actions are described in general terms -‘contribute’ ‘work for’ ‘actively participate’ and ‘protect’.

There is relatively little comparative research into the effectiveness of citizenship education in increasing levels of participation. A cross-national study of civic attitudes of fourteen-year-old students from twenty-eight democratic countries found that 80% of young people do not intend to participate in conventional political activities, such as joining a political party, writing letters to newspapers or being a candidate for local office (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald and Schulz 2001). Students, however, believe it is important for adults to participate in community and environmental groups and are willing to become engaged in some forms of civic life, such as collecting money for a social cause. Schools that model democratic practices by creating an open climate for discussion are the most effective in promoting civic

knowledge and engagement (Torney-Purta et al. 2001). A further study indicated that four years after the introduction of a citizenship curriculum in England and Wales, students showed increasing awareness of politics and its influence, but limited themselves to activities that required low levels of time and effort. There was no sign of any direct impact of school factors on student attitudes to civic participation (Benton, Cleaver, Featheston, Kerr, Lopes, and Whitby 2006).

#### **1.4 Contribution to conflict transformation**

Each of the three curricular approaches can contribute much to conflict transformation, but no single one is fully sufficient on its own. Peace education's broad, flexible approach means that it can be applied to a variety of post-conflict contexts. It is widely applied around the world in one of its many forms. Nevertheless, it is seldom, if ever, included in national curricula. As such, it is dependent on the activities of international agencies and NGOs. The emphasis on the necessary skills and values to be promoted for peace is a strong point. The skills include cooperation, critical thinking, problem-solving and participation. The values are those of tolerance, empathy, reconciliation, solidarity and a sense of justice and equality. Peace education, however, is almost silent on the required knowledge and understanding.

Lord and Flowers (2006) believe that peace education and human rights education can mutually reinforce each other. Peace educators trained in human rights can understand the links between the denial of rights and conflict, while human rights educators can teach negotiation and conflict resolution skills. Unlike most peace education, human rights education has a clear basis in knowledge and understanding, as it rests on the widely accepted norms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the associated legally binding conventions. It also highlights the values that support human rights, such as tolerance, fairness

and equal treatment, and includes skills and participation in political activities. As explained in Chapter One, violent conflict has often emerged from deep-seated feelings of economic, social and political grievance. Therefore, for human rights education to contribute to conflict transformation, it should stress the indivisibility of both civil and political rights and economic and social rights. Like peace education, human rights education may be seen as a potential threat by states concerned with building loyalty and unity. Conversely, Douzinas (2006) warned of the danger that the institutionalization of human rights might be used to reinforce state power over people, reducing their chances of challenging structural violence. Another drawback of human rights education is that it does not necessarily deal with membership of the community and state, nor with issues of history and collective memory.

Citizenship education may complement these two strategies. It is compatible with a democratic state with a commitment to long-term peace-building, but flexible and responsive to context and tradition. As it is derived from civic education, a non-controversial method of teaching young people about their national and local political system and institutions, citizenship education may be more acceptable to governments than peace or human rights education. As such, it has been incorporated into the curricula of many state education systems (Kymlicka 2004).

Citizenship education, however, has not yet been shown to increase participation (Benton et al. 2006; Torney-Purta et al. 2001). Furthermore, what a government calls 'citizenship education' may actually be civic education under a new name. Where citizenship education is used by governments with the objective of building national unity, it is likely to reflect the agendas of political élites. If it is focused on the *status* of national citizenship rather than the emotional feeling of belonging, it may not adequately recognize the interests of minority

identity groups or diasporas (Levine and Bishai 2010). In other words, civic and citizenship education are not necessarily geared towards *inclusive* citizenship. This idea is discussed in the next section.

On the other hand Citizenship Education includes a coherent body of knowledge and required understanding of state and local institutions, as well as of human rights, values and instruments. Most importantly, it proposes active participation skills. The comprehensive approach dates back at least to Heater (1990) who proposed that citizenship education demands a balanced combination of knowledge, attitudes and skills, without citing a specific source for this idea. Knowledge addresses how citizenship is articulated in institutions and laws and the major issues for citizens at local, national, regional and global levels. Attitudes include self-understanding, respect for others, respect for values of evidence, freedom, justice, fairness and altruism, reciprocity of rights and duties. Skills cover intellect and judgement, reasoning, sympathy, understanding consequences, oral and written communication, discussion, organizing and participating in groups, petitioning and lobbying, and persuasive communication. In Heater's view, all three elements are equally important:

“Knowledge about citizenship is only partially useful if it does not lead on to the formulation of attitudes and acquisition of skills; attitudes are but prejudices unless grounded in a firm and clear understanding; and action is wanting direction without attitudes and is irresponsible and/or inefficient if born in ignorance.” (Heater 1990:336-337)

Although it is not clear whether she directly followed Heater, Fountain's framework for UNICEF (1999) is remarkably similar, and it is significant for being the only peace education framework to identify the importance of a combination of knowledge, skills and values. It specifies knowledge and understanding of rights and responsibilities and the identification of causes of conflict and community mechanisms for conflict resolution. Fountain cites Hicks

(1985) as her source for this combination, but it dates back at least to Taba (1962:196) who argued the following:

‘The general aims [of education] can be satisfied only if individuals acquire knowledge, skills, techniques and attitudes....Objectives on this level are of two different sorts: those which describe the school-wide outcomes and the more specific ones which describe behaviours to be attained in a particular unit, subject area [or] course.’

In demanding a systematic approach to the formulation and organization of objectives, Taba devoted a chapter to knowledge of facts, ideas, concepts; reflective thinking; values and attitudes; sensitivities and feelings; and skills. In the final section she gave the example of a 1949 U.S. school program which reduced the five elements to three: knowledge, skills and attitudes.<sup>32</sup>

To conclude this section, there is a large body of literature for each of these curricular approaches, which makes it difficult to clarify their boundaries or understand precisely how they could best contribute to conflict transformation. Citizenship education appears to be the best vehicle for active participation in local and national politics and stands a good chance of being incorporated in state curricula, but risks being controlled by dominant groups. In such a case, the participatory elements will be downplayed, and it will revert to being civic education, where people are taught about institutions but discouraged from becoming active. Peace education seems to be the best for transmitting values of tolerance, fairness and equal respect and skills of problem-solving, but in most of its versions, necessary knowledge and understanding seems to be absent. Human rights education is based on clear ethical and legal

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<sup>32</sup> For clarification of the origin of this concept, I am grateful to the influential peace and citizenship educator Robin Richardson, who taught Hicks (among others) and who wrote this personal communication to the author: ‘I should imagine I met [knowledge, skills and attitudes] first through the Open University course on curriculum design for which I was a tutor in the early 1970s. It may perhaps originate with Dewey and his generation but my own first contact with it would have been through Bruner or Hilda Taba.’

principles, but runs the danger of emphasizing an individualistic approach based on civic and political rights, and may be distrusted by governments. Neither of the last two has a secure place in state curricula. As will be seen, (in section 2 of the following chapter), the combination of knowledge, attitudes and skills, slightly modified, is used as an organizing method for a conceptual framework for a conflict transformation curriculum.

## **2 Towards a conceptual framework**

Although no single curricular approach of those examined above is sufficient on its own, features of each can be combined to develop a more useful conceptual framework for the contribution of the school curriculum to conflict transformation. This needs to be broad enough to be adaptable to a wide range of post-conflict contexts, but capable of being practically organized for the day-to-day life of schools. There are personal, theoretical and practical sources for this framework. First, I am drawing from my own experience as an educationalist. My experience of teaching history in school contributed to ideas of how people might approach the contested past through critical thinking. My previous research suggested that students in my school in England were motivated to care about human rights both from personal experience and from sympathy for others' experience of violations (Cunningham 1986). Working with others to encourage democratic participation in school taught me that the daily life of the school is itself a learning experience. My visits to African schools suggested that students are responsive to opportunities to discussing issues in small groups, and the exploratory visit to Uganda revealed that at least some schools were trying to teach values for peace and reconciliation.

Secondly, I am building on the work of conflict transformation thinkers, many of whom are practitioners as well. Since conflict transformation ideas are developed and refined through

practice, I studied the policies of six well-known conflict transformation non-governmental organizations to identify common approaches, which could be practised in schools. The NGOs, chosen because of their use of the term 'conflict transformation' in their statements of aims and goals, are: Conciliation Resources, Search for Common Ground, World Vision, Responding to Conflict, ActionAid, and International Alert. A wide range of ideas and concepts were compared and combined in relation to the practical boundaries of the curriculum.<sup>33</sup>

I identify three key concepts for a conflict transformation curriculum: 'truth-seeking', 'reconciliation' and 'inclusive citizenship'. 'Truth-seeking' addresses the need to understand one's personal and collective history, as well as the root causes of violent conflict. UNESCO (2011:240-242) states that what people are taught and how they are taught can make countries less prone to violence, and that one important area is the teaching of history. As Buckley-Zistel (2008:142) puts it, the way the violent past is remembered is central to every transformation effort: "If our identity is always rooted in the past, the question is not whether one should remember but how." The NGOs concerned with conflict transformation express in their policy statements their concern with truth-seeking. Examples of this include "[A] comprehensive understanding of the conflict" (World Vision 2011); "[T]aking a fresh look at conflicts that affect them" (Responding to Conflict 2011 ); and the need to understand the complexities of each situation, "seeing old problems from new perspectives...challenging existing stereotypes" (Conciliation Resources 2011). According to ActionAid "unequal power relationships are always the root cause" of violent conflict (ActionAid 2011). Although

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<sup>33</sup> Conciliation Resources <http://www.c-r.org/about>; Search for Common Ground [http://www.sfcg.org/sfcg/sfcg\\_home.html](http://www.sfcg.org/sfcg/sfcg_home.html); World Vision <http://www.worldvision.org.uk/about-us/our-core-values/>; Responding to Conflict <http://www.respond.org/>; ActionAid <http://www.actionaid.org/what-we-do/emergencies-conflict/conflict-and-protection>; International Alert <http://www.international-alert.org/about-us> (all sites last accessed 14/9/12). As the following references are from web resources, there are no page numbers.

Fountain's (1999) conceptualization of peace education includes the identification of the causes of conflict as one aspect of necessary knowledge for peace, none of the three curricular approaches examined in the previous section gives prominence to the issues of the past, memory and history.

'Reconciliation' is the idea of forgoing the impulse to take revenge and easing a state of active hostility. According to Lederach (2003), young people need to develop a sense of positive identity in relation to others through increases in understanding and mutual respect in relationships. Statements of the NGOs concur with this view, for example "[Peace is] an ongoing process of developing relationships of mutual respect and trust" (Search for Common Ground 2011). People need "collaborative partnerships to build trust" (Conciliation Resources 2011); "[to] change relationships, behaviours and attitudes" (World Vision 2011), "listen to the needs of others and understand their perspectives" (Responding to Conflict 2011); "practise cooperative action and mutual problem-solving" (Search for Common Ground 2011). These processes contribute to reconciliation in that they counter vengeance and hatred.

Dupuy (2008a), whose work was discussed in the previous chapter, claims that in-school participation is an important way for schools to contribute to conflict transformation. The concept of 'inclusive citizenship' embraces this process but includes also a knowledge and understanding of political and legal institutions at local and national level. I am drawing from citizenship education where participation and action are combined with the knowledge elements of civic education, and from human rights education, which rests on knowledge and understanding of human rights. Inclusive citizenship is a useful unifying concept to embrace NGO references to grassroots participation, inclusion, communication skills and advocacy. Examples of their statements and aims include: "An essential step in transforming conflict is



enabling people to communicate and have accurate information about each other” (Search for Common Ground 2011); “ensure that peace-building activities are inclusive and reflect the views of all sections of society including engaging effectively with politicians and policy makers”(Conciliation Resources 2011); the “promotion of women’s participation and skills” for lobbying governments to protect and promote rights (International Alert 2011).

The following sub-sections address each of the key concepts in turn to explain their application to the school curriculum.

## **2.1 Truth-seeking**

In the context of the school curriculum, ‘truth-seeking’ refers to the understanding of the root causes and trajectory of civil war, and the readiness to hear the narratives and experiences of participants, whether so-called perpetrators or so-called victims. (Wilson 2001). Conflict transformation practitioners speak of the need to challenge stereotypes and to understand the past from different perspectives. There is a widespread view that the truth is crucial for long-term peace:

“Unless a society exposes itself to the truth, it can harbor no possibility of reconciliation, reunification and trust. For a peace settlement to be solid and durable it must be based on truth.” [Roberto Canas of El Salvador, quoted in Stremlau (1997:23)].

The key questions however, are: what is truth, whose truth and which truth? The notion of truth is not self-evident. Power operates on the selection and editing of information and decisions on what counts as knowledge. Foucault saw truth as a pretence perpetuated by the powerful. He argued that there is a complex process of choice and exclusion by authorities.

Those in positions of authority, who are seen to be 'experts', are those who can speak the truth (Mills 2003:72). This does not mean that any possibility of truth must be abandoned. While accepting its limitations, truth can be sought by trying to understand subjective points of view from many perspectives, for example that of the imaginary observer outside our own world: "History is like a nymph glimpsed bathing between leaves: the more you shift perspective, the more is revealed" (Fernandez-Armesto 1997:221).

A distinction may be drawn between forensic truth directed towards accountability, and narrative truth in which individuals and groups tell their story without contradiction as a way of restoring lost dignity (Wilson 2001:37). As agreement on guilt and accountability is difficult to achieve, forensic truth-seeking can perpetuate victimhood and resentment. Therefore, some countries, like Cambodia and Spain, have preferred to suppress suffering, declining to investigate previous atrocities in detail, or to seek personal accountability from perpetrators at least for one generation (Hayner 2002). In most civil wars, however, time does not heal all wounds. According to Lerche and Jeong (2002:117), grievances may be passed down to generations and become easily manipulated by political leaders, as a 'widening gap of hatred and fear' increases the risk of new violence. Bloomfield, Barnes and Huyse (2003:167) agree that: "The collective and individual hurt, pain, frustration and anger that are the legacy of violence will only grow, not diminish if left unaddressed."

Narrative truth-seeking may contribute to sustainable peace by publicly acknowledging the victims' suffering and recognizing their uniqueness and dignity as human beings. Following identity-based conflicts, reconciliation is supported by attempts to challenge the constant reproduction of conflict through myths, folk tales, stereotypes and political rhetoric (Buckley-Zistel 2008). This type of truth-seeking aims at changes in groups' collective memories and the

development of some sort of shared history (Staub 2011:433). Many truth commissions - legal or quasi-legal processes designed to address a contested past - have been established after violent conflict. They vary immensely in their terms of reference, and often the distinction between forensic and narrative truth is not clear-cut. Countries like South Africa, Rwanda, Colombia, and Sierra Leone have attempted a mixture (Borer 2006; Hayner 2002).

As far as the relationship between truth commissions and the school curriculum is concerned, governments are reluctant to risk increasing divisions or exposing themselves to criticism. For example, the government that commissioned an innovative Peruvian curriculum resource in association with the truth and reconciliation commission declined to place it in the national curriculum. There were similar failures to make any educational impact from corresponding commissions in South Africa, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guatemala (Paulson 2010).

Even in the absence of truth commissions, the curriculum still carries the 'official account' of the past and it can be a disputed zone, with different parties trying to ensure that their version of the truth is presented without contradiction to future generations. Questions of forensic truth and legal accountability are, therefore, very difficult for schools to address, but types of narrative truth, such as the causes and trajectory of a war, can be studied and the stories of individuals and groups can be heard. The location of such sensitive material varies widely between education systems. In some, the past is included with other humanities subjects, such as geography and social studies, while in others history is a separate subject. It is normal for very simplified versions of the past to be presented at primary level, with more complex versions being introduced to secondary students. Accounts of genocide survivors may appear in history, autobiographies of child soldiers in social studies and war poetry may be included in literature courses. Visitors may come to school to tell their own stories, and where

technology allows, people can watch documentary films and videos, or clips from social networking sites. The need for such material to be mediated and interpreted governs the style of pedagogy. The role of the teacher as the authority in the classroom can be balanced with opportunities for students to discuss and reflect.

To sum up, I propose truth-seeking as a fundamental concept for conflict transformation in school on account of its potential for understanding the roots and course of civil war, challenging stereotypes and offering acknowledgement to all those who have suffered. While accepting that efforts will be made by all groups to dominate the official narrative, truth-seeking can contribute to the next concept of the framework: reconciliation.

## **2.2 Reconciliation**

Scholars like Jeong (2005) and Lederach (2005) emphasise that truth is an essential element of the reconciliation necessary for sustainable peace. Reconciliation means forgoing the impulse to take revenge or to maintain a state of enmity and hostility. Reconciliation may be between different ethnic or identity-based groups, or between an oppressed population and dominant groups who controlled a repressive regime. It can reduce antagonism without effacing cultural differences (De Gruchy 2002; Lerche and Jeong 2002). There are different approaches to reconciliation, such as a faith-based belief in forgiveness or a secular aim of mere co-existence. After civil wars, some countries have opted for truth commissions with an emphasis on accountability and without a reconciliation element. Others, influenced by the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission have aimed to address victims' needs for dignity.

The conceptions of Galtung (1996), De Gruchy (2002) and Lerche and Jeong (2002) portray reconciliation as a process consisting of all or most of these elements: investigation, acknowledgement of victims, truth, apology or remorse, punishment, restitution and reparation, forgiveness and amnesty. There can be tensions and priority issues between these different elements. For example, the need of individual families for retributive justice has to be balanced with the need of the state for national reconciliation. It may be necessary for the state to offer amnesty to perpetrators of atrocity and violence, in order to develop unity, but this undermines the demand for accountability. Restorative justice, drawing on such traditions as *ubuntu*<sup>34</sup>, and focusing on reparation and the recovery of everyday relationships, may be able to combine both needs (Ryan 2007). Many indigenous societies have evolved reconciliation systems, which allow victims to be heard with dignity and effectively incorporate offenders back into the community. Lederach, (2005:5) makes a passionate call to:

“Mobilise and build the moral imagination. ...the capacity to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that includes our enemies [...] the ability to sustain paradoxical curiosity without reliance on dualistic polarity. ...the fundamental belief in and pursuit of the creative act [...] the acceptance to the inherent risk of stepping into the mystery of the unknown that lies beyond the all too familiar landscape of violence.”

He notes later (2005:41) that: “[w]e are still in our infancy in reference to shaping and sustaining a positive just peace, the rebuilding of genuine community in areas that have suffered from great division and violence.” These idealistic statements, however, seem devoid of politics or any explanation of how durable peace is to be achieved. Lederach and other writers on reconciliation are silent on the role of schooling. It is not clear why. There may be

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<sup>34</sup> *Ubuntu* is a word of Bantu origin for an African ethic regarding people’s relationships with each other. As expressed by a South African judge in a recent ‘hate speech’ trial, *ubuntu* expresses values of dignity, compassion, mediation, reconciliation (as opposed to vengeance), confrontation and victory of one party over another, (South African Legal Information Institute <http://mg.co.za/uploads/2011/09/12/malcma-judgement.pdf>, last accessed 10/1/12).

an assumption that its state-controlled nature is part of the problem, not part of the solution, and that informal community processes are the most fruitful. It may be that they consider peace education, discussed in section 1 of this chapter, to be the appropriate forum for discussion and research into education and reconciliation.

While trauma is not an inevitable result of violent conflict (Cairns 1996) and it is not helpful to ignore coping mechanisms or undermine agency, unhealed group trauma can lead to new violence. Victims focus on their own vulnerability and are unable to consider the needs of others. Staub (2011:433) argues for the role of schooling in transmitting and countering trauma:

“Transmission of trauma also occurs in schools, directly through the teaching of history from a particular perspective, and indirectly through teachers' attitudes and behaviours. When trauma has become 'chosen', embedded in the culture, it is important for people to understand and become aware of how it shapes perceptions and actions. This may be the first step in moving beyond a chosen trauma.”

Staub claims that education has been found to change values and behaviour. Group healing can prevent a cycle of victimhood and revenge. An understanding of the social conditions, the psychological and social process and culture that lead to violence helps people use their judgement to oppose leaders who instigate hostility. His example of Hutu and Tutsi groups, however, inspired by a radio drama to create a forgiveness ceremony and to cooperate in farm-work is from outside schools (Staub 2011). Santa-Barbara (2007) believes that reconciliation education in schools may counter deliberative spoilers, who see it in their interest to maintain mistrust. Studies of Israeli and Palestinian narratives suggest that schooling is an important

source of narrative construction alongside the family and community, and is better for the critical reflection necessary for reconciliation (Tint 2010).

Arguably, then, the school curriculum has a role to play in some parts of the reconciliation cycle, particularly those aspects involved with restoration or reparation. Through socialization into the values of respect for other individuals or identity groups and forgiveness for past wrongs, schools could promote reconciliation. Conversely, if a distorted curriculum remains unexamined or unreformed it will preserve hostile feelings towards others. This is why reconciliation is an important concept for a conflict transformation curriculum. Simply trying to socialize 'positive' or 'peaceful' values, however, is insufficient, since horizontal inequalities or grievances between groups are usually embedded in political and social structures.<sup>35</sup> For this reason, it is necessary to consider the third concept: inclusive citizenship.

### **2.3 Inclusive Citizenship**

Scholars and practitioners agree that conflict transformation requires active grassroots participation for change and the development of communication skills. These features can be expressed adequately through the concept of 'inclusive citizenship'. Since citizenship was explained in section 1 as referring both to membership in a political system and also to the delineation of freedoms, rights and responsibilities within that membership, it is necessary to explain what is conveyed by the term 'inclusive'.

The social, economic and political exclusion of groups with particular cultural identities represents 'exclusive' interpretations of citizenship, which can contribute to violent conflict. There may be tensions between local or sub-national and national levels of citizenship,

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<sup>35</sup> See note on 'horizontal inequality' (Stewart 2006) in Chapter One, section 2.

particularly in Africa where the colonial legacy was to play off reform in the urban sector against repression in the rural sector (Mamdani 1996; Pateman 1970). In partial democratization multi-party elections may lead to élites, who fear they may be excluded from the spoils of power, trying to manipulate nationhood and citizenship. As noted by Dorman, Hammett and Nugent (2007:4):

“There is scarcely a country on the continent (of Africa) where the state of the nation and the boundaries of inclusion/exclusion have not been debated in recent times and in many times violent conflict has ensued.”

By contrast, the term ‘inclusive citizenship’ (Kabeer 2005) expresses not only the inclusion of all different ethnic and identity-based groups, but also a multi-layered approach to the concept of citizenship, which transcends the local, national and international boundaries. Kabeer (2005:4) states that ‘inclusive citizenship’ is as much about recognition as about access to formal rights. Thus, it can be thought of in terms of collective struggles for change, with an emphasis on ‘horizontal’ relationships between citizens rather than a ‘vertical’ one between them and the state. The framing of ideas of citizenship purely in terms of membership, rights, freedoms and obligations has been challenged (Dagger 2002; Faulks 2000; Gamarnikov and Green 2000). Isin and Turner (2002:2-3) observe that:

“Citizenship is ultimately [...] about addressing injustices suffered by many peoples around the world, making these injustices appear in the public sphere, enabling these groups to articulate these injustices as claims for recognition and enacting them in national as well as transnational laws and practices, and thus bringing about fundamental changes.”



This interpretation of citizenship matches the argument that conflict transformation requires a struggle against structural violence. As such, implied in the term 'inclusive citizenship' is this sense of citizenship as a change process rather than a state.

Following a civil war, the nature of the political settlement is crucial for setting the terms of citizenship and for establishing the context in which schools might contribute to long-term peace. It must be recognized that citizen participation may actually contribute to social conflict. When the balance between disagreement and disengagement fails to be struck, groups may address themselves rather than engaging each other, resulting in increasingly negative stereotypes and hardened social lines (Levine and Bishai 2010). Conflict transformation implies a conception of inclusive citizenship, which values solidarity, grassroots community action and active participation. It means developing the capacity to continue political disagreements indefinitely without giving up efforts to resolve or ameliorate them or resorting to violence. Kiwan (2008) explains how a feeling of belonging and the practice of participation are mutually reinforcing, but that in situations of ethnic or religious diversity, a tolerance of difference is more important than a deeply entrenched understanding of each other's beliefs and traditions. Such inclusive citizenship attributes can be developed. The process extends beyond formal education laterally into informal learning and throughout life. The way school curricula, however, are built and implemented may provide a solid foundation for inclusive citizenship and thereby promote conflict transformation.

## **Conclusion**

My aim in this chapter has been to clarify the way in which schooling may contribute to conflict transformation. An important foundation is equitable access, as discrimination may lead to total exclusion from or non-completion of school. The resulting barriers to social

mobility lead to grievances, which can contribute to civil war and armed conflict. Marginalization, incitement to hatred and tendencies to violence, however, are not simply matters of access but are transmitted through the curriculum. The curriculum includes all the planned learning that is carried out in school during lessons and in assemblies and social events, as well as the experiences derived from daily life in school. The study of three curricular approaches - peace education, human rights education and citizenship education - which may be used after civil war suggests that no single approach is quite adequate for a conflict transformation curriculum. By examining the literature and NGO policies, and by building on my own experience, I have identified three important conflict transformation concepts that can be addressed through the curriculum: truth-seeking, reconciliation and inclusive citizenship. Truth-seeking is the process of attempting to understand the root causes of civil war and of listening to the experiences of those who have suffered from it. Reconciliation means forgoing revenge and developing an understanding of others who previously may have been enemies. Inclusive citizenship is the collective participation at all levels of society aimed at social justice. This conceptual framework is applied in an empirical examination of the practice of schools in a post-conflict context, the design and operation of which is explained in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I explain the methods used for the empirical research. As explained in the introduction, an exploratory visit to northern Uganda led to a proposal for research into the part played by schools in peace-building after civil war. Extensive reading of academic and grey literature and informal interviews with practitioners resulted in a probationary report, which provided the basis for the full study. In order to address the research question - **'How can schooling contribute to conflict transformation?'** – a three-month fieldwork visit was made to Gulu district in northern Uganda to collect empirical data. Qualitative methods were used: participant observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and documentary study, with a small quantitative element in terms of a questionnaire. Upon return, further library and on-line research led to a better understanding of the history of the civil war and a more complete conceptual framework through which to examine and interpret the research data. The methods for analysing and interpreting the data are explained and their limitations considered. Finally, I discuss the ethical issues surrounding the research.

#### **1 Research approach**

In this section I explain the reasoning behind the approach taken in the research. Careful consideration was given to the advantages and disadvantages of different models of social and educational research (Converse and Presser 1986; De Vaus 2001). The use of precise measurement to establish generalizations and causations would be problematic in the study of complex institutions such as schools, where there is interplay of structures, emotions and

cognitive development. A quantitative approach would be likely to produce a spurious sense of precision and of a static social world (Bryman 2001). Subject to time and resource limitations, it would not be feasible to undertake longitudinal or quasi-experimental research.

Initially, I engaged in a literature review of civil wars, peace-building and education, to discover what was already known or discussed about the position of schools before, during and after civil wars. From the outset, however, I was seeking to explore people's experiences, feelings and values, as well as school policies and curriculum. I felt that there might be discrepancies between official policy and what was really going on in classrooms and school daily life. In seeking to understand how schools could contribute to conflict transformation, I decided on an explicatory research approach using qualitative methods, as this would make it possible to delve in depth into processes and complexities (Marshall and Rossman 2006). Denzin and Lincoln (2000:2) describe qualitative research as "multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them." The qualitative researcher should be a 'jack of all trades', inventing methods when necessary, self-reflective, using triangulation to get an in-depth understanding of a problem.

The method chosen is that of an educational case study of a group of schools and one college in a war-affected district. Bassey (1999) proposes three kinds of case study: (i) evaluative; (ii) story-telling and picture drawing; and (iii) the development and testing of a theory through the production of evidence. This research touches on all three, beginning in the world of action and aiming to contribute to it. My target was to gather sufficient data through which to interrogate a conceptual framework and to construct an argument related to relevant previous

research. I am evaluating how far the school curriculum is contributing to conflict transformation, drawing a picture of how the teachers and students are behaving. I am trying to make plausible and trustworthy interpretations in order to inform policy-makers and to lead on to further research.

The study draws on an ethnographical tradition, as well as that of analytical social enquiry (Geertz 1973, 2000). Educational ethnography is concerned with an important story to be told, the data for which is collected in a variety of ways from participant observation, to interviews and life-histories (Delamont and Hamilton 1993). The task is to interpret people's stories faithfully, as a matter of respect for those who revealed their lives to the researcher (Kearney 2005). I am presenting a picture of the challenges facing teachers and students in the aftermath of a civil war by listening to their stories and opinions, and trying to understand and interpret them. Most of the participants have undergone serious psychological suffering over the past twenty years, and as the study is oriented towards the future, a narrow focus is insufficient to register a wide range of experience, choices and beliefs.

Yin (1994) argues that case study research should be directed towards general conclusions, either through theoretical inference or empirical generalization, backed by statistical or sample approaches. Any claims of generalization must be supported in order to cover any likely significant dimensions of heterogeneity and the time period (Gomm 2004). Other researchers, however, deny that case-studies have to produce objective conclusions (Lincoln and Guba 1985). I have followed the latter approach based on my belief that research of this scale would have little chance of proving hypotheses or validating a theory. From the start, I understood that I would not be uncovering 'truth', which implies objective reality, but hoped for 'trustworthiness', where validity is a matter of persuasiveness and coherence (Reissman

1993). Although this case study is too small for generalizations, it provides a conceptual basis for further investigation in different contexts. The accumulation of case study findings should allow the framework to be adapted, improved or rejected.

## **2 Articulating the conceptual framework**

Two extensive periods of library and on-line study of the academic and grey literature bracketed the fieldwork. The results of this work are to be seen in Chapters One, Two and Four. While planning the methods for data collection, I created an operational structure for developing the conceptual framework. This was needed because the concepts of 'truth-seeking', 'reconciliation' and 'inclusive citizenship' are very broad. They have to be articulated in relation to the different aspects of learning, pedagogical approaches and how schools are organized. I found that some scholars of peace, human rights and citizenship education framed these approaches in terms of a combination of knowledge, skills and values. Following Taba (1962), they propose that a combination of all three is necessary for comprehensive learning and for associated school organization (Fountain 1999; Heater 1990; Hicks 1985?; OCHR 2004; Osler and Starkey 2005, 2010).<sup>36</sup> I considered that this idea would allow me to structure the data collection plan and later the analysis and interpretation in a more precise way than if I had only used the concepts of 'truth-seeking', 'reconciliation' and 'inclusive citizenship'. The relevance of this combination is explained in the following paragraphs.

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<sup>36</sup> This combination is expressed and explained below as 'knowledge and understanding', 'skills development', and 'values socialization', but for clarity of style and unless it is necessary to make distinctions, the phrase 'knowledge, skills and values' is used throughout the thesis.

## **2.1 Knowledge and Understanding**

Knowledge and understanding are necessary for a curriculum aimed at conflict transformation. People need to know what happened and when, but they also need to understand the complex roots of conflict, as well as the interests and relationships of different groups. The first is factual knowledge, as in the French 'savoir', and the second is knowledge in terms of experience and feeling, as in 'connaitre' (McGilchrist 2009). Both are important. According to Vygotsky (1978), knowledge is not simply imparted or transferred from external sources to the brain. It is constructed in the sense that any new information or understanding has to be integrated with existing knowledge and understanding. Understanding occurs when learners are led to develop their own generalizations:

“Genuine understanding is most likely [...] to be apparent to others, if people possess a number of ways of representing knowledge of a concept [...] and can move readily back and forth among these forms of knowing.” (Gardner 1993b:13)

There appears to be an inherent contradiction between existing knowledge-defining curricula and any potential schooling may have for conflict transformation. According to Foucault (1971), all education systems are a political method for maintaining social control. Therefore, contested forms of knowledge are seldom addressed in schools. The high priority placed on passing fact-based examinations can result in learners who have much detailed theoretical or factual knowledge, but a lack of understanding derived from consideration of different perspectives (Bruner 1996). Freire (1972), however, proposed that the assumptions upon which current knowledge is based can be challenged through teaching methods that encourage

reasoned understanding, critical thinking and analysis. Furthermore, Stehr (2008:4) suggests that increased access to global information systems will challenge dominant forms of knowledge and official accounts, leading to greater freedom and democracy. Although states may be reluctant to make fundamental reforms to the curriculum, there may be room for change at school level in relatively decentralized systems. This empirical research set out to collect data on how schools are approaching knowledge and understanding, using a variety of methods, as explained below, in order to evaluate assumptions about curriculum content and teaching methods.

## **2.2 Skills development**

A curriculum geared towards conflict transformation requires the development of relevant skills, such as problem-solving, cooperation and communication. This is because truth-seeking, reconciliation and inclusive citizenship cannot be achieved simply through abstract knowledge and understanding. They imply action and changes in behaviour. A skill is a process acquired at times by explicit methods, but as the skill develops, increasingly by intuitive imitation. Many skills are not analytically structured rule-based techniques. They are flexible and can be applied in a variety of situations (Halpern 1998). Action and practice are necessary for intellectual skills to be acquired, refined and improved. There is a circular process in that a minimum skill level is needed to take any action, while repeated actions lead to skill development. A skill can only be observed or assessed in action. For example, it is not enough to tell someone that you are a skilled musician or manager; the evidence is in the practice. Therefore, this empirical research set out to evaluate skills development relevant to the three core concepts, largely through participant observation.



### **2.3 Values socialization**

Values are beliefs about what is desirable. They are deeply rooted motivations acquired early in life that guide human behaviour (Carlton 1995) and are closely related to culture and identity, providing the individual and the group with fairly stable orientations across non-similar situations, thus aiding social integration (Carlton 1995; Ester, Mohler and Vinken 2006). Conflicts of interest over material benefits and resources that are among the causes of civil wars (Oberschall 2007; Stewart 2006) may be partly informed by conflicts of values. For example, groups may disagree over the legitimacy of using violence to achieve political, social or economic objectives. Some values, such as equal respect, tolerance, forgiveness and fairness, are more closely associated with peace than others, such as hierarchical power, vengeance and punishment.

People's values reflect what they experience. The life-long process by which people acquire values and beliefs is known as 'socialization'. Merton (1957:13) defined it as "the process by which people progressively acquire the values and attitudes, interests, skills and knowledge - in short the culture - current in groups to which they are, or seek to become, a member." Friedman (1962) explains how socialization by the state is thought to contribute to the common good, and schooling is a means by which a large share of the population can be subject to values teaching (Haydon 2006). The process is not permanent or fixed; re-socialization can take place, where one set of values is replaced or merged with another (Schaefer 2010). States emerging from civil wars may choose whether and how to use formal education for values re-socialization. As put by UNESCO (2011:167 and 221):

“Values inculcated in school can make children less susceptible to the kind of prejudice, bigotry, extreme nationalism, racism and lack of tolerance that can lead to violent conflict. [...] Education can become part of a more inclusive social contract under which governments demonstrate a commitment to tackle social and economic inequalities.”

What transpires, however, is not simply a matter of government policy. Special interest groups and local or international NGOs may try to influence the direction of any curriculum reform. Programmes of study, moral teaching in assemblies, daily problem-solving and dispute resolution represent the conscious values socialization approach. As young people, however, learn from what they experience and not just from what they are told, the everyday life of the school is also important. This empirical research set out to uncover how schools may be consciously and unconsciously socializing young people in the values that would lead to sustainable peace.

#### **2.4 The need for a combination**

The scholars cited in the introduction of this section argue that comprehensive or effective learning in peace, human rights and citizenship requires a combination of knowledge, skills and appropriate values. If they are correct, then this should be the case with a curriculum for conflict transformation. Knowledge and skills without values of equal respect, tolerance and fairness can be observed in situations where supposedly well-educated people and groups have perpetrated terrible atrocities and rights violations. Despotic, totalitarian or manipulative leaders can draw on deep inter-ethnic hatred and use education to lead people to violent action. The Nazi regime was skilful in developing hatred and distrust against the Jews and a belief that war was in the national interest (Blackburn 1985). The pre-1994 Rwandan government deliberately fostered the fear and de-humanization of Tutsis (Melvern 2000:56-

57). Conversely, values of tolerance, respect and fairness alone are insufficient for conflict transformation if people have inadequate understanding of the root causes of violence, and/or lack the skills needed to participate in their society. Simple, practical and repetitive skills need little or no knowledge and understanding. They can be taught in a rote fashion, as there is no expectation on the person to solve any new or unfamiliar problems. It is difficult to develop intellectual skills, like discussion and problem-solving, without background knowledge and understanding. Yet, someone may be very well informed about the origins of a conflict, the current situation, and the possibilities and limits of freedom of action, but powerless to act without the necessary skills. It is for these reasons that knowledge, understanding, skills and values need to be treated as a combination.

### **3 Research design**

The conceptual framework developed over time through an iterative process. Some conceptualization took place before the fieldwork and some later on in order to make sense of the data that had been gathered. Although the type of case study envisaged was not designed to produce valid and reliable generalizations, decisions had to be taken over context, location, methods and participants. In this section I explain the choice of location and methods for the collection of empirical data using participant observation in the community and school, in-depth semi-structured interviews, a simple questionnaire and documentary study.

#### **3.1 Choice of location and schools**

I considered several potential country contexts, including Sierra Leone, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. I chose a district in northern Uganda for several reasons. The shooting phase of the war had recently ended and the district was in the stage of early recovery. This meant that schools were working in a relatively stable situation. The

commitment of the government to the Millennium Development Goals for education was evidenced by the introduction of universal primary education.<sup>37</sup> As such, it would be possible to investigate a situation where a supportive official policy might be assumed. Gulu town and district had suffered very badly in the war and it would, thus, be possible to examine the work of schools that are recovering from difficult circumstances. Furthermore, there was considerable NGO presence in the district and I already had some evidence that NGOs were seeking to influence the curriculum in the direction of peace.

In the time available (about three months), I concluded that I could spend most of a week in eight different institutions - seven schools and one teacher training college - leaving time available for settling in, interviews with officials and officers, and for contingencies. As I was not seeking statistical significance, it was not important to sample a large number of schools. I wanted them, however, to be somewhat typical of what the general population would experience. For example, I decided not to choose the highest performing schools, or well-off private schools. Far more people attend primary schools than secondary and for this reason I decided on four primary schools and two secondary schools, half of them urban and half rural, as documentary evidence showed that town schools were likely to be advantaged compared to rural schools. I felt it was important to gather data from the one special school for war-affected children in the area, as it might follow a curriculum especially geared to peace-building, and from the primary teachers' training college, as it might have an important indirect influence on schools. I had visited three urban schools before and for the remainder I sought advice from the District Education Officer, explaining that I was looking for 'average', or 'normal' rural schools. In summary, the schools consisted of an Anglican urban primary with an annex for blind children, a Catholic urban primary, two rural primary schools which catered for children

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<sup>37</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/katinc/2009/mar/28/uganda-millennium-development-goals> (last accessed 11/7/12).

from Internally Displaced People's camps, and which had recently returned from temporary sites, an urban secondary school, originally displaced from a rural location, a rural secondary school recently returned to its original site, a special school for 'war-affected' children, most of them formerly abducted, and a training college, equivalent to an upper secondary level school, which prepared young people to teach in the local primary schools.

### **3.2 Research assistant**

As will become evident below, part of the research design involved the interviewing of school students. There are many ethnic groups in Uganda, each with their own language. The lingua franca, however, and the educational and administrative language is English. Until the recent introduction of mother-tongue teaching in schools, Ugandan students started their education in English. Although it would have been possible to interview in English, the complexity and sensitivity of the questions I wished to ask suggested that it would be better to interview young people in the local language, Luo. I was concerned that young people might be shy in the presence of a foreigner; either finding it difficult to answer anything or perhaps giving answers that they thought would be expected. Accordingly, I decided to work with a research assistant who had grown up in the district. With the advice of a local NGO, I was able to employ the services of a degree-educated young man who had some experience of working on peace and development issues. The decision had many benefits beyond the issue of student interviews, as I was able to learn from him a great deal about the history of Uganda and the war, and local social, economic and cultural matters.

### **3.3 Participant observation in the community**

Participant observation (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995; Punch 1998; Marshall and Rossman 2006) is an ethnographical approach in which the researcher spends considerable time in the

settings of everyday life, in order to explain how people come to understand their situation. The meaning of 'participant' is that the observer is interacting with people, not separating themselves. This was a useful method for developing an understanding of the values element of the study, for delving into complexities, where policy and practice might be at odds with one another. I needed to be able to relate what I learnt from living in northern Uganda to the ideas developed as a result of my reading. Visiting local people, churches, markets, hospitals, festivals and parties contributed to essential background knowledge, and led to further reading of the history of the war. General observation of daily life in town and country was supplemented too by a readiness to ask local inhabitants and friends about the meaning behind certain behaviours. Every conversation and interaction could contribute to deeper understanding and I expected my experiences to modify my questions or my assumptions. Miles and Huberman (1994:34) note the importance of talking to people who are peripheral to the main theme and those no longer actively involved. Very many informal conversations in the three-month fieldwork period gave an insight into the general civic and political awareness of adults and their own narrative of the war.

There were a number of significant experiences and events, which contributed to an overall understanding of the community and its recent past. These included a high school debating competition; a lecture to secondary school students by a government representative; a festival honouring World Teachers' Day; market traders organizing their own festival to create political pressure for self-management of the market; a visit to educational friends in western Uganda where I could get an outside view of troubles in the north; a pre-examination cathedral service and blessing of school students by the local Anglican bishop; a music festival, and some enjoyable dance experiences. Interactions were noted contemporaneously or immediately after the conversation in a rough field notebook written up in detail at the end

of each day, supplemented by photography and some video filming of slogans, notices, t-shirts, marches, demonstrations, or political events.

### **3.4 Participant observation in schools**

As people's accounts of their own knowledge, skills and values were unlikely to be entirely reliable (Robson 2002:228), participant observation could be used to cross-check other data. The premise of the 'participant observer' approach was that I was clearly a visitor, easily recognizable as the only white person in the community and school, but also an involved and concerned one. Some schools were already known to me from my previous visit, while others were recommended by local education officials. It was a flexible plan, which left room for adding or subtracting schools if need be.

The process included (i) informal conversations with teachers, children and other school staff both in and out of the school, (ii) observation of adults and young people in formal and informal contexts in school, i.e. lessons, assemblies, discussions and debates, problem-solving and negotiations, social time during break and lunch, sporting and cultural activities, and social events such as end of term parties, and (iii) observation of the environment such as classrooms, latrines, libraries, sports facilities.

By virtue of my experience as a teacher, I was willing and able to take part in lessons, assemblies and convey my appreciation of the work and life of schools. In this sense, I was not a detached, cool observer of an alien environment. I had a large degree of sympathy for the struggles of both teachers and students, and the difficult conditions under which many were working. I was determined to consider the challenges faced by teachers in this recovery period, and wanted to learn as much as I could about workload, salary, commuting distance,

accommodation, training and so-on. Usually, in each school, there was one teacher with whom I established a good relationship, so that we could socialise a little out of school. Through participant observation, I could supplement or cross-check what I learnt from more formal interviews. Since the research assistant accompanied me to the schools, I was able to triangulate insights and understanding. Sometimes people were unguarded in his presence leading to surprise openings. Every day we had a de-briefing and I was able to question him about school processes in relation to the cultural context.

### **3.5 Teacher interviews**

The plan was to discover the knowledge, skills and values of head teachers and teachers. The choice of participants was driven by the framework and not by a concern for representativeness (Miles and Huberman 1994). I wished to gather data from those who would have the greatest interest in the schools' contribution to peace. It seemed sensible, however, to interview roughly the same number of people in each of the eight institutions. In each school the adult participants were to be the head teacher, the deputy head, the counsellor or equivalent, and two or three teachers trained in peace education or any similar approach. Other participants were teachers who had some social or religious studies or history training. Overall, this design was followed quite closely. I only managed to interview two teachers in the training college, as by the time I visited, the college was closing for holidays.

Completely informal or open-ended interviews would be inappropriate, as they might not cover the different elements of the research. Since the conceptual framework, however, was still in development, a standardized interview would be too confining. Such an interview might be appropriate for knowledge elements, but was of limited use in trying to uncover values. Therefore, I decided that a semi-structured approach was most suitable, with



opportunities for follow-up questions and for the participant to influence the course of the interview (May 2001; Patton 2002). The interviews were to be conducted in English, digitally recorded and then downloaded to a laptop where they could be transcribed word for word. My previous research experience had taught me the limitations of note-taking: it is hard to be an active listener while writing. A digital recorder is small and unobtrusive and I hoped that participants would be relatively unaffected by it.

I tried to approach values indirectly through life-story - an approach that I hoped would illuminate participants' values relating to truth, reconciliation and inclusive citizenship (Hatch and Wisniewski 1995). The interview would have a rough outline structure, but the main emphasis would be on letting the respondent relax into a narrative, rather than answer a series of questions. The aim was to let the participant set the context and the tone, before narrowing down the questions to specifics. One method for trying to uncover values, termed 'dilemma analysis', was used to focus on fateful or important moments in life where indecision, confusion or contradiction might be captured (Winter 1982). It is difficult, however, to analyse such data, while there is a risk of invoking ethical issues. For this reason, I decided not to rest the interviews too heavily on this approach. After a general question inviting the participant to tell of their experiences during the civil war, I asked two more specific questions: one referring to a major turning point in life and the other concerning a difficult dilemma. I also asked participants to describe their own actions in support of peace, human rights or reconciliation. The aim was not to write up each participant's story, but to use the stories to seek common or unexpected values.

The rest of the interview was aligned largely towards knowledge and understanding and it followed a broad structure, which varied according to the participant's experience and

interests. In general, the focus was on participants' knowledge of Ugandan history and the origins of the war, of reintegration and rehabilitation programmes, and of human rights. Depending somewhat on the trajectory of the interview there was a question about traditional approaches to reconciliation, and their relationship with problem-solving in school. There was usually a question about the meaning of 'peace education' and the impact of local or national NGOs. Although participants could report their actions, the interview was not intended to focus directly on skills, which were better assessed through participant observation. The interview schedule is shown in Appendix 3.

### **3.6 Student group interviews**

A key element of the research was to gather data from young people, as there is relatively little published work on their understanding and views in the context of post-conflict education. I decided on a focus group approach, because individual or paired interviews might seem too intimidating to the participants. There were two categories for the focus groups: one involved those students with responsibility for keeping order and solving problems in the school, i.e. the prefects. The other consisted of student members of after-school clubs. These clubs were established under titles such as Peace Education Club, World Vision Group, Girls Education Group or Music/Drama Club. The reason for choosing these students is that they were the ones more closely concerned with activities relating to peace, either directly through their mission, or indirectly through their role in problem-solving and cooperation in school. The plan was to interview each type of focus group in each school. I decided against interviewing students not involved in clubs, because I did not feel able to justify a randomised selection procedure and because I doubted that I would be able to comply with the ethical requirements for parental permission in the time available. The parental permission process proved quite complex, even with students who were organized in groups.

The schedule for semi-structured interviews was jointly constructed with the research assistant, and interviews were carried out in the local language. A pilot interview was carried out in English in order to test out the semi-structure. I met each group at the beginning and end of the interview, allowing the research assistant to conduct the interview in my absence, but also allowing participants to question us about our research at the end of the interview. The interviews were divided in four main sections, but each one followed its own trajectory. In most cases there were some introductory questions about the nature of the group or the duties of students so that the participants could relax and get used to the situation. The first section was aimed at exploring the participants' familiarity with the term human rights. They were asked what the term meant to them, where they thought they had learnt it, and what human rights documents they knew about. The second section was exploring the values of the young people through their views on why these issues were important or useful, and their views on their relationship with adult rights and local culture. The third section was on young people's experience of unfairness and their perceptions of fair and unfair treatment by those in authority. The final section was aimed at eliciting accounts of actions in support of peace and human rights (see Appendix 4). The participants were not separately identified by name, as this would have interrupted the flow, but care was taken to ensure a range of people commented and responded.



*Figure 1: Student group interview*

### **3.7 Interviews with government and NGO officials**

I planned to interview the chief education officers of the municipality and district and two or three officials in the ministry of education. The choice of the latter was driven by networking and personal contacts, but resulted in interviews with people experienced in special education and curriculum reform. The NGO officials were chosen from those local and international NGOs most active in the school curriculum. Given the time and resources at my command, it was necessary to start with an outline of the main questions, although I was ready to adapt them. These interviews were more loosely structured than the interviews of heads and teachers. There was no focus on the participant's personal story. The main aim was to have some perspective on the school curriculum from people not directly immersed in school life. Questions centred on current views of human rights education, peace education and anything resembling citizenship education; for example, civic education and political education. Some of the NGOs concerned, such as the Norwegian Refugee Council and Save the Children were directly involved in training children in human rights, while others were familiar with peace education. Questions were asked about the history of the war and about trust and mistrust. The local and central government education officials were asked about government curriculum

planning and the importance attached to education for peace. As with all the other interviews, digital recording was used.

### **3.8 Teachers' questionnaire**

Simple factual knowledge of and declared opinions about human rights were assessed through a one-page questionnaire of some ten questions in English, given to random groups of about six teachers in each school. It was largely open-ended and not in tick-box form. The groups were created by asking all the teachers present in the staffroom at one time, excluding teachers selected for interview, if they would be prepared to fill in a brief questionnaire. After some preparation and explanation, occasionally in Luo, but also in English, the teachers wrote the answers themselves. The questionnaire was short enough to be completed in the presence of myself or the researcher, so as to avoid the possibility of respondents going to others or to reference material for answers. The answers were to be quantified at the time of analysis and triangulated with other data (see Appendix 2). This survey is of limited significance in relation to the other methods of data collection owing to the small number of participants and the method of selection.

### **3.9 Documentary study**

At the time of the empirical data collection, my own knowledge of the detailed history of the country and of the war was limited. There was insufficient time in the interviews to ask all the questions I would have liked. Although a significant amount of reading underpinned the development of this research, a collection of articles and grey literature from NGOs was gathered for further study on return from the field. Documentary study of curricula, textbooks, revision books and examination questions provided evidence for the treatment of recent

history and civic knowledge at primary and secondary level.<sup>38</sup> Examples of peace education textbooks showed the reconciliation and citizenship values intended to be disseminated. Information was sought from the Ministry of Education about national and local policies for peace, civic, citizenship and human rights education. The syllabus for school examinations was checked for relevant references through the semi-independent national examination board. Some relevant NGO advocacy, policies, and the curricula for training programmes were also studied. School policies and rules, displays and student work also provided data on knowledge and values.

#### **4 Data analysis and interpretation**

I explained above, in section 2, that the interrelated learning elements of knowledge, skills and values were used as an organizing structure for data collection. They necessarily formed part of the structure for data analysis. The data from the various sources was coded and grouped at one level according to the conceptual framework of truth-seeking, reconciliation and inclusive citizenship. It was then processed on an operational level according to knowledge, skills and values. This structure is followed in the empirical chapters. The chapter titles follow the three main elements of the framework and the interpretation in each chapter is organized under the headings of knowledge, skills and values. The details of how and why particular elements were chosen for study and analysis are explained in the chapters concerned.

##### **4.1 Interview analysis**

In analyzing semi-structured in-depth interviews, it was not appropriate or useful to apply numerical methods. Each interview had its own trajectory and although a schedule was used,

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<sup>38</sup> For example, the website 'Allafrica.com' reported on 19/3/08 that the Ministry of Education was to introduce a new course on peace and conflict resolution in schools (<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200803190059.html>, last accessed 14/4/08).

often the standard questions were not even the same in each interview. Each interview was transcribed in full using the digital field recordings, which had been downloaded to a laptop. This produced a large amount of text. This text was then coded and grouped according to the conceptual and operational framework. For example, participants' responses relating to the history of the conflict, or their own analysis of what was happening and why, were placed in the conceptual category 'truth-seeking' under the operational heading 'knowledge'. The interview questions relating to participants' own experiences and turning points were designed to uncover their values, and comments in this section of the interview were placed in the conceptual category 'reconciliation' and the operational category 'values'. Where participants commented on issues of procedural fairness, their answers were grouped in the conceptual category 'inclusive citizenship' and in the operational category 'values'.

The quotations from interviews were chosen to illustrate the points made. To support a general point, there needed to be several very similar examples, of which one or occasionally two characteristic ones were chosen. Sometimes more detailed excerpts have been included as they encapsulate in one view a range of responses from other respondents or groups. From time to time a unique, opposing quotation has been chosen to illustrate a contested view. It is usually difficult to ascertain whether this is a strictly minority opinion, in other words an outlier, or representative of quite widely held views. This is a characteristic weakness of qualitative research.

It was very important to guard against over-reliance on one or two respondents, and for that reason the origin of the comments was tracked throughout. Initials (coded for anonymity) have been retained for each quotation so that they can be traced back to the source interview. This also serves to illustrate that there is a wide variety of sources of comment. For example, if a

quotation were only to be identified as 'primary teacher', then it might be that a large proportion of them could originate from a very small group of respondents. In fact, all the head teachers are quoted more than once, and twenty-six out of the twenty-nine teachers interviewed are quoted.

The responses of the relatively small number of heads, eight in all including the principal of the teachers' training college, include the type and level of school. Secondary teachers, (and heads) have several more years of formal education than their primary colleagues, and it seems helpful to distinguish between primary and secondary respondents. I considered whether to identify the responses of headteachers, teachers and students by gender – for example 'female headteacher', 'male student' and so on. I decided that this would be useful and interesting in the discussion on equal respect and gender, but that an attempt to subject all the elements of the study to a gender analysis would add considerable complexity to the findings without much prospect of any special insights. As explained above the student responses were anonymous from the outset, but the type of group and whether the school is primary or secondary is identified. Where there are several different comments from different members of the same group, the comments are placed on separate lines with their own quotation marks.

None of the respondents was a native English speaker. A decision had to be made over whether to 'tidy up' the grammar and turn it into Standard English. Although too much alteration runs the danger of losing the authentic voice of the respondents, small grammatical errors have been corrected so that the meaning of the comment can come across quite clearly. Where words are added to clarify the sense, brackets and a non-italicized font are used. Where words have been cut out, the convention of leaving dots [...] has been followed. In the



case of the translated group interviews, the translator's English has been 'tidied up' without losing the original sense. In transcribing interviews into text, the punctuation decisions are entirely those of the transcriber.

#### **4.2 Questionnaire analysis**

The teachers' questionnaire was aimed at one element of the framework, namely teachers' knowledge and understanding of human rights. As it was open-ended, in order to avoid pre-judgement about the range of answers, it was necessary to categorize these according to the main questions. For example, answers to the question on 'which human rights people immediately called to mind' were divided into those related to freedoms and those related to entitlements. Answers to a question on 'how human rights were learnt', were categorized by education/school, NGO workshops and media. Answers about 'the utility of human rights for [their] work' were interpreted as learning-related, or concern for the teacher's own rights and responsibilities. The last question was on 'reasons why they consider it useful for children to learn about human rights'. Five categories of reasoning could be discerned: (i) awareness of their rights and violations; (ii) responsibility and moral behaviour; (iii) respect for others and reduction of stigmatization; (iv) support for life skills and assertiveness; and (v) support for community and country.

Enough questionnaires were completed to allow the use of some form of numerical weighting, without going so far as to producing detailed percentages for each answer or category. This enabled some broad generalizations in the form of 'a majority of responses' or 'a small minority of responses'. The interpretation of responses was integrated into the main empirical chapters rather than being given undue weight by being allocated to a separate section. Some of the questions bore the traces of an earlier aim to investigate the impact of NGOs on the

development of human rights knowledge and understanding. By the final version of the framework, this theme had declined in importance.

#### **4.3 Analysis and interpretation of other data**

No formal categorizing method was used for summarising and editing the notes of participant observation, documentary study and general immersion in the community. The process here was one of reading and re-reading, comparing and collating observations. A self-reflective awareness of the danger of seeing only what was expected was necessary. My own academic background in history and education was important for this element of the work, enhanced by some ethnographical reading as part of the literature review. It is not possible to summarise the overall impact of participant observation, but references are embedded in the text of the empirical chapters. There are also references to the study of textbooks, syllabi, examination papers and so on. A few photographs illustrate particular points, such as the students' involvement in developing their own classroom rules, and the evidence of young people's narrative and artistic skills.

#### **5 Research limitations**

The limitations of this research fall into two categories. The first concerns the overall design and development of the thesis and the second is largely about the empirical element. Where the thesis finished is not where it began. It did not involve a linear process of devising a framework or structure and then using empirical data to test that structure, since the empirical data itself suggested lines of thought that led to further development of the initial ideas. The research began with some questions about peace education and human rights knowledge, but ended with the development of a conceptual framework for education for conflict transformation. Before the fieldwork itself, the idea of a distinction between peace-building in

general and conflict transformation was not developed. A considerable part of the archival research took place after the fieldwork. Another example of this was the way in which my general knowledge of the war in northern Uganda developed into a more detailed understanding as a result of reading material when I returned from Uganda. It could be argued that the iterative nature of this work was not a limitation, but a strength.

There are a number of limitations to the fieldwork. The idea that a researcher can directly portray the lived experience is problematic in itself. In the ethnographic literature the notion of the objective observer has been questioned (Van Maanen 1988). Editorial decisions are made at each step: from the raw data, to the field notes, the interpretations and analysis of data, and finally to the text that is offered to the reader. The result is a construction that is at some distance from reality. Any observer alters the conditions that they are observing. Participants are likely to provide answers that they think are wanted or expected. Those who might have thought that I represented a non-governmental organization may have exaggerated their stories in the expectation of material benefit. In addition, the relatively short time spent in each school is likely to have meant that I missed some quite fundamental aspects of its structure and daily workings.

Although I feel I took the right decision in working with an assistant who spoke the local language, my unfamiliarity with the language and traditions of the area, may well have led to misconceptions. The interview participants may have been fearful of speaking the truth about certain issues, such as antagonism between ethnic groups or between the people of this northern district and the government. All the interviews were transcribed from digital recordings and the student interviews conducted in Luo were translated by the research assistant. The aim here was to extract the main ideas and concepts, not to catch every nuance,

breath and pause. Inevitably, there is a loss of character and individuality in this process, when some phrases from different individuals and groups sound similar. Additionally, some of the human rights and peace concepts have nuances in English that cannot be expressed in Luo vocabulary. Nevertheless, in the effort to explore the real thoughts and ideas of young people, I was prepared to compromise on this matter. I was not confident that had the interviews been conducted in English we would have been able to capture the range of ideas and thoughts that we did in the Luo version. In any case, I observed that many young people were rather intimidated by a white visitor and I worried that they would try to give me the answers they thought I wanted, even more so than normally.

As with any case study research, there is the possibility that the chosen group of schools was atypical. I believe that the decision to study rural as well as urban schools was correct, as the enrolment, retention and test result data suggests that urban schools are more advantaged. Within the schools, only a small number of staff was interviewed, which might lead to distortions at that level too. The focus groups of students probably represented the more capable and assertive ones, which may suggest that they do not represent adequately the full range of student understanding and opinion. I have explained above why I chose to interview club members and prefects and not those students who were in neither of these categories. If I had, I would have been able to make some comparisons between club members and non-club members.

## **6 Ethical considerations**

It is important to consider the emotional world that may be inhabited by participants. There was some risk of emotional harm from remembering painful past experiences. As the interviews with adults had a life-story element, I was bound to raise powerful emotions and it

was vital to be sensitive and aware of this. I decided that I would not probe for the details of painful events and would accept the accounts in the form in which they were offered. I was ready to suspend interviews and turn off the recorder at request. I have to consider very carefully the impact on any participant who reads the finished work, in terms of whether I have interpreted their story or their views faithfully. I am confident that I have not used subterfuge or secrecy in gathering the data, as each participant had the chance to read a brief summary of the research (Josselson 1996).

The above was all the more important with young, formerly abducted people. Honwana (2006:72) points out that former child-combatants are in a world of their own, oscillating between victim and perpetrator, combatant and civilian. They have multi-faceted identities, but also lack a permanent socially stable place. Thus, the research methods had to be sensitive and take this into account. There was one section in which students were invited to recall occasions in or out of school when they considered that their rights had been violated. The research assistant and I considered this the most likely point in which young people might be under emotional pressure, and we decided to present the question in a qualified and tentative way. We were not searching for extremes of experience, but rather trying to evoke young people's understandings of human rights, fairness and the story of the war.

The Open University Code of Practice and British Educational Research Association guidelines (2000) were carefully studied. The relatively low potential risk of collecting data from human participants was met through the anonymizing of research data at the level of the school and the individual. Verbal and written assent and consent was obtained from participants. I was unsure of how these procedures would work for students under 16. Many students in the district are orphans, or do not live with their parents, or their parents were

unable to read the information sheet. Some parents might have been fearful about signing their name to anything official. Head teachers were consulted over this matter and on some occasions their written permission to interview students was secured *in loco parentis*. A protocol for the *in loco parentis* consent to interview participants under the age of 16 was devised to account for this situation. All relevant protocols were translated into Luo, the local language. Overall, most students were able to return signed consent forms from parents, having been verbally briefed in their mother tongue.

The Ugandan Ministry of Education was approached for guidance on ethical matters. An ‘Enhanced Disclosure’ from the UK Criminal Records Bureau was obtained so that the researcher complied with UK standards for working with young people under the age of 16, even though such standards do not yet exist in Uganda. Guidance from the Open University ethics committee was meticulously followed, and approval given by the University Ethics Committee.<sup>39</sup> I made a formal application to the Uganda Council for Science and Technology for permission to research in Ugandan state schools. The application was approved on my attendance at the council offices. The official document is reproduced in Appendix 5.

## **Conclusion**

The thesis had its origins in an exploratory visit to schools in a district of Uganda recovering from civil war. It is framed by wide-ranging inter-disciplinary research from academic and grey literature. The empirical element consists of a qualitative educational case study of seven schools and a teacher training college in a conflict-affected district of northern Uganda. The aim of the fieldwork was to investigate how schools are contributing to conflict transformation, in order to illustrate and modify a conceptual framework and to provide the

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<sup>39</sup> HPMEC/2009/#513/1 – June 18 2009

foundations for practice and further research. A mixture of methods was used: participant observation, semi-structured interviews with head teachers, teachers, students and officials, as well as documentary study. A group of teachers completed a questionnaire on human rights knowledge and values. Every post-conflict context is unique. Before moving to the three chapters on the interpretation of the empirical findings, the origins, trajectory and impact of the twenty-year civil war are outlined. I consider in this context the meaning of truth-seeking, reconciliation and inclusive citizenship and discuss the resulting implications for the way in which schools may contribute to conflict transformation.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION AND UGANDA**

The framework presented in Chapter Two distinguishes three important elements of conflict transformation that may be supported through the school curriculum: truth-seeking, reconciliation and inclusive citizenship. In Chapter Three, section 2, I explained how these broad concepts can be articulated at curricular level through knowledge and understanding, skills development and values socialization. The detailed application of the framework in a school will depend on the context; each civil war and post-conflict situation has its own particular influence on what would be deemed desirable and possible. In this case, the framework is explored through the activities of schools in Gulu district in northern Uganda, during a period of 'early recovery' from a twenty-year civil war between the government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). This chapter describes the causes of the war, its impact, its end and aftermath, in order to analyse what priorities and constraints may apply for these particular schools. The war was the continuation of many years of power struggles in which ethnic and economic issues were intertwined. Consequently, there are contextual challenges for truth-seeking, reconciliation and inclusive citizenship. Truth-seeking here is affected by government efforts to end the war and issues of accountability. Reconciliation in this case is concerned with the return and reintegration of formerly abducted people into the community. Inclusive citizenship is influenced by the government's approach to peace-building and the local grievance against the government over forced displacement, which exacerbated long-standing economic and social marginalization.



## **1 Civil war in northern Uganda**

The causes and course of the civil war in northern Uganda are explained in this section. The first phase of the war can be seen as the continuation of a long-term struggle for power since the overthrow of President Idi Amin Dada in 1979. The Ugandan National Liberation Army (UNLA), which consisted of between 30-40% Acholis, the main ethnic group from northern Uganda, had been responsible for massacres and atrocities in a previous civil war in West Nile province and the so-called Luwero Triangle, north-west of Kampala.<sup>40</sup> The dead may have numbered as many as 250,000 and some 75,000 people were displaced (Khisia and Nalugo 2010). The UNLA's opponents, the National Resistance Army (NRA), captured the capital Kampala in 1986 and formed a new government headed by Yoweri Museveni. Acholi soldiers of the UNLA returned to the north with a great amount of loot, pursued by the NRA. Although the NRA at first acted with restraint, some units took revenge for the Luwero Triangle atrocities by plundering and murdering, and many Acholi took this as evidence of a plan to annihilate them (Gersony 1997). This fear was reinforced when the NRA forcibly cleared some 100,000 people from their homes in and around Gulu (Amnesty International 1999). This phase of the war ended when several thousand former UNLA soldiers came to an agreement with the NRA in 1988.

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<sup>40</sup> This war was known as the 'Bush War'. The West Nile Province now contains the districts of Yumbe, Arua, Moyo and Nebbi. The Luwero Triangle comprises the districts of Luwero, Kiboga and Mubende, (see map on p. 108).



A new phase began in 1989 when Joseph Kony led the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in a rebellion against Yoweri Museveni's government. Peace talks were held in 1994 but broke down. Between 1994 and 2002, the insurgency was backed by the government of Sudan, in retaliation for Uganda's support for rebels in southern Sudan. Kony and his senior commanders were indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court in 2005. Peace talks began, which resulted in a ceasefire in 2006. Kony, however, ultimately failed to sign a detailed agreement and the LRA retreated into remote areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic, where it continued to abduct people and carry out massacres (Schomerus and Tumutegyereize 2009; Schomerus and Ogwaro 2010).<sup>41</sup> Tens of thousands of Sudanese and Congolese civilians were displaced, but at the time the fieldwork was carried out, northern Uganda was experiencing a "a semblance of *de facto* peace" (Schomerus and Tumutegyereize 2009:6), which under UN terminology could be described as 'early recovery'.<sup>42</sup>

This civil war and its predecessor resulted from combined economic and ethnic factors. Under the colonial policy of 'divide and rule', the Baganda people from the capital region of Kampala in the south formed the bulk of the bureaucracy, and immigrant Indians provided most of the commercial activity. The south of the country had better educational facilities and trade links with the rest of East Africa. The northern districts inhabited by the Acholi clans remained relatively isolated by distance and poor communications, leading to a sense of economic marginalization (Gingyera-Pinchwa 1989; Kasozi 1994). Many people from the north were recruited for the army and the police (Allen 2006; Veale and Stavrou 2003). As a

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<sup>41</sup> The LRA was still causing problems in the DRC and CAR in early 2012, according to the NGO Conciliation Resources, (<http://apc.us4.list-manage.com/track/click?u=4eed0d03c0d2205b1c7b74fa2&id=feddf654c6&e=ac844b9790> last accessed 13/7/12).

<sup>42</sup> 'Early recovery' and other UN terms are explained in Chapter One, section 3.

result, the Acholi developed a perception of their being a 'martial people' with a specific ethnic identity and tradition (Behrend 1999).<sup>43</sup>

Ethnic antagonism was exploited by both sides from the 'Bush War' onwards (Gersony 1997). The Acholi soldiers who formed only part of the UNLA army at the time were singled out for blame for atrocities and in 1986 there was a genuine panic that there would be widespread massacres in retaliation (Jackson 2002). The NRA, composed mainly of southerners as well as exiled Rwandans but with no Acholi soldiers, was seen as an army of occupation (Finnstrom 2008). The aims of the LRA had a strong ethnic element. Joseph Kony and his leadership rejected modern institutions and emphasized ethnic power transcending state boundaries. The intention was to establish a new moral order and a break with the past (Jackson 2002). They were committed to 'cleansing' the old through the initiation of abductees, in order to save people from the evils of contemporary life, namely the sale of land, the privatization of industry, the spread of the 'Tutsi empire'<sup>44</sup> and the dilution of the Acholi by intermarriage. From the rebel leaders' perspective, this claim provided legitimacy for abductions. The children were suitable targets to be inducted into this new order. When non-Acholi were inducted into the LRA, they were taught to be 'new Acholi' (Dolan 2009; Ward 2001). In the 1994 peace talks LRA representatives drew heavily on Christianity, tradition and ethnicity to argue for their legitimacy over the current traditional leaders, whom they saw as corrupted (Dolan 2009).

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<sup>43</sup> During the colonial period, even though in proportion to the overall population, recruitment into the army was higher in the southern region populated by Bantu tribes, it was believed that the people of the north, who were of Nilotic origin, were 'a more fighting race'. In 1944 a sports and cultural club was formed, the Acholi Association. Lectures on Acholi music and language reinforced and spread the idea of a specific ethnic identity. In 1948 the wish first appeared for a paramount chief for the entire Acholi district, and in 1950 a faction attempted to follow the model of Buganda and establish a King of Acholi. In the early 1950s the first texts of an Acholi literature appeared (Behrend 1999).

<sup>44</sup> Museveni's NRA in the Bush War had a large contingent of Rwandan exiles, mostly Tutsi, (Behrend 1999).



Although later in the war Kony and the LRA lost any vestiges of support from the Acholi population, there were economic factors behind the support of the mainly rural farming population for the LRA insurgency in the early years. The northern region had been heavily dependent on military income and the economic consequences of the loss of military power after 1986 were catastrophic (Gersony 1997). When Gulu and Kitgum districts were declared ‘war zones’ at the end of 1987, transport and trade almost entirely collapsed. The disarming of the local police tracking force that guarded people’s cattle against raids from rustlers from the neighbouring ethnic group, the Karamojong, led to the almost complete loss of the Acholi’s cattle, (from 285,000 head to roughly 5,000, representing a loss of some \$25 million). The NRA was widely held to be complicit in the raids, or at the very least tolerating them, if not directly benefiting from them. This was “a source of irreconcilable and continuing bitterness against the present administration” (Gersony 1997:29).

The LRA had limited success in conveying any political messages to the general public. The abduction of children, the mutilations and tortures, and the claims of spiritual leadership fed the image of a crazed leader, but it may have been in the interests of the government to repress any overt expression of political aims (Finnstrom 2008).<sup>45</sup> A manifesto emerged in 1999 demanding multi-party democracy, human rights, separation of powers, a nationwide socio-economic balance, and the end of corruption. Most external observers, however, questioned its authenticity, judging that exiled Acholi used the cover of the LRA for their own political demands and aspirations (Finnstrom and Atkinson 2008).

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<sup>45</sup> For a few weeks in early 1999, the LRA broadcast daily at a station they called Radio Free Uganda, which was jammed. Dolan argues that the broadcasts belied the claim that the LRA had no political agenda and were not interested in communicating with the population. They wished to do so, but were suppressed. Following a call from Kony in a live broadcast in December 2002, Radio Mega FM, the most popular local radio station in the north was prohibited from broadcasting LRA contributions or to discuss what the government considered to be contentious issues (Dolan 2009).

In summary, the LRA war evolved out of earlier Ugandan civil wars, which were primarily concerned with the capture of state power. Although there was never any real possibility of the LRA winning, ethnic antagonism and a (justified) perception of economic marginalization led to some local support in the early years. As can be seen in the following Section, this support disappeared as a result of the LRA's method of pursuing its war aims.

## **2 The impact of the war**

In this section, an attempt is made to summarize the effects of the civil war on the lives of the people of northern Uganda. The number of the killed and seriously injured is difficult to ascertain. Mortality estimates reach as high as 100,000 (Government of Uganda 2007). Many thousands of people were permanently damaged by battle wounds, landmines, rape, and HIV. Nearly everyone in northern Uganda has some personal suffering to tell. According to a random survey of over 2,500 persons in displaced persons camps by the International Center for Transitional Justice and the Human Rights Center, 45% witnessed the killing of a family member and 23% had been physically mutilated at some point during the conflict (Baines 2007).

Abduction was a particularly painful element of the war and estimates of the number abducted by the LRA vary between 54,000 and 75,000 people (Civil Society Organization for Peace in Northern Uganda 2006; Pham, Vinck and Stover 2008). In the survey referred to above, 40% of respondents had been abducted (Baines 2007). The abduction of children gained the most publicity and obscured the fact that many adults were abducted also.<sup>46</sup> Estimates of the children abducted vary between 25,000 and 38,000, (Human Rights Watch 1997, 2003a,

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<sup>46</sup> Under the terms of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is someone under eighteen years old. Of 25,231 children and youth who had been registered by reception centres after returning from the LRA 37% were 13-18 years old, while 24% were between 19-30 years old. 76% were male and 24% female (Pham, Vinck and Stover 2008).

2003b), which, comparing with the total figures, implies that about half of those abducted were children. The abduction statistics often do not differentiate between those abducted for one day or those for much longer, but the abduction length varied. Dolan (2009) states that 78% of children returned within a year and a further 16% in the following year. Some of those abducted in the early 1990s still have not returned. Either they have died or they have become fully incorporated into the LRA. Others were released or escaped within a few days, a few months or after one or two years. The median abduction length was three months, but among women aged 19-30, it was over four years (Pham, Vinck and Stover 2008).

The mental impact of abduction varies. Most children experienced horrific induction trials, such as torturing or killing fellow abductees or members of their families. They suffered long and rapid marches through very tough terrain, carrying heavy loads. They fought battles and in the latter phases experienced attacks from helicopter gunships and bombers (World Vision 2004). On the other hand, the LRA was a disciplined force with strict rules and rituals. Even in the midst of suffering this may have given young people room for manoeuvre or choice; what Honwana (2006:71) calls 'tactical agency'. Older boys were given responsibility and opportunities to show initiative. Girls suffered sexual violence by being given to commanders as 'wives'. They also suffered domestic violence from their 'husbands'. They too, however, had tactical agency. There was no sexual free-for-all: the group was strictly controlled and measures taken to prevent 'prostitution'. Ordinary soldiers were not allowed to talk to girls unless authorized. Mothers were given some respect and security and they had time for some farming. In line with the LRA's aim of a 'New Acholi', importance was given to fertility (Dolan 2009). It is impossible to establish what proportion of the LRA forces were willing, totally convinced combatants and what proportion were compelled by force and fear to remain in the army, just waiting for the right opportunity to escape.

A major effect on the quality of life of the people of northern Uganda was forced displacement. The figures for total displacement were 1.8 million people at the height of the war; in the districts of Gulu, Kitgum and Pader, 94% of the local population was displaced. (Borzello 2007; CSOPNU 2006;). The government termed this the 'protected villages' policy claiming that it was impossible to protect scattered settlements from the random and unpredictable attacks of the LRA. There were several phases of displacement between 1986 and 2002. In 2002, people were given a two-day deadline and told that if they remained in rebel areas they would be 'treated as rebels' and bombed in their homes (Human Rights Focus 2002). The term 'villages' does not accurately describe the 200 Internally Displaced People's (IDP) camps, some the size of large towns with populations of over 60,000, but without the associated services or amenities (CSOPNU 2006).

The security for each camp was often in the form of a protected bunker in the middle of the camp, giving the inhabitants the impression that they were a human shield for the soldiers. Not only were the LRA not deterred from perpetrating massacres, but the detachments of the army (the Uganda People's Defence Force, UPDF) behaved like an occupying force in hostile territory, perpetrating human rights violations. There was a high level of impunity for such acts, and accordingly, people experienced the double violation of being harmed by those meant to protect them (Dolan 2009:260; Weeks 2002).

In the camps there was minimal land for agriculture and so people could not grow food for themselves. The aid agencies concluded that the government was unable or unwilling to provide adequate food and that unless they delivered direct assistance the people would starve. But the aid was inadequate. Furthermore, the traditional mud and grass huts were built in



extremely high densities, greater than urban informal housing, often with only two or so meters between each hut, with grossly inadequate latrines and water supplies (Gersony 1997). The malnutrition and overcrowding led to a much higher than normal incidence of malaria, diarrhoea, and other infectious diseases. Mortality rates in the IDP camps were three times higher than the Ugandan national average, with reports of one thousand deaths per week in the years after 2002. Six hundred extra deaths per week above the national average over a four-year period, gives an estimate of 120,000 extra 'non-violent' deaths in that period alone (CSOPNU 2006).

Dolan (2009:258) emphasizes the negative impact of displacement on morale and social structures, describing IDP camps as 'sites of abuse' and alleging that the government was clearly not interested in protecting the rights and interests of the civilian population. Communal life was damaged by the disruption of clan structures, the undermining of elders' authority and the elimination of the custom where the young would sit around the fire with the elders to learn traditions and oral history. The young were unable to learn rural farming traditions or the music and dance of the area.<sup>47</sup> In effect, they were immediately urbanized without the usual benefits of urban life, as they were not allowed to leave the camps. The traditional institution of marriage died out, as there were no cattle and clan structures to support it. With no prospect of marriage, or of heading a household, the undermining of masculinity led to violence and self-destructive behaviour. Rape and domestic abuse were at high levels (Dolan 2002). Sexual activity and unwanted pregnancies also increased (Baines 2005; Harlacher, Okot, Obonyo, Balthazard and Atkinson 2006).

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<sup>47</sup> Angucia (2010:64) hypothesizes that as the Acholi danced they experienced a common identity, entertained themselves and educated the younger generation with their values and norms. It is these values that are being sought after as the people take recourse to their traditional rituals and dances at reception centres. They seek to repair a broken society.

The impact of the civil war on education was devastating. A whole generation suffered huge disruption to their schooling. In 1997, 737 schools (60% of the total number) were not functioning because of the war and some 250,000 children received no education at all. Nearly all rural schools were displaced to urban centres or IDP camps. It was usual that several schools shared one site, running in shifts and sharing staff. Some schools, built in the camps themselves, were little more than roofs providing shelter from sun and rain. The staff-pupil ratio rose up to 300 to 1 (Gersony 1997). The LRA targeted teachers and many were killed. Others did not wish to work in such disadvantageous circumstances. In 2006, the rate of primary school completion in the north was only 20% compared with a national average of 48% (Robinson and Young 2007). There were also serious concerns about the lack of access to secondary schooling. Only 5.2% of the age-cohort completed secondary education (Government of Uganda 2007) and in Kitgum, the neighbouring district to Gulu, this figure was a mere 1.5% (CSOPNU 2006).

This fieldwork was undertaken when the Internally Displaced People's camps were being dismantled; the population and schools were in the process of returning to their original villages. The great majority of teacher respondents had suffered terribly from the war. Many experienced the killing of parents and close relatives, in some cases under their very eyes. Some had been abducted. One head teacher, in particular, had been captured many times by the LRA. Most had been displaced after their homes and farms had been burnt. Some were only teaching as their career plans had been damaged by their disrupted education. A teacher described the serious effect of the war on his performance:

“When I was in secondary the rebels came to our school and abducted some of our children and I escaped, [...] even my own sister was abducted, but she went back to school even after she had given birth... The war affected my life so much, when you

are preparing your lesson plans, you will hear they are near and you throw that book away, and we are unable to even look after our own children, you cannot sleep in your house as you fear they will be abducted.”

OI, special school teacher

In short, the impact of the war in northern Uganda was devastating. The people were caught in the middle of the conflict. On the one hand, they were being murdered and abducted by the LRA, and on the other they were subjected to a kind of ‘silent massacre’ as a result of the government’s failure to protect them in any way other than by forcing them into over-crowded IDP camps. In the following sections I aim to explore the meaning of truth-seeking, reconciliation and inclusive citizenship in this particular context.

### **3 Truth-seeking and northern Uganda**

The efforts to bring the war to an end through negotiation and peace-making, as well as decisions about amnesty and the role of the International Criminal Court have influenced what truth-seeking means for the people of northern Uganda.<sup>48</sup> In this section I describe the contested views about how to end the war, the tensions over amnesty and accountability and the implications of these for the schools’ approach to truth-seeking.

Throughout the war there was a tension between President Museveni’s goal of a military victory and the northern Ugandan people’s desire for a negotiated peace settlement. Since most LRA combatants had been forced to fight under fear of death, northerners found the term ‘rebels’ ambiguous. If fighters were killed in action they were called ‘rebels’, if they escaped or were rescued they were called ‘abductees’. People feared that an all-out military assault would result in the deaths of hundreds, if not thousands, of their abducted family members.

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<sup>48</sup> The distinction between *peace-making*, *peace-building* and conflict transformation has been explained in Chapter One .

Gersony noted (1997:94) that “[t]o facilitate a peace agreement, the Acholi people would be prepared to peacefully reintegrate the vast majority of LRA insurgents in their communities.” The push, by groups such as the Acholi Religious Leaders, for a negotiated settlement had some influence on the government. There were two substantial peace talks, those led by Betty Bigombe, Minister for the North in 1994, and those that took place in Juba from 2006. The LRA insisted on the need to examine the root causes of all violations committed during the conflict regardless of the identity of the perpetrators. The idea of a truth commission “found wide support within Uganda and within Acholi civil society” (Afako 2010:21). At Juba, the LRA secured a government commitment to provide individual and collective reparations for conflict losses. After repeated delays, however, during which the LRA re-armed, talks collapsed at the end of 2007. The LRA, pursued by a multi-national force, retreated to a remote region between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Central African Republic (CAR) and southern Sudan (Schomerus and Ogwaro 2010:10).<sup>49</sup>

In trying to secure peace, the government made concessions over accountability. LRA combatants and other insurgents, who promised not to take up arms against the government, would receive amnesty from prosecution for treason under an Act of 2000.<sup>50</sup> By April 2002, however, less than 400 LRA members had taken advantage of this Amnesty Act (Dolan 2009). There were tensions over the differential effects of the amnesty. Former senior LRA commanders moved freely around Gulu, receiving high salaries from the government or

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<sup>49</sup> At the time of writing, the LRA is still undefeated and has carried out further massacres. [www.hrw.org/news/2012/.../central-african-republic-lra-attacks-escalate/](http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/.../central-african-republic-lra-attacks-escalate/) (last accessed 9/8/12)

<sup>50</sup> So called ‘reporters’ would receive a card identifying them as under amnesty, which could be used to draw support in money and goods, such as tools, to assist them in their return to ordinary life. The government provided cards to all those of 12 years old or above, who had spent at least four months in captivity and/or had committed atrocities. The card meant that the person was forgiven and could not be prosecuted. Returnees were given a mattress, cooking pans, hoes, seeds, a jerrycan and 263,000 shillings (about \$146). They were also provided with skills training contracted through Acholi Private Sector Development Company Ltd, e.g. in motor vehicle repair, carpentry, and tailoring. Some people feared the card, viewing it as a form of labeling indicating that someone was once a rebel (Dolan 2009)

founding NGOs to help rehabilitate former child soldiers. The peace negotiator Betty Bigombe had warned about this:

“I think the people of Acholi are so desperate for peace that they are saying they are ready to forgive. Probably one day when the war is over and you have former LRA, especially those who have committed atrocities in the most brutal manner, walking down the street [...] I do not know how people will relate to that then.” Betty Bigombe quoted by Borzello (2007:410)

The corollary of the Amnesty Act was a tacit amnesty for government soldiers. Non-Acholi government troops were allegedly responsible for serious human rights violations, dating from the early years of the war and continuing sporadically, especially in the IDP camps. Crimes committed by government soldiers were left un-investigated or unpunished (Dolan 2009). Truth-seeking can be seen to be a victim of the Amnesty Act, since ‘real’ LRA perpetrators, such as commanders, cannot be distinguished from abducted ‘victims’, and violations from the government forces will continue to be hidden.

When President Museveni referred Kony to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2003, many northern Ugandans feared that Kony would be unwilling to make peace if he thought he would have to face retribution. For the Acholi, the prospective trial of Kony and a few other commanders far away in Europe did little to meet their foremost desire for an end to the war and their longer-term quest for truth (Afako 2010). Community leaders, therefore, promoted traditional Acholi justice as an alternative formula for ending the conflict. The traditional approaches depend on acknowledgement of the truth of what had happened, before proceeding to reparation and reconciliation. During the Juba talks, the LRA and government agreed that both formal justice procedures and the traditional *mato oput* ceremony of reconciliation would

play a role (Afako 2010).<sup>51</sup> Some scholars, however, such as Baines (2007), have highlighted the problems of employing traditional ceremonies at the political level. They have never been used on this kind of platform, namely when a rebel group has fought against a national government by means of violence on the local population. They were not designed for mass killings, but were community approaches to single incidents of murder and rape. They involved clans taking on the guilt of the crime and paying reparations and there was no structural inequality such as existed between the LRA and the Ugandan government. Furthermore, the ceremonies are not the same in all areas. Other ethnic groups, also victims of the war, have different rituals (Baines 2007).

Although the proposed truth commission was shelved when the talks collapsed, many people in northern Uganda still strongly support the idea of official truth-seeking. Neither the retributive justice of the International Criminal Court, however, nor local traditional justice is likely to meet the dual needs of accountability and trust-building. A large section of the political leadership in Gulu and Kitgum believe that the government was not serious about negotiation, since it regarded the Acholi as trouble-makers who deserved to suffer. It suited the president and his party to keep the north weak by allowing the war to continue (Dolan 2009). On the other hand, government supporters consider this to be a far-fetched ‘conspiracy theory’ and blame Kony for the failure of the talks (Ondoga ori Amaza 1998). The significant factor here may be less what is the actual truth, supposing it could ever be established, and more what people choose to believe.

The background, the course, the end of the civil war and the differing interpretations thereof has implications for the school curriculum of northern Uganda, and, arguably, of the whole

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<sup>51</sup> *Mato oput* means ‘drinking the bitter herb’. It is a traditional Acholi ceremony between clans to resolve a serious crime and to agree on reparations (Baines 2005; Angucia 2010).

country. Finnstrom (2008) thinks that it is necessary to develop an understanding of the historical conditions that caused and sustained the war in order to reduce the risk of further civil wars. In time, historical accounts may be developed to explain the background of the LRA civil war and its relationship with earlier armed struggles in Uganda. These may or may not appear in the school curriculum, but even if they do, interpretations including alleged or actual human rights violations by the army are likely to be resisted by the government. In the absence of any comprehensive truth process or commission, it will be difficult for schools to address specific matters of guilt, accountability, or retributive justice. Meanwhile, different communities will retain their own version of the past, through an oral tradition or various written accounts. Schools have perhaps some space for the acknowledgement of the experiences of victims of the war, whether abducted, and forced to fight and perpetrate atrocities, or simply left to survive in overcrowded camps.

#### **4 Reconciliation and northern Uganda**

Reconciliation means the readiness to forgo feelings of revenge and the ending of a state of enmity between individuals and groups. In this section I examine what reconciliation at the individual and community level means in the context of northern Uganda.<sup>52</sup> Those abducted by the LRA and forced to commit terrible acts, including the murder of their own family members, need to be reconciled and reintegrated with their families and communities. This is a complex and difficult process, which has significant implications for schools, whether or not they contain formerly abducted people. In a conflict in which so many of the combatants were forced to fight, it is hard to know what to call those who return. 'Former rebels/combatants' or 'ex-LRA' suggests agency and hence accountability, while 'abductees' ignores that some of the senior commanders went to the bush freely. The commonly used terms today are

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<sup>52</sup> This section draws much from the thesis of Margaret Angucia (2010), who herself lived in Gulu through many years of the war.

'Formerly Abducted Person (FAP)' and 'Returnee' There is also a problem with the word 'child', used by NGOs for anyone under 18 years old. In the 1990s, counsellors at reception centres used to speak of their clients as 'children' even when these were obviously 18 years of age or older (Borzello 2007). Most of those who escaped did so within two years of abduction, but some spent years in the bush and were not children when they returned. There is also a problem with the term 'child mother' referring to abducted girls given in 'marriage' to rebel commanders. This implies victimhood with no room for agency. Many, however, are young adults who have had their children no earlier than the general population and some of these saw themselves as being in stable relationships with their partners. Many mothers in the LRA were accorded respect and status, and acquired skills such as nursing, trading, translating, and accounting while in the bush (Ezati, Ssempala, and Ssenkusu 2011).

Unlike the kind of civil war where one ethnic group is fighting another, in this war victim-perpetrators were compelled to commit atrocities on members of their own group. Those who escaped or who were captured in conflict, spent time at reception centres before facing the ordeal of returning to the families and communities they had damaged. Most formerly abducted children have faced considerable personal difficulties upon return to their communities, experiencing hallucinations and nightmares. Many, however, have felt accepted by their family, preferring not to be spotlighted in the villages with formal support (Angucia 2010). The families want to care for former abductees, but they can become desperate and feel helpless when they do not know how to help. While close family members might be supportive, more distant relatives can be hostile, as there is still considerable fear of formerly abducted people for what they did. Acirokop (2010) states that many returnees report stigmatization and live in fear of reprisal. Conversely, former abductees exude a sense of normality if they are occupied in work, but their aggression surfaces when frustrated or under



the influence of alcohol (Betancourt 2008). Normal arguments or fights are seen as attempts to kill, making marriages unstable. The divorce rate in couples where the woman was raped by any of the fighting forces is high and one report suggests that over 80% of rape victims were rejected by husbands and relatives (People's Voice for Peace 1999). Although many families did not want abductees married into their community because of involvement in violence, some have started to accept 'bush marriages', where both parties wished to continue the relationship (Acirokop 2010:278). In families and the wider community, children have been subjected to name-calling, which makes them feel guilty. Finnstrom (2008) argues that it is boys who face bitter talk more frequently, but it is girls who face greater subtle stigmatization for being sexually impure and morally dubious.

Reconciliation can draw on traditional and local practices of dispute resolution and healing (Ryan 2007). 95% of the population of Northern Uganda is either Catholic or Anglican Christian but for many people this does not mean a complete displacement of earlier spiritual beliefs. Traditionally, in northern Uganda, there is no concept of the individual as an entity separate from their community. Psychological recovery and reintegration into the group are seen as one and the same process. Many people believe in spirits (*jogi*), as well as Christian theology (Ward 2001).<sup>53</sup> Angucia (2010:168) reports children in an IDP camp fearing that the spirits of those killed by a formerly abducted girl at the same camp would return and make her kill them. Nightmares and hallucinations may be treated with traditional Acholi cleansing rituals, Christian prayer and psychotherapeutic counselling, applied separately or combined.

A number of approaches have been tried by traditional and religious bodies. Ker Kwar Acholi, an institution representing chiefs and elders, organized over 50 communal traditional

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<sup>53</sup> This, however, is not always the case. Pentecostal and 'born again' Christians tend to regard the spirits as satanic and take no part in traditional ceremonies that refer to them, (from conversation with participants).

ceremonies in order to build unity across clans, promote a spirit of forgiveness, and send out a message to the LRA fighters who return that they would be welcomed and forgiven (Baines 2007).<sup>54</sup> Baines, (2007:94) quotes a chief saying that “[t]he Acholi culture of forgiveness and reconciliation will always extend till the end of time. It was begun by our ancestors. We grew by it and will live to see that our children remain in it.” During the Juba Peace talks, an LRA delegation toured northern Uganda to meet victims of the insurgency and ask for their forgiveness (Afako 2010:22). The religious leaders of all faiths co-operated in the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, which pushed the government for a law that would encourage LRA members to surrender and seek reconciliation without fear of punishment. In 1996, the Uganda Joint Christian Council made a plea to Kony and reminded the government of its duty to promote peace, unity and development (Ward 2001). Churches and mosques have partnered with NGOs in their work on relief and conflict resolution. Their belief in equal dignity of all in the eyes of God underpins their anti-stigmatization approach. Formerly abducted people should not be called *olum* (rebel) or *kony* (Ward 2001).

There are a number of implications for schools and their potential contribution to reconciliation. Most of those abducted when young missed months or years of education. Where possible, returnees have been inserted back into the school system. It is considered that school attendance is helpful as it provides normalcy and meaningful activity. Literacy and skills learning improve the chances of economic security. A team study by the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International and Affairs, found that formerly abducted young people prefer to be anonymous and often it is only their teachers that are familiar with their situation. The ones that stay try hard and get good results. They enjoy games and cultural

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<sup>54</sup> The four main rituals under consideration were: the ‘stepping on the egg’ (*nyono tong gweno*), a ceremony used to welcome home family members who had been away for a considerable time; ‘cleansing the body’ (*moyo kum*), for people returning from captivity; ‘drinking the bitter herb’ (*matu oput*), for reconciliation between clans after a violent crime such as murder or rape (Baines 2007); ‘bending of the spears’ (*gomo tong*), for reconciliation between different ethnic groups (Pain 1997).

activities, getting fully involved in them, perhaps as an echo of the active life they led in the bush when they were always on the move, in battle or carrying loot (Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs 2006). While in the bush, abductees developed survival skills (Annan, Blattman and Horton 2006). Paradoxically, counsellors argue that the longer someone has stayed in the bush the more able they are to adapt to civil life upon their return. This is “perhaps because they have grown accustomed to the strict discipline of LRA life” (Borzello 2007:404). Formerly abducted people are seen as hard-working and some have farming, or brick-making skills learnt in the base camps in southern Sudan.

The return to schooling, however, is not without problems. Older students are embarrassed to sit with younger ones, and there are few opportunities for appropriate special education.<sup>55</sup> This is connected to the fear of stigma, as name-calling continues in the villages. Family stress and poverty means they cannot afford fees, uniforms and books, especially when the families have lived in camps for a long time. Non-abducted children say that formerly abducted children still tend to be aggressive and easily provoked by small irritations (Angucia 2010). “They keep telling stories of killing, while [s]ome are very rough and if you joke, they fight you” (Focus group Anaka Primary School, quoted by Angucia 2010:175). Others are isolated and withdrawn:

“The returnees sometimes find difficulties in associating with other pupils. They also find difficulties associating with teachers because sometimes they are withdrawn, they isolate themselves. When you call them they don't easily respond to your call, so sometimes they respond but they are so fearful and we have been trying to see how to deal with them.” (Teacher quoted by Angucia 2010:176).

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<sup>55</sup> The special school for war-affected children appearing in this study is the only one in Uganda.

There has been an unequal service between urban and rural schools, as some urban teachers have special needs training from NGOs. Certain schools, especially in the primary sector, have had no counselling or psychosocial support. Since there has been no LRA attack in northern Uganda since 2007, NGOs are reducing their level of activity and no longer provide follow-up. The result of these problems is that the drop-out rate of formerly abducted young people has been high (Robinson and Young 2007). Although there are vocational courses for tailoring, carpentry, construction and mechanics these are not necessarily related to market need (Maina 2009).

### **5 Inclusive citizenship and northern Uganda**

In the final section of this chapter, I describe the effect of the civil war on the relationship between the Acholi of northern Uganda and the central government led by President Museveni. This is a matter of citizenship, both in terms of a sense of belonging and in terms of actual duties and benefits. Under regimes of Presidents Obote and Okello, the Acholi had access to benefits and jobs; under the rule of General Idi Amin they were massacred and oppressed. The war can be seen as a contest between the LRA and the government forces, in which the LRA were the perpetrators and the Acholi its victims. Although the large-scale violent atrocities were carried out by the LRA and not by government forces, the course of the war perpetuated the strong sense of grievance held by the people in the north, particularly through the forced displacement programme.

Dolan (2009) thinks that the LRA could have been overcome with a coherent military strategy, which would not have alienated civilians. He claims that forcing almost the entire population into 'protected villages' (IDP camps) was designed to send a message of intimidation to the Acholi and other potentially secessionist or anti-government groups. Government human

rights violations were much less publicized or criticized than those of the rebels. Dolan terms this policy ‘social torture’, which “...does not describe the behaviour of a few individuals [...] it involves a systemic process [...] which is enabled by a range of actors, including governments, multi-laterals, NGOs and academics” (Dolan 2009:258). Other writers argue that in the eyes of many Acholi this was a “slow and secret genocide” (Finnström 2008:169) and a “war crime” (Branch 2008:151) designed to punish the Acholi for their soldiers’ atrocities in the Luwero Triangle.

Angucia (2010:14) develops this argument, claiming that the atrocities and suffering resulted in what she terms ‘broken citizenship’. She contrasts the individual emphasis of humanitarianism with a community approach, which requires government participation in the process of reintegration of abducted people and the return of displaced communities from the camps to their rural homesteads and villages. According to Angucia, the Acholi look for the type of peace-building that includes repair of their relationship with the government and reparation for their suffering and losses. This is to transform ‘broken citizenship’ into ‘inclusive citizenship’.

The evidence for a deliberate plan to repress the Acholi is circumstantial. Museveni came to power with a clear objective to reduce ethnic elements in Ugandan politics (Ondoga Ori Amaza 1998). The government was ostensibly committed to national unity and it had to gain control of the north if it was to be seen as the credible government of the country and not just the current occupier of the capital city. Over 50% of the government budget, however, came from external donors, resulting in weak control of areas far from the centre (Green 2008). It is by no means clear that a military victory over the LRA was easily achievable by the Ugandan government acting alone. The fact that the LRA has been able so far to resist the combined

efforts of Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and Sudan suggests that Kony was very difficult to defeat, even when isolated. It is important to note that for much of the war the LRA had significant support from Sudan (Dolan 2005).<sup>56</sup>

Yet, although the allegation of a conspiracy cannot be proven, the analysis of the social impact of the 'protected villages' policy is useful for understanding the unique elements of conflict transformation necessary for northern Uganda. Just as important as whether Dolan's allegation is 'true' is that a significant proportion of the Acholi people believe it to be true. Conflict transformation requires, among other things, the cultivation of trust that the government will act in the interests of all areas and peoples of Uganda and not use 'divide and rule' tactics to maintain itself in power indefinitely. Feelings of exclusion from national politics, marginalization and underdevelopment, as well as the anger over economic losses and displacement may create conditions for new insurgencies in the future. As noted by Borzello (2007:48): "If these are not tackled, there is little to stop former combatants returning to the bush and forming a new fighting group. Uganda is a country where people readily turn to the gun."

As I am arguing that inclusive citizenship is one of three elements of a framework through which the school curriculum can support conflict transformation, it is useful to examine the government's peace-building plan for its relevance to inclusive citizenship and schools. The Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) (Government of Uganda 2007) has been the government's vehicle for peace-building in the north, with four strategic objectives: the consolidation of state authority; the revitalization of the economy; the re-building and

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<sup>56</sup> In a lecture in Oxford University (22/2/12) Alan Doss, former UN special representative to the Democratic Republic of Congo, expressed the view that Kony could have been located and eliminated if certain great powers had made available their detailed positional and tactical knowledge, and some hundreds of highly trained special forces.

empowering of communities; peace-building and reconciliation. In terms of state authority, the plan accepts that law and order remains weak due to an under-resourced administration. The prevalence of small and light weapons means high levels of violence. Land mines have damaged economic and agricultural productivity and road use, as well as having a long-term humanitarian impact. It is recognized that “gross abuse of human rights has occurred throughout the war and a variety of processes from traditional reconciliation to more formal processes of dialogue, truth telling and justice will have to be explored” (Government of Uganda 2007:54). The plan, however, does not specifically refer to the fact that these abuses originated from both sides, and it is vague about what is meant by “have to be explored”. As has been discussed above, the development of trust in state authority is likely to be impeded by a lack of commitment to truth-seeking.

The PRDP aims to build an informal leadership amongst men and women in order to engage with local authorities and civilians in a reconciliation process, and to provide support mechanisms for intra-/inter-communal conflicts. Although the sense of the political marginalization of the north is recognized in the plan, there is little or no reference to strengthening democracy through grassroots participation and political involvement at any level below the district (Green 2008). Up to 2008 the approach to democratization and citizenship was based on the *status quo* and not at all on any substantial reforms or the affirmative action for northern Uganda that was promised (Marino 2008). Failure to implement the PRDP might convince the local population that the government is not sincerely interested in addressing the political, social and economic divisions between the various regions of the country that have fuelled cyclical conflicts since its independence (Marino 2008).

The implications of this for schools and their potential for contributing to inclusive citizenship are several. There are fears that the young, if left uneducated and without hope for the future, could easily support a new rebellion against a still relatively weak central state, relying on the perpetual justification of ‘the marginalization of northern Uganda’ (Borzello 2007:408). Education is not a major feature of the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP), but it appears under the title of ‘rebuilding and empowering communities’. The main objective is concerned with access: the improvement of school completion rates and the provision of alternative training for those who drop out. These priorities demand the reconstruction of school buildings, the employment of sufficiently well-trained teachers, as well as their timely payment (Government of Uganda 2007).

The school curriculum is barely mentioned in the PRDP, other than support for radio, cultural and dance groups, and the more general term ‘public information’. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education is supporting curriculum reform, with the assistance of development partners. There have been significant changes in the early years with the introduction of the so-called ‘thematic curriculum’, taught in the mother tongue for the first three primary years. A participative approach is built into this approach. The programme ‘Revitalization of Education in Post-Conflict Areas’ (REPLICA) funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was specifically targeted at internally displaced people in the conflict-affected areas.<sup>57</sup> This programme used the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergency standards (INEE 2010) as a post-conflict instrument and was backed by the President. However the decentralization of education makes it difficult to implement change across the whole country.

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<sup>57</sup> This data is from interviews with education officials and from participant observation as part of the field work. Information about REPLICA can be found at <http://creative-associates.us/2011/02/uganda-usaid%E2%80%99s-ten-year-investment-in-education-yields-results/> (last accessed 27/2/12).



One implication for a curriculum for inclusive citizenship is that the government is responsible for mediating problems between different ethnic groups. While there is little inter-ethnic tension within the northern districts themselves, as Acholi form by far the largest group, fieldwork participants stated that relations between the Acholi and the Karamojong pastoralists to the East, who are blamed for the theft of the cattle in 1987, are still strained, while southern and western ethnic groups remain bitter about the Luwero Triangle atrocities. This presents challenges for schools in terms of developing an understanding of the interests and cultures of different ethnic groups. In view of the perceived marginalization of the north and the danger of further rebellions there is a question of whether and how schools can develop values of fairness, and the knowledge and skills to participate in peaceful politics.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have described the origins and the course of this war, and efforts to end it through negotiation. The purpose was to assess how the context impacts on the conflict transformation framework outlined in Chapter Two. Although the war appeared to be a simple contest between a government and a group of insurgents, there have been elements of inter-ethnic hatred dating back to previous periods of war and armed violence since Ugandan independence in 1962. The policy of forced displacement and the failure to either defeat the LRA or to make peace, created the impression of a plan to suppress the Acholi people.

The way in which the war ended in Uganda, although continuing in neighbouring countries, meant that there has been no formal agreed peace process, no truth commission and no reparations. The truth-seeking element of conflict transformation has not taken place. This presents challenges for schools in terms of teaching the story of the civil wars in Uganda since

independence, the trajectory of this particular war, while at the same time leaving room in the curriculum for the personal stories of suffering by different types of victims. In the Ugandan context, reconciliation concerns communities and formerly abducted people, who were forced to fight and commit atrocities against their own families and villages. The question here is whether schools may help victims on both sides come to terms with what they have experienced. Inclusive citizenship denotes the development in northern Uganda of a sense of belonging to a national project and of a shared future with other ethnic groups. There is a question of whether schools can contribute to an understanding of how to use the political and legal system to effect necessary changes and to the development of the associated values and skills.

Meeting these challenges implies not simply a restoration of the *status quo*, but changes in approaches to schooling. To that effect, it is interesting to see what the schools in a conflict-affected district are actually doing during the early recovery phase. The following chapters present the findings of an empirical investigation, the organization of which was explained in detail in Chapter Three. Each chapter addresses one conflict transformation concept, and within each chapter, the findings are organized under curricular elements of knowledge, skills and values. These elements depend on each other, as a curriculum that supports conflict transformation must include each attribute. Insights from this research will suggest what aspects of the framework may be built upon, and what aspects are less useful.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

“The government and the rebels must be held responsible. If the International Criminal Court has any role, then it should handle the government and the rebels. There are many incidents where the rebels have done wrong and many incidents where the government has done wrong [...] but here we are in a situation where ‘when the lion fights the grass suffers.’”

CH, urban primary head

In the first of three empirical chapters, I explore the relationship between truth-seeking and the curriculum of the schools in Gulu. In the writings of conflict transformation academics and practitioners, truth-seeking is associated with two processes. One -narrative truth- is the effort to understand the causes and the trajectory of civil war through a wide range of evidence, narratives, and interpretation. This includes both systematic academic approaches and the informal efforts of communities to ensure that their story is heard and not forgotten. The other -forensic truth- is the need to hold to account all those whose actions have led to the suffering of many thousands of people. On the international stage, the International Criminal Court was established to end impunity for major perpetrators of violations of international law and human rights. Within states, various transitional justice processes have grappled with the conflicting demands for accountability and the political reality that many people implicated in violence continue to hold considerable power.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Transitional justice refers to the set of judicial and non-judicial measures that have been implemented by different countries in order to redress the legacies of massive human rights abuses. These measures include criminal prosecutions, truth commissions, reparations programs, and various kinds of institutional reforms. (International Centre for Transitional Justice 2012).

In the previous chapter, it was shown how neither of these processes seems to be taking place in Uganda. At the height of the war, the local religious leaders, seeking a sustainable peaceful solution, challenged the government and the LRA to reveal the truth about their actions. There is, as yet, no national truth commission engaged in establishing exactly what happened, and the extensive use of the Amnesty Act means that there is little likelihood of holding to account the perpetrators of atrocities, be they rebels or government actors. Nevertheless it is worth investigating the potential and actual contribution of the school curriculum to such truth-seeking as is possible in the circumstances.

The organizational structure of knowledge, skills and values, explained in Chapter Three, is used to explore truth-seeking in schools. In section 1, I comment on the teachers' declared knowledge and understanding of the causes and trajectory of the war, and documentary evidence for the opportunity for young people to learn about the recent history of Uganda through the school curriculum. The narrative and critical thinking skills of students are discussed in section 2. Teachers' beliefs concerning the utility of history for building sustainable peace and their appreciation of different historical interpretations are probed in section 3.

### **1 Knowledge, understanding and truth-seeking**

In this section, I investigate truth-seeking in the case study schools, focusing on their approach to recent history, which I define as the history of the past fifty years. Judt (2005) and Borer (2006) claim that protracted repression of grievance and pain merely allows it to fester under the surface and erupt at some future time. A knowledge and understanding of recent history allows people to come to terms with their suffering and put it behind them. Judt says:

“ A nation has first to have remembered something before it can begin to forget it[...]Only after the Germans had appreciated and digested the enormity of their Nazi past - a sixty year cycle of denial, education, debate and consensus - could they begin to live with it: i.e. put it behind them” (Judt 2005:829-830).

On the other hand, some scholars, for example Rigby (2001) and Hayner (2011), argue that following inter-state or civil war, a period of amnesia is important for peace, pointing out how common it is. The pain and suffering may still be too raw for people to be in a position to face the truth. This might be illustrated by the obverse of Judt’s phrase, in other words, “one needs to forget before one can remember.” This dichotomy may be illusory. It is possible for a period to exist in which the immediate wounds are allowed to heal, followed by an increasing readiness to look openly at terrible events. There may be a further time delay between the public search for truth about the disputed or painful past and its expression in school. Germany first incorporated a study of the Holocaust into the compulsory school curriculum seventeen years after the end of World War II (Judt 2005:810).

Even if a civil war is covered in the curriculum, the interpretation will be determined by how the war ended. It is a commonplace that history is written by the victors (Fernandez-Armesto 1997:193). If the war ends in an outright government victory, school history teaching is almost certain to present the government’s version of its causes and trajectory. After the genocide in Rwanda, the government eliminated history from primary and secondary curricula on the grounds that the previously ethnically biased teaching had contributed to the genocide. The government sought to control history teaching through courses at ‘solidarity camps’ held for

all university students and public officials and through genocide memorials (Longman 2004).<sup>59</sup>

The efforts of victor-governments to control the official story, however, do not entirely suppress alternative narratives and interpretations. Defeated or marginalized groups have a strong sense of memory cultivated through the family and community, rather than through educational or religious institutions. It is largely an oral history, less susceptible to control by powerful groups who dominate the state, but rarely gaining the visibility obtained by the printed word or the official report. When there is a gulf between official government history and the oral history of a community, groups in ethnic or identity-based conflict are unable to hear, let alone accept, the narratives of their enemies (Barton and McCully 2003). This incomprehension may be asymmetrical. For example, Palestinians, as a subordinate group, have a greater need to learn about Israeli history than vice versa, but the traumatic history of each group damages the capacity to acknowledge that of the other (Bar-On 2002)

Although there may be efforts to use the school curriculum for propaganda and for developing intolerance, it may also be a vehicle for conflict transformation. What is learnt in school can challenge family knowledge and create opportunities for the questioning of assumptions by providing students with a variety of perspectives (Tint 2010). Evidence from the exploratory study suggested that although young people had been seriously and negatively affected by the war, they had little idea of its origins or its course. The primary curriculum appeared to include almost no Ugandan history since its independence in 1962. In more peaceful times, the oral traditions and the cultural habits of passing on wisdom from the elders to the young

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<sup>59</sup> The genocide memorial in Kigali puts the 1994 genocide in the context of other 20<sup>th</sup> century genocides, and interprets the Rwandan experience in terms of racist theories fostered by the Belgian colonisers, (personal experience).

would have provided some form of coherent narrative. It was emphasized, however, on many occasions that the tradition of story-telling by the fire had collapsed under the stress of war and internal displacement.

The empirical study sought to discover the extent to which participants are familiar with their own recent history. This was to be checked against opportunities for such study through the prescribed curriculum and the importance attached to it; for example, by its prominence in national tests. As was explained in Chapter Three, the teacher interviews were semi-structured and free ranging, and were allowed to develop organically. The first section allowed respondents to tell a personal life story. This had the dual purpose of allowing them to relax into the narrative and therefore more easily reveal their values through their answers to questions about turning points and dilemmas.

The varied interview trajectories meant that not every respondent commented on history, but of those that did (about half), all said that although they had their own personal and very painful experiences from the war, they were not confident in their knowledge of its history. This is not surprising, as the solidifying of ‘current’ or ‘contemporary’ events often takes decades and generally follows the publication of academic work. Teachers in northern Uganda do not have access to chronological accounts that are available to scholars, let alone the time to pick their way through conflicting theories, exemplified by this remark:

“Actually the story of the war, I know not all. This war here started when the government of Okello was overthrown, and the army people ran away and told people here that bad people are coming and we will have to fight, so very many people were affected by that propaganda[...]Kony’s aim was quite different, they claimed that they fought for us, and in the end they were killing us.”

SH, special school teacher

The head teachers claimed some knowledge of recent history, frequently referring to details I did not yet understand at the time of the fieldwork. This was perhaps to be expected, as their appointment depends on high educational qualifications. One primary head reflected:

“I may know some parts. I know that this country has been ruled by the British. The one I know very well is Amin [...] they wanted to collect them all and kill them [...] my father was an Obote supporter, he hid himself in the rural area, [...] some of my relatives were also killed, my uncle, my stepmother.”

WG, rural primary head

Of the few officials or NGO officers to comment on their own experience, all stated that they had not studied recent history in school, as here:

“I went through history, it did not cover after independence [...] we could know some areas, other parts we don’t know.”

JH, District Education Officer

One official considered that knowledge of history, current politics could be fitted into civics or social studies:

“They should be encouraged to think of what is surrounding them now, relevant past history [...] operations of government, civics, the origins of conflict [...] you have to go back to those things, not well-documented at the moment [...] there must have been some hidden facts behind Kony, which children should definitely learn about.”

PH, Ministry of Education



I decided to add to the investigation of teachers' declared knowledge an exploration of the students' opportunities to learn about recent Ugandan history through documentary study of the lesson programme, textbooks and examination questions. A large majority of Ugandans finish their education at the end of primary school. I examined the national primary curriculum in order to discover the place of history as a subject. This included a survey of the textbooks seen in the schools visited and revision books for the national primary tests, the so-called Primary Leaving Examination.

There is relatively little opportunity to learn about or understand the history of Uganda after independence in 1962. What little exists can be found in the social studies curriculum for the fifth year of primary education. In several textbooks studied, there are brief references to the first President, Milton Obote and to his successor Idi Amin, including some mention of 'human rights abuses' under his rule. The capture of power by the current President Yoweri Museveni in 1986 is also mentioned. There are references to insurgencies, but no explanation of the LRA rebellion. One textbook, however, was located which, under Topic 9 'Uganda as an Independent Nation', has several pages on the Amin and Okello régimes. The only reference to the 20-year war in the north is the statement: "In spite of achievements, Museveni's government has had civil wars in some parts of Uganda" (Nsubuga, Muguni and Kabonge 2007: 56). The relative lack of importance of recent history can be inferred from the questions in the leaving examination. In the 2009 mock Primary Leaving Examination on social studies, which includes geography and history, there were 55 questions, of which 24 were on history and social studies, but there were no questions on the history of Uganda after 1962.

Secondary students are increasing in numbers but still form a small proportion of the whole, especially in the north.<sup>60</sup> There is more scope for students to learn about recent history there, but it is an optional subject. The textbook for the Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE), the national examination at the end of the junior secondary phase, includes the Amin era. A history teacher in the urban secondary school was observed teaching about the development of Islam in East Africa in an enthusiastic and organized lesson. The teacher explained that history teachers take opportunities to refer to recent events, although there is no formal place for them in the curriculum. A teacher of political education explained that his subject provided the main opportunity for people to learn about recent history but the subject is being discontinued, ostensibly because the curriculum is overloaded. A teacher in a school visited in western Uganda gave the view that the history since 1986 will not come out until after President Museveni has left office, as “people are afraid to tell the truth”. He said that Museveni’s capture of power was covered in political education:

“But even then we only covered the good side of what Museveni did. None of the negatives were mentioned. It will not be possible to talk about alleged UPDF atrocities in northern Uganda.”

GH, secondary political education teacher

In this section, I have suggested that the study of history can play a part in truth-seeking through the study of different interpretations of the causes of the civil war. Listening to oral accounts can provide a counter-balance to official versions of events, especially where there has been some national truth-seeking process. Most of the teachers who commented on their knowledge of history said that they know relatively little. All could speak about their own

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<sup>60</sup> In the rural district of Gulu, less than half of the candidates pass the primary leaving examination, which is the minimum requirement for entrance to secondary education. Of those, a large proportion is unable to attend for financial reasons. Furthermore, attrition in the upper primary years means that far less than the whole age-cohort even sit at the leaving examination, (author’s study of district education statistics).

experiences in vivid terms, and it seemed that they had an outline of events from newspapers and radio programmes. Head teachers and secondary teachers appeared to be more confident, which is to be expected as they have higher levels of education than the primary teachers. There is an inevitable time lag between the end of a war, and any treatment of it in the school curriculum. It is unsurprising that documentary evidence suggests that students as yet have no opportunity to study this war, but more surprising that there seems to be little space allocated to the study of its antecedents in the turbulent history of Uganda following independence.

## **2 Truth-seeking skills**

Even in the absence of a formal place in the curriculum for the transfer of knowledge and understanding of the recent history of Uganda and this war, truth-seeking may be supported through the development of relevant skills. In this section I investigate two skills that arguably are relevant for truth-seeking: story-telling and critical thinking. Senehi (2011:211) suggests that story-telling has a critical role in peace-building, because it is accessible and allows a wide range of voices to be heard. The process of listening to a story involves walking in the narrator's shoes and can promote understanding and mutual recognition. The school may be a site for story-telling, which fulfils the important role of engaging and handling the emotions involved in recent history. Where the course syllabus denies people's identity needs, omitting the achievements and perspectives of certain groups, this can be compensated for by giving space to individuals to express themselves. Stories can allow people to address dilemmas of justice, accountability and forgiveness. Story-telling is a skill, which is learnt through imitation and it can provide a good link between generations. The school can provide an alternative forum where elders visit to pass on their wisdom (Senehi 2011).

Respondents, both teachers and members of the community, complained that the social disruption of the war had led to a decline in the oral skills, the music and the dance traditions of clans and communities. There was evidence, however, that teachers were consciously encouraging their revival. Story-telling skills were observed in the creative work by peace groups and after-school clubs, who used dance and music to tell stories about their experiences. I observed an after-school peace club performing a music-drama about family attitudes to the education of girls. The young people acted and sang the parts of an alcoholic father who wanted to marry off his under-age daughter, a concerned mother, and the daughter herself who was pleading to be able to go to school. The rest of the group sang a chorus commentary on the action. I observed a youth drama group made up entirely of formerly abducted youngsters perform a narrative about their experiences in the LRA. This was taken to different IDP camps and schools as a means of reducing stigmatization and of increasing sympathy for them as victims, as well as perpetrators. It was not possible within the research parameters to explore the capacities of young people to develop a personal, individual narrative of the war. Some older students, however, were able to describe how the war had affected them. The following is an excerpt from a longer account:

“In May 2003 when I was in senior one in Lachor minor seminary we were abducted by LRA rebels. They tied our hands behind during the night and we were beaten seriously, I was caned eighty strokes and when I was conscious I found myself in a pool of blood.”

Secondary prefect

Story-telling deals with one kind of truth, a subjective and emotional record. After violent conflict, it may be prone to concentrate on victimhood and trauma, perpetuating division and a desire for revenge (Vivian 2009). Fountain (1999) and Johnson and Johnson (2005)

recommend the skill of critical thinking as an important element of peace education, as it helps people resist propaganda and political manipulation. Critical thinking is the process of applying reasoned and disciplined thinking to a subject. It involves examining assumptions, identifying hidden values, and assessing evidence in order to reach conclusions (Chaffee 2009; Paul and Elder 2002). The ability to think critically involves three elements: being ready to consider problems in a reflective way, logical reasoning, and some skill in applying those methods (Glaser 1941). There is a distinction between critical thinkers who use skills selectively to further personal ends without considering ethical consequences and those who accept the logic of issues to see a problem clearly without an egocentric or socio-centric bias. Critical thinking can be developed in formal schooling in various subjects, through an approach which distinguishes the development of critical and creative thought from the formal transmission of facts and ideas (McLaughlin 2003; Stenhouse 1967).

Lesson observations and textbook study showed that the great majority of teacher-student interactions are concerned with factual transmission rather than the development of critical thinking. This is perhaps unsurprising at primary level: the skill of weighing up evidence is seldom developed at an early age in any education system. This skill is associated with secondary level education, whereas the bulk of the present research took place in primary schools. Newly-introduced learning styles, however, are beginning to change the culture of the classroom, revealing that teachers and students are open to curricular reform. In one observed primary school lesson, the teacher engaged very young students in role-play and active enquiry-type questioning, instead of the normal style in which students reply to questions, the answers to which are already known by the teacher. In a secondary school lesson, the teacher used group discussion and debate to address issues of loyalty and responsibility. Students in

different groups formulated their ideas and positions and were able to argue their viability with other groups.

The local media, especially local FM radio, are important for conveying ideas and information in urban and rural districts in Northern Uganda. The phone-in model is used frequently, giving listeners the chance to hear a range of views on a topic and learn how radio journalists moderate such a discussion. Listeners become familiar with the consideration of alternative views on a subject and this may help in the development of critical thought. No teaching about the media was observed, nor was there any direct evidence from schemes of work or textbooks, but it may exist in the optional subject of political education, taught at upper secondary level. At the time of the research, very few people had access to the world-wide web, although mobile phone use was increasing very fast.

To conclude this section, story-telling and critical thinking skills could contribute to truth-seeking. There is some evidence of encouragement of story-telling skills, even if this is concentrated outside the formal curriculum, and there is some evidence of critical thinking skills, although they are at an early stage of development.

### **3 Truth-seeking values**

In this section I explore values associated with truth-seeking. I have explained (in section 3 of Chapter Four) the complex position regarding the history of the war in northern Uganda where the lack of a truth commission, the widespread amnesty for former members of the LRA, whether abducted or volunteers, and the down-playing of human rights violations by government forces created a confused picture of events. As discussed in section 1 of this chapter, many see the advantages of waiting for a generation or so 'for the dust to settle'

before examining the history of a civil war in any detail, but others believe that if the history is repressed then there is a greater likelihood of a re-eruption of violence. Consequently, I decided that it would be useful to investigate whether teachers believed that studying the war would be useful for peace-building or whether they felt it was better to opt for permanent or temporary amnesia.

Secondly, my own experience of teaching history to young people, using a variety of interpretations and perspectives, directed me towards investigating the extent to which respondents appreciated that different people see events from very different perspectives and that the 'simple truth' or the 'whole truth' cannot be attained. In the aftermath of civil war, the starkly differing interpretation of events presents a challenge for conflict transformation. A person telling their story inevitably does so from a specific standpoint and may or may not see the wider picture. There are different perceptions or memories, and unconscious bias. In transitional justice processes like the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, or the Rwandan *gacaca* courts, individuals frequently distorted events and lied to avoid censure or punishment (Corey and Joireman 2004).<sup>61</sup> Fischer and Hanke (2009) argue that societies with greater acceptance of diverse opinion are less likely to experience strong internal and external conflict. Warring or disputing parties may agree to accept each other's reality up to a point, without necessarily having to agree on an 'absolute' right and wrong. This begs the question, why should enemies, for example, take the trouble to see events from their opponents' angle? The answer comes from the application of other values; sympathy and equal respect. It becomes possible to see through the eyes of another, if one can accept them as equal human beings. These values are discussed in the following chapter on reconciliation.

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<sup>61</sup> 'Gacaca' courts, based on traditional forms of public justice, were set up by the Rwandan government to establish some form of accountability for the very large number of people accused of participation in the 1994 genocide (Corey and Joireman 2004).

### **3.1 The value of history**

Where time permitted, heads, teachers, officials and officers were asked about the utility and relevance of students studying the recent history of Uganda, and in particular the civil war. Follow-up questions explored whether they felt that teaching this history might incite ethnic hatred or a desire for revenge, and whether present students have any opportunity to study it. About half the respondents commented on this. Of these, a large majority were in favour of some treatment of the war. Many comments, especially from primary teachers, were very simple, responding that it is good to study history, because it is good to know. A number of detailed and considered responses, however, explained that people need to understand the destructiveness and futility of war; that young people need to understand the hollowness of Kony's promise to make a new Acholi; and that those who do not understand the past are more likely to repeat its mistakes. This comment is characteristic:

“It is important that Ugandans learn the history since independence to prepare for a better future. The biggest challenge we have is that most students learn those things to pass exams; they fail to transform what they have learnt in class into practical real life situation, so if they learn the history of Uganda from independence to today and use it to build a future it would be a good thing. It is lacking, it is really lacking[...]it is what is making [...] people say history will repeat itself.”

OT, secondary teacher

Although secondary teachers accepted that it is important to know the history of the war, they tended to refer to sections of the curriculum studied by a tiny minority of students, for example:



“The coming generation must be taught the history[...]it comes into African nationalism (A level) and comes a bit into O level but not much.”

OT, secondary teacher

“I think the war should be in the proper curriculum for Uganda because in African nationalism we handle [the National Resistance Movement] NRM, but there is little about this war.”

HT, secondary teacher

National and local education officials, radio station managers, local and international agencies' representatives agreed about the utility of teaching recent history in schools. No respondent in this group agreed with the suggestion that doing so might enflame ethnic hatred or a desire for revenge. Instead, it echoed their views from earlier statements about the need for trustworthy accounts of the civil war. A minority of teacher interviewees gave the reasons for *not* teaching the history of the war in school. They thought that it is too soon, since very many have directly suffered from it and there is a danger of re-awakening trauma. It may be necessary to study the impact of the war but not the causes or the course, which they can learn from their parents. Lastly, it may be divisive, arousing feelings of revenge and hatred amongst the different groups in Uganda, as remarked by these teachers, one of whom was reflective about the role of history teaching in creating prejudice:

“It will re-awaken their trauma[...]if we talk about Kony and the LRA there are so many who have been involved in the atrocities it will really provoke the community, to talk about it.”

JH, special school teacher

“To me I think it is good for them to learn but also [...] there are some which should not be taught, especially where a tribe is fighting another tribe, this should be stopped

so the children forget. They might think ‘these people are my enemies, they are the one who killed my mother and my brother’ so those facts should be left out[...]so now we think badly of Arabs because of what we learnt about the slave trade.”

WG, rural primary head

Most participants said that very little is being covered in the school curriculum, which supported my conclusions from the documentary study of the primary curriculum, textbooks and examination questions. Some are worried about the long-term of effect of such neglect:

“My own children were all born during this war period, they will need to know. It happened while they were young, they have seen the problems. It is important to know our political history which has been very bad, in this conflict [...] the recent history of this country since independence[...]bad politics has been the biggest problem, what we need in the country is stability, what are those things that can make a country stable? Democracy.”

N, Municipal Education Officer

### **3.2 Acceptance of divergent historical interpretations**

Some comments suggest an acceptance that not everyone sees history in the same way. According to these interviewees the history of this war is too contentious or even risky to explain; the approach has to be circumspect because of the country’s political system:

“Yes but sometimes you don’t have a voice. Many people lost their life for saying what they think. People learnt to be very careful with their tongue [...] especially we teachers because we are not politicians, we are educators and we implement government policy, so for us we just keep quiet.”

HW, urban primary head

Some teacher respondents told me, usually outside the recorded interview, that they had kept documents to remind themselves of specific incidents. Several explained that they were waiting for the history to be collated and written by ‘proper’ historians, but they feared that this was unlikely to happen in the immediate future:

“Like today that history cannot be taught, I am afraid that people think that Uganda is a country with freedom of speech and very little freedom of speech exists.”

FS, secondary teacher

Education officials and NGO officers also expressed similar doubts to those of the teachers over whether the government would be willing to allow different historical interpretations to emerge. Ugandan history reveals a pattern of lack of accountability for killings and human rights violations by different parties over the many years of war and conflict since 1962. At the time of the fieldwork, the Ugandan government’s referral of Kony and senior LRA commanders to the International Criminal Court (ICC) was a matter of intense local debate and interest. The point was made by several interview respondents, and also by many people I met in Gulu, that such a trial in an international court would not bring accountability for the alleged government atrocities and human rights violations, which although they may have been of a different type and on a different scale from those of the LRA, nevertheless were serious, persistent and long-remembered. The officer quoted below speaks for those who believe that there will be no closure or sense of a lasting peace without some Ugandan form of truth and reconciliation:

“There is a deep need in this community for truth and expression of that need on a regular basis. It is going to be extraordinarily difficult because of one of the main players in the conflict is the government. I don’t think we will ever do

anything to address transitional justice issues[...]they are fine to prosecute the one side but not to take any responsibility. I think that is the history of Uganda, not acknowledging that pain, there is so much pain in Luwero, and that's why people think the Acholis got what they deserved [...] and there hasn't been this healing and recognition of that and there isn't a national unity that says that if some of our citizens are suffering [...] we don't expect that they deserve that."

CA, USAID

To conclude this section, a majority of the teachers who were asked, would value the study of recent history as a contribution to lasting peace, while a small minority feel that it risks perpetuating hostility and anger. Many teachers think that publishing, let alone teaching divergent interpretations of the history of this civil war is still too contentious and risky because of the alleged involvement of the government in human rights violations. A possible explanation of these apparently contradictory findings relates to the points made about the time necessary for the most painful wounds to heal. It is noteworthy that no participant revealed a view on the inevitability of different interpretations.

#### **4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have investigated the relationship between the school curriculum and truth-seeking under the headings of knowledge and understanding, skills and values. I suggested that although schools are unlikely to contribute to issues of accountability, they might support truth-seeking through the study of recent history, this being defined as history covering the last fifty years.

Little recent history of any kind is being taught in the primary schools in the cases studied. Some history is taught at secondary level, currently attended by a minority of the population. In neither stage is there any treatment of the twenty-year civil war that caused so much

suffering. Although most teachers suggested that they knew relatively little about the wider context of the war, most were able to recall in considerable detail their own experiences and sufferings and had their own versions of events. It is likely that an oral account of the past is being transmitted through families, friendship groups, and villages. It is clear from conversations with a variety of people I met in Gulu district that the memory of alleged government atrocities is very much alive, although all accept that the scale of violence and atrocity was much more obvious on the part of the LRA. The government policy of forced displacement into the so-called protected villages and the devastating impact on the economy, society and culture of this district was less often articulated. This is probably because people felt they had to be careful not to make anti-government remarks to someone they did not know.

Two skills associated with truth-seeking have been suggested: story-telling and critical thinking. A number of respondents, even in the group situation, were able to make a convincing narrative, while a youth group of formerly abducted individuals developed a drama performance to communicate their experiences and suffering to others.<sup>62</sup> Anecdotal evidence suggested that the traditions of story-telling around the fire, which were characteristic of rural life, had been severely disrupted by the displacement. There are, however, signs of recovery as people return to villages and settlements. There are some signs of the beginning of critical thinking at primary level, as the curriculum is gradually being reformed, starting with the early years.

Most participants argued that there is a need for truth as part of the long-term process of recovery from the war. Many framed this in terms of a national truth commission, similar to

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<sup>62</sup> I took video evidence of this performance, but it has not been included in the thesis for reasons of time and space.

those established in many countries after violent conflict. Most teachers who were specifically asked about the value of teaching Ugandan history thought that discussing the origins and course of the war are ways in which schools can contribute to the search for truth. A minority believed that it was too risky, and could enflame anger and a desire for revenge. All who commented thought that such history cannot be learned as a list of received facts or uncontested 'truths'. In other words, history is not just a matter of 'knowledge', but also a matter of 'understanding'. Such understanding must potentially include a variety of interpretations of the past. Many of these teachers are aware of strongly contested interpretations of the war and the government's approach to ending it. Although some people I spoke to have kept documents and memories, several respondents explained that the history was not yet written at an academic level and that they doubted whether the truth would be allowed to emerge without an official truth and reconciliation process. In the following chapter I explore the relationship between the school curriculum and the prospects for reconciliation, as revealed by evidence from the case study schools.

## CHAPTER SIX

### RECONCILIATION

“I don’t know where it will end; those fellows instead of being conciliatory they came paying back[...]you know when things are done without reconciliation and peace and justice it becomes a vicious circle of war and anarchy.”

CO, rural secondary head

In this chapter I discuss the contribution of the case study schools to reconciliation. The interest shown by the people of northern Uganda in bringing civil war to an end through negotiation was evident from the earliest years. Indeed, many thousands of insurgents who did not at first accept the victory of Museveni’s National Resistance Army, laid down their arms through a negotiated settlement in 1988. If reconciliation is necessary for durable peace, who participates in this process? In relation to the LRA war, reconciliation would seem to take two forms. One is the reconciliation between the local population and the central government, while the other would mean the restoration of positive relationships between different ethnic groups, mediated by the government. The latter is a matter of inclusive citizenship and is addressed in the following chapter. The main focus of this chapter is the reconciliation between the people of northern Uganda and the formerly abducted people, who are themselves also victims.

As in the previous chapter, the interpretation of the data is organized under the headings of knowledge, skills and values. In section 1, I discuss what knowledge and understanding in the curriculum may be applicable to reconciliation and report general observations of teachers’ and students’ familiarity with current events. In section 2, I explain the role of the Gulu

schools in developing problem-solving, cooperation and teamwork skills, as these skills underpin capacities for reconciliation. Finally, in section three, there is an exploration of how the schools are building on the intensive support given at reception centres to formerly abducted young people, by socializing the values of equal respect, sympathy and forgiveness.

### **1 Knowledge and understanding for reconciliation**

In this section I am considering the type of knowledge and understanding that supports reconciliation and that could be addressed in schools. Conflict transformation scholars argue that for people to address structural violence they need to be able to analyse their political economy and society. It is in the nature of human interaction to experience conflict and controversy as people have different interests. For reconciliation people do not only need to understand history, as discussed in the previous chapter, but also its impact on contemporary issues.

The question of whether and how schools approach contemporary issues gained significance as a result of my fieldwork experience and follow-up reading. From my fieldwork notes, there were clear indications of young people's interest in the process of trying to bring the war to an end. Debates were observed in three separate contexts, where the peace process was the topic, and in particular the question of the arraignment of Kony and senior LRA commanders by the International Criminal Court. The debate was framed in terms of 'international justice' and 'local justice'. The Juba Peace talks were well-known and in the debates students referred easily to well-known political figures and to the arguments about the best way of bringing the war to a complete conclusion. Additionally, all the interview respondents knew about the measures taken to introduce traditional reconciliation rituals as part of an overall approach to conflict transformation.



Informal conversations with adults in Gulu suggested a lively interest in current events, and I observed that people who cannot afford newspapers read the headlines on the papers displayed outside newsagents. Most people within broadcast range listen to local FM radio, and head teachers, teachers, and even primary students appeared to have some awareness of current issues. People were very interested in land issues, as there were many disputes over ownership. The war had destroyed traditional communities with their vital oral memory of boundaries, markers and land relationships. Several people displayed great distrust in the government's declared aim of encouraging an industrial zone on the edge of the town, fearing some form of 'land-grab'. The issue of reparation for the theft of the Acholi livestock was also a matter of regular comment.

The treatment of controversial issues in school is relatively rare anywhere in the world and is often confined to the most advanced students (Entwistle 1996; Hess 2004). In empirical work in Northern Ireland, Barton and McCully (2003) found that while young people were able to step outside their pre-conceptions to interpret historical events of the past, they resolutely refused to make any connection with the conflict-impacted present. This issue is related to the point I made in section 1 of the previous chapter about the need for a period of forgetting before people can begin to remember. Cole (2007) explains that there needs to be a degree of reconciliation in society at large before schools can be expected to address controversial issues in the present.

The Gulu case seems somewhat different. As reported in the previous chapter, teachers and students have little or no knowledge of recent history and no opportunity to examine contrasting interpretations. Yet they appear to be interested and involved in issues related to

the end of the violent conflict. Nevertheless, given the time and space constraints on curricula, the observational and documentary evidence suggests that the schools are not devoting much time to current events, especially where they are controversial. These findings point to the possibility of further investigation in the future and are discussed in the thesis conclusion.

## **2 Reconciliation skills**

A case might be made for a wide range of skills both suitable for reconciliation after civil war and applicable in schools. They relate to 'intra-personal' and 'inter-personal' intelligences, the former referring to self-knowledge and understanding and the latter to people's relationships with others (Gardner 1993a). There are many ways in which such skills may be framed. Some might be considered too complex and specialist for action in school, an example being psycho-therapeutic skills. I decided to investigate problem-solving, cooperation and teamwork skills as they are relevant to daily life in schools, can be developed through repeated action and have applicability beyond the school (Coleman and Deutsch 2001; Davies 2004b). Here I followed part the UNICEF peace education framework (Fountain 1999:50). These skills can be developed both in the formal curriculum and through the overall experience of school daily life, and they are susceptible to observation. Furthermore, I have direct experience of the development of such skills in English schools, through 'restorative justice' approaches to reconciliation after in-school conflicts, through planned practical group-work challenges, and the involvement of young people in school-improvement.

Peace educators have both developed and evaluated resources for the development of problem-solving skills (Baxter 2005; Zbar, Russell and Weston 2005). Although strategies can be applied to them, they are not to be taught merely as abstract theories, but in the context of actual problems and conflicts in schools. Young people, who have had the opportunity to take

action in this way, are being prepared to use these skills in adult life, which in turn can contribute to long-term conflict transformation.

The data for this element of the investigation is derived partly from the reports of teachers and students about their own actions, where account was taken of the natural tendency to talk up one's own actions. Notes from participant observation in the schools provided a method of triangulation, supplemented occasionally by documentary evidence, such as policies and notices.

## **2.1 Problem-solving**

Problem-solving skills are important for reconciliation. The problem-solving cycle includes identifying and defining the problem, forming a strategy, organizing knowledge and resources, and evaluating actions. As such, it can be applied to a wide variety of challenges (Steinberg 2003). Problem-solving skills, using logical and emotional reasoning, can be used to bring a potentially or actually violent confrontation under control, so that the long-term issues can be discussed and mediated. Where such skills, are geared more specifically towards peace, they are sometimes termed 'conflict resolution' skills. I saw some textbook evidence of educationalists planning for these skills and was alert to the possibility that they might be taught in the case study schools. I preferred, however, to use the broader and more general term 'problem-solving' because I doubted that I would have the opportunity to see such specific skills being deployed, given the relatively short time spent in each school.

The development of skills requires repeated action. Therefore, in order to understand if and how such skills are being developed it is necessary to assess whether problem-solving is expected of students and whether they are regularly solving problems. There was no problem-

solving observed in the main programme of daily lessons. The pedagogical model was almost entirely individualistic and repetitive. For example, in primary and secondary schools, after a teacher's explanation providing new information, the normal practice was to write a list of exercises on the blackboard, which had 'right/wrong' answers, i.e. 'closed' answers. There was little or no encouragement for creative thinking or speculative questioning, and no opportunity to tackle a problem with a strategy which could be later evaluated.

The context for problem-solving was the daily life of the school outside the organized lessons, as explained by this teacher:

“Peace building in school means a lot[...]it does not mean that we can end the war, when we say ‘peace’ it means we must begin where we are [...] even if we are not handling those who are doing the violence, we must begin within ourselves [...] so we teach the learner that peace begins within yourself [...] and your family and in the school. And they should love themselves and know how to settle cases among themselves because not all problems can be solved by fighting or anything, but they should know how to solve their problems in a good way.”

OI, special school teacher

In the interviews, teachers and students gave accounts both of successful problem-solving and of difficulties and dilemmas. Accounts of difficulties are just as instructive as those of successes, since skills are not only developed through successful action but also through modifications to actions after failure. The example given by teachers with regard to solving problems is an important reference point for the development of the students' skills, illustrated by this account:

“The case was becoming serious so we called their parents. These girls were complaining that these boys wanted to beat them on the way. [...] We spoke to them and advised them and came to a conclusion. The parents [...] from the girls’ side were very serious, very angry, so after guiding and guiding them, we came to a conclusion and they all went happily.”

PO, primary teacher

Evidence from teacher interviews revealed how schools tried to meet serious guidance and problem-solving challenges. For example, one rural teacher who lived in the community explained how difficult it was for fellow-teachers to play a full part in resolving inter-personal issues, while living far away in the town. S/he comments on the importance of close links between school and family - a problem solved in school might continue in the community:

‘This war made our people traumatized and there is need for psycho-social support [...] and the teachers are the immediate people to provide that for the children and even for the parent. If a child comes to school and you see signs of problems and you can get closer to the child and he or she opens up [...] and tells you more about him or her, and you find there is a way of getting to the parents and that is what our teachers are doing, their only limitation is time.’

KH, primary teacher

Even, where as above, there is relatively little evidence of skills development at student level, the influence of NGOs could be discerned in the language of teachers when talking about problem-solving. For example, terms like ‘conflict resolution’ and ‘conflict management’ were used by teachers who had received training in peace education. Some problems appeared not only within schools but also between schools. One head teacher described problem-solving between Catholic and Anglican secondary schools:

“The Justice and Peace Commission run by Gulu Archdiocese were carrying out peace education in school. [We] did a number of workshops and seminars with them, and did a lot of training on peace education with them. We were gearing towards getting ways of ending any grievances in a more peaceful way; [We learnt] a number of ways how to solve problems and mediation skills, analysis of problems. You have to analyse them critically and then solve them, it was about conflict management.”

CH, urban primary head

Young people learn by example. If teachers are solving problems carefully and with sensitivity, then the students themselves are learning in an appropriate peace-building atmosphere. Those who find themselves in leadership positions may have spent several years in schools, where they are able to observe the teachers’ methods of addressing and solving problems. Many will have experienced being guided to solve their own problems, such as interpersonal issues, bullying, fights, and thefts. One must remember, however, that some students spent their formative years in the bush with the LRA, where they learnt the most extreme methods of dealing with issues, under military style discipline, frequently involving torture and death. So what evidence is there of the students’ actions to develop problem-solving skills?

The young people most likely to be involved in problem-solving were the prefects. Prefects are students vested with some authority over their fellow students in order to help with the daily organization of the school. The extent of the school prefect system was surprising. It is national in scope, seemingly dating from the colonial educational system.<sup>63</sup> The system works similarly in all the schools in the study, whether primary, secondary or special. Members of after-school clubs, such as the Girls Education Movement or Peace Clubs,<sup>64</sup> also have

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<sup>63</sup> Although I was unable to study any official government rulings on the role of prefects, my visit to schools in western Uganda revealed prefect systems identical to the ones seen in the schools in the north.

<sup>64</sup> The position of clubs is discussed in more detail in section 3.

opportunities for problem-solving. Both involve a minority of students. The prefects are an elected/appointed élite. Club membership is voluntary and does not cover all students. The question occurred as to whether and how this system was contributing to conflict transformation through the development of problem-solving. Some teachers have little doubt about the contribution that is made:

“The prefects are so useful in this school, on duty for when teachers are late they can even do the assembly. They solve problems between children[...]When maybe children are fighting they are the first people to go to settle the case, they separate them. They may take the child to the ‘on-duty’ to solve the problem.”

FCP, primary teacher

Although considerable time was spent in each school observing daily life, there were no occasions when students were observed in the process of solving a particular problem. Any evidence comes from the statements of the students themselves. Here one must be cautious, since people are prone to describe what they feel they ought to have done, or what they think the questioner expected them to do. There may be a considerable gap between rhetoric and reality. Nevertheless, the students’ statements were cross-checked against those of the heads and teachers, many of whom claimed that students are effective.

There was evidence of successful student problem-solving from all the institutions in this study. Responses that merely reported on prefects carrying out their ‘school order’ duties, such as monitoring late-comers, supervising classes or marshalling students for assembly were not analysed specifically. Specific attention, however, was given to examples which revealed students, often prefects, addressing disputes, personal problems or offences against the community. It is clear that the teachers both expect the prefects to sort minor matters out and

that they welcome this. A significant proportion of problems were related to theft, as in this example:

“There was a problem when we went for music dance and drama, other schools came and stole our property. So we left it in the hands of the prefects and until they got a pair of boots and a pair of uniforms from our school, and they solved that problem for two hours and they went to the home of the boy in Bungatira.”

ET, rural primary head

Most student groups mentioned fighting as the most common problem they had to solve at their level. There was a little evidence of teamwork and discussion between prefects, both specific and implied through the use of the term ‘we’. The teachers generally confirmed the positive efforts of the prefects to sort out problems, but it is also clear that prefects referred difficult cases to the staff:

“In case of [a] problem as a head prefect I try to solve the issues with other prefects and if we are defeated we forward it to the staff disciplinary committee.”

Primary prefect

“Counselling the culprit and advising him to avoid such [a] mistake if it is a simple issue.”

Primary prefect

In one secondary school there was a formal students’ disciplinary committee acting as a level between daily rule enforcement and the school’s main disciplinary committee:

“We sit as club members and give our opinion on the matters. We first bring the matters before the chair-person to settle it and if she/he finds it difficult then they forward it to the school administrators. In determining the action to take, we first try to



investigate the root cause of the problem. We are also guided by some rules and regulations as a club and at times we give punishments to those who are on the wrong. When a club member for example fails to attend a meeting without excuse or apology for three times, he or she will be demoted if the person is executive member. And if a person is active member he/she will be chased away from the club.’

Secondary club member

The special school had a very high proportion of students who had been in the bush with the LRA. Many of the older ones had considerable military responsibility and opportunity to develop leadership skills, albeit in a violent context where disobedience would result in torture or death. The teachers of this school had the challenge of selecting which among these had the potential for ‘civil’ leadership. In other words, the students had to be able to take legitimate authority without abusing their position. One experienced rural teacher described how the staff observe their students and identify those with problem-solving potential:

“For life-skills there needs to be behavioural change. You can see a sign of peace or conflict. If there is conflict do they solve it themselves, or refer to other people? You can see some leadership qualities in some children who go in to solve their own problems. They are able to solve problems among the children themselves.”

KH, primary teacher

## **2.2 Cooperation and teamwork**

Cooperation and teamwork skills are important for reconciliation. They are derived from the experience of working together towards common goals and building networks of trust. Cooperation and teamwork skills require a readiness to listen to others, understand their point of view, and subsume one’s personal desires for the good of the whole. They are related to problem-solving in that many problems are best addressed in a co-operative manner, and to

discussion skills in that the process of good decision-making requires listening to a range of opinions. Cooperation is a broader term than teamwork for one can cooperate with others even if there is no team involved. For the purposes of this study, the terms are linked as it was not possible to gauge personal cooperation within the empirical framework.

The work of prefects provides potential opportunities for cooperation and teamwork. Although no documents were seen setting out the precise role of prefects, all the prefect groups were asked to describe their roles and provided detailed lists. Although the majority of answers related to authority and the enforcement of school rules, there is evidence in all groups that prefects are expected to co-operate with each other. The extent to which the prefects consider themselves to be a *team* is not clear and emerges indirectly from interview questions. The range of responsibilities is illustrated by the different individual responses from the special school prefect discussion group:

“Prefects act as a link between the students and the teachers.”

Special school prefect

“It is our work to ensure that students are following school rules and regulations and settling minor disputes among students.”

Special school prefect

“To monitor the health condition of the pupils and report any cases of sickness to the school nurse.”

Special school prefect

These responses suggest that prefects are aware of their role and could develop teamwork skills through their actions, if they acted as claimed. Their claims were supported by the

comments of heads and teachers, who said that they find prefects useful for the smooth running of the school. All the same, the emphasis appears to be on a hierarchical system of top-down authority. Hence, it is pertinent to ask what opportunities most students have to learn co-operation and teamwork skills.

Teamwork skills are developed in sports teams and after-school clubs. One school visit coincided with the annual inter-schools football competition. The competition is taken seriously and there is a lot of enthusiasm generated for the school teams. There are also inter-school athletics tournaments and music, dance and drama festivals. These provide good opportunities for the development of group loyalty. The activities of after-school clubs are explained in more detail in the next chapter, but evidence emerged, from interview and some observation, of the way in which clubs manage themselves. Student members and leaders have the opportunity to develop their interpersonal and teamwork skills in running the clubs, setting up action plans and evaluating their success. One teacher explained the influence of the peace club on the prefects' sense of responsibility:

“To some extent it has changed because when the club was introduced in the school, pupils registered and elected their own leadership, because the sense of responsibility was there, pupils were able to elect their own leaders and they were able to educate their fellow pupils about their rights.”

WH, primary teacher

Other co-operative interpersonal skills may be developed in clubs, such as organization, action-planning and evaluation, as revealed by this primary teacher:

“GEM (Girls' Education Movement) clubs look at human rights. We have given the responsibility of the girls, to be chairperson, the secretary can be the boy, and they

[are] all the same. We should respect each other. We always take the girls to be the leaders[...]most of the GEM club members are the leaders in the school. [...] We can look at the girls who drop out; they have the right to education and should come back to school.”

CIH, primary teacher

### **2.3 Training for reconciliation skills**

The preparation and training of the prefects is important for successful problem-solving, cooperation and teamwork. Most schools appear to give their prefects some basic training, consisting of perhaps one afternoon of instructions. The reference to discussion (see below) suggests that at least some training is interactive and not simply ‘top down’. References to prefects’ meetings were rare, implying that once appointed, prefects are left to get on with it. One respondent, however, specifically mentioned the opportunity to organize their own meetings:

“The pupils, the prefects after they are democratically elected, the senior man and woman organize a meeting where they are given (a) thorough discussion of all the school rules, their meaning, their impact, positive and negative if not properly handled, then they are given the opportunity to organize their own meetings [...] where they can invite the teachers, and sometimes they are also taken by NGOs for meetings and workshops.”

KH, primary teacher

Teacher respondents from one primary school said that although prefects were given their tasks and responsibilities, the training was quite superficial and needed to be reinforced. The one specific reference linking prefects’ training with ‘peace work’ came from a head teacher, who claimed direct involvement with the initiative. The use of the term ‘peer mediation’, in the following quotation, suggests a teamwork approach:

“Getting prefect leaders trained in peace work was my own initiative and many schools lack them. The training we give them prepares them for leadership [...] When we train our students for peer mediation [...] [we] wanted procedures for handling cases [...] it depends on how well-trained a student is and the personality.”

FH, urban secondary head

The training of primary prefects is quite rudimentary and may not be followed up after the first briefing. Financial and time considerations were given as the main reason for this. The language used by prefects, with frequent use of the term ‘we’, suggests some degree of team sense. Prefects’ group meetings, however, seem to be rare and it is hard to see how teamwork can be developed without meetings. It appears that there is a rather more atomised structure, where if an individual prefect is not performing very well, the matter is taken up by the teacher responsible for the system. There may be some distinction between primary and secondary schools, as secondary prefects mentioned collective training with prefects from other schools, for example:

“I have learnt about human rights from school because I am a prefect, where normally we learn human rights issues as a group. The group organizes [...] meetings at the end of each month and [...] we share our experiences and opinions on peace, human rights and security.”

Secondary prefect

Once again, this evidence should be treated somewhat cautiously. It is noteworthy that the trainee primary teachers, young themselves and only just out of lower secondary school, were more dubious about actual problem-solving skills, than what was claimed by teachers. The focus here, however, is on actions taken which develop skills, and failure can lead to learning as well as, or perhaps better, than success. The students’ reports of their efforts and their

challenges are instructive. Reports of dilemmas and conflicts of loyalty can reveal their values, as well as the arena for skill development, and it is to values that I turn in the next section.

To sum up this section, there is evidence that prefects and club leaders are active in dealing with minor problems. A wider range of students is gaining cooperation skills through sports and after-school clubs. The whole student body has a part to play in prefect selection and, therefore, there is some sense of accountability. The initial training of prefects, however, especially at primary level, is rudimentary and follow-up meetings and in-service development are largely lacking. Teamwork with delegated responsibilities and within a shared overall aim is under-developed. This means that the potential of the prefect system for reconciliation skill development is not being fully realized. The leadership model appears to be individualistic and very dependent on the value system of the individual school. Students' own reflections on unfairness on the part of older students are evidence of the potential for abuse.

### **3 Reconciliation values**

Reconciliation means forgoing the impulse to take revenge or to maintain a state of enmity and hostility. In this final section, I investigate three values that are both relevant for reconciliation and that could be socialized in schools: 'equal respect', 'sympathy' and 'forgiveness', first explaining why these three have been selected out of a wide range of possible choices.

I am defining 'equal respect' as a situation in which humans of different origins, categories and locations are thought of as fully human, even if they do not have equal power or status. It is not a matter of material equality, but one of acknowledgement and recognition. Where reconciliation means the bringing together of two parties out of a conflict, the value of equal

respect is of crucial importance, because conflict transformation is likely to be impeded by values or prejudices, which hold some categories of people as more human than others (Hayner 2002, 2011). The most extreme form of such values was seen in the Nazi treatment of Jews as sub-human vermin and in the propaganda concerning the Tutsis before the Rwandan genocide. “We no longer considered the Tutsis as humans or even as creatures of God [...] so we found it easy to wipe them out,” said a self-confessed Hutu killer (Hatzfeld 2009:25). Such beliefs were conveyed by the state-controlled media, aided and abetted by the education system (Obura 2003).

Bird (2007:184) explains how identities can be created and ‘shifted’ through formal and informal education. Just as the curriculum conveys values, group loyalties and peer influences which lay the foundations for a vengeful mentality through the encouragement of negative and stereotypical presentations of ‘the other’, so it can support what she calls a ‘positive identity shift’. ‘Equal respect’ is the obverse of negative stereotyping. My choice of this value is influenced not only by the literature, but also by my experience as a headteacher in tackling racism and other forms of discrimination or bullying in schools. Approaches based on developing understanding and mutual respect between conflict parties, had greater long-term success than those based solely on rule compliance and sanctions.

A closely-related value for reconciliation education is ‘sympathy’. Sympathy is the disposition to experience sorrow at the other’s serious misfortune, to be disturbed by injustice, and to intrinsically care for another (Yarnell 2001). Pinker (2011:576) defines it as “aligning another entity’s well-being with one’s own, based on a cognizance of their pleasures and pains.” Humans have an innate capacity for sympathy (Panksepp 1998), but this is also a learned value from early infancy, socialized through child rearing and education (Goleman 1995). I

considered using the term 'empathy', which is often used interchangeably with sympathy. Of relatively recent origin, used first in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it means being able to 'enter into' the feelings of others. This is not precisely the same as sympathizing, since for example a criminal or confidence trickster can enter into the feelings of others without actually caring for them (McGilchrist 2009; Pinker 2011).<sup>65</sup>

The capacity for sympathy is not triggered automatically by the presence of another human being, but is associated largely with a group: family, tribe and so on. The question of who is considered worthy of sympathy and who is not is mediated by culture: it is a cultural norm. For example, in some industrialized countries values concerning disability and homosexuality have been changing. For sympathy to operate there has to be sufficient social stability and receptivity for the feelings of others to be appreciated. Otherwise, sympathy can be swamped by anger (Levenson and Ruef 1992).

Over time our 'circle of sympathy', i.e. those with whom we feel capable of identifying, has expanded (Pinker 2011:175). Pinker suggests that the expansion of literacy has helped us develop a sense of perspective by being able to imagine ourselves in other people's shoes through reportage, memoir, and fiction. Arguably, schools have a part to play in this process, not only through their general contribution to literacy, but also through introducing students to a wide range of people and experiences. Since our feelings have to be engaged in order to expand our circle of sympathy, rote learning is relatively ineffective (Goleman 1995). My previous research found that young people can be motivated to learn about human rights, both from direct experience of injustice and also by in-depth encounters with the life-stories of victims (Cunningham 1986). The multi-media world, through which it is possible to

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<sup>65</sup> It seems to me that people prefer to use the term 'empathy' because in everyday speech 'sympathy' carries a meaning which implies insincerity or superficiality.



appreciate the lives of others via radio, photography and film, can also play a part. In most schools of conflict-affected countries, such media are as yet little used, but this is likely to change as technology costs fall rapidly.

The language of reconciliation frequently refers to the value of 'forgiveness', which expresses a renunciation of any need for personal revenge. Revenge has been explicitly endorsed in many of the world's cultures (Cottino 1999). Pinker (2011) argues that the reason can be found in the need for deterrence. Revenge is not a disease, but is necessary for one to protect oneself against being exploited. According to Pinker, game theory shows not only how revenge works, but also how damaged relationships can be repaired with acknowledgement and forgiveness. Computer 'tournaments' with repeated iterations of the game 'The Prisoner's Dilemma'<sup>66</sup> illustrate how different strategies lead towards cycles of retaliation or their interruption. The strategy named 'Tit for Tat', which starts by co-operating and thereafter is based on repeating the exact last move of an adversary, is outperformed by a more forgiving approach nicknamed 'Generous Tit for Tat', which will occasionally grant forgiveness, moving two strategies locked in mutual retaliation into a path of cooperation (Pinker 2011:534-535). This appears to support Trivers's (1971) theory that values are adaptations of cooperation. It may be that conspicuous acts or expressions of forgiveness by individuals or small groups can break deadlocks (Pinker 2011:534-535).

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<sup>66</sup> Two partners in crime are held in separate cells. The evidence against them is marginal, so each is offered a deal. If he testifies against his partner ('defects') while the partner stays loyal ('cooperates') he will go free and the partner will be jailed for ten years. If they each defect and testify against each other, they will both be jailed for six years. If they stay loyal to each other and cooperate they can only be convicted of a lesser crime and they will be free in six months. They both ought to cooperate, which gives the game a positive sum, but each will defect, figuring out that they will be better off either way. This dilemma arises in any situation in which the best individual pay-off is to defect while the partner cooperates. The highest total pay-off is when both cooperate and the lowest total payoff is when both defect. In terms of predatory violence, being the aggressor against a pacifist brings the benefits of exploitation, but being an aggressor against a fellow aggressor damages both parties. Therefore, both ought to be pacifists. They, however, fear that the other will be an aggressor, thus, their pacifist behaviour will lead to the worst outcome possible.

Some reconciliation scholars, such as De Gruchy (2002) and Santa-Barbara (2007), argue that forgiveness is a personal, individualized matter and cannot be made part of a formal or a state process. This suggests that the socialization of forgiveness is unlikely to be successfully conveyed through the formal taught curriculum, but it may find its place in the expression of school values through the rituals and processes of everyday school life. The choice of this value was influenced by the use of the term 'forgiveness' by those people in northern Uganda who were seeking to end the war through negotiation, as opposed to the government policy of outright military victory.

### **3.1 Equal respect**

In this sub-section I report on the values of the teachers and students concerning equal respect. As people often hide their real views, I hoped that the life story, turning points and dilemma elements of the interview would give insights into their values, precisely because there were no direct questions about them. There are three categories explored here: ethnicity, gender and disability.

The LRA war, as explained in detail in Chapter Four, developed out of the ethnic and political violence, which followed the end of colonialism. Schools may contribute to long-term peace in Uganda if young people are socialized into values of equal respect for all ethnic groups. Investigation was made into the extent to which respondents consider ethnic tension to be an important factor for long-term peace. Only one quarter of the teacher interview respondents had the occasion to comment. Five out of the seven teachers who did so said that there are lingering ethnic tensions in Uganda. Some generalized about tribal divisions and the alleged sense of superiority of the ethnic groups which had established politically organized and centralised kingdoms during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The relative organization of the Buganda and the

Bunyoro kingdoms resulted in the British choosing Kampala as the capital, with long-term consequences on people's sense of identity:

“Here in Uganda we have very many tribes, there seemed to be a lot of suspicions, politically, socially, economically even religiously [...] that is my big concern when they begin to talk of peace and human rights in Uganda. To Buganda, and Banyankole [people] any other tribe is a second class citizen.” (sic)

CH, urban primary head

Several respondents referred specifically to the blame attached by the Langi people to the Acholi for the atrocities in the Luwero Triangle carried out in part by Acholi soldiers, exemplified by this comment:

“This is a regional matter. What worries us these days and I believe it will continue to exist [...] the Acholi people and the Langi -there is a strong [...] instinctive [feeling] that the Acholi people were the ones who started this war. Supposing you are working there you don't feel comfortable, if anything happens, you might even be killed[...]so they have that stream, that friction between them that was so much, during the Luwero war, many Langi were killed and they hate the Acholi.”

OO, primary teacher

This distrust of the Acholi has led to the identification of the ethnic group with Kony himself. In fact ‘Kony’ has become a term of abuse or ridicule used by other ethnic groups for Acholi people, especially when they are studying or working in other areas of Uganda. It was ironic that the people thus abused were the prime victims of the war, as in this case:

“I got that discrimination when I went for teacher training, some of them were calling us Kony - even the principal himself asked me if I would behave well, if I would

destroy the school property[...]It is not yet ready to say there is mutual understanding between tribes. What is bringing problems is the politicians; they divide and they talk differently in different area[...]I cannot tell you that it is really becoming OK - no."

HO, secondary teacher

One respondent commented on the long-term distrust between the Acholi and their neighbours to the east: the Karamojong. This group was implicated in the theft of the entire stock of Acholi cattle soon after the beginning of the war. The speaker explained that dialogue was fruitless unless it was accompanied by reparation:

"We have to consult the communities in Acholi and Karamoja, but when we consulted, people said they did not want dialogue, they are still so bitter about history of raping our women, taking our cattle, grazing on our crops. 'We are still so angry - don't even talk of those things...' [People] are not ready, until there is compensation [...] for them the real victims were not included [...] so the people are still bitter... Without compensation there can be no reconciliation."

AB, Institute of Peace Studies

Only two teachers commented on the need for education against ethnic hatred, building on traditions of hospitality, and religious and patriotic values, one quoted here:

"Tribal ill feeling is still there, like even now the Acholis here segregate themselves [...] yes even within here, they talk like 'I hate the Bantus'. It can be tackled in school, I think it should be but the church can help a lot to bridge with them that we are one[...] even here tradition was good, hospitality to strangers, when you eat and drink together and you are one. Once you have given food you are one and you do not segregate."

AO, secondary teacher

The school student groups had little or nothing to say about inter-ethnic hatred or mistrust. It may be that in this relatively mono-ethnic area, the matter does not arise. It may be that neither schools nor communities are concentrating on the past, but are taking the line of 'selective amnesia', namely that it is more important to work for the future than to dwell on the past.

Although lack of respect and distrust between ethnic groups was not mentioned by a majority of respondents, there were enough thoughtful responses to consider this matter to be a serious one. It is linked to the knowledge and understanding of recent history discussed below, as myths and misunderstandings about the past are easily manipulated by politicians or rebel leaders, and ill-educated people are more easily recruited into armed violence.

In reporting on the socialization of equal respect for women, it is necessary to note that there is no simple connection between any such lack of respect and the outbreak of war. As explained in Chapter Two, however, conflict transformation means addressing structural violence, one aspect of which is the oppression of women. A society that accords women equal respect as full human beings is contributing to social justice and the struggle against structural violence. Since overall secondary participation rates are correlated with a lower likelihood of civil war, improved educational access for girls may reduce the likelihood of recurrence of civil war. Improvement in girls' enrolment, attendance and completion is likely to be correlated with improvements in respect to women's standing in general.

The respondents' values relating to equal respect for males and females were not approached through direct questions. Instead, they were inferred from other comments about men and women in the family and the right of access of girls to education, their retention and success rates. Many of these comments came from discussion about the activities of school clubs. In

each case study school, there were several different kinds of clubs, concerned with sports or cultural activities, while some were focused on peace, human rights, or girls' education. A typical arrangement for this type of club is that one or two teachers were chosen as 'patron' or 'matron' of the club and then trained by officers from local, national or international NGOs. It was impossible to ascertain what proportion of any student body actually attends one or more of these clubs, but I had the impression that a club would have some twenty members. There is considerable attention to girls' education in this district as the girls' enrolment, completion and examination passes fall far below the boys.<sup>67</sup> Both rural primary schools in this study have Girls Education Movement (GEM) clubs, whose membership specifically includes boys, and which develop sensitization skills. The GEM clubs are promoted by UNICEF and there is a direct connection with the Millennium Development Goals of universal primary education and gender equality.

Some schools are making efforts to foster equal respect between the genders. There were comments by male teachers from rural primary schools, where there has been some NGO effort to raise the profile of girls' access and attainment in line with the Millennium Development Goals. The treatment of female abductees who were forced to marry rebel commanders, and gave birth in the bush returning with their children is here referred to by a female headteacher:

**“Yeah (emphasised) we had so many[...]we should stop stigmatization. We wanted them to look the same, even those they were girls who produced in the bush, we brought back to the school and they sat for their primary leaving examination, and even some were staying with their children in the class as it was education in emergency[...]I think it has been effective because when the children arrive from the**

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<sup>67</sup> Supported by unpublished enrolment, completion and examination data provided by District and Municipal Education Officers

bush they are respecting them, even those who are coming from the bush they are respecting other children.”

ET, rural primary head

Some participants emphasised general social values concerning women and girls. Unsurprisingly, the most eloquent statements about gender equality came from better-educated female secondary teachers. Several stated that there is considerable resistance in traditional rural communities to ideas of equal respect for women:

“I have strong feelings about women’s equality. I come from the villages and I know what goes on there, it is just terrible. [...] I always encourage [the girls] to work harder and to become independent people because without education in Uganda the possibility of having a good job is not there. And women do not own land, the village women they have no papers and no resources. Economic independence is what they first need and so we encourage them to study so they can stand on their own.”

OD, secondary teacher

“That is a common saying in the traditional villages: ‘New policies are interfering with the culture, spoiling our wives and children.’ We say: ‘We are in a changing world; we have been ignorant; everyone should have their rights at the same level; it is because you people are seeing it for the first time, it looks strange.’”

EC, Primary Teachers Training College tutor

There were relatively few comments from the student groups about equal respect for women. However, in the primary teacher training college group there was a lively debate about the position of women, in which one female trainee argued against several of her male colleagues. One female member of a ‘Girls Education Movement’ club set up specifically to address issues of girls’ educational inequalities described one of the club’s aims as:

“Encouraging child mothers to go back to school.”

Rural primary club member

If gender is not an immediately obvious matter for conflict transformation, disability is even less so. Kett (2007:182) found that there was little research into links between disability and conflict, writing that “ [D]isabled people have been largely ignored in international relief and development efforts.” Disabled young people are unlikely to fill the ranks of any future rebel armies, and yet civil wars produce physically and mentally disabled people while reducing the capacity of communities to support them (Erevelles 2011:137-8). As with gender, the development of a culture of equal respect for all kinds of people reinforces a peaceful approach to resolving social conflict and supports efforts for social justice. Inclusion and community participation improves individual decision-making capacity, self-esteem and confidence which reinforce security, reconciliation and re-integration (Kett 2007:183). It is not argued that this is a principal issue, but it is symptomatic of a gradual development of values.

Two of the schools in the study had specific reasons to be interested in disabled people. The boarding school for war-affected children is a special school, all of whose teachers have been trained in special educational needs. Its students are deemed to have been physically or psychologically damaged by the war. One of the two urban primary schools has an annex for visually impaired students. The head and the teachers are concerned about matters of equal respect, but also for the proper resourcing to cater for the special needs of their disabled students. All schools, however, have groups of students who had been abducted. Clearly, abductees have suffered great mental trauma. The schools revealed their commitment to equal respect by treading a fine line between not identifying them as a group and meeting their special needs for support. There were few obviously physically disabled students in the



schools, but appearances may have been deceptive. Informal accounts from contacts in the hospital revealed a large number of people carrying bullets and shrapnel in their bodies and who are therefore in permanent pain. The headteacher of the school with an annex for visually handicapped children expressed his determination to secure them fair treatment:

“When I came here the blind children, most of them were sleeping on papyrus mats. I talked to people [in disabled and blind schools] saying: ‘Why should my pupils sleep on papyrus mats, while here there are mattresses, blankets and plenty of everything?’”

CH, urban primary head

The very few student comments on disability were from schools, which have special reason to know about disabled people. Apart from these cases, disability is more or less invisible in the schools studied, which conforms with the findings of a Women’s Refugee Commission report into disabilities and refugees that disabled people are not encouraged to attend school and that their potential contribution is not recognized (Reilly 2008:2-3).

### **3.2 Sympathy**

In this sub-section I report on an important value that underpins reconciliation: sympathy. As explained at the start of this section, people have an innate capacity for sympathy, but it is also a learned value and the question of who is worthy of sympathy is culturally mediated. In the case of the intense suffering of the people of northern Uganda, there is a problem over who is to be reconciled with whom, and who needs sympathy from whom. The most obvious example is the sympathy extended to the children abducted by the LRA and forced to become soldiers and killers. One, however, might speculate whether there is sympathy for the government soldiers and their families. Evidence has been gathered to discover to what extent

heads, teachers and students have sympathy for different actors, at least by their own admittance. Due caution must be expressed over the way in which people do not necessarily consciously express their own deeper values. Since 'sympathy' is a precise term, and not one necessarily present in most respondents' vocabularies, it was decided to include other expressions or terms that reveal sympathy, such as 'feel for them', 'understand their feelings', 'accept them back', 'have love for them'.

There was varying evidence of teachers' sympathy. In one urban secondary school, there was no clear evidence from any teacher. As might be expected, however, in the special school for war-affected children, where the majority of staff has special needs training, most of the respondents revealed this value. Even though the term 'sympathy' was never used, expressions like 'friendly attitudes' and 'relating to others' highlighted this overarching value. It is also expressed in terms of the acceptance of offenders back into the community using general terms like reconciliation, peace and co-existence. The idea that peace begins inside each individual with self-love is powerfully expressed by one respondent:

“Loving each other, helping, reconciling [...] it went on in many schools. At the time it started, the children that time were afraid[...]those born during that period found that violence and war was normal, so they would pick up stones and throw them at you. We targeted them so they would love peace, and develop more friendly attitudes and help them relate with others.”

FS, secondary teacher

Many teachers, from both urban and rural schools, revealed sympathy through reference to the traumas that abductees had been through, expressing sadness at the limits of their capacities to remedy their pain. Approval of psycho-social support for former abductees and LRA

combatants means that people are prepared to treat them as traumatized victims, rather than willing perpetrators. Sympathy was revealed by teachers' reports of their behaviour toward stressed students. Some teachers went to extraordinary lengths to help their students overcome trauma, staying up all night, singing and praying:

“I learnt how to be with them and now I love them so much, and I love that through music I can help them reduce the trauma. Through music you can sing the feelings that you have, and you can just go and dance and just now feel relaxed and stop recalling the terrible things you have been thinking of[...]so I have now come to learn that music plays a lot of role in somehow healing our war's problems.”

JE, special school teacher

The teachers have also been dealing with students who found the adjustment from one set of values to another extremely challenging. Although this quotation is a long one, it is included here to illustrate the very difficult context in which some teachers are working.

“Our children here have trauma and they are **wild** (speaker's emphasis)...when we teachers deal with these children we find that we also get that trauma ourselves. Sometimes we stay in the night when the children have this post traumatic whatever, we stay with the children; we sing with them and pray and try to sing all choruses, but sometimes it takes long. There was a night when we had 18 learners, only they had just come [back from the bush] and there was no way we could take them except in the largest hall in the school...the dining hall. We were only two teachers there. [...] We left the other students to sleep but we kept a few prefects to help us. The children could kick us, could slap us[they] would run out, climb the tree up in the night. Others would run to the rubbish pit, shouting and screaming that they want to kill him, trying to find a way of hiding. Inside my heart I want all the children to be secure and nobody to be hurt. We have counselling and special needs teachers - that has helped a lot - even that post-trauma is no longer there. It has helped - we used to have 18 learners with post-trauma, but now there are almost none.”

IO, special school teacher

There was some evidence of sympathy in most of the student interviews. Ideas about counselling, dispute resolution and mediation are well-established and were mentioned by many groups. It thus seems likely that school policies in this area are at least supporting this value. This was confirmed by almost universal reports from teachers about their work in counselling and guidance, and their resolution of problems and dilemmas. Here club members express their values:

“Practice policy of love for one another between teachers and students.”

Special school club member

“[Prefects] should act as a mediator between teachers and students.”

Rural primary club member

Surprisingly, although teachers in all schools described the integration of returnees, there were no unprompted references to ‘returnees’ or ‘abductees’ by members of the student groups. One reason may be that the drop-out rate of returnees due to stigmatization and bullying is so high that there are few of them left in school (Murphy, Stark, Wessells, Boorthy and Ager 2010). Another reason may be that they have been so successfully integrated into schools that they are now invisible to their fellow students. A third reason could be that the experience of suffering is so universal in this district, that conventional statements of sympathy for other victims are superfluous. A combination of these factors could exist in different schools, but although it is not possible to be conclusive, evidence from a range of teachers suggests that in every school there is a number of abductees who are known to be such only to a few staff.

To summarise, the value of sympathy is evident from the teacher interviews. Although there is some doubt about who is to be reconciled with whom and at what level, the general approach is to treat the former abductees as victims while not forgetting their role as perpetrators. Most accept that their terrible actions were not borne out of their free will, and many respondents appreciated and could identify with their suffering. There is considerable support for a psycho-social approach to the sufferings, which depends on a basic sympathy for other people and an understanding that chance played a role in who became what kind of victim in this armed conflict. The evidence is less clear when it comes to fellow students. Statements about mediation or problem-solving are not necessarily strong examples of sympathy, as it is possible to value mediation or peace-making as a procedural technique, without advancing any emotional identification with an opponent or 'other'.

### **3.3 Forgiveness**

Qualitative empirical research is an iterative process, in which the actual words and ideas of respondents influence the development of theory and cannot be simply shoehorned into an existing structure. 'Forgiveness' emerged from a wide range of interviews as a significant value in the minds of many respondents. Forgiveness signifies the forgoing of revenge and carries a meaning of 'pardon'. It is clear that forgiveness plays a part in the values of this community. This was expressed partly in terms of Acholi cultural traditions, which favour community methods of reconciliation and reparation:

"How do we sustain the right to life for a peaceful community, co-existence, forgiveness and reconciliation? We have those in our culture when things go out of hand, sustain it by sitting down, talking, having other people to reconcile the two parties, normally the elderly were the ones doing, it is only in that way that the broken hearts can be mended and people begin walking on the same path. I think that [it] [...]

is very vital because without forgiveness reconciling, talking with the party that offended you, it becomes a problem.”

CO, rural secondary head

Several people, however, expressed this value in Christian terms:<sup>68</sup>

“We tell them: ‘The rebel leader has been our brother here in Gulu [...] an altar boy in [this church] but the devil has used him to do bad things, we should excuse him... mm? ...so that God can change the mind of this mind and come back home, because he is our brother, because if we have to go deeper, here a child whose mother was killed by this man [...] the child may say, ‘I will kill him and his children’, so you don’t want a cycle of revenge.”

HW, urban primary head

One NGO respondent explained the difference between the Catholic doctrine of confession, penance and forgiveness and the Acholi community tradition:

“With Catholic penance you are going to face only the priest, and it is the priest who knows what you have done, but with *matu oput*<sup>69</sup> the entire community appreciates your honesty and knows what you have done. In the Catholic (sic) nobody else knows you were a thief. In our culture even in the Karamojong, they have raided all these cattle, and the forgiveness will involve restitution of the cattle, you start with a small scale, compensation community by community [...] eventually it can be achieved if people are determined.”

CNN, Norwegian Refugee Council

The value of forgiveness emerged a few times in group interviews with students without much reference either to Acholi tradition or to religious ideas, as here:

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<sup>68</sup> Christianity is the majority religion in this area. The one Muslim teacher interviewed spoke in similar terms as the majority of Christian respondents about formerly abducted people.

<sup>69</sup> See note 51, page 120

“In case of physical harms created on somebody you have to provide medical treatment to buy heart of forgiveness from the victims.”

Secondary club member

In the third section, I have commented on the reconciliation values of equal respect, sympathy and forgiveness. It seems that efforts are being made to develop equal respect, but these are more strongly evident in terms of gender than in relation to ethnicity and disability. There is evidence, more so from the teachers than the students, for the fostering of sympathy for formerly abducted people, in spite of the involvement of many of them in atrocities. Naturally, this was particularly evident in the special school for war-affected children. The related value of forgiveness emerged during the fieldwork as an important feature of Acholi traditions, and one reinforced by religious institutions.

### **Conclusion**

A unique feature of the case of northern Uganda is the need for reconciliation between communities who were victimized by the Lord's Resistance Army and the formerly abducted members of the same communities, forced by the LRA to commit atrocities against their own families and friends. Schools have some part to play in this process, whether or not formerly abducted people are actually present.

The argument of earlier chapters that some knowledge and understanding of recent history is important for conflict transformation is further developed to suggest that this may extend to current events. Some of the case study schools seem to be able to make a marginal contribution here. Several debates at primary and secondary level were observed in which the peace process, the international criminal court and traditional justice were discussed.

Naturally, this was more extensive at secondary level than at primary level. Debating is treated in more detail in the following chapter. There is little planned space for contemporary issues in the main curriculum, but some individual teachers may refer to them as part of their history or civic teaching. Whether and how such interventions can contribute to reconciliation is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain because they may not take place when the teacher is being observed.

There is evidence of skills' development related to reconciliation in the schools. Although the prefects were most likely to be actively involved in problem-solving, clubs are fostering the development of cooperation and teamwork skills. The influence of local and international NGOs is evident in the development of skills and values, but the training and preparation of school prefects appears to be quite rudimentary so far.

In terms of values, equal respect for women and girls is of lively interest to teachers and older students and is an emergent issue in rural primary schools with the Girls Education Movement clubs. This value is being actively promoted by local and international NGOs in line with the Millennium Development Goals related to education and gender equality. Although the term 'disability' is not common, there is evidence that schools are promoting equal respect for people who are disadvantaged in various ways -some of them in an obvious way, such as a visual handicap, but more pervasively with the mental trauma of having been abducted or having lost family members.

The value of sympathy is evident in the schools in this study. The teachers reveal this value in their language and actions, and there is some, though weaker, evidence from the students. The value of forgiveness emerged strongly from the empirical investigation. The traditional culture



of the district seems to have been combined with religious traditions to support this value, but schools are playing their part in reinforcing it. There may be a gap between rhetoric and reality, for although there is some evidence of integration of formerly abducted people there has been stigmatization as well.

Reconciliation between communities and those abducted by the LRA has been the main focus of this chapter, but the argument that the LRA war was a continuation of previous civil wars<sup>70</sup> suggests that reconciliation also requires addressing previous unresolved grievances between Ugandan ethnic groups. Only a small number of teachers, however, think that ethnic mistrust is an important issue and the active promotion of equal respect for different ethnic groups features little in the schools studied. Perhaps this is because the issue is not in the forefront of people's minds in this largely mono-ethnic Acholi district. Conversely, the reason may be just because it is too sensitive an issue to speak openly about to a foreign researcher. This type of reconciliation between the Acholi people of northern Uganda and other ethnic groups may be approached through the operation of the Ugandan political system. The question of the way in which the people of the north consider themselves full citizens, capable of participating in the system and the implications of this for the work of schools is addressed in the following chapter.

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<sup>70</sup> As explained in Chapter Four.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **INCLUSIVE CITIZENSHIP**

“When you train a child in this case you are not just training them for academic, they finally will come back to live in our society, so we are transforming them and making them more peace-loving [...] more responsible citizens and we are gradually transforming the society.”

OT, secondary teacher

It was shown in Chapter Four that one of the contributing factors to the LRA civil war was the perceived marginalization of northern Uganda from the more prosperous and better-educated southern districts, populated largely by different ethnic groups. The war was a continuation of a previous one which had strong ethnic elements and large-scale atrocities. As well as the search for truth and reconciliation, conflict transformation requires the development of inclusive citizenship, explained (in Chapter Two sub-section 2.3), as the inclusion of different ethnic and identity-based groups in collective efforts for change. This is a matter both of actual membership of a political community and also of a feeling of belonging. I am arguing that the school curriculum has a part to play in the building of inclusive citizenship, and in this chapter I present the findings on the extent to which the case study schools are engaged in this process.

As in the previous two chapters, a structure of knowledge, skills and values is used. True membership of a political community requires a knowledge and understanding of local and national legal systems and human rights. This element is discussed in section 1. A true sense of belonging requires participation in social and political life. This is a two-way relationship: active participation may increase a sense of belonging, whereas a feeling of alienation may

lead to apathy, lack of involvement or conversely to violence. In section 2, I examine the role of schools in developing some communication skills that are important for participation: deliberative discussion, debate and sensitization. Both dimensions of citizenship are supported by values of procedural fairness and human rights, discussed in section 3. Government policy in the aftermath of war is likely to have a significant influence on curriculum development. In the final section I assess the government's role in the kind of curricular reform, which may support the work of schools towards inclusive citizenship.

### **1 Knowledge and understanding for inclusive citizenship**

In this section I consider the knowledge and understanding of participants in relation to inclusive citizenship. Knowledge and understanding of local, national and international political and legal systems are important, for it is within these systems that people can have the agency to achieve their objectives without recourse to armed violence. Even in authoritarian systems, there are avenues for ordinary people to take some action. Where societies are in transition and traditional community approaches to politics still attract support, knowledge of these systems is also important. If ordinary people understand the boundaries and scope of their own systems, they are less easily manipulated by dominant groups. In Uganda, as a result of a decentralization policy by the central government, there are possibilities for political participation at local and national level. During and after the war, a large number of international agencies and NGOs worked in northern Uganda, while the creation of local NGOs has increased opportunities for advocacy and pressure outside the sphere of the state.

## **1.1 Local and national political and legal systems**

A basic familiarity with the local and national legal and political systems was necessary for the fieldwork. Comments by participants and local residents contributed to an understanding of the Ugandan context, supplemented by documentary study of textbooks, syllabuses and examination questions. At the time of the fieldwork, however, I had not incorporated political and legal knowledge into the framework and consequent research design. Although I was interested in such knowledge, and later came to recognize its importance, at the time I felt that there was a risk of trying to cover too much ground. The comments in this sub-section are derived more from participant observation than from specific interview questions, although in some cases, participants provided indirect evidence of their knowledge in their life-stories or answers to other questions.

Many respondents referred to local and national political and legal systems. There was widespread reference to the Ugandan constitution of 1995, which not only explicitly incorporated human rights into the Ugandan polity but also established a five-tier system of local government.<sup>71</sup> General issues referred to by heads, teachers, officials and NGO officers included the then forthcoming 2011 presidential election; the role of cultural leaders and kingdoms; the process of establishing formal title to land; corruption of law enforcement and legal systems; and the problem of mob justice.

Heads and secondary school teachers appeared to have a more detailed understanding than primary teachers, but at least one primary school head teacher had extensive political experience himself, having been involved in the Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative

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<sup>71</sup> The system involving local committees at parish, sub-county, county, sub-district and district level uses Roman numerals to distinguish between the different tiers; thus, Local Committee 1=LCI, Local Committee 2=LCII and so forth, with LCV (fifth tier) being the District committee.

(see Chapter Four, section 3). Head teachers have to be up to date with the local political and community systems. They occasionally referred to government or district education policy as it affects the running of their schools. Further, on one occasion, I observed close links between one primary head and the local political leader, when both participated in end-of-term ceremonies.

“How could I get some blocks of latrines for the children, when we came here it was bush. How could I make the school shine? I could not sleep - I was thinking should I go to the [District Education Officer], should I go to the non-governmental organisation, where should I lobby?”

ET, rural primary head

Some revealed a general interest in the health of the Ugandan political system, claiming a distinction between theoretical freedoms, and actual injustice and maladministration.

“Freedom of speech is here in theory; you can speak but who will listen to you? [...] there are instances where the rights of people have been violated and there have been injustices, malpractices in elections, but because the president appoints the justices, the complainant always loses the case.”

CH, urban primary head

Two secondary humanities teachers discussed the forthcoming withdrawal of political education as an optional subject in secondary school, expressing concern that it would not be possible to cover the same ground in history or religious education.

“The other one is political education. [Mentions that this part of the curriculum is being phased out] Yes there is a problem, because of that cut to the curriculum the best way would be to introduce it as a subject and then everyone would have to do it.”

HC, secondary teacher

Some secondary students were familiar with local and national political and legal terms. There is a small section in the primary curriculum aimed at developing a basic understanding of local, national and international institutions.

Some observation was made of participants' knowledge and understanding of local, national and international political and legal systems. Heads and secondary teachers seemed to be better informed than the less well-educated primary teachers. A small number of secondary students, particularly those in the Uganda National Students Association, showed some political awareness.

## **1.2 International political and legal systems**

An understanding of international political and legal systems, and in particular human rights and responsibilities, is important for inclusive citizenship as it empowers people to claim their participation and fair treatment. They provide a framework and leverage for addressing grievances and problems, for subjecting local and national systems to scrutiny, and for handling inevitable conflicts of interest. For this research, I concentrated on the participants' knowledge and understanding of one aspect of these systems, i.e. human rights. In this subsection, I report on the teachers' and students' familiarity with human rights terms, their knowledge of instruments and conventions, and which rights come most easily to their mind. I also report on how they have learned about human rights and comment on some difficulties in the translation of human rights into Luo, the local language.

No initial assumptions were made about the respondents' knowledge of human rights. I set out on the field without having any idea whether the term was current in the district. Therefore, one interview question was whether teachers and students had come across the term 'human

rights or any related terms or expressions. If they had, the next question was whether they were familiar with human rights conventions or documents, such as the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention of the Rights of the Child, or the African Charter of Human and People's Rights and Responsibilities. Following on from this, questions were asked regarding which rights people were most familiar with, and how and where they had learnt about them.

All the head teachers had heard of human rights, but they were not familiar with the detailed provisions. Only two mentioned the United Nations or its agencies, and none the African Charter. The heads and secondary teachers knew about international NGOs and pressure groups, no doubt as a result of the extensive NGO presence in the town. All the respondents knew about the International Criminal Court, as Joseph Kony and LRA leaders were subject to indictment for war crimes, and there was much local debate about the impact of this on the long-hoped for formal end of hostilities. Some head teachers knew that the Ugandan constitution enshrines human rights but they had not read it and were unclear about which ones:

“We studied conflict resolution. We could see Christian faith matching together with human rights. They both defend the right of a person. [...] My approach became different. Even military men who came here, I would talk to them openly and boldly, and they would fail to attack me because I would quote the Convention of Human Rights and scripture. It was new to them - scripture and human rights became one and it became my very important tool to transform this school.”

CH, urban primary head

The type of rights most often referred to without prompting were the rights to education and freedom from forced labour. All the head teachers mentioned children's rights and many of

them referred to women's rights. Only one head teacher mentioned a civil or political right, such as freedom of speech, or freedom from arbitrary arrest.

“They have the right to be educated, they have the right to be fed properly, children's rights is (sic) a better way of looking after the children. [...] When someone has been arrested maybe [...] they keep them more than 48 hours, which the constitution of Uganda does not allow that one.”

WG, rural primary head

All teacher participants were familiar with the term 'human rights' in both English and Luo, but like the heads, they were not familiar with the detailed provisions. A minority referred to the UN, either generally or referring to conventions, or the Universal Declaration, and a small minority referred to the Ugandan constitution. Only two among the teachers surveyed referred unprompted to the African Charter. A number of technical rights terms were freely used, such as 'violation', 'association', 'empowerment', 'security' and 'discrimination'. This shows that among educated people, such as teachers, there are no problems in using specialised English terms related to human rights. Interestingly, there was no reference to 'torture', 'cruel and degrading punishment', or 'slavery'. This was rather surprising in view of the known LRA practices of forced labour, beatings and mutilations, but it may have been a feature of rights *language* rather than ignorance of the substantive issues.

When teachers responding to the survey were asked to recall specific rights, the right to life and security, basic welfare and education far outnumbered the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and political participation. In view of the experience of the government's failure to protect people against the rebel forces and the extreme and desperate conditions in the IDP camps, it is not surprising that the teachers see the right to life and basic economic and



social rights as essential. It is natural, too, that they see education as a fundamental right. The civil and political rights associated with political participation may be seen as of lesser importance, but it is not certain whether a lower number of responses means that they are actually ignorant of them, as in this survey there was limited time and space to verify it.

The variety and volume of student responses to questions about human rights suggest that the terms were easily recognized. Needs-related socio-economic rights were recalled twice as often as civil and political rights, with sixty references. Children had learned about their right to food, shelter, medical attention, education, and freedom from abuse and exploitation. The right to education was the single right most often referred to. Like their teachers, the young people did not know about the United Nations or African Union human rights instruments, or the 1995 Ugandan constitution. In response to direct and indirect questions, there were only two references to ‘a list of all the rights we have’. Although the original documents are complex, simply worded versions of the Declaration and the Convention on the Rights of the Child have been produced for children (UNICEF 2010), but they were not available in this district.

Teachers revealed three main sources of knowledge about human rights: their own education, local radio and training from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Nearly all respondents referred to at least two of these sources. The influence of NGOs was strongest: two thirds of the teacher interviewees and half the heads said they had learnt from workshops or visits to schools. Just over half of the teachers surveyed mentioned local radio and other media as a source of knowledge. Formal education, however, had played its part too: half of the teachers investigated referred to their education and training. Most likely this was at training college level:

“In 1998 we had a training workshop at former school. The topic was human rights in schools. It was organized by the school. Before that day I had not learnt about human rights.”

HC, secondary teacher

“Roughly last week, almost the whole week they [radio broadcasters] were talking about human rights, that was the whole district [...] and they even called some rallies. [...] Mega FM plays an important role for people here.”

JE, special school teacher

Young people have mainly learned about rights from local NGOs, who use the local radio station or workshops for school clubs. Three times as many responses referred to extra-curricular learning about rights than to programmed curricular learning. There is a very small section about human rights in the social studies curriculum for the final primary school year, (Primary year 7). I was told, and it was evident from observation, that this Section of the course is often missed as preference is given to examination preparation. Secondary schools have optional subjects, such as ‘Political Education’ and ‘Christian Religious Education’, which contain some references to human rights. Any other teaching is at the discretion and motivation of the teacher. Some local government officials are teaching rights to secondary students through the briefing of Uganda National Students Association (UNSA) leaders and prefects. The local churches appear to be involved too. The English term ‘rights’ has become familiar from the banners and t-shirts produced by a range of state and voluntary organizations.

“With me, I have learnt about rights from [a] workshop which was organized by diocese of Northern Uganda. We were distributed a book which was entitled *All People Have Rights*. This book contains all the rights of human beings.”

Secondary club member

“I have learnt about human rights from school because I am a prefect. [...] The group organizes [...] meetings at the end of each month and [...] we share our experiences and opinions on peace, human rights and security.”

Secondary prefect

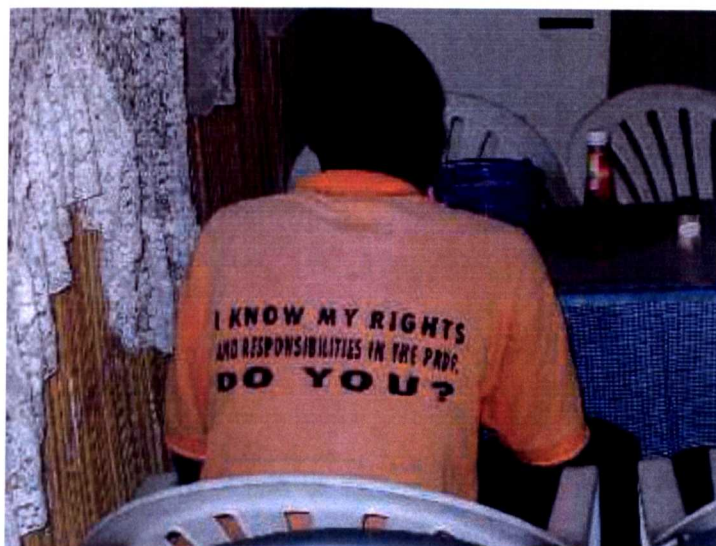


Figure 3: Example of ‘walking publicity’ about rights<sup>72</sup>

Many heads and teachers had significant and thoughtful comments to make on how the term ‘human rights’ is translated into the Luo language. The majority of such comments were unprompted and arose naturally in the interview. The usual translation of ‘human rights’ into Luo is *twero pa dano*. *Twero* means ‘power’ in Luo and carries with it a sense of compulsion or the ability to do something, rather than an entitlement or freedom from arbitrary authority. Several teachers suggested that other translations should be considered, in order to convey the ideas of ‘freedom’ and ‘entitlement’ and to reduce the emphasis on ‘power’, for example:

<sup>72</sup> ‘PRDP’ stands for Peace, Recovery and Development Plan, described in Chapter Four, section 5

“I can say that the issue of rights if you use it in Luo is causing problems, especially *twero* is so strong, like having a certain kind of power and authority that is not flexible, and if you need peace, something should be flexible, that is liable to change if there is any mutual understanding.”

KH, primary teacher

Some of the NGO officers also commented on the problem of translation:

“It needs to be harmonised, the interpretation of [...] rights into the local language is of paramount importance [...] so that the people can understand exactly what a right means, so [...] I have ever challenged them to sit as a team and look into [...] rights, what is the correct translation so it can be used appropriately.”

KI, UNICEF

To conclude this section, I have suggested that knowledge and understanding of local, national and international political and legal systems is necessary for inclusive citizenship. It appears that head teachers have a general understanding, not only of the way that politics work at the local level, but also of some aspects of the international system. Discussion about the International Criminal Court had probably brought this into the foreground. As Kony and senior LRA leaders have been referred to the International Criminal Court, this was a live topic of discussion at the time. In school, there appears to be minimal opportunity for students to learn about their political and legal systems, especially at primary level. Conversely, heads, teachers and students are all aware of human rights, particularly the so-called economic and social rights, with, naturally, a strong focus on education. The principal source has been the work of local and international NGOs, but some of the knowledge has come from formal education. Generally, they do not know much about the provenance of rights, in either the UN system or the Ugandan constitution. There is a problem with the usual translation of human

rights into Luo, the local language, which is perhaps weakening the nuanced understanding of the reciprocity of rights and their relationship with responsibilities.

## **2 Inclusive citizenship skills**

Conflict transformation scholars and practitioners agree on the importance of communication skills for sustainable peace. An inability to articulate needs and demands can result in apathy, frustration or violence. Scholars do not often elaborate, however, on what communication skills really are. In this section, I discuss some skills that contribute to inclusive citizenship and, thereby, to conflict transformation.

Here I am drawing on the work of Giddens (1996) and Dryzek (2002), who have discussed the idea of ‘deliberative’ democracy, in which a key element is ‘deliberative discussion’. This is a process that requires a group of specific skills, such as concentrated listening, clear speaking and logical thinking. These can be grouped under the term ‘deliberative discussion skills’. Two other processes, ‘debate’ and ‘sensitization’, have been chosen as a result of what I learnt in the field and each carries with it an associated group of skills. ‘Debate’ is a common approach to addressing controversial issues. Unlike deliberative discussion, which seeks consensus, it is based largely on adversarial argument and decision by simple majority. Although this can mean that it may lead to frustration on the part of the minority, debate has the advantage of being well-established in nearly all political systems. ‘Sensitization’ can be understood as the process of publicizing or explaining situations or issues to audiences of different levels of receptiveness, and encouraging them to think or act differently.<sup>73</sup> Groups

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<sup>73</sup> I considered using either the term ‘advocacy’ or ‘persuasive communication’. The former is too closely associated with legal terminology, while the latter has connotations of manipulation or distortion. As I often heard the term ‘sensitization’ in Uganda, it makes sense to use the term which people are familiar with.

seeking to achieve their purposes peacefully in the social and political world need sensitization skills in order to gain support from neutral groups and to build solidarity and self-confidence.

Some skills associated with these three processes overlap. For example, public speaking skills are common to all three. Others, however, are more closely associated with one process more than another. For example, the skill of finding common elements in a discussion is associated more with deliberative discussion than with the other two processes. A curriculum geared towards inclusive citizenship would provide a balance between deliberative discussion, debate and sensitization. This section examines the extent to which the case study schools may be contributing to skill development through providing opportunities for these three processes.

## **2.1 Deliberative discussion**

Inclusive citizenship requires more than institutions and structures, such as periodic elections of representatives. It demands the gradual building of trust, based on the experience of working together on common issues. Trust can be developed best neither by adversarial argument nor prescribed knowledge, but the process of dialogue. ‘Deliberative discussion’ is the process through which people learn how to reason in order to discover consensus, broad agreement or boundaries of difference. Controversial issues cannot be directly resolved but deliberative discussion can allow us to agree to disagree. It is “a powerful medium for tolerance and conciliation” (Giddens 1996:76). As Dryzek puts it (2002:1):

“Deliberation as a social process is distinguished from other kinds of communication in that deliberators are amenable to changing their judgements, preferences and views during the course of their interactions, which involve persuasion rather than coercion, manipulation or deception.”

Schools can be an important arena for developing deliberative discussion skills (Stenhouse 1967). In the classroom, a teaching approach which allows room for differing views backed by reasoning and evidence will contribute to the development of listening and decision-making skills. Almost no deliberative discussion was observed in primary or secondary school lessons. As noted already, teaching in these schools generally involves the direct transfer of information from teacher to students. The crucial primary leaving examination is entirely memory-based. Questioning is almost always 'closed', using a 'hands-up' system, in which a small minority of the class answer most of the questions. That is not to suggest that it never happens or could never happen. Teachers are capable of other pedagogical approaches. In one secondary lesson, students worked in small groups, sharing opinions and occasionally arguing with each other.

There may be more discussion in after-school clubs. A problem-solving meeting was observed between the leaders of a Music, Dance and Drama club. The atmosphere was cordial and informal with students perfectly free to ask and comment, but the overall thrust of the meeting was question and answer: the students asked and the teachers replied, often at length. This was not an example of deliberative discussion where participants seek to resolve conflicting positions. Some teachers, however, seemed ready to listen to the views of students and to accept feedback. Most schools have informal and quite regular meetings in which students can express their views and be heard by the staff. This is a good starting position for the development of deliberative discussion skills.

## **2.2 Debate**

Debate differs from deliberative discussion in its adversarial structure. The rules and terms of debate do not lean towards compromise or addressing areas of agreement. The aim is victory

over the opposing team. It is not possible to argue for a nuanced position. Two sides argue over a proposition from opposing viewpoints. The assumption is that the leaders -the proposers and opposers on the platform- are competing for the support of the undecided audience, sometimes referred to as 'the floor'. Debate provides a structure of rules and conventions that permits the airing of radically opposing views and, therefore, its skills may contribute to inclusive citizenship.

There is a tradition of formal debate in the district's schools. On the exploratory visit to Gulu, I chanced upon a debate taking place in an urban primary school after the end of formal lessons. The topic was whether Joseph Kony should face international or local justice. To my eyes, the debate seemed chaotic. Each speaker had to battle against much background noise, there was no teacher present and it was moderated by the students themselves. I felt, however, that it was significant for two reasons: first, because it was not staged for my benefit and second, because the students were motivated enough to discuss a relatively sophisticated issue. During the fieldwork proper, I observed a much more organized occasion: the local finals of a national secondary school debating competition. The motion was: 'This house believes that the International Criminal Court is a stumbling block to the peace process in Northern Uganda.' The students were articulate and impressive, marshalling their arguments and supporting them with evidence and quotations. The way that some teacher respondents referred to debates and typical topics suggested further that debate is a well-established process.

“Then every Friday we make them hold debates on topics they have chosen. We feel that through that we can promote human rights. We are trying to make this a democratic society where the rights of individuals are respected and the views of individuals are also respected.”



One of these after-school debates was observed from start to finish. This time it was a competitive session between two different year groups, supervised by a teacher and presided over by a student judge of questionable impartiality. The motion was worded: 'HIV and AIDS are better than war', perhaps meaning it would be better to have HIV/AIDS than to experience a war. There were many irrelevant and disruptive 'points of order' and some of the arguments put forward seemed thoughtless and heartless. When the judge pronounced her own year group the winner, the debate ended in uproar and recriminations.

The local FM radio station contributes to communication skills through the organization of debates and discussions, as explained by the manager:

"We have debate programmes on Saturdays, but these are mainly primary children. We are planning to go to secondary. We started Mega Classroom, a programme where we get the students and a teacher in the studio discussing a variety of things, mostly in Luo but sometimes in English."

RH, Mega FM

I listened to one of these debates, organized in Luo. Although I was not in the company of a bilingual Ugandan, and I could not understand the content, it was easy to tell that the tone and mood was calm and reasonable. Members of the public called in live to contribute to the discussion.

Although some of this evidence, about the disorderly and angry end of one debate seems to undermine the idea that debate might contribute to inclusive citizenship skills, the evidence from the well-organized competition and the radio programme, seem to support it. While there

is considerable difference between adversarial approaches to discussion and those which highlight consensus, and the protection of minority views, the capacity to handle evidence and organize arguments is an important skill for negotiation.

### **2.3 Sensitization**

As explained in the introduction to this Section, sensitization is the term used in Uganda for persuasive communication. In the Gulu district, it refers to formal training, for example of teachers or NGO officers, and for more informal approaches aimed at schools, villages and communities. At first sight, sensitization seems to be a neutral process that could be directed for or against inclusive citizenship. In a pluralistic society, pressure groups with their own agenda may use it to gain attention, support and resources. However, manipulative leaders can use it for war-mongering. Heater (1990) argued that persuasive communication skills are necessary for citizenship, but it seems to me that on their own they can be used to deny citizenship. Therefore, I would submit that sensitization has to be seen in the context of the values that lie behind it. In association with relevant values, such as equal respect, which was discussed in the previous chapter and procedural fairness, discussed in the following section, it contributes to inclusive citizenship and therefore to sustainable peace.

Sensitization carries a range of associated skills, ranging from formal and objective oral and written presentation, to emotional and creative performance in various media. While written forms, such as leaflets, posters, letters to the press and internet social sites, have a part to play in inclusive citizenship, the relative poverty of northern Uganda means that many people have little opportunity to use them. Oral skills are more common, used by people in meetings, drama, and music to convey their messages to a wider public.

As with other processes explored in this section, there is relatively little evidence of the development of sensitization in the programmed lessons. Using the language flexibly, orally or in writing, in order to affect a listener's emotions, requires space and time. However evidence was found in voluntary clubs, which meet after formal lessons are over. In one case, representative students themselves had the opportunity to receive specific training off the school site, so that they could cascade their understanding when back at school, described her by a teacher 'patron':

“The peace club [...] was used to pass messages of peace, advocate for peace and [...] it was easily taken up by the admin at the school because it helped to hold up the school rules, because if they are more peaceful then there will be fewer strikes and that kind of thing [...] so it was basic respect of human rights [...] we reached out to students through songs, drama and debate [...] our students are calmer students.”

OT, secondary teacher

Sensitization is a common element in all the reports of clubs of this type. Students are expected to perform at assemblies, open days and in the wider community:

“These children have got music, dance and drama, essay writing, debates, talk show... [so] that people are sensitized to never go violating the rights of others [...] it can be for a class and for school assembly [...] they can go to other schools [...] to the camps [...] so they can sensitize the community.”

KH, primary teacher

The Girls Education Movement (GEM) clubs referred to in the previous chapter encourage young mothers to return to school. They explain the importance of girls' education to other children. They help elderly people with charitable work and make sanitary pads out of simple local materials so that girls do not miss school for up to a quarter of each month. The

conscious opposition to domestic violence, the insistence on cooperation between boys and girls, and the encouragement of assertiveness contribute to inclusive citizenship.

“We bring girls in leadership, we give them the chance in clubs, the GEM clubs [...] they exercise their right to be leaders, free to dress the way they like, they come and state openly, it is a topic in debates, through talking about it they get sensitized.”

EC, teacher training college tutor

“We let them go to the camps to do their talk show and their dance and their drama and they campaigned for the child mothers to come back to school. [...] The girls have gained in confidence and even the boys are sewing the local pads.”

ET, rural primary head

Most of the evidence about clubs came from reports by teachers and members, but there was an opportunity to see a GEM sensitization group performing at end of year ceremonies. The main theme of the performance was domestic violence. The words were sung in choral fashion, with soloists calling out the main phrases, which were echoed by the larger body. The song was accompanied with drum and dance movements. A photograph of this group can be seen in Figure 4. Although the Peace Clubs and GEM clubs provided the best evidence for sensitization, a number of other clubs appear also to provide opportunities for actions to develop the associated skills. The teacher in charge of the World Vision Club at the urban secondary school explained the wider perspective of the club, as compared with the Peace Club. The former includes environmental issues such as tree-planting, sexual and reproductive health and charity work:

“World Vision club[...] I introduced this club in 2008 [...] selected some leaders and [...] students came up with objectives and [a] work plan. The peace club concentrates

on peace only, the World Vision [club] covers many things, such as HIV/AIDS [...] Children can learn about their rights in clubs.”

OT, secondary teacher



*Figure 4: Rural Primary School Girls' Education Group*

The importance of clubs should not be exaggerated. It is clear from interview responses that the number of active and regular clubs is much lower than the theoretical list. Documentary study failed to turn up any timetable or programme for clubs. Occasional comments from teacher and NGO interviews gave examples of clubs that had existed once, but were now inoperative. In other cases, clubs appear to exist in name only, with students unclear about their remit or aims. This point was underlined by the District Education Officer:

“Some go through the system and [are] never in any club, so it is not enough to leave peace education to the clubs [...] we need these things in the main classes, so the child knows they will have peace education and human rights in the exam and they will have to answer that. [It] needs to be country wide: parents need some parental teaching too [...] they do not have time to teach the children how to be proper citizens.”

JH

To conclude this section on inclusive citizenship skills, the schools studied appear to be open to the idea of listening to the views of students, but there is little evidence of the development of deliberative discussion, at least in everyday lessons. Debating skills are consciously fostered and here students can gain experience in expressing their opinions and learning how to disagree within a formal rule-bound structure. Voluntary clubs appear to be contributing to inclusive citizenship skills through sensitization. This can be a one-way process: broadcasting what you already know and feel, without listening to what others have to say. A performance like the one about domestic violence is not necessarily aimed at developing a discussion in which traditions, hopes and fears can be taken into account, but there is some evidence that the process of preparing for a performance involves the students in open-ended discussions. One problem is that clubs involve only a small minority of students, who already show an interest, and therefore it is difficult to ascertain their impact on the wider student body.

### **3 Inclusive citizenship values**

Inclusive citizenship, in which ordinary people are empowered to work together for the common good while accepting that conflict is inevitable, depends on certain values. In this section, I explore ‘procedural fairness’ and human rights values’ which are chosen because they are not only important for inclusive citizenship and but also they can be socialized in schools. ‘Procedural fairness’ means support for codes and rules, which can contain and channel violent emotions of anger and revenge (Freeman 2006).<sup>74</sup> It is contrasted with arbitrary authority, where those in power can act on whim, without consistency and without the support of the community. As such, it is a common factor in different legal traditions, such as Roman law, Islamic law, English common law, and various customary laws from around

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<sup>74</sup> Other terms for ‘procedural fairness’ are ‘due process’ and ‘natural justice’. These are used in some common law traditions (Freeman 2006).

the world.<sup>75</sup> Examples of procedural fairness from legal traditions are the presumption of innocence, that no one should be judge in their own cause, that both sides in a dispute should be heard, and that judgement should be impartial and independent (Freeman 2006). The socialization of this value in school through simplified versions of legal processes may contribute to inclusive citizenship and, thereby, to long-term conflict transformation.

My experience as a headteacher taught me that young people are deeply concerned with what they call 'fairness'. Their faith in an ordered community, in the relevance and importance of rules, and their expectation of a process of judgement when it is alleged that rules have been broken can be developed in school and can therefore contribute to inclusive citizenship. Conversely, where the enforcement of rules is haphazard, arbitrary and inconsistent, young people may learn to despise rules and see themselves in permanent conflict with authority or learn to ruthlessly promote their own self-interest, no matter what the consequences may be for other individuals and groups (Cunningham 1991).

I report also on general human rights values. Human rights knowledge and understanding have already been claimed to be an important element of inclusive citizenship, but it is quite possible to know a great deal about human rights, including specific provisions or articles, without subscribing to their underpinning values. An important value underpinning human rights - equal respect - has been examined in relation to reconciliation. I wished to learn the extent to which teachers value learning about human rights, whether they see a conflict between human rights and traditional culture, and their view of the relationship between rights and responsibilities.

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<sup>75</sup> I am grateful for the clarification of these points for the conversation with Mark Freedland, Professor of Law at the University of Oxford, 16/11/11.

If teachers themselves have hostile or negative views of human rights, it is unlikely that they will form any significant part of the curriculum. Again, my personal experience with the development of democratic processes in school, and response of students and teachers, has informed the choice of heading (Cunningham 2000). The findings are derived from responses to indirect questions about life choices and dilemmas, and from participant observation of behaviour, as direct questions do not necessarily lead to the uncovering of values.

### **3.1 Procedural Fairness**

The experience of legitimate authority, fairly exercised, may teach people that there are non-violent methods of achieving objectives, thus, building support for the value of procedural fairness. Conversely, the experience of arbitrary authority in school may develop a feeling or belief that all authority, legitimate or otherwise, is to be distrusted and resisted. Such a value may be rational and useful when people are struggling against injustice. Procedural fairness or arbitrary authority may be evident at different levels within a school. Here, I report on procedural fairness in the development of rules, the application of sanctions, and in the selection for school leadership roles.

One contributing element to procedural fairness is whether the members of an institution understand and accept the rules. A method of encouraging this is to involve the members in their development. Five of the seven sample schools have involved the students themselves in the development of the rules of the school as a whole. It was, however, much easier to hear accounts of this than to be able to see the resulting lists or codes. Here is one account:

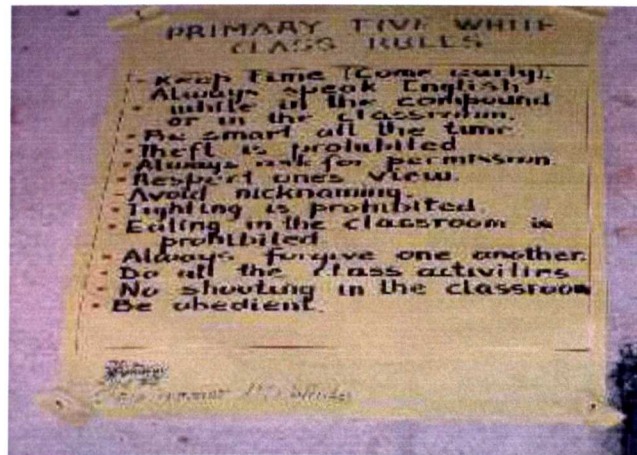
“If I started from the students it would be easier for them to follow the rules, so it would be for our benefit [...] after the students have discussed, then the next is the



staff [...] and then I forward it to the board and hand it over to the head teacher. We also did that with our vision and our mission.”

HC, secondary teacher

A number of examples of classroom rules were observed. The teachers told me that these were the outcome of discussion between teacher and students. This suggestion was supported by the language and somewhat random order of the rules. An example can be seen in Figure 5.



*Figure 5: Example of classroom rules*

In most schools, teachers were observed resolving fights and interpersonal problems using scrupulous fairness. A primary head was observed sitting under the tree in the school compound listening to the stories of students who had been brought in by a member of the community for fighting in the street. She let each student have their say, preventing anyone from interrupting. When it came to delivering her correction, she did so with dignity and without shouting or humiliating the students, although she made it quite clear from her tone of voice and manner that she was angry and disappointed. In another case, in a rural primary school, a teacher was observed resolving a problem of theft of school books during the lunch break. The matter was held rather like a court, in front of the whole class. Although there were interjections and commentary from witnesses and friends, the teacher kept order and ensured that the different parties were heard in turn.

It would be unlikely for people to act arbitrarily in front of a visitor, but observations were supported by the comments of head teachers and teachers. One school was using an 'aggressive incident form' in order to monitor the frequency of violence in the school. Most schools have staff and student disciplinary committees, which through dispersal of authority and due process can give protection against arbitrary actions. Such committees were referred to frequently in interviews:

“We give a very clear hearing [...] when a student has done something wrong; we don't just subject them to punishment before we hear their side of the story. We don't just expel them. We call them before the committee.”

OP, secondary teacher

In some cases the investigation merged with counselling and advice and seemed to be more organic. The teachers did not necessarily use legalistic terms like 'witness' or 'evidence', but sought the conclusion of the problem through a process of discussion and compromise. Occasionally teachers were reflective about the difficulty of being absolutely fair:

“One of the rules most compatible with peace education and human rights is guidance and counselling [...] when the child has done something wrong it is not that you should beat or shout at him or her, but it is proper you bring him or her down and you tell him or her this is the problem [...] then she could understand and you could come together.”

CIH, primary teacher

The nature and type of sanctions may also have a bearing on procedural fairness. Corporal punishment was banned by a Ugandan government circular in 2006, but has not explicitly been made illegal under statute. It is of course proscribed by the Convention of the Rights of

the Child, ratified by the government of Uganda. The Ministry of Education launched a handbook in 2008 on alternatives to corporal punishment, recognizing that it was still being used in schools despite the ban. The practice gave rise to much comment on the part of primary school respondents. Teachers explained that not only is corporal punishment wrong, it is also ineffective and counter-productive, perpetuating a culture of violence. The role of NGOs in encouraging the use of positive discipline was noted by several respondents:

“We did away with it but we brought in a number of new things [...] psycho-social, social, theological and spiritual, [...] carrying bricks and slashing [grass-cutting] [...] as I speak now there is quite a good transformation.”

CH, urban primary head

Some teachers said that corporal punishment is retained for the most obstinate or difficult students. In two primary schools there was a mismatch between the comments of the head and those of the teachers. Teachers and students, however, agreed it is declining in frequency and severity:

“As much as the government has abolished corporal punishment we teachers, we are giving [...] at least some one or two strokes, yes [...] because there are some notorious pupils [...] I don't know how we can come to a total ban of corporal punishment.”

SH, primary teacher

Many parents disagree with abolition, with some even coming to school to demand that their children be beaten in front of them. One teacher, however, claimed that earlier problems of excessive violence or miscarriage of justice by teachers had turned some parents against the practice. This was supported by some students:

“There are some teachers who beat the children badly. They don’t treat children the way that they are supposed to [...] some teachers [...] overbeat children, so some parents are really against corporal punishment.”

KO, primary teacher

Corporal punishment is still carried out by some senior students on younger ones. They were seen giving taps with flimsy sticks on the backs of the legs of latecomers as they came through the gate. Although the sticks are mainly a symbol of authority, in some schools prefects overstep their powers. The students themselves are well-aware that corporal punishment is out of order and referred to its use as being unfair or excessive, and this teacher confirmed this:

“Sometimes they could even grab the food and use their power: ‘Tomorrow if you come late I will give you six strokes.’ They are not allowed to cane and not supposed to carry these little sticks [...] but they continue.”

OO, primary teacher

The most common sanction observed was physical work, for example the filling in of potholes and cutting the grass, which grows fast in this climate. It is a constant task to keep the compounds and sports areas clear for assemblies, lessons under trees, and games. There was no direct evidence of excessive or onerous physical labour, such as carrying very heavy loads, but small children were seen carrying plastic jerry cans. Some heads were aware of the dangers of over-loading small children:

“I told them when you want to give some work to the children [...] you have to first to look at the child’s age [...] when you are sending a child of eight years to fetch water don’t send her with a 20 litre jerry can. Send her with a small one.”

WG, rural primary head

Students' accounts of unfair incidents reveal their underlying belief in procedural fairness. References to unfair punishment included suspension for minor offences, failing to check the facts, favouritism, insults, and abuse of power, as in this example:

“Some teachers believe in prefects without doing thorough investigation. [...] There was [a] day when I was taken by a prefect to the teacher and the teacher didn't want me to defend myself but only listen to what the prefect was saying.”

Special school club member



*Figure 6: Students 'slashing' grass as a sanction for lateness*

Prefects were asked for positive examples of procedural fairness in handling offences and disputes. These are statements of 'ought' and not necessarily of 'is'. It is quite possible for a prefect who suffered injustice when young, and who knows how they ought to behave now, still to act unfairly. Several reported on the difficulty of making fair, impartial investigations based on evidence and their concern over the severity of the punishment of a reported offender:



“Many students normally report to us cases of theft and many times it was difficult to us to handle the cases without evidence.”

Secondary prefect

“I should not be biased on students’ side or teachers’ side when making decisions.”

Secondary prefect



*Figure 7: Prefects at school gate to check latecomers*

Procedural fairness can also be developed through the involvement of students in school leadership. This may be through formal systems of student representation in administration or management committees, or through the selection systems for prefects, used by all the schools to support good order. In the primary teachers’ training college, student leaders are elected to a council, called a ‘guild’, which is involved in political issues in the college, such as teaching quality and student amenities. One member explained why he joined:

“For my case I have decided to join the guild government [...] because the people who were handling before were not doing the rightful thing. [...] I decided to join so that at least I can change the situation from worse to good.”

Primary Teachers’ Training College (PTC) council officer

One primary school involves students in school administration. Although this concerns a very small group, they are reportedly elected through a democratic procedure:

“We have some pupils they attend staff meetings, head boy and head girl, head prefect. They are elected; we make them choose their own leaders because these are rights [...] by voting, by holding open voting, open campaign.”

CH, urban primary Head

Prefects are generally students in their final two school years, filling a variety of posts, such as Head Boy and Head Girl, punctuality monitors, food queue monitors, and in schools with boarding, dormitory captains. The selection process was examined for procedural fairness, since fair procedure increases the prefects’ legitimacy in the eyes of their peers. In all the schools visited, there is a semi-democratic and formal system for the selection of prefects, which involves student elections. One head said that now the national system is democratic. In general, first, there are written applications vetted by teachers, who then produce a shortlist. One school group mentioned an electoral commission for short-listing. The candidates campaign and are elected by fellow students. It was not possible to observe the process in action as it takes place at the start of the school year, while the fieldwork was towards the end. Evidence from both rural primary schools suggests an open voting system in which voters line up behind their chosen candidates. It may be that secondary schools have a more sophisticated

method, but no one mentioned a secret ballot. This must mean that elections could be open to abuse.<sup>76</sup>

Teachers asserted some influence over the process, generally at the short-listing stage. In one case it was mentioned that the teachers would exercise a veto *after* elections, if they thought the students have elected someone manifestly unsuitable. A teacher suggested that even in the case of a veto over one particular role, there is an effort to find an alternative suitable post:

“After the campaign, all teachers will be there to help counting, controlling the line, and one teacher records the votes. The elections are really free; they can elect a disturbed child to be a prefect. After the election we have a staff meeting and when we see that a child is not fit, he may spoil others, for example they elected a child who wanted to beat a teacher, and we told them they could not put the child in the post. He accepted our decision; we put him in another post.”

FCP, primary teacher

The value of this semi-democratic system would seem to depend on how carefully and fairly it is handled. The intervention of the teachers may be benign and carefully handled, or potentially manipulative.

Procedural fairness applies to relationships within the teaching staff, as well as between teachers and students. Conditions of employment and the teacher’s code of conduct lay down the ground rules for how teachers should behave, but there are also cultural elements, which convey the sense of self-respect felt by teachers. Some rural teachers are pillars of their community, serving on the parish council, as well as acting as elders in the community. Senior

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<sup>76</sup> The importance of being a prefect for a future career may be illustrated by a press claim that vote-buying is the ‘norm’ in Ugandan schools and that pupils are learning corruption, while apparently learning democracy. In this case study, however, no evidence emerged to support this claim.

<http://www.bugandapost.com/main/archives/1708>, (last accessed 12/4/11).



staff, however, explained the difficulties they face with absenteeism and unpunctuality and the negative impact on school discipline and learning. One such head teacher explained the effort to correct the problem through counselling and guidance, and the use of disciplinary means as a last resort:

“But we take a long time to discipline a teacher, we counsel them [...] we write to them and if they cannot improve we send them to staff disciplinary (sic) [...] they will talk to him and counsel him and then if that one cannot be done [...] if he does not reform then you send to school authorities and he may either be warned or disciplined.”

CH, urban primary head

Key phrases from the interviews reveal the respondents' belief in due procedural fairness and their concern about people's behaviour in the absence of any trust in the ordinary process of justice. A question asked of all adult interview participants was: “Can you recall any action you have taken in defence of human rights?” Five respondents from different schools reported on their intervention to protect suspected thieves in danger of their lives. This teacher voiced her disapproval of mob justice:

“There is now a common habit when they catch a thief, they try to lynch him, mob rule, because they say that when you arrest a thief in the evening you see the fellow walking on the streets and so they take action into their hands [...] so here was a young man he was caught with some stolen property and they were beating him [...] I said ‘why don't [...] you take this to the police and they will help you sort out this issue, the truth will come out and if this thing is to stop you need to find the other person?’ [...] and they said, ‘No, this is a waste of time’ [...] I said, ‘You are beating him. He may be very innocent, let it be proved elsewhere.’”

HC, secondary teacher

### 3.2 Human rights sensitivity

It can be argued that equal respect and procedural fairness, discussed respectively in the preceding chapter and previous section are values that support human rights. Many unprompted remarks from respondents led to a decision to report on teachers' beliefs about how useful they feel human rights in general are for their educational work, and whether they feel that human rights contradict traditional values. I am here using the term 'human rights sensitivity' to cover these two issues. 'Sensitivity' is placed in this section on 'values' as it is distinct from knowledge about human rights. It means a tendency or readiness to support the idea of human rights.

Head teachers generally expressed the importance of human rights for their role:

“I am responsible for many things and I must protect the rights of all teachers here [...] and protect the rights of **all** (participant's emphasis) the children and all the parents, and also make sure they implement their roles and responsibilities.”

CH, urban primary head

Almost all of the teachers' surveyed said that human rights are either useful or very useful for their own work. Allowance must be made for the tendency of respondents to give the answer that they think is desired or expected, as all the teachers knew this was an investigation into education for peace-building. The given reasons fall into two categories. One relates to how understanding human rights makes a better atmosphere for learning, such as peace in the school, the development of self-esteem and reduction of corporal punishment or sexual abuse. The other is more directly concerned with the teacher's own rights and responsibilities and the duties of the superiors towards the well-being of the teacher. Survey and interview responses suggest that knowledge of human rights may increase confidence in freedom of speech and

personal freedom. This comment from the survey suggests that the teacher sees a connection between such knowledge and job security, or improved terms and conditions:

“It will make the superiors to look at the subordinates as equals at the workplace other than mistreating and using ladies as sex workers in case they want to promote them.”

Comment from teacher questionnaire

All the teachers surveyed and a great majority of the interview respondents stated that it is useful to teach young people about human rights, two thirds of them backing this up with reasons; for example, the need to protect the rights of others, as well as to understand one’s own, the reduction of stigmatization and bullying, and increasing cooperation:

“It is important in that learners will be able to respect others as well as protecting others who may be in danger.”

Comment from teacher questionnaire

For clarity in developing a conceptual framework, a distinction was made between ‘values’ and ‘knowledge’, but in reality they may often overlap.<sup>77</sup> People’s belief in reconciliation and forgiveness, commitment to equal respect between ethnic groups, and support for procedural fairness, may be conditioned by the knowledge they have of human rights, religious precepts and community traditions. In media discussions between educators from Africa and Asia, I have heard human rights described in terms of ‘western’ or ‘imported’ traditions rather than universal entitlements, so I decided to ask interviewees about the compatibility or conflict between Acholi traditional values and human rights.

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<sup>77</sup> The general relationship between knowledge, skills and values was discussed in Chapter Three, sub-section 4.4.

Many respondents saw no conflict between traditional values and human rights. They mentioned that the Acholi tradition for resolving serious disputes and crimes involved the whole community. The clan of any alleged perpetrator took responsibility to find the truth and shared any consequent guilt. The wrong was righted through compensation to the victim's clan. This differed from 'modern' systems of justice that treat crimes as being against the peace or authority of the state. For some, punishment without compensation for the victim seems less than satisfactory. Where the justice system is corrupt and richer defendants are able to buy their liberty, people feel aggrieved and are more ready to take justice into their own hands. This teacher understood the reciprocal nature of rights in traditional culture:

“[The] rights of a person [are] observed in traditional Acholi culture. If parents were failing then the elders requested them to conform to what is right. [...] traditionally the child learnt that there are rights of others so you cannot grow up doing anything you like.”

SH, primary teacher

Some respondents, however, saw conflict between women and children's rights and traditional values. Traditionally, women were not in the groups of elders who made decisions and solved problems. These respondents, like this college tutor, said that because ideas of gender equality were imported from outside, they caused some problems:

“Quite a lot of resistance [...] [the] biggest problem is the culture of Acholi [...] [the] strongest belief is that a wife should be controlled by a man, and children should follow the law of the home. Because of exposure to ideas about rights [...] many think the women are hi-jacking their power to become the authority in the family.”

EC, Primary Teachers' Training College tutor

The semi-structured and organic nature of the interviews allowed many participants to comment on issues, which were not part of the research design. One issue concerned the reciprocity of rights, and especially the idea of responsibilities. Teachers think it is important that children learn about human rights, but they believe that the way they have been conveyed so far has caused considerable problems. Children have been taught much about their rights and little about reciprocity. Partly as a result of the translation problem referred to above in section 1 of this chapter, people have imperfectly understood the relationship between rights and responsibilities. The idea that a rights holder has the responsibility to accept and protect the rights of others is a complex one. If human rights are introduced only as claims to power, without the necessary reciprocity, they are received as a direct assault on authority of all kinds, instead of as a means of deliberating conflicts of interest without recourse to arbitrary power or violence, as seen by this rural head teacher:

“Yes, there is conflict [...] simply because the children don’t understand their right [...] they just take it [...] that it is their right even if they don’t want to come to school, their parents should not send them, they have a right to stay at home.”

WG, rural primary head teacher

These problems have led some people in this district to hold human rights ideology responsible for a breakdown in authority in the family, the school, or society. In the view of several respondents, children are refusing to do reasonable chores at home, using the right not to be forced to do heavy labour as an excuse. In article 32 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, child labour is defined as dangerous work or work that interferes with education (UNICEF 2010), but teachers informed me that children refer to their right to be free from child labour to try to avoid normal domestic tasks or school sanctions. Respondents see a major difference between expecting children to contribute to the life of the family and

excessive and onerous physical labour that can damage their health, or interfere with their right to education.

“Child labour rights [...] when you tell them to help you doing small work ...in the compound they say, ‘You are violating my rights.’ [...] they don’t know enough [...] they mix up responsibilities with the rights [...] children have a little knowledge, and they need a better knowledge. [...] Children should be given work which is equivalent to their age.”

ORA, primary teacher

It seems that the emphasis on children’s rights in NGO training workshops has been to put the burden on parents as if they are the prime duty bearers, rather than on the government. Poverty can force parents into inadvertently violating children’s rights through their inability to pay school fees.<sup>78</sup> An NGO officer pointed out that an over-emphasis on the duty of parents to ensure that children are not exploited and can have an education removes the focus of responsibility from the government:

“It is really impossible [...] when you begin teaching them about their rights [...] shelter, food, education, [...] It is conflict of loyalty, parent thinks they have the obligation for school fees [...] your mother is not supposed to violate this right, but if she cannot afford it.”

CN, Concerned Parents

NGO officers recognize that mistakes have been made in bypassing the parents, the wider community and often even the teachers when teaching children about rights. The universalism of human rights was underplayed in order to focus on the rights of vulnerable groups. The

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<sup>78</sup> School fees still exist at secondary level and even at primary level, in spite of Universal Primary Education. This is the case because schools are so underfunded that they ask for ‘voluntary’ contributions from parents to pay extra teachers in order to reduce class sizes (evidence from a range of participants)

concentration on children's and women's rights has created the danger of a backlash against human rights, as they are not seen relevant to the whole community. The view was that human rights were being 'given' by NGOs, instead of focusing on their place in global legal documents and the Ugandan constitution:

“[Human rights are] seen as something external. It was a concept that was not well understood... [there are] no strong grassroots programmes to sensitize people with human rights... [the] view is ‘NGOs are coming to give us human rights.’”

IE, Norwegian Refugee Council

Yet, although the adults complained that the young are ignorant of responsibilities, young people frequently paired rights with responsibilities, as in this example:

“Rights move with responsibilities, e.g. building a house for shelter, cleaning compounds for healthy environment.”

Primary club member

Students, particularly the older ones in secondary school, have a perspective on the relationship between the rights of children and adults that is quite similar to that of their teachers. Some note the confusion over 'power' and the ability to do what you want, while others can see the limits of children's rights, in relation to their position being under the guardianship of their parents. Several expressed the concern that over-attention to children's rights leads to disrespect for elders. The variety of responses to the question on whether it is advisable to teach young people about adults' rights shows that some students have a nuanced understanding of the question, as with this student union member:

“In the school, they mainly talk about children rights but after the workshop we realised that rights are universal despite age, sex and colour.”

Secondary UNSA group member

In this section I have explored two values that I think important for inclusive citizenship: procedural fairness and general support for human rights, using the term ‘human rights sensitivity’. The schools in the study are contributing to procedural fairness through developing clear school rules, often in association with the students themselves. Infractions seem to be generally dealt with according to well-understood processes, and not arbitrarily. Corporal punishment has declined in frequency and severity but still lingers in some cases. The prefects who assist in keeping order in school are selected according to semi-democratic procedures, but they have relatively little training for their responsibilities. Teachers themselves have a good sense of due process, rejecting, for example, mob justice in the community. There appears to be strong if not overwhelming support for human rights in theory, but there are some serious concerns over the way in which they have been introduced to young people, especially in terms of bypassing parents and families. In general, they are not seen to be in conflict with local traditions, but there are some tensions and issues surrounding gender equality.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have described the extent to which schools are contributing to the third conflict transformation concept: inclusive citizenship. As before, the curricular elements of knowledge, skills and values have been used as an organizing method to clarify a wide range of material. I have suggested that knowledge and understanding of local, national and international political and legal systems would contribute to inclusive citizenship, but this was not fully explored because of the limitations of the research design. As one might expect, head



teachers and secondary teachers are more knowledgeable than primary teachers. Some secondary students, particularly those in the Uganda National Students Association (UNSA), show local or national political awareness. Documentary study of texts and syllabi revealed that there is a very limited place in the curriculum for civic education aimed at developing some basic understanding of local and national institutions.

Although the term 'human rights' is very well-known in the district by heads, teachers and students, few participants know about its legal foundations in the UN or in the national system. The best-known human rights are economic and social rights, especially the rights of women and children. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the right to education was the most frequently referred to. The so-called civil and political rights, including democratic rights, are far less prominent in people's thinking. There are problems regarding the understanding of human rights owing to the translation of the term in the local language, which suggests 'power' and bears little reference to entitlement or reciprocity.

I proposed that inclusive citizenship skills can be developed through the processes of deliberative discussion, debate and sensitization. There is little or no deliberative discussion in the mainstream curriculum, but some is taking place in clubs, which tend to involve the young people in planning and activities, under the guidance of a teacher 'patron' or 'matron'. Secondary schools provide a means for students to contribute to school improvement through the Uganda National Students Association. Only one primary school in the study, however, has any form of representative student involvement in school improvement. It is unclear how real this is, or whether it is a form of tokenism. Debating is well-established in the district. The adversarial and competitive approach, however, appears to favour superficial conclusions and a concentration on the forms, rather than on the reality of the issues. Young people are

developing citizenship skills through sensitization organized by after-school clubs. The arts are used to convey social messages about peace, forgiveness, and girls' rights to education. NGO support has been significant in this area.

Inclusive citizenship values include procedural fairness and general human rights sensitivity. There is evidence that schools are using fair procedure in establishing rules and in carrying out disciplinary actions. Corporal punishment is officially banned and is generally in decline, though not entirely defunct. Students have strong notions of procedural fairness and do not accept arbitrary authority as the natural order of things. There is evidence too of some democratic process in prefect selection. This is by no means 'pure democracy', as there is no secret ballot and the teachers have various veto powers over those selected. The above findings do not suggest that the schools are models of fair process: there is evidence of infractions and unfairness by both prefects and teachers. The particular pressures on schools in the district as a result of the disruption of the war mean that most schools are struggling with basic management, but there is evidence of a fair process of discipline for staff. Teachers' reports of interventions in the community to prevent mob justice show their own value of fair process and their sense of duty as teachers for setting an example to the community.

Most heads and teachers think it is important to teach and learn about human rights, both for creating a better learning atmosphere in school, and for personal confidence about job security and relationships with superiors. Many respondents see no conflict between human rights and their community traditions, although a sizeable group recognises that some human rights values, imported from the outside world, conflict with traditional approaches to gender and childhood. The values of reciprocity in human rights have not been well-conveyed, as NGOs

have concentrated on children's rights without putting them into a universal context. There is a widespread concern that the language has emphasized rights at the expense of responsibilities.

Finally, there is evidence that the ministry of education is undertaking some curriculum reform supported by the US development agency, USAID. However, the de-centralization of education and the unilateral activities of various NGOs with an interest in peace-building and conflict transformation mean that it is unlikely that the in-built inertia of the national curriculum, buttressed by a very fact-based examination system, will be changed in the near future.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis bears the traces of its origins. In the conclusion, I seek to explain how it evolved from its initial impetus into an effort to understand how the school curriculum can contribute to conflict transformation in countries that suffered civil war. I provide a tentative answer to the main question, summarising the steps that have led me to this conclusion, and reporting on findings from the qualitative research in schools. I finish with some more general reflections and suggestions for further research.

### **Impetus for the research**

In earlier stages of my educational career I had researched human rights education and written about the development of democratic values through the influence of school culture (Cunningham 1991, 2000). Involvement in a large African teacher education project<sup>79</sup> opened my eyes to the huge challenges schools are facing in the aftermath of various types of violent conflict. It seemed, at that point, that there was little known about the school experiences of head teachers, teachers and young people in these very difficult circumstances. On an exploratory visit to northern Uganda, I was interested to discover that peace education was being promoted in some schools. On investigating its content, I noted that while the values of cooperation, compromise and non-violence were being actively promoted, there was an absence of any reference to human rights, the story of the war, or to political participation. I wondered whether the absence of any substantial knowledge and understanding was accidental, the result of peace education theory, or national government policy.

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<sup>79</sup> The Open University's Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) programme developed a partnership of educators in sub-Saharan Africa who wrote on-line, open-source resources for teacher education, to help meet the huge need for qualified teachers created by Universal Primary Education.

Thus, the initial impetus for research was a question about why human rights, recent history and politics were missing from peace education materials and approaches. I believed, also, that addressing this question would provide an opportunity to understand and explain the experience of students, teachers and head teachers in the immediate aftermath of a civil war. At this stage, I had some ideas about how well-planned peace education might contribute to peace, but had not as yet explored the literature on peace-building and conflict transformation. Early reading uncovered much generalization about education and its importance for sustainable peace, but it appeared to be overwhelmingly descriptive and normative. One finding was the statistical correlation between educational access and civil war: the more schooling people have had, the less likely they are to experience civil war (Thyne 2006),<sup>80</sup> but as with all such statistical approaches it is difficult to prove the direction of causation. There was no thorough explanation, moreover, of *why* and *how* schooling should be able to contribute to peace, and no consideration of the nature or quality of the school curriculum.

### **Development of the research question**

As a starting point, it was necessary, to think about the term 'peace'. Pinker (2011:189) reproduces Henry Maine's aphorism "War appears to be as old as mankind, but peace is a modern invention." Pinker charts the decline of inter-state war since 1945 which he links to the suggestion that human beings are becoming less violent and more peaceful. Although the incidence of intra-state or civil wars has also been declining (Gleditsch, Hegre and Strand 2009), they continue to cause great suffering and they are impeding progress towards the Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations General Assembly. In its most simple interpretation, peace may be seen merely as the situation where warring groups stop shooting and put down their weapons. But, as re-eruptions of civil war are most likely within

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<sup>80</sup> The indicators examined by Thyne are the proportion of GNP invested in primary education, the primary enrolment level, the secondary enrolment level and the level of adult literacy.

five years (Collier 2007:34), it can be justly asked whether a cease-fire merits the term 'peace'. Thus the adjectives 'durable', 'sustainable' or 'lasting' are often added in order to convey the need to think beyond the short-term.

Actions and policies that can be taken in the first few years after a cease-fire or peace agreement are particularly important in the effort to secure durable peace. The dominant approach is known as 'the liberal peace'. This proposes institution-building, the establishment of democratic forms, respect for human rights, and liberalization of markets. One institution to be strengthened is education. All modern societies have formal education systems, from organized pre-school groups to university, but the element accessed by the vast majority of learners is schooling, above all, primary schooling. Schooling generally manages to continue in some form during civil war, although frequently with massive damage and disruption, as people value it as a symbol of normality and as a platform for the future. After a civil war, in the early-recovery phase, the priority is the restoration of the infrastructure: buildings, teachers and administrative systems. But there is another significant challenge, namely the school curriculum.

The theory of conflict transformation has implications for the curriculum as it holds that conflict itself is an inevitable aspect of human interaction, for we all have differing identities, values and interests (Austin 2011, Lederach 1995, Lederach and Appleby 2010). Not all conflict is violent and not all violence is armed. Structural violence can be found where large groups of people are oppressed, knowingly or unknowingly, by other social groups and/or economic and political systems, which may appear to be immutable. Conflict transformation requires the involvement of people at all levels of society in tackling structural violence, as unresolved grievances and permanent frustrations can lie buried for some time only to re-

erupt, sometimes quite unexpectedly, leading to new or renewed civil wars. The school curriculum can contribute to the causes of civil war through perpetuating inequalities, ethnic or identity hatred, and where this is the case, an unreformed curriculum will often carry the seeds of future violent armed conflict.<sup>81</sup> However, there is, as yet, little conceptualization to explain in detail how the school curriculum can contribute to conflict transformation. By addressing the question, 'How can schooling contribute to conflict transformation?' I am adding to knowledge through a detailed conceptual framework, which can be used for empirical enquiry into the school curriculum and adapted for a variety of contexts.

### **The argument**

I argue that the school curriculum can contribute to conflict transformation by addressing each of three elements - 'truth-seeking', 'reconciliation' and 'inclusive citizenship' - through 'knowledge and understanding', 'skills development' and 'values socialization'. This can be understood as a conceptual framework and shown in the form of a table, shown on the following page:

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<sup>81</sup> Examples include the segregation of education between identity groups in Northern Ireland and the Balkans, and the removal of history from the Rwandan school curriculum. Further, the sharply differing narratives of the past in Israeli and Palestinian schools are likely to remain negative factors in the search for long-term peace. The recent victory of the Sinhalese-dominated government over the Tamil separatist insurgency has meant the end of a shooting war, but how truth, reconciliation and inclusive citizenship will be dealt with in schools is bound to influence the future trajectory of Sri Lankan society.

### A conceptual framework for a school curriculum for conflict transformation

On the vertical axis are three core conflict transformation concepts. On the horizontal axis is the method of articulating them in the whole curriculum.

	<i>Knowledge and understanding</i>	<i>Skills</i>	<i>Values</i>
<i>Truth Seeking</i>	<i>Recent history</i>	<i>Narrative skills</i> <i>Critical thinking</i>	<i>Value of history</i> <i>Tolerance of divergent interpretations</i>
<i>Reconciliation</i>	<i>Contemporary events and issues</i>	<i>Problem-solving</i> <i>Cooperation and teamwork</i>	<i>Equal respect</i> <i>Sympathy</i> <i>Forgiveness</i>
<i>Inclusive Citizenship</i>	<i>Local, national, and international political/legal systems</i> <i>Human rights articles and conventions</i>	<i>Deliberative discussion</i> <i>Debate</i> <i>Sensitization</i>	<i>Procedural fairness</i> <i>Human rights sensitivity</i>

Using this framework I have investigated the curriculum of schools in a war-affected district of northern Uganda. The schools are contributing to some but not all of the elements. They are conveying the values of equal respect, sympathy and forgiveness, which aid reconciliation, and fostering procedural fairness which is significant for inclusive citizenship. They are developing teamwork and problem-solving skills that underpin reconciliation, but are not yet teaching much deliberative discussion or critical thinking, important respectively for truth-seeking and inclusive citizenship. Teachers and young people know a little about human rights, but are learning almost nothing about recent history or contemporary political and legal systems.



The first two chapters sought to explain how schooling can contribute to conflict transformation. One basic requirement is access. Unless people attend and complete school, they are in no position to receive any of its potential benefits. It was then argued that the type and quality of the school experience, described as the curriculum, may have an impact on conflict transformation. Although conflict transformation writers barely mention formal education or schooling, some of their key concepts can be approached through a school curriculum of sufficient quality. *Truth-seeking* means attempting to uncover and analyse the sources of civil war and to acknowledge the suffering of victims. It includes the understanding that there may be varying truths, depending on the perspective of the viewer. *Reconciliation* denotes the readiness of former opponents to live alongside each other, laying aside the desire for revenge and co-operating for durable peace. *Inclusive citizenship* means the process by which diverse groups are actively supported in participation at all levels in their own society with the aim of improving the quality of life for all. These three conflict transformation concepts can all be addressed in schools.

The school curriculum consists not only of the taught timetabled lessons, but all the planned activities of the school, including assemblies, social breaks, after-lesson clubs, sports and arts events. The relationships between staff and students, as well as methods for organizing the school community and solving problems are, therefore, all part of the curriculum. Furthermore, what is planned for is not the same as what is experienced. Therefore the definition of curriculum followed in the thesis is everything experienced by the student, both planned for and unplanned (Kelly 2009). Relatively little is known about the school curriculum in the immediate aftermath of violent conflict. There are many generalizations about the need to reconstruct buildings, staff the schools and heal the trauma of victims, but little published academic work on the actual school experience. Much of what has been

produced by non-governmental organizations is aimed at garnering public support and tends to highlight examples of best or innovative practice, or extreme cases of educational neglect and violence.

A coalition of international agencies and non-governmental organizations, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, has produced general guidelines for formal education after conflict and emergencies, drawing partly on the broad and overlapping curricular approaches of peace, human rights and citizenship education.<sup>82</sup> No single one of these approaches is sufficient in itself for schooling towards conflict transformation, but each includes valuable aspects. Furthermore, noted scholars of these approaches recognise the learning experience of daily life in the school and the necessity of a combination of knowledge, skills and values. These interrelated elements provide a practical articulation for the conflict transformation concepts, leading to an integrated conceptual framework. This has been used to organize the empirical element of the thesis, opening a window into the daily life and practice of schools in the aftermath of a civil war.

### **Summary of findings**

The qualitative case study of schooling in a post-conflict district of northern Uganda placed the argument in a specific context in order to explore the applicability of the framework. Seven schools and a teacher training college in the Gulu district were studied through interviews with heads, teachers and groups of young people, participant observation, and documentary study of syllabi, textbooks and examinations. National and local education officers and officials of local and international non-governmental organizations were

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<sup>82</sup> *Minimum Standards of Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction and Guidance Notes on Teaching and Learning* published by the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE 2010).

interviewed in order to achieve a wider perspective. The findings, presented in detail at the end of each of the empirical chapters are summarised here.

Appropriate learning about the history of a civil war can contribute to the search for truth. In the period after a civil war, however, it takes some time for journalists and subsequently historians to produce comprehensive and comprehensible accounts of events. History is always contested, and there are bound to be different interpretations of events. Where a civil war has been won by one side, as for example in Sri Lanka, the winner will control the public account of events. Official school history, represented by schemes of work and textbooks, will coincide with the government view. Where wars have ended through compromise or negotiation, there is likely to be a political struggle over which accounts will find their way in the school curriculum. Countries as varied as Spain, Cambodia, and Mozambique have opted for a period of amnesia to allow the dust to settle and wounds to heal before approaching the disputed past.

Therefore it was unexceptional that the schools in this study were as yet making no contribution to an understanding of the causes and course of the civil war. At the time of the research, a ceasefire had been in effect for only a short time, and many schools were still displaced from their original communities. It was surprising, however, to discover that almost none of the history of Uganda since independence in 1962 was being taught in the primary schools. The people who were the victims of the war had as yet no opportunity to reflect on how it started, or what had happened before (i.e. events that took place twenty years previously). Although a minority of respondents felt that studying the history of the conflict in school would be dangerous, a majority felt that it would be helpful. Either way, if the

government pushes its preferred (some would call it distorted) version of history into the school curriculum it may do more harm than good.

One way that schooling can contribute to conflict transformation is through the development of critical thinking, so that people can be less easily manipulated by political leaders into choosing violence as a way of resolving conflict. The problem of ‘Whose story? Which truth?’ may be overcome by the consideration of various view points. Critical analysis of different perspectives can be developed through various forms of social study, including history and the examination of controversial contemporary issues. The study of contrasting interpretations is a more complex approach to history than the rote learning of prescribed facts (Cole 2007), and is probably more appropriate for secondary levels of education, currently accessible only to a minority of people in Uganda. The current primary and much of the secondary curriculum allows little or no space for any kind of critical thinking or analysis. The lessons seen were overwhelmingly based on oral transmission and rote learning. There is evidence however, from observed discussions and debates, as well as from interview responses, that Ugandan teachers and students are capable of such a type of enquiry, even at primary level.

An important element of truth-seeking for conflict transformation is the need of victims to be recognized and understood. The experience of being listened to leads to a sense of dignity and self-esteem, which supports reconciliation. There is almost always an oral history of any civil war, narrated in families and the community. This may be accurate or inaccurate, contributing to conflict transformation or damaging it. Potentially, there is space in school for the oral histories of different individuals and groups, both through story-tellers and through video and audio recordings from documentaries. This type of school history may, therefore, contribute to truth through ‘seeking’, rather than through a top-down approach of ‘telling’, and provide a

different source of understanding from what young people learn from their families. There was some evidence of creative approaches to the story of the war, using traditions of music, drama and dance that are being re-introduced after the cultural disruption caused by forced displacement. Narrative methods are being consciously used by peace clubs and other similar groups for what Ugandans term 'sensitization' on a wide variety of social issues, including the chance of abducted young people to tell their story to those whose lives they themselves have damaged.

Reconciliation denotes the readiness of warring parties to forgo the anger and bitterness created by suffering, in order to live alongside each other and co-operate for a peaceful future. According to conflict transformation scholars, it requires some understanding of contemporary social, economic and political forces, so that inevitable conflicts of interest can be resolved without violence. I suggested that schools could contribute to this knowledge and understanding, but there was little or no curriculum space for such issues in the schools studied. Nevertheless, evidence was found from students as well as their teachers for a lively interest in some pressing contemporary issues, such as transitional justice and the ending of the war.<sup>83</sup> In one school, space was found for this approach through a weekly programmed debating session, suggesting that it may be possible for all schools to find some space for contemporary events.

Reconciliation skills such as problem-solving, cooperation and teamwork are particularly relevant in situations where traumatized people offer angry and violent responses to solvable problems. There is good evidence for the development of these skills in the sample schools.

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<sup>83</sup> Transitional justice refers to the set of judicial and non-judicial measures that have been implemented by different countries in order to redress the legacies of massive human rights abuses. These measures include criminal prosecutions, truth commissions, reparations programs, and various kinds of institutional reforms. (International Centre for Transitional Justice 2012).

The prefect system is providing young people with the opportunity to work together in handling daily problems and in thinking rationally about their solution. The club system, which is well-supported by local, national and international non-governmental organizations, allows students to discuss issues informally and to work together on general peace-related issues, such as gender equality, environmental challenges, and stigmatization of formerly abducted people.

Schooling can help war victims on both sides come to terms with what they experienced. This demands a gradual process of personal and community psychological recovery, aimed at developing an understanding of the suffering of self and others. The findings show schools building on specialist psycho-social support in their handling of interpersonal, intrapersonal and psychological problems. The values of equal respect and sympathy can be applied not only to formerly abducted people, but also to their families and the interrelationships between the different individuals and groups who have suffered from this civil war, each in their particular way. Values of compromise and forgiveness have been present in Acholi society from much earlier times. Unlike other parts of the world, there does not seem to have been a strong culture of revenge and blood feud. Local, national and international non-governmental organizations and religious groups have built on this tradition, introducing ideas of human rights and psychotherapeutic support. The schools are providing a context for sympathy and forgiveness, especially for those who have been abducted. It is probable that

This is not to say that there is no stigmatization. It does exist to a significant degree. It is, however, challenged by many teachers and young people. The values of equal respect are apparent more in terms of gender and disability than in terms of ethnicity, but in this particular

case the local society is largely mono-ethnic. A number of teachers and heads suggested that ethnic mistrust in the country is a serious matter, but others disagreed.

Inclusive citizenship refers to membership and participation in a society at local and national level, and increasingly through the information revolution, it implies people's connections with the wider world. It is underpinned by human rights knowledge and values, since individuals and groups operate within current global norms. It is also an important concept for conflict transformation. The recent events of the 'Arab Spring' showed how groups were inspired by the actions of people well outside their borders, and how they gathered around key values such as the right to participate in the choice of government. If people feel excluded from membership of their country or participation in its political system, they may be prepared to use violence to attain their ends. Some would argue that such violence is both justified and an inevitable part of political development. Violent revolution, however, may be a seedbed for future cycles of civil war. Inclusive citizenship also implies the recognition of a wide variety of social and identity-based groups and a tolerant relationship between them. Unless people learn how to approach conflicts of interest in peaceful ways, there is potential for violence and war between groups. Ignorance of the culture and beliefs of the various groups living in a country can lead to misunderstanding and fear. These emotions can be exploited for political gain through divide and rule tactics, or through fanning deep-seated resentment or half-formed historical memories.

Schools can contribute to inclusive citizenship through teaching people about their own political system, including the varieties of ethnic, religious or other identity groups, and by providing students with the skills and values of participation. There is little evidence for that, however, in the schools in this study. Of course, young people may be learning from their

families, communities and the local media. The treatment of a topic in school, nevertheless, is an acknowledgement or endorsement of its importance. Education systems that are silent on the rights and duties of citizens are by implication assuming that the learners do not need to know such things. Teachers and students in the schools studied are aware of the basic idea of human rights, but are much more conscious of economic and social rights, than civil and political ones. They know little of the legal or global foundations of rights. For conflict transformation, this cuts both ways. Social justice requires an understanding of the importance of economic and social rights, but it also depends on the political agency of people to struggle for their rights. In terms of the United Nations principles, human rights are indivisible. Hence, civil and political rights must not be repressed in order to achieve economic and social rights. There is little or no provision for learning these matters in the mainstream school curriculum. Local and international NGOs have played a major part in sensitizing people about human rights, but there are clear weaknesses in the approach taken. Although many people do not see a major conflict between human rights and local traditions, the reciprocal nature of rights and associated responsibilities has not been well-conveyed, and families and communities have been bypassed.

Inclusive citizenship requires people to learn how to discuss with the aim of achieving a consensus and to make good decisions that leave room for minority opinions and views. Such 'deliberative' discussion skills can be learnt and developed in school lessons through group work and through a teaching style that encourages thinking and questioning. Deliberative discussion is almost non-existent in the main curriculum, while representative student involvement in school improvement is largely absent. This approach is in its infancy in Uganda, although some recent reforms in the early primary phase show that the government is aware of its value. Resource decisions that result in very high class-sizes make such reforms a



big challenge. In any case, deliberative discussion is rare in the schools of most societies. Some of the case study schools are encouraging persuasive communication and debating skills, which may have a positive impact on people's sense of agency and self-esteem. The adversarial and competitive approach may be thought to have a negative impact on conflict transformation, but the theory holds that conflicts of interest are normal. Such techniques of resolving conflict through known and recognized procedures have contributed to the development of democracy in many parts of the world.

In the same way, the value of procedural fairness means respect for the development of rules, and correspondingly transparent and principled methods of handling infractions. Support for this value is an important element of inclusive citizenship because it counters tendencies to arbitrary authority or mob violence. Fairness is not simply a matter of basic legal rights, such as fair hearings and the right to defend oneself, but it extends to the process of democracy, which depends on a readiness to accept rules of balance and reciprocity. The schools are promoting procedural fairness through disciplinary matters. Corporal punishment has been largely abolished and teachers are learning non-violent methods of dispute resolution, which are being conveyed to the young people. There is evidence of some understanding of democratic processes, as exemplified by prefect selection.

It may be thought that a conflict transformation curriculum is too complex and sophisticated for the lower levels of schooling. There is no evidence that young people's minds are physically incapable of learning and thinking at a complex level. The capacity for abstract reasoning is more a question of exposure than a universal development stage, although there are probably general lower age limits (Vygostky 1978). In most conflict-affected countries much more than half of the population is still unable to access secondary education. Young

people of up to 16 years of age or even older may be completing their schooling at the primary phase. To confine such a curriculum to the higher phases of formal education is to deny the population their chance to participate fully in society and to reduce the chances of long-term conflict transformation. Keeping the school curriculum at a simple, factual knowledge-based level may represent a conscious or unconscious policy to prevent the emergence of articulate and organized social groups who could threaten dominant élites (Freire 1972). The curriculum can therefore become a political battleground where different interest groups seek control. The empirical findings showing what is being achieved in clubs and school daily life support the idea that young people at the primary level are capable of learning in a sophisticated way and that they would be able to respond fruitfully to those participative methods which develop rational and critical thinking. Although young people are learning from families, churches, local communities, clubs and activities provided by NGOs, schools are in a position to make a major contribution as they are the places where a large majority of the population can gather knowledge, develop skills and acquire values in a relatively uniform way.

It will be recalled that one impetus for the research was a question about why such peace education materials as were evident in schools were lacking in any requirements for knowledge and understanding of history, human rights and the political and legal system of Uganda. While it is not possible to answer this question definitively, I can offer some reflection. In view of what I have learnt about other countries' approaches to past war and civil war, it is not at all surprising that the origins of this war and its course are not yet in the school curriculum. One respondent said that it would only appear when the current president has ceded power to a successor, and it is as yet unclear whether Uganda will be able to make an unchallenged, peaceful, democratic transition to a new generation of leaders. One might think that since Yoweri Museveni has held power since 1987, there is little danger in teaching

people about the 1962 - 1987 period. Perhaps it is thought that students will start to ask questions about the manner in which the NRM took power.

The Ugandan government has little reason to hide when it comes to human rights. They were incorporated into the 1995 constitution, and President Museveni has toured other countries lecturing about human rights. As I found some references to human rights in text books, there does not seem to be a conspiracy to bury them. I suspect it is more a question of passivity. It is not in the overwhelming interest of any government to awaken its citizens as to their rights, and indeed it was only in 2002, fifty four years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that the UK government incorporated the study of human rights into the curriculum of England and Wales. The reformed curriculum being introduced at the lower primary levels in Uganda appears to incorporate some reference to the rights of the child. A peace education expert who developed materials for use in refugee camps in Kenya privately informed me that camp leaders preferred people to be taught how to get along with each other than for them to be given an ill-digested list of rights that they could then use to stir up conflict. Some of the Ugandan materials were developed by religious groups who may be somewhat sceptical of a secular approach to values, and who similarly may fear that in the hands of manipulative political leaders, the language of rights can be divisive. What I learnt about the problems of translation of the term into the Luo language appears to support this view.

The Ministry of Education is working with development partners on curriculum reform. Officials in the ministry are familiar with peace and citizenship education and supportive of more participative classroom methods. However they noted three significant problems. First is the difficulty of integrating peace or citizenship education into the crowded primary curriculum which is dominated by the vital leaving examinations which determine access to

secondary education. Unless and until the examinations board which is nominally independent of government changes the syllabus, curricular reforms are unlikely to have much impact. Secondly, where the NGO community believes rightly or wrongly that the government is dragging its feet on reform, it has taken unilateral action, resulting in confusion and overlaps. This is linked to the third problem: inadequate training and the dumping of materials in schools without preparation or any support on how they could be used. Some schools in this study had sets of books which had clearly never been used, while in others, teachers were using their initiative and incorporating peace education materials into mainstream subjects like English.

### **Research implications**

Every civil war is unique, depending on the history and the social, political and economic structures of the area. The conceptual framework developed here is a starting point, and could be applied in different contexts. Firstly, it can be adapted and tested in a variety of countries and contexts. This case study is of schools catering for a local population with little ethnic diversity. There are other districts in Uganda or more remote groups of schools displaying their own characteristics. It would be interesting to make further case studies of schools that display sharper ethnic or other identity divides. Secondly, it would be worthwhile investigating schools in other countries in Africa that have recently experienced persistent civil war and intra-state conflict, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote D'Ivoire and South Sudan. Thirdly, looking further afield, it would be valuable to explore how the school curriculum contributes to conflict transformation where young people of different ethnic or religious identity groups are being educated in parallel under different curricula. Fourthly, the conceptual framework may be used for societies like Spain or Cambodia; where much time has elapsed between the end of civil war and efforts towards accountability and

reconciliation, or where there has been a recent civil war with a clear ‘winner’, as in Sri Lanka.

Much more could be understood about the way that different post-conflict societies approach history in school. The idea that a significant time lapse is needed before the narrative can settle into a commonly accepted form could be explored in relation to when history starts to reappear in the curriculum. The different approaches to the transmission of such history could also make for useful research questions, such as whether there is any space allowed for alternative interpretations, especially those which challenge the orthodox or dominant account.

Given the importance of oral history in perpetuating historical interpretations that do not conform to dominant knowledge, an exploration of the narrative skills and methods of young people would be productive. The use of the arts to create personal or group accounts of their experiences in war may be taking place in the non-formal education sector, as in youth clubs or around religious institutions. It is possible, however, that they find some place in schools. Other forms of narrative, for example memoirs and personal stories, may be accessed through written documentation, literary studies, documentary films or on-line media. The use of mobile-phone technology to produce live witnesses to events as they unfold has been a strong feature of events in Northern Africa and Syria and may be used in the future in classrooms. Social networks and other Internet resources could also be explored.

In this research, there was some consideration of the knowledge and understanding of contemporary events and national and local political and legal systems. As noted in the empirical chapters, I was able to make some rather general observations. It would be useful for the further development of the framework to investigate other cases, with more attention paid

to specific questions on how teachers and young people become active citizens through a secure knowledge and understanding of the potential for agency in their locality and in the wider national scene.

The framework outlines the importance of sympathy for former opponents, especially of different ethnic groups. There were many victims of the war in northern Uganda. Although there was a strong ethnic element in the early stages, there was no clear 'us-them' divide along ethnic lines. The farmers who lost cattle to raids by the neighbouring ethnic group are those who have the most evident ethnic grievance. Many respondents referred to the economic marginalization of the north and the casual insults by other ethnic groups when studying or working elsewhere in Uganda, but it was not possible to identify high levels of ethnic anger or hatred. It would be of great interest to study how schools do or do not develop equal respect and sympathy for other ethnic groups, after a more clearly delineated ethnic conflict than this.

Unlike many other countries emerging from violent armed conflict, Uganda has not embarked on a national truth and reconciliation process. Although such a process was proposed and agreed upon in peace talks, it was not advanced as a result of the talks' collapse. Yet, many people in northern Uganda still favour such a process whether or not peace will ever be signed with the LRA. It became clear from conversations and school debates that young people are interested in accountability. At the time, the indictment of Joseph Kony and his senior leaders by the International Criminal Court was seen as an obstacle to peace. Yet, the amnesty for middle-ranking leaders allowed people who were known to have perpetrated massacres to re-integrate in the community without retribution or reparation. Research into the relationship between schooling, truth commissions and reconciliation processes would add a useful

dimension to the further development of conceptualizations of schooling and conflict transformation.

### **Final remarks**

One of the original aims of the research was to give voice to the stories, feelings and actions of the participants, who are struggling to come to terms with the aftermath of twenty years of war. Unfortunately, owing to the constraints of developing a coherent argument, many interesting comments from participants have been edited out. The desperately difficult conditions in which heads and teachers are working need to be emphasized again. Class-sizes of up to 100, lack of furniture and textbooks, sports, arts and music equipment, and a strong sense of disadvantage in relation to other areas of the country were features not just of the interviews, but also of the experience of daily life. My feelings of admiration for so many of the participants could not be expressed in the formal structure of a thesis. Teachers have been through immense suffering and are dedicating their lives to future generations. Young people, many of whom have been abducted, tortured and forced into combat or marriage or gruelling journeys, look to schooling as a vital passport to their future.

One of the most interesting interviews was with a young ex-teacher working for an international non-governmental organization. Her comments here highlight some of the main themes of the study:

“The school context and the approach the teacher gives you bring a lot to your mind. If you fight, one teacher slaps you and the other one [...] says, ‘Sit down and you listen.’ The one who tells you to sit down brings a process of reconciliation, forgiveness and understanding but the one who slaps you -it feels like revenge... the next time you think of revenge.”

“They need to know their rights, and [...] human rights, .When we fight [...] for example Acholi and Karamoja [...] when we bring in reconciliation how do we react? [...] All partners participate [...] because we are building up togetherness...”

CNN, Norwegian Refugee Council

One of the participant head teachers stated that: “Bad things are an agent of transformation; destruction can be a catalyst for development.” Where civil war has erupted from conditions of structural violence, the development of an equitable society requires a transformational process. An effective school curriculum has a part to play in creating the conditions for durable peace. As dominant groups control access to knowledge and power, there are major obstacles to the curricular reform suggested by this thesis. Without an idea of the goal of such reform, however, it is all the more difficult to achieve it. Through its contribution to truth-seeking, reconciliation and inclusive citizenship, schooling can help heal old wounds and provide the foundations of a collective effort for a better future, while assisting in the global challenge of a decent quality of life for all humans.



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## ACRONYMS

<b>BCPR</b>	<b>Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery</b>
<b>CAR</b>	<b>Central African Republic</b>
<b>CSOPNU</b>	<b>Civil Society Organizations for Peace in Northern Uganda</b>
<b>DEO</b>	<b>District Education Officer</b>
<b>DRC</b>	<b>Democratic Republic of Congo</b>
<b>GEM</b>	<b>Girls' Education Movement</b>
<b>GNI</b>	<b>Gross National Income</b>
<b>ICC</b>	<b>International Criminal Court</b>
<b>ICRC</b>	<b>International Committee of the Red Cross</b>
<b>IDP</b>	<b>Internally Displaced Person</b>
<b>IMF</b>	<b>International Monetary Fund</b>
<b>INEE</b>	<b>Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies</b>
<b>LRA</b>	<b>Lord's Resistance Army</b>
<b>NGO</b>	<b>Non-governmental organization</b>
<b>NRA</b>	<b>National Resistance Army</b>
<b>NRM</b>	<b>National Resistance Movement</b>
<b>OCHA</b>	<b>Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</b>
<b>PBC</b>	<b>Peace-building Commission</b>
<b>PRDP</b>	<b>Peace, Recovery and Development Plan</b>
<b>PTC</b>	<b>Primary Teachers' Training College</b>
<b>REPLICA</b>	<b>Revitalization of Education in Post Conflict Areas</b>
<b>SPLA</b>	<b>Sudanese People's Liberation Army</b>
<b>TESSA</b>	<b>Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa</b>
<b>UCDP</b>	<b>Uppsala Conflict Data Programme</b>
<b>UCE</b>	<b>Uganda Certificate of Education</b>
<b>UN</b>	<b>United Nations</b>
<b>UNDHR</b>	<b>United Nations Declaration of Human Rights</b>
<b>UNDP</b>	<b>United Nations Development Programme</b>
<b>UNESCO</b>	<b>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</b>
<b>UNHCR</b>	<b>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</b>
<b>UNICEF</b>	<b>United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund</b>
<b>UNLA</b>	<b>Uganda National Liberation Army</b>
<b>UNSA</b>	<b>Uganda National Students' Association</b>
<b>UPDA</b>	<b>Uganda People's Democratic Army</b>
<b>UPDF</b>	<b>Uganda People's Defence Force</b>
<b>UPE</b>	<b>Universal Primary Education</b>
<b>USAID</b>	<b>United States Agency for International Development</b>