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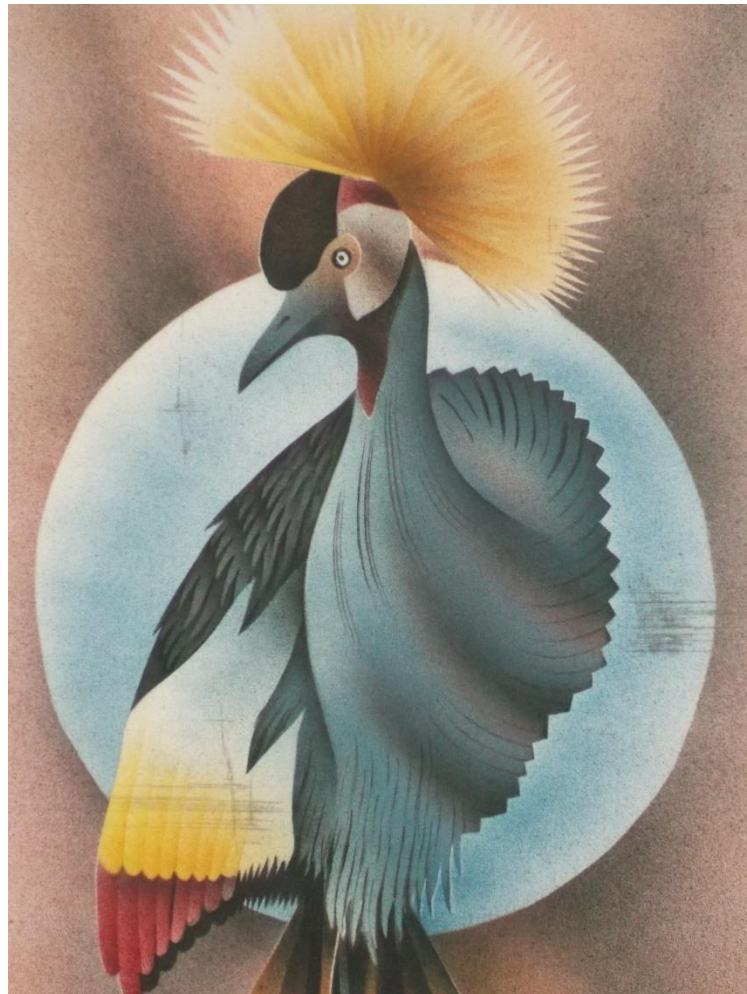
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Ugandan pupils as decision makers: Freedoms and constraints
(Volume 1)



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School: School of Education, University of Glasgow

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Preface

I first visited Uganda in 2009 for leisure purposes and during this visit came across a small community while en-route from Kampala to Queen Elizabeth National Park. In a short convenience break at Ntungamo I came across a small-scale education project and as a teacher, I was interested in finding out a little more. I met with the founder of the project, an ex-army chauffeur born in the village, who hoped that as there were not enough schools to support the number of children in the local community, he could establish a small school to begin to bridge the gap. Impressed by his commitment and desire to help the people of his community, I returned to the project the following year as a volunteer and have been supporting the community ever since.

On my first visit as a volunteer (2010) I was overwhelmed with the generally positive attitude of the people of the community despite the obvious daily challenges they experienced, brought about by poverty and the prevalence of fatal diseases such as HIV and Malaria. As an education practitioner, I was touched by the overall enthusiasm and desire for education demonstrated by the children in the village. I initially saw hope, willingness to achieve and a real lust for learning. If I am honest, these were things that I felt I had not seen for some time in my own local community in the UK.

As I spent longer in the community, the apparent rosy façade began to fade and as I visited more schools and spoke to more people, I began to realise that despite the impressive desire for education something appeared to be amiss with the system. I noticed initially: classrooms were dirty; the lack of windows; a smell prevailing from the pit latrines; pupils crammed around one desk, squabbling for space to write in their workbooks and struggling to see the blackboard that their teacher was writing upon. I observed teachers willing to give up their classroom to the white girl (me - who had little or no primary experience) as white people 'know better'. Other teachers I observed were nursing their own infants in class; sitting behind a pile of marking whilst the children spelled out words on a board; over and over again I witnessed anger and frustration meted out by playground fighting, corporal punishment by teachers and by a class monitor role which I was yet to understand. In the wider community, I observed other children, sitting on the streets during school

time looking dishevelled and lost and without particular purpose. I couldn't understand why this was, particularly with such a need and obvious desire to be educated and, what I had understood to be, a Government committed to Universal Primary Education (UPE). I couldn't believe that education presented such a harsh environment to vulnerable young minds and bodies. In my early research and as part of my MSc in International Development dissertation I tried to gain greater insight in to the education system from the perspective of the teacher to understand why things appeared to be going wrong. I sought to grasp the experience of the practitioner to develop my understanding of the situation and their insights revealed a reality that lacked communication and was dominated by top-down initiatives. This was compounded by several curricular reforms forced upon them by both the Ministry of Education and Sport (MoES) and international donors and for which they were insufficiently resourced to deliver. I discovered a rather dysfunctional relationship existed between donors, the MoES, School Management Councils (SMC) and practitioners.

At the time (2011), I was rather interested in empowerment and participation frameworks of development (hence my focus at teacher level in my earlier study) and had been reading that social movements can gather momentum if they are instigated at grass roots level. I was intrigued as to what social level of grass root such frameworks could extend to and as such became fascinated with the prospect of investigating what some may consider the lowest level of all - children (especially in Ugandan socio-cultural structures). I believed that children are part of an education system and as such should have rights within it and yet I found myself wondering to what extent this manifested in reality in these rural schools. During one of my many visits to community schools, I elected to ask a small group of the pupils (aged 10-11) informally, whilst we sat together during a break, what they thought of school...

The answer to this simple question, is perhaps one of the most significant factors which has led to this thesis. The first response I was given was that no one had ever asked them what they thought before. This was then followed by an animated relay of their thoughts, ideas and anecdotes which served to both amuse, inspire and endear me to them. After this brief conversation, I was left wondering whether other pupils had similar things to say. Was there a

possibility that they could share their ideas with teachers and to perhaps work in partnership with their teachers to make decisions about their education and so to begin a process of change? The small number of pupils I chatted to certainly appeared to demonstrate a degree of maturity and an ability to articulate their views and perspectives well. In parallel I had been reading about participatory and emancipatory models of education, Clive Harber and Paolo Freire for example, and I wondered to what extent it would be possible for these to take effect in Uganda. My curiosity was aroused and as such the initial bones of a research project proposal arose. Several years later, I arrived here.

Abstract

This thesis is a qualitative study which explored the extent to which pupils can participate in decisions relating to their education. The study was drawn from the experiences of pupils based within South West Uganda and examined existing cultural and structural frameworks which may have served to enhance or inhibit them from having a voice in education; which in turn affects their being able to make and articulate any decisions.

The primary research focussed on a combination of four primary schools run by the state and NGOs within Ruhanga district. The selection of this district was justified, not by highlighting its distinct characteristics, but by the fact that it represented what is typical of many of the rural, agrarian communities throughout Uganda. The research sample included six pupils from each school and from Primary 6 and Primary 7. This represented 10% of the cohort. Six teachers from the same year group were also selected to gain greater insight into the environment surrounding the pupils at their school. Further insight was gained through a meeting with the head teacher from each school. The research design incorporated three aspects of qualitative data: semi-structured interviews (groups for both teachers and pupils); two exercises based on Hart's Ladder of Participation and classroom observations. These took place as part of field visits to Uganda between 2011 and 2014. The primary data is contextualised against a content analysis of two key governmental policies. This served to provide a fitting comparison of rhetoric and reality.

As a result of conducting this study, the original contribution to research is twofold. The first contribution (an unintended consequence of the research) relates to the particular theoretical model which was used as part of the primary data collection - Hart's Ladder of Participation. This study established the limitations of the ladder in situ and as such proposes a re-imagining of the Ladder to encompass a more culturally relevant metaphor and indeed additional sub-categories to represent a developing nation which perhaps is transitioning towards participation.

The second outcome was rather more intended than the first. This thesis presents the voices of young pupils, within primary education, who have not previously been given agency to speak, or a platform to be heard. Despite almost 50% of the Ugandan population being 15 and under, young people are generally marginalised due to their age and relative social status and therefore become a silent majority. Against the backdrop of an ambitious national development policy, this study captured the unique perspective of twenty-four young pupils:

To investigate the extent to which Ugandan pupils participate as decision makers in education

These pupils demonstrated an ability to make decisions and an awareness of factors affecting their education and presented a rather dark and sinister picture of their school life. A life underpinned by fear and anxiety, a lack of basic rights, such as dignity and respect and a damaged relationship with their teachers. Yet despite this reality, they demonstrate much hope that education will help them out of poverty and towards a more prosperous future.

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Appendix 1: Sample Evidence from Field Study

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Authors Declaration:

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature

Sarah Jayne Digby

Printed Name:

Sarah Jayne Digby

Definitions and Abbreviations

AU	African Union
BERA	British Educational Research Association
BRMS	Basic Required Minimum Standards
BTL	Breakthrough to Literacy
BTVET	Business, Technical and Vocational Education and Training
CAPE	Creative Arts and Physical Education
CNDPF	Comprehensive National Development Plan Framework
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DTC	Department Training Colleges
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESA	Education Standards Agency
ESIP	Education Sector Improvement Plan
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
FFS	Farmer Field Schools
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	Girls' Education Movement
GOU	Government of Uganda
GUSM	Growing up and Sexual Maturation
IIASA	International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation's
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MDG	Millennium Development Goal/s
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sport
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
NAPE	National Assessment of Progress in Education
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
NEB	National Examinations Board
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development

NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Government Organisation/s
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PAF	Peoples Action Forum
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PLE	Primary Leaver's Examinations
PTA	Parent-Teacher Associations
PTC	Primary Teacher College
PTDMP	Primary Teacher Development and Management Plan
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SFG	School Facilities Grant
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMC	School Management Committee/s
TDMS	Teacher Development Management System
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UGX	Ugandan Shilling
UN	United Nations
UNCHR	United Nations Convention on Human Rights
UNCRC	United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child
UNDP	United Nations Development Project
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United National Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USE	Universal Secondary Education
UPE	Universal Primary Education
WCEFA	World Conference on Education For All

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis is formed of a qualitative study exploring the extent to which there are freedoms and constraints to primary pupils' participation in decisions in education. The study draws on the experiences of pupils and their teachers located in Ruhanga, South West Uganda and critically analyses the political, cultural and structural frameworks which may serve to enhance or inhibit pupils' opportunities to make decisions in education.

The study is based on the premise that pupils are integral to the education system and therefore emerge as key stakeholders. Pupils hold opinion in matters relating to their education and their voices should be heard by other stakeholders (teachers, parents for example) when decisions are made about their education. Greater participation of pupils in decision making may enhance the quality of a pupil's schooling experience and educational outcomes. This may, albeit indirectly, correlate with the emergence of a more agile, less passive citizen contributing to the economy: a vital part of Uganda's national growth strategy.

1.1 Research Background - Uganda 'The Pearl of Africa'

Uganda lies between the Eastern and Western branches of the Great Rift Valley, occupying an area similar to the size of Great Britain. An ex-British Protectorate, Uganda gained independence in 1962 and has since witnessed several dramatic political changes, which have damaged the country's economic and social structures. These include: the expulsion of Asians and serious economic mis-management during the 1970's under the notorious rule of Idi Amin Dada; civil unrest; persistent border conflicts in the North and more recently the prevalence of HIV/AIDS which has ravaged the country (Briggs, 2010).

Uganda is a developing nation. Development, for the purposes of this study is defined by the human development approach. This approach is anchored in the work of Amartya Sen (1999) on human capacities and capabilities and adopted by the UNDP. Development is not just defined in economic terms, but also by

'expanding the richness of human life' (Selim, 2002 and Stewart, 2013). Key underpinning principles of the human development approach are people, opportunities and choice. Countries are ranked according to dimensions of human development, including: life expectancy, mean years schooling and standard of living (Selim, 2002). Development is therefore about improving these key statistics and outcomes. The United Nations previously ranked Uganda as 148th in the world on the Human Development Index (HDI) in 2010, (UNDP, 2011) and this dropped to 163rd in 2016 (UNDP, 2016). Uganda faces many sustained challenges and with a current population of over 39 million (of which approximately 1.8 million reside in the country's capital, Kampala) and a mean age of 15, life expectancy remains short at 59 years. The country is considered to have 70% of the population in multidimensional poverty, of which 38% are working poor, earning less than \$1.25 per day (UNDP, 2016).

Despite notable social and economic challenges, Uganda has demonstrated a clear commitment to investing in national development. The sustained efforts of Uganda can be attributed to the stable macroeconomic environment that has prevailed since 1992 which made it easier to forecast government revenues and to plan future government initiatives. Other African Governments at the time had not achieved this (Stasavage, 2003). Adam and Gunning, in 2004, referred to Uganda as a 'donor darling', due to the fact it was perceived as one of Africa's success stories in terms of reform (particularly in education and health), economic growth and its commitment to poverty eradication. However, more recently this has changed amidst accusations of government corruption and controversial political rulings against homosexuals¹. The consequences of the withdrawal of aid led to the government increasing its borrowing from the planned Ush1 trillion (\$397.6 million) 2014/15, to plug the gap left by withdrawal of aid. This is most likely to severely impact on health and education spending.

¹ According to Among (2014) of the East African, donor funding to Uganda dropped to 15% of national income, (\$300 million) in 2012 amidst allegations of corruption in the Prime Minister's Office and further aid was cut from Northern Europe and World Bank amounting to \$110 million due to rulings on homosexuality.

1.2 Education and Uganda

Kenyan Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai sets an aspirational tone for education's potential:

'I believe passionately that African Governments and individuals must demonstrate the value of and love for Africa's children, by making effort to provide young people with education, opportunities and encouragement so they can develop skills' Maathai (2009, p277)

Education is a critical element of Ugandan national policy and the Government has demonstrated notable commitment to education provision and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2, since the inception of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997. Alongside donor supporters, the Ugandan Government made several pledges to improve education provision and widen participation across the country. However, Government expenditure on primary education according to Uganda's Education Management Information System (EMIS) dropped from 2.23% of GDP in 2002, to 1.02% in 2016. This is comparably low to neighbours, Kenya (6.6%), Tanzania (6.2%), Rwanda (4.7%), and Ethiopia (4.6%) (UNDP, 2016). However, due to withdrawal of some donor support, Uganda's primary education budget may be reduced further leaving parents and donors to foot the bill. This may have implications for the country's ability to sustain UPE (Among, 2014).

Despite its policy commitment to UPE, Uganda, like many other countries experienced several challenges with its introduction and continued administration and management. These included: grade repetition; teacher absence; high enrolment and poor achievement (particularly girls); and a general lack of basic amenities and equipment, such as books, desks and blackboards (Glewwe and Kremer 2005). According to The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) in 2010, whilst access to education had improved, progress had stagnated. Statistics demonstrated that enrolment in primary education had tripled since the introduction of UPE, from 2.7 million in 1996 to 8.6 million in 2016 (EMIS, 2016) but the proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reached the last grade of primary school was low, falling from 61%

in 2002, to 32% in 2016 (ibid, 2016). However, despite numerous cycles of reform in the past decade, it appeared many of these challenges persisted regarding primary education provision and that Uganda as predicted did fall short of meeting MDG 2 by 2015 (USAID, 2008; Kulabako, 2013; UNDP, 2014). The enrolments in government schools remained stable between 2002 and 2016, with the average number enrolling just short of 7 million annually. However, the enrolment in private schools has increased considerably from 768,842 in 2002, to 1,544,244 in 2016 (EMIS, 2016). Continuing education into secondary and tertiary is significantly lower at 28% and 9% respectively (UNDP, 2016). Current statistics provided by UNDP reflect that primary drop-out remains at 75% and the average years completed in education is 5, of the 10 considered as compulsory education.

Underpinning many of the challenges facing educationalists in Uganda, is the very nature of policy implementation and decision making. In, 2011, my own research concluded that the donor dependent relationship between Ugandan Ministries and the donor communities meant that the Government of Uganda (GoU) agreed to shape policy direction and priority not only to meet national objectives, but also to integrate international targets led by the donor agencies, such as the MDGs. This dependent relationship meant that Uganda was (and still is) influenced heavily by donor intervention in their policy formation and this shapes how to spend funding. This relationship had recently been tested to the detriment of Uganda, as donors withdraw aid because of policies outlawing homosexuality, demonstrating the strength of donor agencies.

Evidence in my previous research (Digby, 2011) suggested a widening gap between reformers, GoU and schools which formed a deeply dysfunctional relationship. This prevailing situation left pupils '*locked in a position of disadvantage*' (Nakar, 2009, p2), where schools were considered outdated, perhaps appropriate for a different time (Harris, 2010a, 2010b) and effective only as preparing pupils to be passive citizens (Naker 2009). All too often time and resources were spent at the policy formation stage and lacked wider consultation and consideration of the practicalities of implementation at grass roots level.

What emerges from general literature is the appearance of acceptance by both Ugandan Ministers and development communities that barriers exist in education, but there remains little understanding of why. What is further apparent is the top-down nature of policy development and implementation within the country. This is typical of what Easterly (2006) refers to as ‘*Planners’* interventions, wherein the focus is on the big picture without the necessary understanding of the impact at grass-roots. ‘*Planners at the top, lack knowledge of the bottom*’ (Easterly, 2006, p5). His criticism of the aid process reflects what appears to be happening within Uganda in relation to education and wider public policy.

*‘..The planners have the rhetorical advantage of promising great things. The only things the planners have against them are that they gave us the second tragedy of the world’s poor. Poor people die not only because of the world’s indifference to their poverty, but also because of ineffective efforts by those who do care. To escape the cycle of tragedy we have to be tough on the ideas of the Planners, whilst we salute their goodwill’
Easterly (2006, p7).*

Easterly and other contemporary writers highlight significant challenges to Uganda and one which underpins the core of this thesis - that of the lack of developing, or (perhaps) the will to develop, an understanding at grass-roots level. This issue is not just present in Uganda, but more broadly and indeed in developed countries too. Significant insight could be gained by analysing education from a grass-roots perspective, which may enable greater understanding of what is happening within the system. Academics Cheney (2007, 2011) and Danby (2002) for example would support taking this perspective. There are national objectives which relate to the provision of education and this has been a priority for over a decade, but there is growing evidence to support a paradigm shift in the quality of this provision, perhaps through greater emphasis on participation *in* education.

In a bid to enhance the quality of education, the Ministry of Education and Sport (MoES), in 2010 committed to enhancing school inspection procedures and increasing community participation through greater involvement of parents

regarding education decisions. Also, strategies were implemented to bring teachers and parents closer together, including stronger SMCs (School Management Committee) and PTAs (Parent Teacher Association). Whilst it appears positive to see participation at this level, there seems to be an absence of representation from another key stakeholder group- the pupils themselves.

This thesis aims to gain insight into grass-roots perspectives from perhaps one of the most marginalised stakeholders in the education system - the pupil. It is acknowledged that this may be challenging. In a system where the voice of teachers is rarely heard, finding a space for the voice of pupil, let alone enabling a pupil to contribute to decisions seems rather ambitious. But by not having courage to make enquiry, one will simply never know what, if any, possibilities exist. It could be argued that pupil voice is not entirely represented in education within the developed world, but this does not mean that the concept could not or should not be explored elsewhere. This thesis will argue that in Uganda, children may well mature more quickly, given their exposure to the harsh realities of life and therefore may possess the capacity to make decisions more readily compared to children in the UK.

To explore the feasibility of empowering children to make decisions, a thorough literature review was undertaken to understand the corpus of research which had gone before. The literature review presents a critical analysis of key themes to identify contemporary discourse relating to the human rights paradigm, empowerment and the notion of children as decision makers in education, in both an international context and within Uganda. These topics form the contextual basis of the study and provide a foundation on which to enhance the analysis of empirical data. The overall purpose of the study is to gain greater insight into the freedoms and constraints to empowering pupils as decision makers in Uganda.

The primary research was in the Ruhanga District of SW Uganda. The selection of this district was justified, not by highlighting its distinct characteristics, but by the fact that it represents what is typical of many of the rural, agrarian, communities throughout Uganda. The district has a population of 501,900 (according to the 2014 census, Ugandan Bureau of Statistics) of which 29% are

considered to be living in abject poverty. Employment is mainly agrarian subsistence farmers and local tradesmen (such as brick makers) offering their services within the local vicinity. Within the district and at the time of writing 110,018 pupils were in primary education, split almost 50/50 male and female. However, only 17,915 were in secondary education, with the proportion of males slightly higher at 9,038, compared to females at 8,882. This study captures the insights from a small sample of four schools within Ntungamo village of the District, three run by the State and one by a Non-Government Organisation (NGO). The justification of this location is provided in the methodology chapter of this thesis.

The study is organised over a period commencing in 2011 and table 1 highlights the organisation of key tasks across the intended timeline of the study. My intention for the study is to capture the voices of those who have previously been denied the opportunity to participate and this was achieved through shared insights from twenty-four pupils and their teachers. Through interviews and observation, I gain their understanding of the education system which surrounds them and the freedoms and constraints which exist surrounding making decisions in education. Their experiences are placed within the rhetoric of government policy, as part of a document analysis, which provides substantive context for the study.

1.3 Hart's Ladder

The study applies Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation (1992) to ascertain levels of participation perceived by the pupils and teachers and to demonstrate decision making capability. What emerged through using this framework was that something very different prevailed within the education system and that there were potential rungs below tokenism which could be incorporated into the ladder. Furthermore, use of the ladder led to questioning the ladder metaphor and its cross-cultural relevance. What has emerged is a reimagining of the ladder to represent the reality within a developing nation context and a more culturally relevant metaphor. This was not the original intention of the thesis, but something of significance which evolved during the field work and something which occurred rather organically.

As such, the thesis made use of the field work to not only address the original research aim and questions, but also to use the experience of the fieldwork to propose modifications to Hart's ladder, using the evidence from the research as justification.

1.4 Research Rationale

Uganda has a developing education system which had previously mirrored that of its colonial predecessor, the UK; however, the present system is under review. This presents an ideal timeframe to consider many different aspects of education provision and to perhaps form a greater understanding at grass-root perspective. Given the present top-down approach to policy development, Ugandan ministers may wish to consider the words of UNESCO in the 2013/14 EFA Global Monitoring Report, which states that '*policies can only be effective if those responsible for implementing them are involved in shaping them*' (p23) - could this extend to children, who are engaged post implementation?

As stated earlier, in a bid to enhance quality the MoES in 2010 committed to increasing community participation through greater involvement of parents regarding education decisions. However, it appears the recipients of education have little opportunity to be involved. This thesis adds to current discourse and the growing body of literature surrounding the field of pupils as decision makers. It explores the perspective of pupils within a country which has not previously entertained this notion above what could be considered tokenism. The thesis argues that children have a right to education and a right to voice (Unicef, 2001) - a fundamental tool for participation (Naker, 2009), yet are often not considered to have the ability (or power) to make decisions, therefore adults often advocate on their behalf (Rozga, 2001; Lundy, 2007; Kellett, 2010). Evidence suggests that children not only possess the cognitive ability to navigate their social worlds (Danby, 2002; Danby and Farrell 2004; Danby et al., 2007 and Danby et al., 2012), but in the vein of democratic education (Harber, 2004, 2011) should have the opportunity to advocate on their own behalf in relation to decisions about them (Lansdown, 2006; Percy-Smith and Thomas, 2010; Schweisfurth, 2011). UNESCO (2015) argues that by empowering children

through communication and advocacy their vulnerability to environmental risk is reduced and is something that both teachers and parents would surely strive to achieve as a duty towards the children they protect.

It has been argued, according to De Waal and Argenti (2002), Cheney (2007) and Achilihu (2010) that children in Africa, perhaps because of their life experiences have more of an understanding of the adult world than western children. Through Western eyes 'children' in Uganda are often seen dealing with the many responsibilities of adulthood (being parents, working, caring for siblings, disease, poverty and others). Supporting this stance, Penn (2007) argues that due to pressures for children to take responsibility early, the conventional development stages of a child simply do not apply in Africa - children bypass stages of development, or indeed other stages are significantly accelerated, meaning the conventional child does not exist as in the West. This raises the question of the UN definition of 'child' and of how countries and cultures conceptualise childhood. Meinert (2009) posed that age (an often-cited metric in defining 'child') in Uganda is considered relative and irrelevant, particularly when many children and their parents do not know birth dates or year. Therefore [in Uganda] the definition of children is based on generation, situation and relative competence, rather than age (ibid, 2009). It could be argued that children in Uganda should be considered as '*little adults*'- building a case for greater capacity to make decisions.

Yet despite such promising evidence, one must consider the cultural complexity and discourse surrounding the nature of childhood in context. Many, including Achillu (2010), de Wall and Argenti (2002) and Cheney (2007) argue that despite this early (perceived) maturation, the role of 'child' in Uganda is very much shaped by the patriarchal nature of the African family [and state] which enforces their relatively low social status, leaving it for perhaps adults to decide when the child has matured in their social setting (Meinert, 2009). Cheney (2011) observes that in Uganda,

'institutions both local and global fail to create meaningful structural changes to improve the lives of children, or even avenues of participation

for them, due to a protectionist - rather than empowering - interpretation of children's rights' (p167).

Perhaps due to the low social status of children in general as posed by Meinert, above, participation is not feasible. Harber (2004, 2011) observed that despite overwhelming evidence of the benefits of pupil involvement in decision-making, genuine participation is rare. Yamashita et al (2011) would support this argument, asserting that participation needs to extend beyond the tokenistic, with the remedy not just being about a school council (Mager and Nowak, 2012, Thomas, 2012), which provides a chosen minority with voice and power (Checkoway, 2010), but is related to a change in culture (also Chiwela, 2011) and power infused social constructs (Aikmen, 2011).

However, underpinning the social discourse relating to children as decision makers (which will be elaborated upon later in the literature review), is the reality that 48.7% of the population in Uganda (Ejuu, 2012) are 15 and under. This represents a significant stakeholder group within the country. Indeed, work by UNDP in 2012 in Somalia highlighted a similar demographic, in that Somalia's 'young' people aged 14 to 29, made up 42% of the total population and this resulted in calls, by UNDP, in 2012 for radical shifts in policies and attitudes to empower young people, who were quickly becoming recognised as core to national development programmes. Perhaps similar 'calls' would resonate in Uganda, where it could be argued a similar need exists for early intervention to develop future democratic citizens?

Growing evidence supports the hypotheses of a correlation between pupil engagement in decisions, quality of education (a Ugandan priority (Tikly, 2011 and Levin and Lockheed, 2012)) and enhancement of individuals capability to become more confident, agile citizens - integral to the social and economic development of Uganda (Sandler, 1999; Naker, 2009; GoU, 2015). UNESCO (2015) describes '*education as a catalyst*' (p13) for the achievement of other objectives and further claims that '*education helps people understand democracy and motivates participation in politics*' (p16). Therefore, there appears basis to inform the review of the Ugandan education system should include consideration of greater development of life skills and competencies.

This could start at primary school, where these critical life skills can begin to develop, perhaps starting with growing a voice, progressing towards building capabilities to make decisions with agility and confidence.

In summary, there appears rationale for the study at a time of policy reformation. The research is very much exploratory, taking what some may perceived as a 'ideological' concept to a developing education system and testing its potential and feasibility. The significance of what emerges because of this essential exploratory element may have potential wider implications for citizenship and democracy. Kristen Cheney on her ethnographic studies (2001 - 2011) of children in Uganda, muses that she is often asked, '*What would real participation look like [in Uganda]?*' She observes that this is indeed the question and notes that few scholars and practitioners have tried to answer it (p167). These early writings therefore intend to contribute to developing greater understanding of our knowledge of pupil participation in an academic and practical context and add to the growing corpus of research on these themes.

The research followed the timeline below:

Table 1: Research Timeline

Action	Dates
Commenced PhD	October 2011 (University of Birmingham). Transferred to University of Glasgow (2013)
Evaluate and synthesise Literature, Methodology and Ethical Clearance	October 2011 - March 2013 (ethics approved 27/11/12 UoB and 24/9/13 UoG)
Pilot Study (UK) and Field Research Activities	July 2013 (Pilot UK) June 2014 (Pilot Uganda 1 school) July 2014 (Uganda, 3 schools) September 2014 (Follow-up at regular intervals)
Virtual touch points (email/phone)	6 monthly until December 2016
Writing Up	September 2014 - May 2018
Draft Submission	December 2016
Re-write / re-draft submission	January 2018
Submission	June 2018
Follow-up dissemination of results to participants	December 2018 (Uganda)

Chapter 2 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW INTRODUCTION

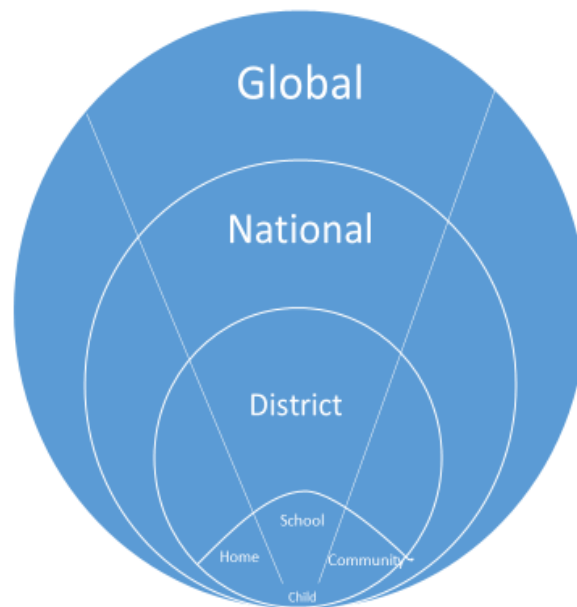
2.1 Research Framework

The formation of the framework is based upon gaining an understanding of the placement of the child in society and the influences that dictate this placement. Therefore the study poses the child at the heart of what is a complex and multidimensional setting (see fig 1) in relation to their education and makes the argument that despite all stakeholders agreeing on the value of education to the child and to the nation's development, the child appears less significant compared to other stakeholders in education.

The conceptual framework of the study presents the child as a small element surrounded by increasingly larger influencers. The child is immediately surrounded by three local social settings: schools, community and home. It is within these settings that key dependent and interrelated relationships are built between parents, teachers and peers. It is also at this micro level, that independent variables shape local values and beliefs (adopted as local practices) which determine the placement of the child. Whilst the key focus of the study relates to the education setting, these independent relationships must be acknowledged and explored to understand fully the social setting surrounding the child. Based on gaining an understanding of what influences the social setting of the child, wider and increasingly influential structures on a national and global basis must be acknowledged. It is critical to the study to understand the interrelationships between each level of the social structure. By researching factors which influence and underpin these relationships the study can explore whether there may be an opportunity for a paradigm shift towards affording children greater opportunity to make decisions.

Figure 1 highlights the complex and multidimensional setting constructs surrounding the child and in relation to their education

Fig 1: Circles of influence identifying the multidimensional social structure surrounding the child

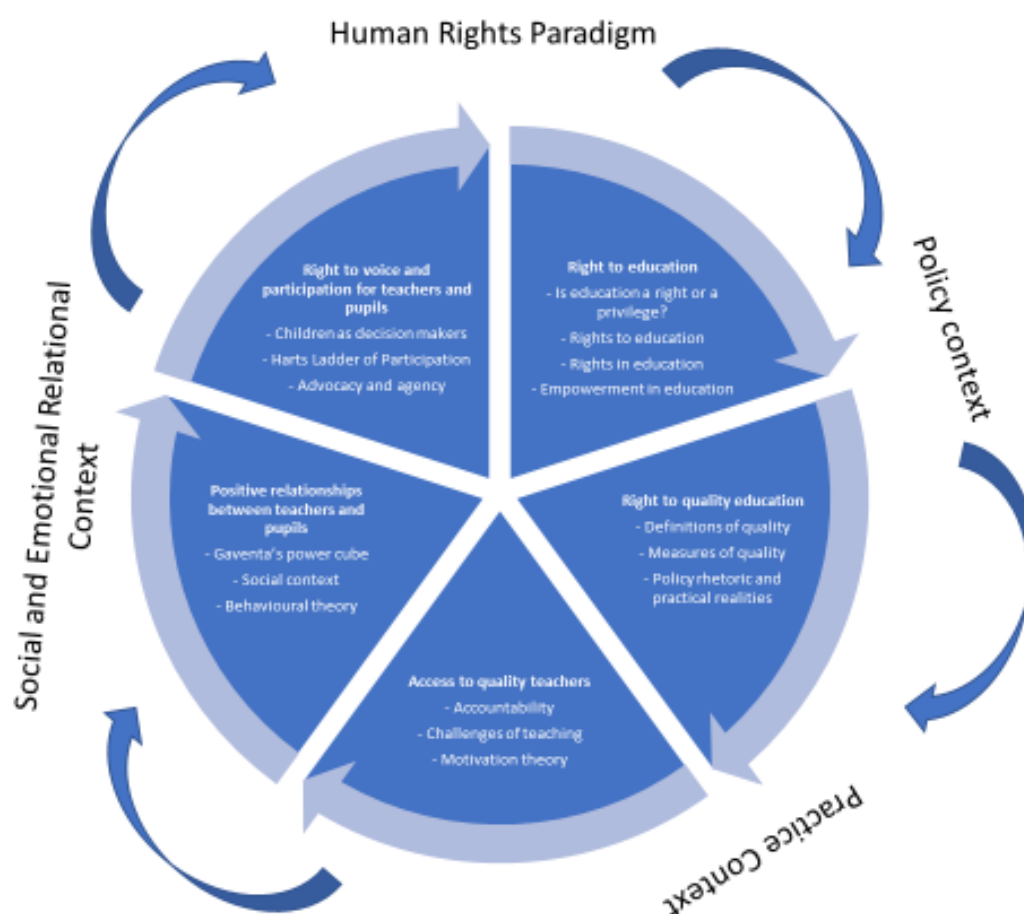


The circles of influence which form the social structures surrounding the child are dictated by many important factors. These circles of influence are shaped by the general social and cultural norms which exist within Uganda. However, a significant factor not implicit in fig 1 is power. The amount of power located in each circle increases at each level of the social setting, with the child possessing the least amount. Understanding of power is essential to the study and ascertaining how power can be re-distributed to empower those who are less powerful is a fundamental concept. A further significant factor is policy and as already acknowledged, this is often initiated top-down. The power to create policy generally also increases as the circles of influence increase. Power and policy serve to influence the nature of the relationships identified and the practices which are adopted thereafter. They can be linked to the underpinning concept of human rights as a powerful agenda item that is shaped predominantly by global influencers and adopted at varying degrees in each circle. While individual and collective rights can be dictated by power and policy more generally, this will be argued in this study with a specific focus on education.

We can align the right to education to the circles of influence above as I examine education policy and powerful influences which shape the global education agenda.

Fig 2: Study Framework

Fig 2 provides an outline of the framework of this study, which has been developed alongside the circles of influence, to illustrate the main structural components of this study.



The interrelated concepts introduced with the literature review and which serve as a conceptual framework are based on several suppositions. The theoretical framework embraces the human rights paradigm, specifically the right to education and draws explicitly from the works of Amartya Sen and Paolo Freire. Firstly, that education is a right, a concept which is critically interrogated

throughout the literature review. Secondly that quality of such education is equally as fundamental. Thirdly that critical to quality education are teachers, who shape the learning environment and share their knowledge. Fourthly that for pupils to make best of education the relationship between them and their teachers is vital. Fifthly that to build a fruitful relationship between teachers and pupils there should be mutual respect and honesty. Finally, to create an environment of respect and honesty children should be afforded the opportunity to have voice and participate in decisions that relate to them.

2.2 Literature Review Introduction

Based on the conceptual framework, the literature review enabled me to acknowledge the contributions of others to the field, to engage with literature critically, to further my understanding of the topics and to tease out the practical problems which emerge in relation to attempting to address pupils as decision makers.

The literature review chapter systematically analyses the complex multi-dimensional topics which interrelate to form a base for my research. Within the chapter the sub-sections analyse these broad dimensions and are presented following structure:

- Human Rights Paradigm - I present a contemporary evaluation of the discourse surrounding the universal nature of human rights, human rights in Africa and Uganda and I summarise the challenges of the adoption of the rights of the child as they emerged within the framework of the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- Education - A right or a Privilege? - I build upon the general rights-based framework in relation to the rights of the child and focus more specifically on rights *to* and *in* education. This is explored alongside international frameworks of Universal Primary Education (UPE), Education for All (EFA), Millennium Development Goals (MDG) agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

- Empowerment - this section analyses the present discourse surrounding empowerment and participation and highlights some of the key critiques of this popular development framework. This chapter is general in nature in relation to empowerment and did not particularly link to Uganda or to education at this stage. However, I felt that current discourse was important to capture as this provides a clear foundation for the study.
- Empowerment and Education - this section naturally develops from the previous section to present an analysis of contemporary literature specific to education. This important section explores other empirical studies relating to the child as a decision maker in education and provides critical insight into the present world views of the role of the child in education.

The literature review chapter concludes by synthesising the various themes emerging from the sub sections (section 2.7). I believe the conclusion provides a clear context for the study and demonstrates the breadth of reading that I undertook to create an informed perspective from which to write this thesis.

2.3 The Human Rights Paradigm

This sub-section reviews discourse surrounding the embodiment of human rights. This is an integral foundation as it sets the framework for exploring the right to education (section 2.4) and empowering children as decision makers (2.6) key components to this research study.

This chapter first explores the context of fundamental human rights in general, then more specifically, the rights of the child. The chapter presents contemporary arguments in relation to rights-based policies and provides a platform from which to introduce the topic of empowerment, explored in section 2.5.

2.3.1 The Evolution of Human Rights

A human right can be considered a person's legal and fundamental right as a human being and is one of the most globalised political values of our time (Wilson, 1997). It encompasses both civil rights and those which are political. Civil rights refer to the right to own property; make and enforce contracts; receive due process of law; worship one's religion; freedom of speech and press. Whilst political rights are the right to hold public office, vote or testify in a court (reserved to adult males in 1948) (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 2010a). The concept spans centuries, indeed the earliest records include notions of '*rights of man*' (natural rights) and are mentioned in the Magna Carta (1215) (Brown, 1999) and the statute of Kalisz (1264) which afforded protection to Jewish minority groups in Poland, from discrimination and hate speech (Lewin, 1985). Civil rights later evolved through the work of John Locke (1691), who believed all [men] are created equal and American and French revolutionaries, asserting liberty and securing '*natural, inalienable and sacred*' rights within their constitutions (Paine, 1996). However, the evolution of an international framework of Human Rights only emerged post Second World War, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was developed in 1948 (Freeman, 2002).

The Declaration was stated as representing:

'..The universal recognition that basic rights and fundamental freedoms are inherent to all human beings, inalienable and equally applicable to everyone, and that every one of us is born free and equal in dignity and rights. Whatever our nationality, place of residence, gender, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status, the international community on December 10, 1948 made a commitment to upholding dignity and justice for all of us' UN (www.un.org, 2013)

Following the UDHR in 1976 the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights were passed. These Covenants developed most of the rights already enshrined

in the UDHR making them effectively binding on States that have ratified them. They set forth everyday rights such as: the rights to life; equality before the law; freedom of expression and the rights to work and social security and education. These key documents, together with the UDHR, are afforded the unofficial title of 'The International Bill of Human Rights', (ibid, 2013). Depending on a country's stage of development, human rights could be in their third generation. O'Sullivan (1998) citing Karel Vasak (a French Jurist), describes these phases as *liberte* - civil and political rights; *egalite* - focussing on economic, social and cultural rights (positive rights); *fraternite*, or solidarity - a response to current domination of market place values under globalisation.

The practice of human rights is fundamental for the basis of a democratic society (Sen, 1999). It affords individuals dignity, equality and freedoms to live in a peaceful world, regardless of faith or gender. It is a worldwide commitment to respect its citizens and I believe it forms the core of humanity. The concept of governments establishing a basic contract of treatment towards its citizens is extremely powerful. Societies who do not ascribe to this essentially place their citizens on the periphery of general society, making them vulnerable and isolated.

Human Rights are globally recognised as the basic entitlement of every individual and the basis for a democratic society. However, they are often not universally understood. They set a contract between a government and its people throughout the world and should be admired as a demonstration of world commitment to its inhabitants. Yet as a concept and as a working body of legislation they are subject to much criticism, as will be discussed in the next section.

2.3.2 Discourse in Human Rights

The human rights movement is one that has attracted much debate since its inception. There are a number of critics who believe that the very notion of a human rights paradigm lacked epistemological foundations and is therefore 'nonsense upon stilts' (Waldron, 1987). Uvin (2002) described the emergence of human rights as a:

'quest for moral high ground: draping oneself in the mantle of human rights to cover the fat belly of the development community while avoiding challenging the status quo too much, cross examining oneself, or questioning the international system' (p10)

Rapport and Overing (2007) harshly criticised the UDHR, in their reflections of contemporary arguments over the years, claiming it was:

'a post enlightenment, liberal-humanist and idealist political philosophy, a continuation of Kantian attempts to establish Archimedean point which provides rationale for universal norms of justice, part of the rise of capitalism, its application is western interference in moral issues internal to other cultures,' (p183)

Falk (1980) and Uvin (2002) argued that bodies such as the United Nations (UN) are more than interfering and would posit that the human rights movement is an example of *'Power at work'*. They define Western human rights as a 'statist' logical typology born of 'hegemonic' logic, that 'virtue' is a manifestation of power - *'might is right'*. They pose that it is the right of the more powerful to interfere in the affairs of the less powerful to maintain their interests and their (more virtuous) version of right, within a nation state (Falk, 1980).

It could be argued that Human Rights takes an absolutist approach, creating the 'universal human', a *'one size fits all'* notion (Robertson et al., 2007), promising equity in an unequal world, which is simply impractical. The UNDP (2016) consistently believes that *'Universalism is key to human development, and human development for everyone is attainable'* (p51). Philosophers such as Karl Marx (1848) and Karl Polanyi (1944) argue that society is constructed largely because of historic struggles between social groups and classes. The works of Durkheim (1893) and then later Mauss (1954) and Dumont (1972) reinforced the importance of collective solidarity. They hypothesised that humans had a dual existence, as a biological being and a moral and mentally complicit social being. The human being is influenced and shaped by societal forces into recognising the

inherent dignity, equality and the unalienable rights of all individuals (Rapport and Overing, 2007). Dumont (1972) poses

‘the ideal of liberty and equality follows immediately from the conception of man as an individual. In effect, if the whole of humanity is deemed present in each man, then each man should be free and all men are equal’.
(p46)

Durkheim (1897) developed the notion of holism, noting the importance of contextualising the individual within the general, the collective, the impersonal, noting “*greater than the sum of their constituent parts*”. This ‘*social solidarity*’ is important (Thomas, 2000) and based on the arguments that are presented, I can identify with a unified means which encapsulates global solidarity. Therefore, a universal approach such as the UN declaration is justified, as a representation of social solidarity.

An example of contemporary evidence in support of universal human rights, is provided by Eichstaedt in his 2009 publication, ‘*First Kill Your Family*’, which explored child soldiers in Uganda. He conducted an interview with a human rights prosecutor in the country who claimed that the Ugandan Constitution had not defined torture within the constitution and argued that, if it couldn’t be defined it didn’t exist. Eichstaedt specifically referred to the international human rights declaration in this instance, which did provide for the necessary definitions and therefore strengthened the prosecutor’s case. This example highlights how an overarching framework can support an individual country’s constitution. However, Freeman (2000) would argue that clarity is a problem in The Convention, wherein there are a litany of rights stated, but very little clarification on the entitlements supporting the application of these rights. Indeed, of the right to ‘*the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health*’ (Article 24 (1)) Freeman questions how ‘*highest attainable*’ could be qualified. There is a need for protocols and additional conventions to quantify the meanings to ensure rights can effectively be provided for.

In an interesting parallel Melkote and Steeves (2001) place religion as the universal and transcendent doctrine to shape universal human dignity, human rights and freedoms. As there is no one religion, and at present religion is potentially a source of greater disharmony and inequity, perhaps human rights interventions such as The Convention achieve a similar outcome without the religious overtones. Whilst the Convention embraces religious rights, it does not support any religion and instead, gives the individual the freedom to practice whatever beliefs they choose.

Some may argue that Human Rights is insensitive to local indigenous cultures paving the way for globalisation of culture. This so called '*Westernisation*' of cultures is observed by many who argue that global frameworks are becoming key influences and interfering with local practices and customs. Sen (1999) warns against oversimplified generalisations and asserts the need for recognition of diversity and understanding of the '*true nature of local values*' (p247). According to Geertz (1973) because of the overlapping of local, national and supra-national, traditional culture is being eradicated. Wilson (1997) supports this distinction noting that Human Rights comes to be seen as a social struggle caught between local and trans-local webs of power.

A lack of sensitivity to local culture is considered a significant barrier to the adoption and success of Human Rights Bills and indeed of the UDHR. Rapport and Overing (2007), note a

'... particular normative blindness towards indigenous people and their collectivist narratives of land ownership, political determination, selfhood and so on.' (p183)

Many others would argue against universalism, among these similar thinkers such as Alan Macfarlane (1978) and Fredrik Barth (1959) believed that individuals' attitudes, assumptions and mental life should not lose out to macro-social (statistical, material, collectivist) '*facts*' (Macfarlane, 1970). Therefore, the notion of cultural relativism is often suggested as a more realistic/sympathetic approach. Supporters such as Paul Feyerabend (1975 and 1978), would argue against a holistic globalised human rights structure on the basis that there can

be no universal human community since human nature only exists as a product of history and culture. The question therefore emerges, should traditional and local culture override international essentialist rights? (James, 1994). The argument that an overarching framework of Human Rights should be adapted to fit local indigenous cultures, is summarised by Gellner (1997) who asserts that rights are cultural and therefore cannot exist beyond a distinct cultural realm.

Despite the discourse surrounding the notion of human rights summarised above, there is worldwide ratification to the Human Rights Declaration suggesting there is clearly perceived merit in signing up to a global framework on basic human rights and using this as a foundation for social structures. UNDP (2016) calls for measures to overcome the barriers to universalism, which is

‘The centrepiece of human development and the cornerstone of the world we want’ (p77)

I have some concern that the UNDP do not specify what comprises the *‘world we want’* and if indeed they should decide upon this. However, I do share some of the sentiment behind it in relation to a universal movement to further the rights, capabilities and capacities of humans around the world.

Rapport and Overing (2007) temper earlier criticisms to deduce that a legalistic language and universal templates are an advantage for the persuading and pressurising of nation states. However, the challenge lies within the method in which these rights are not only enforced but adopted into national and local communities. This is where it is vital that a less universal and more relative approach is adopted to reduce the growth of Westernised and global cultural domination. Slim (2002) refers to having

‘the courage to build local, national and global movements that argue for specific duties to be met by governments, corporations and individuals that will enable all people to enjoy their rights’ (p5)

According to Fuchs (2007) these networks should form an alliance comprising the public sector (state and international organizations), civil society, and private industry, resulting in a public-private partnership referred to as '*networked governance*' (Reinecke *et al.*, 2000; Witte *et al.*, 2004) or '*global governance*' (Rosenau, 2005). The notion of global civil society therefore reflects cross-boundary networks and relations of private actors and their interests; it symbolises a space of social self-organisation within the triad of state, market, and the private sphere (Niemeyer, 1941; Kocka, 2000). It does however, lend itself to a dominance from those who perhaps have stronger markets, *might is right* (as Falk and Uvin mentioned warned earlier).

Therefore, despite being an '*imperfect instrument*' (Freeman, 2000), Human Rights appears to be a landmark and pivotal legal instrument to protect, preserve and provide for the rights of every individual. Ratified throughout the world the framework represents a common (dare it be termed universal) set of basic rights and freedoms which represent a common baseline for society. Although the implementation of human rights will differ from country to country, its overarching objectives are widely acknowledged.

2.3.3 Adoption of Human Rights in Africa and Uganda

Embedded within the International Bill of Human Rights is the African Charter on Human and People's Rights referred to as the Banjul Charter. This charter was formed by African Union Members to relate Human Rights law into an African constitutional context. On emancipation from British colonialism, the then African Union (AU) drafted a rights-based document in 1981, which eventually came into effect in 1986 and by 2009, 53 countries had ratified it (AU, 2012). The Banjul Charter provides for: civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights; people's rights and group Rights. In addition to Banjul, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child was adopted by African Unity in 1990 and came into force in 2000.

Generally, in Uganda, Human Rights are considered a work in progress. In 2010, the General Assembly of the UN congratulated the country on a number of areas of progress, such as education, creating opportunities to further equality for

women and establishing human rights within the constitution. However, Uganda still had many recommendations to take heed of, most notably in furthering the rights of children and women and disadvantaged groups (ibid, 2010). More specifically, Uganda receives much criticism for its stance on homosexuality (which is punishable by death), heavy handed policing, poor conditions in prisons and slow-paced justice systems (UN, 2012a, UNDP 2014). Uganda is a typical example of how human rights implementation differs depending on the country and how indigenous cultural norms still prevail despite the country appearing to embrace the Convention.

2.3.4 The Emergence of Rights for the Child

According to Fuchs (2007) the rights of the child evolved from the *'welfarist'* perspective, to a brief incorporation into the UDHR (Article 25) post war, but the extent to which it appeared was criticised as being insufficient in reach and context. The general expectation at the time (and to some extent even today) was that the protection of a child's rights was the responsibility of the parent and in the absence of the parent, the state. In the 1950's the scope extended a child's rights to health and in 1959 the Geneva Declaration extended the reach to social and cultural rights. From the 1970's the scope further increased to education and gender and the eventual Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in November 1989. This was considered to be the world's first international legal instrument on children's rights (Freeman, 2000). The United Nations Convention categorises rights in three main areas: protection; provision and participation, in relation to civil, political and social rights.

2.3.5 Definitions of 'Child'

As with the United Nations Convention on Human Rights (UNCHR) there were early criticism of the key terms of reference, for example the definition of 'child' within the context of the framework was problematic. This section of the thesis seeks to explore some of the contemporary views which serve to highlight the complexities in having a *'universal child'*, with much of the discourse reflective of earlier discussions on the *'universal human'*.

According to Smith (2010) and Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (2010b) it was Philippe Aries (1962) who asserted that before the middle ages the very notion of the child did not exist and that children were merely '*little adults*'. This view was based on his observations of visual art.

Aries further asserted that the absence of children in medieval art could be interpreted as showing that they were not emotionally important to parents and that parents would not take the emotional risk of investing in close relations with children whose mortality was considered high:

'People could not allow themselves to become too attached to something that was regarded a probable loss' (Aries 1962, p38, cited in Smith 2010, p30)

Aries further suggested that in the 17th Century, as part of the '*discovery of childhood*' the sentimental value of children emerged, along with coddling and the recognition of the innocence of children. At this juncture there began to emerge a distinct phase of social life which led to characterizations which meant a child should receive preferential treatment in terms of care and protection. He further posited evidence to suggest that boys and wealthy families tended to receive better treatment over girls and poorer families, who tended to maintain less sentimental practices.

Aries' theories were widely criticised most notably for their sweeping statements and *present-centeredness* (Wilson, 1980) yet Aries is considered to have influenced early thoughts on the social construction of childhood. According to Pollock (1983) and Smith (2010) there is evidence to support the notion of high mortality affecting parents' emotional priorities, which focussed more on survival than affection. Cunningham (2006) also supported Aries' observations, although not necessarily agreeing with the accuracy and methodology of the inequalities between the girl child and rich and poor.

Contemporary views of the child would identify that a child is a distinctly separate being from adults, or at the least an incomplete being, Postman (1995) for example, describes the child as an '*unformed adult*'. This perspective would support the Aristotelian conception of children, wherein, a human child is an

immature specimen of the organism type human (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 2010). This study would adopt this perspective and argue that the child, as an immature human is placed within a wider social circle yet has the capacity for the same immutable capabilities as the mature human. However, they need opportunity and positive influence to develop them.

Childhood is shaped by many influences. Theorists such as Piaget first developed a staged theory of childhood development in 1936 and proposed that there are cognitive structures and stages in place within which a child develops. Kohlberg (1981) also described stages in his 3-level theory: Level A: premoral, Level B: morality of conventional role conformity, Level C: morality of contract, of individual rights and democratically accepted law. Prout and James (1997) suggest three themes in development: rationality, naturalness and universality. Rousseau (1979) poses 5 age related stages: (i) infancy; (ii) The age of sensation; (iii) the age of ideas (13 to puberty); (iv) the age of sentiment (age 21 on) and (v) the age of marriage and social responsibility. Social Constructivists, such as Lev Vygotsky (1934) would argue against such linear theories and others would suggest that whilst development does occur in stages, the timeframes of these stages are often affected by the individual child's lived experiences (Penn, 2007). It is these lived experiences which undermine these well-established childhood development theories in Africa. Factors such as the necessity to work, marriage and having children at a much younger age than in the West, mean these stages simply don't apply in African (and other developing world) contexts.

2.3.6 Should a 'Child' have Rights?

According to Roche (1999) children are not seen as fully rational beings and are lacking in wisdom (because they are lacking in life experience) and therefore, in a critical sense, they cannot know their best interests. This argument supports a case for children to require to be protected and to have their needs met, rather than rights upheld.

Roche (1999) further draws a parallel in the struggle for the rights of a child to that of women fighting for their own rights, noting that historically women were

considered too irrational and emotional and there was a sociobiological warrant for their inferiority: they were '*fitted*' to the home. These views are today topics for bemusement and considered absurd in many countries. But the historical legacy of struggle could hold currency to debates surrounding participation of children as active citizens and decision makers (Knutsson, 1997, cited in Howe and Covell, 2005).

Walby (1992) defined the concept of '*unfolding citizenship*' or '*incremental citizenship*' as a process of progress from exclusion to inclusion when describing the evolving journey of women in society. Bulmer and Rees (1996) similarly referred to '*partial citizenship*' in which it is argued there is not a concept of being either in or out (a citizen or a non-citizen) but where several groups may be considered part in and part out of citizenship. Roche (1999) applied this part in/part out theoretical perspective to that of the child, based on the premise a child is considered aged 0-18. The extent to which a child is '*in*' society can be dictated by age, as generally older children will have more life experience and more advanced communication, so the case to take account of their wishes or feelings is increased. Arguments supporting partial citizenship have some merit although King (1997) question the extent to which children should have equal rights to adults. Whilst few expect complete equality at this stage, showing respect and recognition that children's views and opinions are no less worthy of listening to than other social partners is a reasonable expectation. Yet despite this factor a constant theme in much of the writing around children's rights is the deep sense of powerlessness and exclusion felt by children and young people (Lansdown, 1995). According to Dalrymple and Burke (1995) for any progress to be made adults (parents and professionals) will have to be prepared to cede power (a topic for later discussion).

As with all human rights there is criticism of its Universalist nature, but perhaps the pressing argument supporting why this is more relative and appropriate to children is because they are socially positioned within a context which has been shaped by the history and culture of the adults around them. Roche (1999, p479) describes children as '*having to make their own space within in spaces not of their making*'. Further evidence to support this perspective is discussed by Nieuwenhuys (2008) who summarised arguments that the universal stance,

supported by the UN is based on the universal child, which may manifest itself in different forms. She argues that childhood is the same across cultural boundaries with children sharing the same characteristics and immutable qualities, such as capacity for learning and the need for belonging. Taking this stance leaves no doubt in relation to violations of the child's rights and therefore a universal norm exists as to what is right and what is wrong. This universalism leaves no room for cultural difference and divergence as the global stance is set. Universalism has little tolerance for contextual factors, for example children having to work due to economic necessity, as is often the case in the developing world.

The opposing argument is the relativist stance (summarised further by Neiuwenhuys 2008; Cheney 2007 and Achilihu 2010) which supports that notions of childhood only make sense in a specific logic of cultures to which the child belongs. They argue that children's rights (as any human right) cannot be assessed globally using a priori standard. The divergence between these two stances is based on two paradigms, where universalism considers childhood the enduring phenomenon and relativism perceiving it to be culturally driven. There is a word of caution when considering the relativist perspective. Certain cultural practices (genital mutilation for example) are deemed socially acceptable in some contexts and could be considered by the child as a rite of passage (not a violation), whereas from a universalist perspective, acceptance of these practices and any inaction based on cultural sensitivity, could be considered immoral. Therefore, we arrive at a juxtaposition in terms of who judges what is and is not globally acceptable. Arguments surrounding the universal versus relativist worldview continue. Neiuwenhuys (2008) for example suggests rejecting universalism and cultural essentialism to focus on children's agency. In terms of agency, Roche (1999), Freeman (2000) and Nieuwenhuys (2008) assert that for children to be considered as political participants new approaches will be needed and a clear understanding of how to develop these rights and even advance them must be sought. I agree with this perspective and believe that the global focus (both academic and political) should shift towards advancing the rights of the child through education, for example, not continuing to fuel historic debate of what the rights should be shaped upon.

Despite the varying discourse surrounding The Convention, it is widely regarded as a beginning and as Freeman (2000) noted the future requires us to build on The Convention, revising and reforming may well take place but the foundation of endowing rights on children should remain firm.

2.3.7 Rights of the Child in Africa and Uganda

When one considers the African child, there can be several parallels with Aries' *'little adult'* and because of this it could be argued that Africa, above any other continent should be proactive and committed to protecting and promoting the rights of the child. De Waal (2002), Cheney (2007) and Achilihu (2010) highlighted a compelling argument in this respect claiming that because almost half of Africa's population is under 18 and many of these *'legally defined children'* (Roche, 1999) are also young parents, young people must become active participating citizens to ensure the future of Africa. Children who are healthy, well-educated and optimistic will themselves develop the next generation to be healthier, better educated and to be better world citizens (Sandler, 1999). Furthermore, the conventional development stages of a child as proposed by Rousseau simply do not apply in Africa, where *'children'* simply bypass traditional stages of development, or indeed other stages are significantly accelerated, such as working life, which mean the conventional child does not exist as in the West (Penn, 2007). In further support of this argument, Meinert (2009) posed that *'age, in Uganda is considered irrelevant and is relative, particularly when many children and their parents do not know one's birth date or year'* (p30) Furthermore, Meinert (2009) stated that in Uganda the definition of children is based on generation, situation and relative competence, rather than age. This adds a further and immeasurable aspect to the notions of childhood, apparently leaving it for adults to decide when the child has matured in their social setting. What emerged from the work of Meinert is a very subjective view of what it means to be *'child'* in Africa, and by enabling adults to make this distinction could lead to inequities and conflict and make it extremely difficult to enforce rights.

Of Africa in general, so far progress in embedding the CRC has been disappointing and De Waal and Argenti (2002) suggested Africa has an obligation to its children to make improvements for its future. Achilihu (2010) claimed that whilst awareness of children's rights is growing in many other African countries, these debates are little more than 'tokenism', noting that the vision of the CRC remains unrealised over a decade after ratification and blames a lack of legal harmonisation as a contributory factor. To redress the balance change is needed and De Waal and Argenti (2002), Temba and De Waal (2002) and Achilihu (2010) suggest a social movement is essential, engaging a range of actors in all aspects of setting strategies to emancipate children and to change traditional perceptions and attitudes towards children. In 2001 African nations did ratify a more culturally relative form of the CRC - the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children. This charter embraces many of the wider aspects of the CRC. There is clear emphasis on more cultural norms, such as the placing of the child within society and affording responsibility of children to respect parents, superiors and elders always (African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, 2011). However, this could conflict with the child's right to participate in decisions that affect them. UNDP 2016 carve the way for human development and rights to be enhanced, claiming:

'Overcoming barriers to universalism will also require refocusing on some elements of the human development analytical approach that have so far been insufficiently considered, such as voice and participation, identity and diversity, inclusion and social justice.' (p81)

Whilst not explicit, could this be extended to such barriers affecting children?

Uganda, as with many African nations has struggled with defining the role of the child in society and as such providing rights has been a challenge (Achilihu, 2010). For example, the civil war on the northern Sudanese border was a war in which children were often kidnapped and used as soldiers. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), led by Joseph Kony, terrorised these borderlands from the 1980's and many children were forced to fight as soldiers (in the case of boys), or be subjected to sexual assault, rape and imprisonment as slaves (in the case of girls) (Eichstaedt, 2009). Both Cheney (2007) and Eichstaedt (2009)

discussed the implications of the war on children who were often taken from their communities, severely psychologically and physically harmed and, even if they escaped, were viewed as 'tainted' and so never being accepted on their return to their communities. These children were permanently displaced and faced with a future in a refugee camp (Cheney, 2007). The conflict has raged since the 1980's and whilst a peace agreement has existed since 2008, the scars remain as does the fear of conflict re-erupting at any time.

According to the UN (2008), Uganda ratified the CRC in November 1990. Following this, in May 2002, the government also ratified the optional protocol relating to the involvement of children in armed conflict. The government of Uganda undertook a review of its laws in 2000 under the leadership of the Uganda Law Reform Commission and as a result, the Children Statute 1996 was revised alongside other laws and is now the Children Act. It remains the principal legislation for the protection of children. After a decade of implementation, there are preparations to amend it so as to make it more comprehensive. Elements to do with social, legal, economic and cultural factors directly and indirectly affecting protection, care, development and support of children will be incorporated (ibid, 2008). Cheney (2011) acknowledges that while many organisation; governmental and non-governmental; are working hard to promote children's rights in Uganda, they often find it counterintuitive to work with children on even a semi-equal level, opting instead to implement children's rights according to the '*best interest principle*' which posits that '*the fulfilment of children's rights must still lie in the hands of adults who know what is best for children*' (p169).

Despite the provision of legal rights for children, there remains a question as to how committed Uganda is to human rights. Indeed, the country received much criticism for the lack of girl children in school in the past (UN, 2012a). This was attributed to early marriage, or pregnancy (via rape or consensual sex), or boy children being schooled in preference (Cheney, 2007). Within school there is evidence that corporal punishment still exists and is frequently administered (ibid, 2007). These practices do not respect rights or dignity.

The Government remain resolute that they have ratified the conventions and intend to uphold the provisions. There is still much work to be done and some sceptical views, such as those of Achilihu (2010) infers the documents were signed to '*impress*' other countries and potential donors without genuine intent. This could lead one to question whether a country which is still developing the rights of women is not yet ready to encompass the holistic embodiment of the rights of the child. I would argue that if you wait until you are ready, you are never ready.

2.4 Education - A Right or a Privilege?

The previous section discussed the evolution of children's rights and the emergence of the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This section will analyse aspects of the Convention in relation to education and global policy frameworks which serve to support the implementation of UNCRC and influence education within Uganda.

Article 28 of the UNCRC states that primary education should be compulsory and free. There should be a range of provision at secondary stage and access to higher education. As such the evolution of UPE will be discussed in a general context and in the context of Uganda. Article 29 of The Convention relates to the development of the child's potential, wherein access to quality education will be discussed and notions of rights in education.

Initially the section will provide some context as to the emergence of Education for All (EFA). It will then analyse how this was integrated into Ugandan Education Policy, through UPE and analysing some of the challenges associated with this.

2.4.1 The Evolution of Education for All (EFA)

In the late 1980's, many developing nations were maintaining a willingness to support basic education despite generally poor financial and economic performance (WCEFA, 1990). However, 100 million people were considered illiterate and enrolment at some schools was as little as 15% of the catchment

population across the developing world (ibid, 1990). In 1990, and in response to this world crisis the UN, United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United National Population Fund (UNFPA), UNDP and World Bank held The World Conference on EFA in Jomtien, Thailand (UN, 2011b). According to UNESCO (1990) and WCEFA (1990) its aim was to make primary education accessible to all children and to reduce illiteracy before the end of the decade. Despite world support, in 1999 UNICEF argued that an estimated 855 million people remained functionally illiterate. More than 130 million children of primary school age in developing countries (of whom 73 million were girls), were growing up without access to basic education' whilst millions of others languished in sub-standard learning situations where little learning took place.

It is worth pausing to note here the continued discourse over the definition of literacy and conversely illiteracy, which is a debate that has spanned over 60 years. In 1951, UNESCO asserted that literacy has both a cultural and statistical definition, with cultural being:

'the ability to read and write as the means by which knowledge is made available to him and by which he communicates with the world, outside his personal contacts', UNESCO (1951)

and statistical being:

'The degree of ability to read and write a page of simple text' (Ibid, 1951).

The notion of semi-literate is also raised, being a person only able to read a simple message in any language. These definitions hold obvious flaws in terms of measurement and application. In 1986 Giere, on behalf of UNESCO published a paper defining literacy, in which it is acknowledged that no definition of literacy existed that was accepted by all industrialised countries, but suggested:

'A person who is literate can, with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life. An illiterate person cannot do this' (Giere, 1986, p21)

Giere also developed the notion of functional literacy as being able to engage in activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning within the group or community and an ability to use reading, writing and calculation for community development. Discourse on the definitions of literacy continues and the UN presents four discrete understandings of literacy:

'Literacy as an autonomous set of skills; literacy as applied, practised and situated; literacy as a learning process and, literacy as text' (UNESCO, 2006, p148)

Despite discourse on definitions which could hamper implementation, it is universally accepted that education and the ability to become literate is not only a human right, it is vital to positively influence economic development, health and survival rates, create quality institutions, good governance and reduce poverty (International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, IIASA, 2008).

The Jomtien conference was considered a major milestone in international human development and during the decade from 1990 education for all (EFA) became an integral part of international and national development policy (UNESCO, 1990). However, EFA (as noted by Lewin, 2007) was identified as failing for a number of reasons in sub-Saharan African, including lack of clarity of targets and goals. Post-Jomtien and its perceived failings, there was a further meeting in Dakar in 2000. Its purpose was to reaffirm the commitment of world leaders and donor agencies towards achieving EFA. In parallel, at the Millennium Summit in 2000, 189 World leaders ascribed to the Millennium Declaration staking a world commitment to build a *'safer, more prosperous, equitable world'*, through 8 key measurable goals by 2015 (UNDP, 2010). To support these interventions World donors, multilateral agencies and national governments committed significant funding and time to ensure developing countries met the MDG's generally and MDG 2 in particular, to ensure by 2015,

children everywhere, boys and girls alike will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling universal education (UN, 2011a).

There has been evidence of some worldwide success towards achieving MDG goal 2 and EFA targets in education over the last decade. For example, the Global Campaign for Education in 2011 noted success in increased aid to basic education which had doubled, to approximately \$4 billion per year and this rise in aid, combined with increased domestic education budgets, a real and tangible impact started to be made. Furthermore, since 2000, the UN Millennium Development Goals Report (UN, 2015) states net enrolment rates have reached 91% (with notable success in Sub-Saharan Africa). Global youth literacy rates have increased to their current level of 91% and the number of out-of-school children has fallen by almost half, of the 100 million recorded in 2000 to 50 million.

Yet despite some success stories, which can be attributed to a range of reforms such as curriculum change, construction of new schools, incentives such as free school places and meals and investment in teacher training, there is evidence to suggest that issues remain. In 2011, the Global Campaign for Education estimated 69 million children and 774 million adults were still missing out on primary education. Furthermore, nearly 250 million children had to work to help their families and half of the world's out-of-school children lived in communities where the language used in schools is different from that used at home. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID, 2008) suggested evidence of high enrolment, high drop-out, large class sizes, falling teacher quality, a lack of teaching materials and resources and low levels of literacy and numeracy. In the 2013/4 EFA Global Monitoring Report a similar picture was reflected, and a rather bleak forecast was illustrated in relation to the possible achievement of the 2015 MDG targets universally (UNESCO, 2014). Indeed, although the UN notes success towards MDG 2, 57 million children remain out-of-school and wider MDG goals relating to the poorest have not been reached (UNESCO 2014a). These combined factors undermined progress towards international goals and can be considered as contributory to widespread unemployment and limited economic growth in developing nations (ibid, 2014).

In the post-MDG era, we find a raft of new targets appearing in the form of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), ratified by member states in September 2015. These goals build upon the original MDG's but place greater emphasis on sustainable outcomes with both social and environmental protection as part of the agenda. Also, the SDGs do not only apply to developing countries, but are worldwide targets to be achieved. It is worth noting that only 1 of the 17 Goals is explicit in relation to education - Goal 4: ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (UNDP, 2015). The SDGs appear to expand the agenda to provide equitable and quality education across the globe. Whilst this study predates their introduction, they provide hope for the future and could well serve as a catalyst for positive change.

Whilst schools and recipient governments are often criticised for failures and weak implementation and achievement of targets, there is evidence to suggest that it is the nature of MDG's and world initiatives that can be partially blamed for problems. Patrinos and Psacharopoulos (2011) for the World Bank, warned efforts proved to be a real challenge and targets were set and reset due to being unachievable. From a policy perspective, Robertson et al. (2007) implied that the initiatives were not working because they were based on incorrect assumptions that one size fits all. It was also assumed by the UN that agreement by world leaders on a global scale, would guarantee commitment in home countries and this was not the case. Moreover, Glewwe (2005) warned that often bias appeared with respect to evidence of progress, due to the natural tendency towards releasing only positive results by either governments or agencies meaning it was difficult to establish correct statistical data. Clemens and Moss (2005) argued that completion of UPE by 2015 would be simply unrealistic, given the fact that it took developed nations almost a century to achieve this. Many of these arguments still hold currency and this highlights that the perspective of the developing world needs to be considered more fully when targets are being set. For example, by picking apart elements of the SDG Goal 4, we find some rather subjective terms. What does a Ugandan Minister consider as *inclusive*, *equitable* and *quality* provision and how far does this differ from what perhaps UNDP considers so? Furthermore, how does a Ugandan head teacher interpret these terms? Does this differ from their own Ministers' perception let alone one

held by a far-removed donor agency? There is much which remains to be done and not just in the developing world, to bridge the gap between donors and grassroots and to create shared definitions before targets can be realised and implemented practically. It remains a real obstacle to improving the lives of the poorest people, as is intended by these interventions.

A further salient point to refer to is that many of these global initiatives focussed significant attention on widening participation by giving access to education (Article 28, MDG 2), but of equal, if not more importance is the quality of the provision and what takes place within the 'system' (Article 29). I believe it is vital that education is of the highest quality achievable within a given country and this should be a significant world priority. The SDG's do encompass the term quality, but at present provide little guidance as to what this means in context thus reflecting the ongoing debate on how to measure quality captured most recently by Alexander (2015). For example SDG 4, states '*ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning*' (UN.org, 2016) There needs to be consistency across the globe to at least form a minimum level of quality standards and also clearly defined metrics by which it is measured. Then support will need to be in place for countries to achieve this. This will mean developing a clear understanding of where countries are in terms of educational development and tailoring aid and support accordingly. This places responsibilities and gives rights to all key stakeholders within the education 'system' and beyond and could pave the way for active engagement and participation of donors, governments, schools, teachers, parents, the community and the child. However, this carries with it some of the risks highlighted in the section relating to human rights. This could lead to domination from the West in developing this minimum standard and international efforts will need to take place to reduce this. It also opens wider debates on whether quality education truly exists in the west and could create an opportunity to critically appraise quality systems internationally.

2.4.2 Rights and Education

In addition to policy frameworks highlighted in the earlier section, the rights-based CRC places emphasis on all signatories to both provide for education and to provide for rights within education.

Article 28 states that primary education should be compulsory and free and that there should be a range of provision at secondary stage and access to higher education. This particular Article compliments the MDG's and EFA agenda in terms of access to education. As has been stated previously, this has generally been the focus of efforts, to get children 'in' to education with little attention paid to what happens thereafter.

Article 29 (and in part 28 and 30) of The Convention seek, to some extent, to build upon access to education and relate to the development of the child's potential, placing emphasis on access to quality education and notions of rights *in* education. These rights include: to be treated with respect; dignity and that education should enable the development of a child's personality, talents and abilities to the full (UNICEF, 2009).

What is an interesting challenge, highlighted by Howe and Covell (2005) on the importance of rights in education, is raising awareness of the child to their rights.

'if children are to participate in decisions that affect them and to exercise their rights to freedom of expression, freedom of thought and religion and have freedom of association and assembly, it is vital that they know they have the fundamental right to do so. However, this seldom happens but failure to do so is to disempower children and inhibit their rights' (p31).

The dichotomy in this arena has been alluded to in the previous section. When one considers the place of the child in society it could be argued that characteristics such as respect and dignity, may well be reserved for adults who have earned it. Children, on the other hand would be perceived as needing to

earn it. This is of importance in an African context, where notions such as dignity and respect, in particular, may not resonate in social structures between adults and children and as such, may prevail in inhibiting the rights as Howe and Covell (2005) asserted. Initiatives such as Rights Respecting Schools and Good Schools may well serve to enhance awareness of the rights of the individual. However, such initiatives are often voluntary and there is little guarantee of the principles of the training being sustained (ibid, 2005).

The early part of this section presented a rather complex situation in terms of policy and legislative frameworks which are influencing developing nations. What will now follow is an analysis of the impact of these policies upon the education system within Uganda. But first a brief description of the evolution of the present education system in Uganda will be presented and will provide valuable contextual information.

2.4.3 The Evolution of Education in Uganda

Formal education in Uganda was initiated by voluntary Christian Missionaries in the 1880's and until the 1920's education was only for the privileged (mainly aristocracy, clergy and tribal chiefs) and remained the case until the 1950's (Syngellakis and Arudo, 2006). Government had little involvement in education until the 1930's, but this increased significantly throughout the 1950's and 60's when control was centralised. In 1963 education policy was guided by the Castle Commission and during this period focussed on investing majority funding in the post primary sector of education. It was not until the late 1980's that the new government commissioned the Education Policy Review Commission, which under Prof.W. Stenzena Kajubi suggested a major policy shift to the universalisation of Primary Education. As a result, in 1992 the first Government White Paper on Education proposed reforms in primary education based on Kajubi's recommendations. In 1993 changes started to happen (Syngellakis and Arudo, 2006) and as a result, Uganda's establishment of free universal primary education in 1997 was particularly dramatic and widely acclaimed as an example of a government devoting increased resources to basic service provision (Stasavage, 2003). The development of Sector Strategic Plans in education

began in 1998, at which point education aims and objectives for the primary sector emerged.

These early aims prevailed in the ESIP 2004-2015 and are established as:

- *To build an education system that is relevant to Uganda's national development*
- *To ensure that all children participating in the education system achieve education goals*
- *To maintain an effective and efficient education sector. MoES (2004, p3)*

These broad themes set out key objectives which include provision of a flexible, equitable education system; acquisition of a mastery of basic literacy, numeracy and life skills; decentralised authority; quality and accountability and partnerships between the ministry and other agencies in service delivery and capacity-building (ibid, 2004).

2.4.4 The Current Ugandan Primary Education System

The present education system, according to Byamugisha and Ssenabulya (2011), is based on a 4-tier model, which has been in existence since the publication of the Castle Commission Report (1963) post-independence. The system consists of 7 years primary education (known as P's 1-7), 4 years of lower secondary and 2 years of upper secondary.

Primary Education commences at around 5 or 6 years old. At the end of P7, pupils will take their first formal national examination, known as Primary Leavers' Examinations (PLE). The PLE incorporates 4 specific topical subjects: English Language, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. The outcome of the PLE is either a first, second, third, fourth grade pass, or a failure. A failure would mean progression to secondary education would be withheld, and the pupil would repeat their grade (Kavuma, 2010). In 2006 Uganda adopted a thematic curriculum as a response to low literacy levels and according to Luswata (2011) represented a paradigm shift from a focus on content knowledge in 10 subjects, delivered in English, to a new emphasis on learning outcomes not

learning aims, delivered in mother tongue. Within the current curriculum, established in 2011, schools should be teaching the following 7 units: English language; mathematics; integrated science; social studies; local language; creative arts; physical education (CAPE) and religious education (Christian and Islamic instruction).

Education is generally managed on a decentralised basis, with much of the administration and management conducted at district level, although the overall responsibility for the sector lies with the MoES located in Kampala. The Ministry also includes a number of semi or fully autonomous institutions such as: National Examinations Board (NEB); Education Standards Agency (ESA); National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) (Byamugisha and Ssenabulya, 2011). Schools are managed by a SMC which act as a Board of Directors and also work with the PTA who represent the voice of the community whose children attend the school (Munene, 2011).

In terms of continuation, after successful achievement of the PLE pupils could progress to secondary education. Uganda launched Universal Secondary Education (USE) in 2007 after years of political debate. However, USE is ironically not '*universally*' available to all primary leavers, and often only the highest achieving students attract the places (Meinert, 2009). Secondary education is divided into 4 years lower secondary education and 2 years upper education. According to Uganda's High Commission (2012), this sector has witnessed a growth of over 20% in the number of government-aided secondary schools over the last 10 years and a 15% increase in the number of registered private secondary schools during the same period. In 2016 there were 1,058 secondary schools in total, compared to 19,718 primary schools (EMIS, 2016). However, the High Commission warns that the sector has yet to attain the necessary capacity to cope with the large number of primary school leavers. Many of the challenges facing the provision of UPE prevail in USE, most notably a lack of critical resources such as furniture, books, classrooms, teachers and latrines (Meinert, 2009).

Successful students completing lower secondary education have four possible progression pathways:

- Upper secondary school (Advanced Level);
- Technical institutes for a 2-3-year advanced craft course;
- Primary Teacher College (PTC) for a 2-year course;
- And Government's Department Training Colleges (DTCs).

Of the students completing secondary education, some 9,000 to 12,000 students per year qualify to join post-secondary education. However, only about 25% of these take the next step (Uganda High Commission, 2012). There are 11 universities in Uganda including Makerere University in Kampala. However, the Ugandan High Commission (2012) notes the enrolments into secondary institutions over the last 10 years has increased by over 90% while the numbers enrolled in tertiary institutions increased by only 1.8% in the same period.

2.4.5 The Residual Challenges of Delivering Primary Education in Uganda

Despite global policy frameworks such as the MDG's and promises of providing education for all, the sustainability of UPE is not without its challenges within Uganda. The country has responded to international calls with over a decade of policy changes, revisions and reforms (table 2), but by its own admission (in MoES, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2010) identified several residual challenges which continue to hamper the education sector. These challenges acknowledged over 20 years ago include: grade repetition; dropout rates; teacher absence; high enrolment; poor achievement (particularly girls) and a general lack of basic amenities and equipment, such as books, desks and blackboards (Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991; Hanushek, 1995; Glewwe, 1999, Glewwe and Kremer 2005). Yet these same challenges appear to persist (World Education Forum, 2000; Moulton, 2000; Colclough et al., 2002; Okuni 2003; Ward et al., 2006; USAID, 2008; Ahimbisibwe 2010; UNESCO, 2012; UNDP, 2016). Indeed, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) in 2010 acknowledged that whilst access to education had improved progress through the education pathways, education of pupils and attainment had stagnated in recent years. It is worth noting that Uganda did not achieve MDG 2 (UNDP, 2015).

Table 2 summarises key revisions and reforms to education policy and practice in Uganda.

Table 2: Summary Matrix of Ugandan Education Reforms

Type of Reform	Major initiatives	Key content	Comments
Curriculum Reforms	2000, 2002, 2007, 2011	Curriculum review task force established in 2000. Curriculum evolved from 4 subjects, to 6 subjects, to thematic delivery to enhance literacy and numeracy and finally to a reduce syllabus of 7 subjects.	Current subjects are: English language, mathematics, integrated science, social studies, local language, CAPE (creative arts and physical education) and religious education (Christian and Islamic instruction)
National Policy Reforms/Reviews	2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2008, 2011, 2015	The Education Bill 2000, MDG's 2000, Education Sector Investment Plan (ESIP) supported by PEAP 2000, New Instructional Materials Evaluation and Approvals Policy 2000, UPPAP Draft National Report 2002, 9 th and 10 th Education Sector Review 2003, Review of Primary Curriculum 2004, Education Sector Reform 2008, Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2010-2015, National Development Plan (NDP) 2010/11-2014/15, National Development Plan II (NDPII) 2015/16-2019/20	Policy reviews and reforms to encompass national education targets and international development goals and to identify strengths and weaknesses in the system that need redressing.

Widening Participation and Inclusion Initiatives	2001, 2005	Child Friendly Basic Education and Learning Programme (2001-2005), Girls' Education Movement (GEM), National Strategy for Girls in Uganda, Early Childhood Development, Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja, Breakthrough to Literacy (BTL), Growing up and Sexual Maturation (GUSM), Basic Education Child Care and Adolescent Development	Initiatives were developed as a result of national reviews to encourage enrolment and retention of girl students and those who were not able to attend regular school.
Funding Reforms	2000	Education Sector Wide Approach SWAp 2000, Schools Facilities Grant (SFG),	SWAp incorporated different methods for aid delivery including sector budget support, greater local and MoES involvement in decisions. Centralised funding for schools construction
Quality and Inspection	2001, 2002	Education Standards Agency (ESA) launched 2001, National Inspection Programme 2002	Launch of co-ordinated department of inspection, to ensure schools performance against national quality indicators.
Teacher Training and Management Reforms	2000, 2000, 2004	Revised School Management Committee Regulations 2000, New Instructional Materials Management Policy, Primary Teacher Development and management Plan (PTDMP)	Decentralisation of text books and resource purchasing to local authorities and schools. New teacher development model successor to teacher development and management system (TDMS) focussing on enhancing quality and teacher development.
Sources of data: World Education Forum (2000); Moulton (2000); MoES (2001); Colclough et al (2002); Okuni (2003); MoES (2003a); MoES (2005a); Ahimbisibwe (2010); Ward et al. (2006); USAID (2008); GoU (2015)			

Statistics demonstrate that enrolment in primary education had tripled since the introduction of UPE, from 2.7 million in 1996 to 8.6 million in 2016 (EMIS, 2016). However, student drop-out is cited as being a significant challenge to the country. Despite high enrolments, in 2003, the MoES in the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) revision paper, stated that only 33% of the 1997 UPE cohort had reached primary 6 by 2002 and only 22% had reached primary 7 by 2003. Little has changed and in 2016 the survival rate has not significantly improved at 32%, however of those completing P7 the pass rate is now 61.5% (EMIS, 2016). MoES (2010) cited that 21% of those who do drop out do so because of indifference and that this is caused by the poor quality of education on offer which includes poor quality teaching along with inadequate facilities and resources. In an article in the Guardian in 2015, Mwesigwa notes a continuing trend in drop out which remains at 68%. According to the article, President Yoweri Museveni expressed his rage over the rate at which pupils were leaving school, even when the country spent 900bn Ugandan shillings (\$302m; \$201m) annually on the scheme. He said:

“We should get an answer, and if you think it [UPE] needs to be restructured, we do that.” (www.theguardian.com, 2015)

The dropout rate continues to be attributed to a number of factors including: gender challenges; child labour; early marriages; less motivated teachers and lack of awareness among parents (UNDP, 2015). However, Mwesigwa (2015) highlights that the biggest challenge is poverty. I believe the reason this is so significant is that in Uganda, although UPE should be free, it is not. There are hidden costs. Parents are expected to contribute to some of the costs for exercise books, pens and in some cases building materials for school infrastructure. This is perhaps why so many poorer agrarian families simply cannot afford schooling for all, or any of their children, given their own situation of poverty. Current statistics reflect that primary drop-out remains at 75% and the average number of years completed in education is 5 of the 10 considered as compulsory education. Continuing education into secondary and tertiary levels is significantly lower at 28% and 9% respectively (UNDP, 2015). Overall, the sector appears to have stagnated and these same challenges, spanning over a decade, were recently evidenced again in the 2014 UNESCO publication, *Teacher Issues*

in Uganda: A shared vision for an effective teacher's policy and in the UNDP Millennium Development Goals Report for Uganda in 2015.

A further issue is of those that do not drop out, pass rates of the PLE are comparatively low. Mukisa et al in 2009 noted that in the 2006 academic year, 13 districts had a failure rate more than 15% achieving the PLE and Ahimbisibwe in 2008 cited a drop out figure of almost 50% who fail to complete a full course of primary education. Presently the pass rate has increased to 86.9% (EMIS, 2016), but as noted previously this is based on only 32% surviving to P7.

It could be argued that the sector is hampered from a lack of financial resources and this presents a clear issue for the country. Uganda is reliant on donor intervention to support the delivery of its public services and based on predicted administrative and budgetary scenarios the MoES (2010) estimated a funding gap of approximately US\$369.7m, for the next 5 years. This is a growing gap due to the recent withdrawal of international funding (Among, 2014). The implications of this indicate an increasing reliance on NGO's and parents to have active and sustained involvement in the provision of bricks and labour and funding for schools. The notion of parents funding schools essentially goes against the principles of Article 28 of the CRC, which proposes free primary education. For example, the strategic plans set out by the ESIP for 2004-2015 were contingent on private sector funding (primarily from households) contributing 36.8% of the total cost, estimated at 40% of household income by 2014, to address shortfalls in funding, (MoES, 2004).

Anticipating funding from private sources is not without its own problems as previously mentioned and this dilemma presents a major challenge to the GoU. It raises an important question of whether Uganda can afford to fund education in the future, without significant donor intervention and if education will ever be sustainable within the country independent of any intervention.

Whilst a lack of budget presents an underpinning issue, teacher morale is a significant problem in Uganda. Okuni, in 2003 noted a 35% abandonment rate of teachers from the profession. Morale is most notably a reason for this abandon and is affected by three key factors: firstly low salaries, in most cases funded

solely by the government (after UPE was introduced additional charges which supplemented teachers wages were removed) (Aguti, 2002); secondly replacing staff during periods of sickness (Altinyelken, 2010) and thirdly, high workloads, resulting in changes in classroom delivery methods and the curriculum and a lack of teaching resources, (ibid, 2010). A more recent UNESCO report on teacher initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa published in 2012, implies that 84% (106,216) of the 126,448 primary teachers in government schools wanted to resign. The report identifies that 47% of teachers were dissatisfied with their job. 59% wish to leave the profession and 78% believe that their colleagues are dissatisfied with their job, with salary remaining as the most significant reason for dissatisfaction. This presents an interesting situation and I wonder if pay would automatically make workers more satisfied? Herzberg (1959) would argue that money is not a source of motivation in his well-established two-factor theory. Data from the 2016 EMIS shows that whilst the number of teachers on the government payroll has stayed relatively stable since 2002, at 202,617, the number of teachers who are employed by private schools has tripled to 71,886 in 2016, from only 20,200 in 2002 (EMIS, 2016). This trend correlates to an increase in pupils enrolled at private schools which has almost doubled in the period 2002 to 2016 from 768,842 (2002) to 1,544,244 (2016). I believe that perhaps salaries and conditions within the private sector may well be enticing teachers away from the government schools and that perhaps pupils and their families may well be trending towards the private sector in the hope of better educational outcomes.

The number of teachers entering the profession is a related issue. For example, in 1996 only 81,600 teachers were on the government payroll (MoES, 2005b) and yet in 2000 the number of teachers increased by 50% but student enrolment increased by 120% (Ward et al, 2006). This represents a disproportionate recruitment to that of the enrolment of students. This situation has been, and remains a constant issue to the sector (UNDP, 2016). O'Sullivan (2006, p248) referred to this dichotomy as a '*noose around the neck of those making efforts to improve*'. This '*noose*' is believed to primarily hamper quality of delivery within the classroom.

Teachers are significant contributors to the quality of education and as such teacher training and inspection processes are critical. This is set against a backdrop which sees quality of teaching beginning to emerge as a key factor in education, particularly as the SDG's begin to build momentum. Furthermore, despite recent investment in the Primary Teacher Development and Management Plan, (implemented as the successor to the Teacher Development Management System of 1994) Aguti (2002) and later Atinyelken (2010) asserted that schemes are not adequate to train all the new entrants or to train the untrained and upgrade the under-trained. Furthermore, the MoES (2003b, 2005b and 2006) has continually acknowledged that teacher training curriculum is obsolete and overloaded and inadequately prepares teachers for teaching. According to MoES (2010) they claim, pedagogy is outdated, and teacher competencies are reported as weak. There appears to be little that is being done to address this, despite guidance from UNESCO in 2012.

The GoU recognised the importance of impartial and autonomous inspection processes in the late 1990s, and as such, according to Ward et al. (2006) the ESA finally began operation in July 2001 with the first inspection programme in August 2002. However, the role of inspection is considered inadequate in Uganda, due to lack of staff and funding (Ward et al., 2006, Read and Enyutu, 2005). The MoES, in 2010 affirmed that major overhauls, particularly in inspection were underway, yet little has emerged since.

The lack of budget not only affects quality of education, but also infrastructural aspects. This seems to be a Ugandan, if not Pan African issue, wherein physical facilities are lacking and, as Ongeng (2011) describes, putting children at risk of contracting hygiene-related diseases. With little room for manoeuvre it is not surprising that in a decentralised system, local management committees find it hard to decide where to invest,

'The Government only gives Ush4,500 per child under Universal Primary Education. The money cannot construct toilets and buy chalk' District Education Officer, George Milton-Abua, cited in Ongeng, 2011, www.monitor.co.ug)

If the residual issues highlighted so far are not enough to navigate through, Uganda also experiences weak institutional alignment, co-ordination and accountability, underpinned by lack of reliable data (MoES, 2010, 2014). In addition, there are numerous problems relating to corruption, lack of accountability and generally a weak internal efficiency. It is acknowledged that there are leakages of resources due to 'ghost' teachers and misuse of UPE grants (ibid, 2010, 2014).

The present system is faltering. Quality is inconsistent and resources scarce. The entire systems seem based on a model of education which is outdated (MOES, 2014). The prevailing model in Uganda creates a situation where pupils become '*locked in a position of disadvantage*' (Nakar, 2009, p2) and where pedagogy and infrastructure seemed appropriate for a different time (Harris 2010a, 2010b) and effective only as preparing pupils to be passive citizens (Naker, 2009). Critics of authoritarian education models pose broader questions relating to the purpose of education and the role of the teacher within the system (Harber, 2004). At a time when Uganda is reviewing its own education system it may be worth ministers considering these questions and what they mean to Uganda. The role of the teacher within the education system and indeed the language of learning, is as much a central focus of discourse in the wider education community as it is in Uganda. Biesta (2015) although an academic from the west, has for some time written about what is known as '*learnification*' of education, wherein a transition towards '*facilitating learning*', '*creating learning opportunities*' and '*lifelong learning*' has emerged. It is clear, based on evidence from those such as Biesta (2015) that accountable teacher professionalism is at the heart of good education and this is something that is vital to consider as Ugandan ministers update education policies.

A final point to consider is that the utmost challenge to Ugandan society is the great hope and expectations that education can bring (UNESCO, 2014). It is perceived in Ugandan society as being transformational and can elevate people from poverty. However, the reality is that despite Uganda's efforts to widen access to education through UPE there are insufficient salaried jobs and few business opportunities for pupils after school. This can often lead to disappointment and the de-valuation of the concept of education (Meinert,

2009). Other more specific issues with the provision of primary education were discussed above, but perhaps this single point could be considered as vital to Uganda, as a growing social '*friction*' is emerging '*where educational policy aspirations clash with social realities and hopes*' (ibid, 2009, p165). This can quickly lead to disillusionment and a decline in perceived value of education.

2.5 EMPOWERMENT

This brief section provides a summary of literature surrounding empowerment. The purpose of the section is to provide a general context in relation to this important topic which serves as a platform to enhancing rights. The section analyses dimensions of power. It explores definitions of empowerment and poses pre-requisites for empowering individuals to enhance capacities as well as highlighting some of the challenges of measuring empowerment. The section explores the implications for the developing world in general and will serve as a bridge to the next section which relates more specifically to the empowerment in education of children and the opportunities to empower children to make decisions.

2.5.1 The Power behind Empowerment

Power exists within multiple dimensions and it is often where an unequal distribution of power occurs, that there is a need for redistribution through empowering others (Gaventa, 2003). This inequity frequently exists in multiple dimensions of society such as: community psychology; management; political theory; social work; education; women's studies and sociology (Hyung Hur, 2006). Rowlands (1997, cited in Wong (2003)) and Williams (2004) argue that to understand empowerment one must first examine its root-concept - power. Hardy and O'Sullivan (1998) posed that

'Power is embedded in the very fabric of the system; it constrains how we see, what we see and how we think, in ways that limit our capacity for resistance' (p453)

Wong (2003), Boje and Risile (2001), Gaventa (2003) and Hardy and O'Sullivan (1998) suggest that power frameworks which exist are a result of 'conflict' and emerged out of discourse surrounding the nature of power by Sociologists including Foucault, Bourdieu and Giddens.

Foucault (1975), considered hugely influential in shaping the understanding of power, proposed that '*power is everywhere*' and '*comes from everywhere*' so is not confined to agency or structure, but is more associated with '*power/knowledge*', thus highlighting that power can be positive as well as negative (Rabinow, 1991). Bourdieu (1990) in contrast observes power as culturally and symbolically created, through what is known as '*habitus*' (social norms), '*cultural capital*' and the '*fields*' in which interactions and exchanges play out between actors (Navarro, 2006). Giddens' (1986) structuration theory holds similarities to Bourdieu in terms of agency which is an actor's ability to make meaningful choices (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005) and structures. However, Giddens introduces the notion of '*the duality of structure*', namely the rules and resources (the structure) and their relationship to people's agency (Baert 1998, cited in Gaventa 2003). The discourse surrounding the nature of power, briefly highlighted above, has resulted in four 'expressions of power' (VeneKlassen and Miller, 2002) which are more commonly referred to in the development community: 1. power over; 2. power-from-within; 3. power to and 4. power with and the identification of three forms of power: Visible, Hidden and invisible (Lukes, 1974).

1. Power over, is understood as being created by the social order and supported by the threat of coercion, perhaps even violence, where those possessing the power either individually or collectively strive to uphold their position (Eyben et al., 2006 and VeneKlassen and Miller, 2002).
2. Power from within can perhaps be related to reflexivity, or as Bourdieu described '*reflexive sociology*' (Navarro, 2006) in so far as one steps out of their identity and interrogates how that identity shapes the understanding of what is possible. It is such consciousness which enables us to change our own behaviours, bringing about the potential transformation of social relationships (Eyben et al., 2006).

3. Power-to involves individuals or collectives recognising the potential to shape his or her world and is based on the belief that everyone has the power to make a difference (VeneKlassen and Miller, 2002).
4. Power-with relates to shared power

According to Wong (2003) however, individual power-to approaches seem idealistic when dealing with the poor, citing power-with as more realistic as a target, an example of Bourdieu's habitus perhaps? and defined as:

'Features of social organisations such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.... The poor are encouraged to join groups, for networks and build trust within the community' (p314)

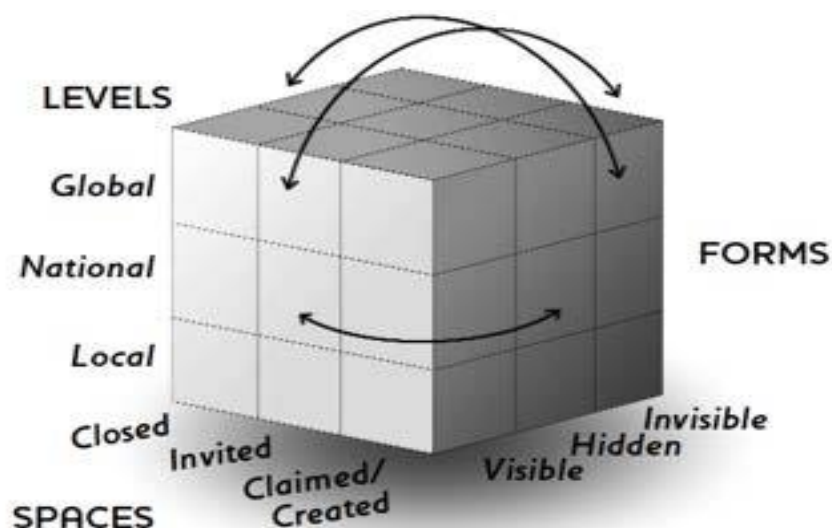
The concept of power forms the root of empowerment, in that those who hold power can choose to empower others, or those who do not possess power can seek to empower themselves. Power manifests in multiple forms and is exercised within all dimensions of social and political structures of society. What is perhaps critical for researchers in international development to understand is the context in which power plays out and the establishment of the actors involved (Gaventa 2003, 2005, 2006; VeneKlassen and Miller 2002 and Jupp et al., 2010). Indeed Lutrell et al. (2007), on behalf of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), refer to the fact that empowerment-focused interventions often fail to address power, making power analysis essential to successful development (capacity.org, 2010). Lyons et al. (2001) would argue that whilst understanding power is of importance, stability, formality and sustainability of key partnerships are of equal value.

Gaventa (2003) identifies a number of practical tools (known as 'Power Tools') to analyse power, such as Stakeholder Power Analysis (International Institute for Environment and Development) but notes that such tools often take the form of analysing particular 'actors' of power and do not develop a more holistic understanding of power. Gaventa (2003, 2005, and 2006) therefore argues for a more holistic analysis of power in order to appreciate the broader dynamics of all the players. His 'power cube' is widely accepted in international

development circles as presenting an understanding of how power operates. The Cube (see fig 3) identifies how different interests are marginalised and identifies the strategies needed to increase inclusion (Lutrell et al., 2007) by drawing on analysis of visible, hidden and invisible power. The Cube is based on the three 'faces' or 'dimensions' of power articulated by Luke's (1974) which are operating in global, national and local places and in closed, claimed or invited spaces (Gaventa, 2005). Visible power relates to overt power which is often wielded by political legislatures, government bodies and local assemblies. Hidden power is often wielded by back-stage players such as NGO's, workplaces and community-based organisations (Gaventa, 2006). The notion of invisible power, has roots partly in Marxist thinking and is very much based on the ideas, beliefs and values of power, embedded in a created hegemony, to '*manufacture consent*' (Heywood, 1994, Gaventa 2003). All these dimensions of power are relevant to this study, given that a policy background will be essential for developing contextual understanding of education in Uganda (visible power). This policy (and often practice) is heavily influenced by the hidden powers of NGOs's and wider donors. To a lesser extent, invisible power is of relevance to the thesis, given that universal human rights form a significant aspect of the conceptual framework for the study. Children may not be aware that they have such rights and therefore do not know how to exercise them. Parents and teachers may be unaware that they are disempowering children by simply practicing established cultural norms in relation to the child's role and responsibilities in society.

Fig 3: Gaventa's Power Cube

Figure 3 provides an image of the multiple dimensions of power represented within Gaventa's Power Cube



With a greater understanding of power and the analysis of actors wielding (or not) power, one can then build a greater understanding of inequities and seek to redress these through empowering intervention.

2.5.2 Definitions of Empowerment - Rights, Capabilities and Capacities

The term empowerment has attracted much contemporary debate with sceptics warning of its ideological nature. They argue it has become an 'in vogue' buzz word in the development world, lacking in tangibility and therefore becoming difficult to measure (Lyons et al., 2001; Moore, 2001; White, 2004 and Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005). Furthermore, Lyons et al. (2010) warned that empowerment holds the potential to distort liberation creating potentially dangerous social movements. Others perceive empowerment as greater evidence of western values trying to create heterogeneity of culture (Robertson et al., 2007). Cooke and Kothari (2001) highlight that empowerment and participatory development is underpinned by a naivety of assumptions as to the authenticity of motivations and behaviour in the participatory process. The language of empowerment

masks a concern for managerialist effectiveness and how micro-level interventions can obscure broader macro-level inequalities and injustice.

Yet despite such scepticism, this thesis supports that empowerment is considered, at least by the World Bank to be of importance to tackling poverty in the developing world and define it as:

‘Enhancing the capacity of poor people to influence the state institutions that affect their lives, by strengthening their participation in political processes and local decision making’ The World Bank (2001, p9)

When one considers the right to enhance the capacity of the poor, one is drawn to the seminal work of Sen (1999) who is considered to have influenced the evolution of human-centred development, positing that development should create social opportunities that

‘Make a direct contribution to the expansion of human capabilities and quality of life’ (1999, p144)

Sen’s own definition alludes to enhancing capacities in what are widely considered as the four empowerment components, which (according to Jupp et al., 2010) are: economic; political; social and organisational. These components become ‘outcomes’ of empowerment interventions and capacities are enhanced most often in these critical areas. The World Bank (2001) tend to adopt an economic capacity building approach based on efficiencies such as returns on investments, better-designed and administrated projects, including microfinance programs like Grameen Bank and Farmer Field Schools (FFS) in East Africa (Friis-Hansen and Duveskog, 2012).

In slight contrast to The World Bank’s definition, Oxfam (1995) appears to place emphasis on a more rights-based approach:

‘...challenging the forms of oppression which compel millions to play a part in their society on terms which are inequitable, or in ways which deny their human rights’

Other NGO's, for example Save the Children also focus on outcomes such as social justice and reduction of power distance, supporting the intrinsic rights of people (Jupp et al., 2010). An example would be the empowerment of women specifically as a sub-group of powerlessness, for example New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Whereas, Page and Czuba (1999) identify empowerment as being more of a multi-dimensional social process.

The very fact that there are multiple definitions of the term has attracted some additional criticism. Page and Czuba (1999) and Jupp et al. (2010) implied a vagueness and lack of clear definition in the development world, this results in misinterpretations and misunderstandings. The term, according to Jupp et al. (2010) holds a variety of definitions making it complex to define as it is often shaped by beliefs and value judgements which have different connotations in differing social and political contexts.

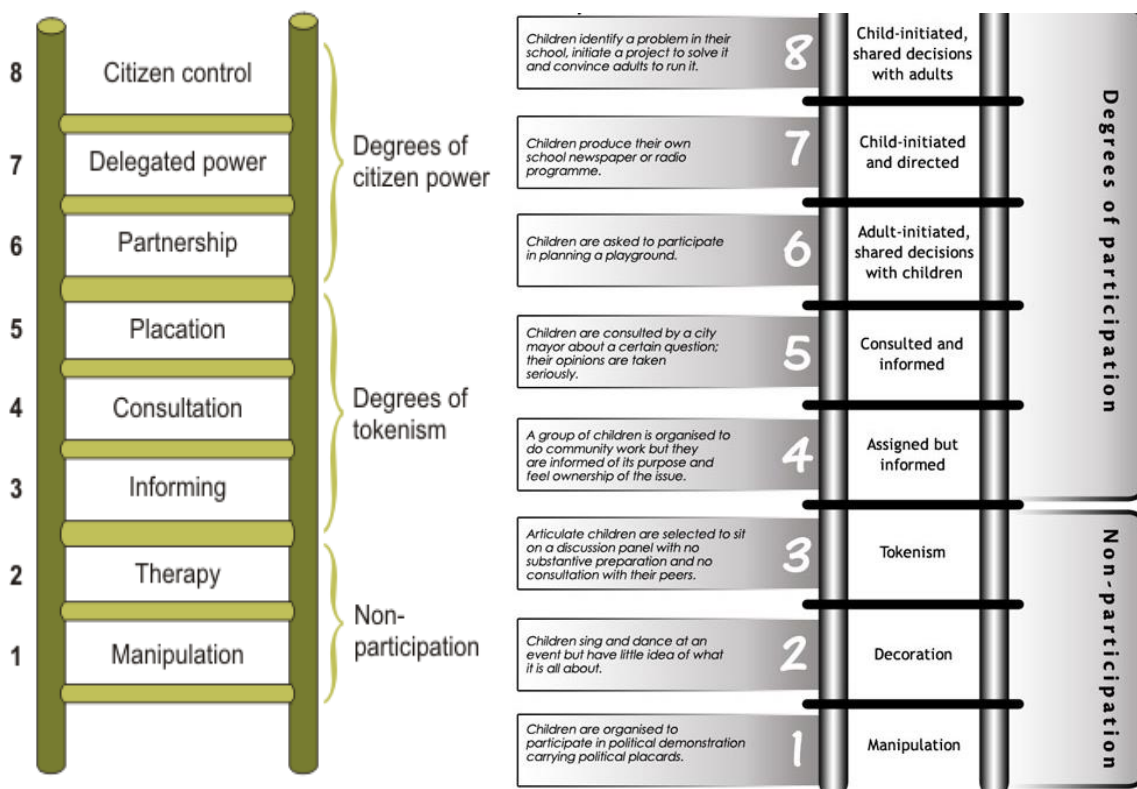
So perhaps since there is some debate about what empowerment is, it may serve this study better to try and identify what empowerment is not. As such, it is worth at this juncture noting the differences between the concepts of empowerment and that of emancipation, as a term of reference. Jonsson (2010) warns that these terms are often used interchangeably, but have inherently different meanings in context, inferring that empowerment involves adapting to a given structural context, whereas emancipation challenges such a structure.

A further term of reference to be established is that of the interchangeable nature of the terms '*empowerment*' and '*participation*'. Croft and Beresford (1992) argue that terms such as '*having a say*' and '*empowerment*' have become synonymous with involvement but are not necessary synonymous with the practice of participation. Croft and Beresford (1992) and Lyons et al. (2001) add further depth of discourse asking for distinction between '*involvement*', '*participation*', '*partial participation*' and '*tokenism*'. Perhaps to help to distinguish this, Arnstein's 'Ladder of Citizen Participation', originally published in 1969 (and later Hart's Ladder of youth participation, which is of particular relevance later in this study) may well help (see fig 4 and Fig 5). The ladder consists of rungs which will briefly be summarised: Manipulation and Therapy

form the lower rungs and are non-participatory and centre on the power holders 'educating' or curing participants. A further three rungs: Informing, Consultation and Placation are considered tokenistic; citizens may hear and be heard but lack power to exert their offering to those who hold majority power. The upper three rungs: Partnership, Delegated Power and Citizen Control demonstrate ultimate citizen power and decision making (Arnstein, 1969, cited in LeGates and Stout, 2003).

Fig 4: Arnstein's Ladder and Fig 5: Hart's Ladder

Figure 4 provides a diagram of Arnstein's original ladder based on citizen power and Figure 5 Hart's adapted ladder based on child participation



In the context of this study and after extensive reading, it is proposed that empowerment is the realisation that people, organisations and communities can gain control over their lives to contribute to society thus moving from powerless non-participants to democratic citizens. Through participation skills, knowledge and capabilities are built and where better to commence this than in the environment of the school. Empowerment and participation in the context of

this study therefore are relational. Perhaps empowerment can be connected to the cognitive and participation can be aligned to actions. This distinction would align with Sen (1999) who describes the idea of the public becoming '*active participants in change rather than passive and docile recipients of instruction*' (p281).

It is clearer from this initial section that empowerment and participation are part of a global agenda to improve the capabilities and capacities of individuals. Eyben et al (2006) and Gaventa (2003, 2005, 2006) observe that empowerment can occur at multiple layers of society, including local, regional and national contexts and in multiple dimensions, but regardless of the layer, it is always underpinned by power dynamics.

2.5.3 Pre-requisites for Empowerment

Advocates of empowerment (Oxfam, 1995; Sen, 1999; Gaventa, 2003, 2005, 2006, for example) would support that it is formed from a basic human need which is the human drive to understand and be involved (empowerment as a psychological perspective). Empowering those perceived as having less power or are powerless is generally considered a result of the growth of emphasis on deepening democracy (Sen, 1999; Gavanta, 2006a,) within a given nation. I support the proposition that those in a position of power adopt a paradigm shift from power over to power with when considering how to deepen democracy. This proposition of democratic '*power with*' relies on active citizenship being significant to nation building and greater human rights being afforded within the nation. The notion of '*deepening democracy*' (Sen, 1999) however, would require a significant shift in the very fabric of national constructs which some nations may be resistant to or fearful of making the change.

The levels at which debates on empowerment take place appear to differ between authors during the past decade. Lyons et al. (2001a), VeneKlassen and Miller (2002) and White (2004) cited the importance and requirement of a broader framework of universal human rights and social equity and indicated a global framework as a prerequisite to empowering nations and individuals within them. Moore (2001) and Jonsson (2010) favour a more national approach stating

that a dislocation and decentralisation from central power holders to linking with more local governments and communities is required. Particularly if:

- i) national political systems are effective as a target for collective action,
- ii) governments implement programmes which are directed to encourage the poor to obtain their entitlements and
- iii) such programmes are crafted to provide incentive to mobilize.

In contrast, Servaes (1999) (cited in White, 2004) stated that development must begin with grass-roots communities and organisations. Asserting that the main actors in the development process create social movements that break out of submission to a hierarchical structure to establish their own independent systems of communication and organisation. In contrast Miller et al. (2006) warned that because of global corporatisation, power has reshuffled to such an extent that it is almost impossible to fight local issues without first considering and targeting global power dynamics and actors.

Perhaps there is merit in taking a multi-dimensional approach to empowerment, encompassing many of the levels of actors. Yoo et al. (2004) for example adopted a 4 tier, 6 stage process. This model was adopted in promoting community involvement in health promotion making use of four tiers, which comprised: Individual/Family level; Community Level; Organisation Level and Policy Level, with the process consisting of 6 stages:

- (1) Entrée into community;
- (2) Issue Identification;
- (3) Prioritization;
- (4) Strategy Development;
- (5) Implementation and;
- (6) Transition. (Yoo et al., 2004)

This particular model is useful in identifying the various dimensions, but the rather linear stages of the process are maybe a little naïve. I am unconvinced that the progression from implementation changes to transition would always

consistently occur. I believe that an intervention that has been implemented does not automatically lead to transition. Some may implement changes because they are ordered to and not with a view that transition would occur, for example the introduction of the thematic curriculum in Uganda. Whilst the curriculum was formed as part of a strategic development, it was implemented inconsistently across Uganda and has failed to transform educational outcomes for either teachers or the pupils (MOES, 2010). Similarly, Braunack-Mayer and Louise (2008) in their research of ethical community empowerment relating to health education, present the notion of '*Reflective Equilibrium Community Empowerment*', which suggests a combined top-down/bottom-up approach. Perhaps a unifying point to be made comes from Gaventa (2006a, 2009) who asserts that the challenge is not at which level such debates take place but rather the accountability and engagement between local, national and global stakeholders in terms of building effective and inclusive advocacy coalitions.

Despite the dimension within which empowerment is debated (whether this is family, community, or at national level), a paradigm shift in power structures appears to be a critical catalyst towards empowerment (Gaventa, 2009). Such changes in power can take place top down, bottom up, and sideways in a successful intervention but require reflection on existing structures to understand how to implement this approach (Gaventa, 2005, 2006, 2009). The catalyst to change often occurs as a result of what Alvesson & Willmott (1992) (cited in Hardy and O'Sullivan, 1998) attribute to people seeking a redistribution of economic and political power but this often causes resistance to and conflict with governance structures that influence individuals' lives. Individuals (or collectives) who are seen to hold power can be reluctant to want to change or re-negotiate and therefore remain holding power over others. It is the very nature of this conflict, caused by tensions about legitimacy, voice and representation and compounded by a lack of trust (Gaventa, 2009), that contributes to why empowerment often does not occur or loses impetus. Furthermore, to stimulate such a change, willing participants are needed and often those in question may be fearful (Aikman 2011, Smith 2011, Carnie 2011 and Barron-Pastor 2011) of the process of change or indeed the anticipated outcomes and this can further undermine the objectives of empowerment programmes and strategies. Lyons et al. (2001) highlight 4 essential elements to

prepare individuals and communities to 'participate': personal development; skill development; practical support and; support for people to get together and work in groups. These preparatory factors of participation are integral to this study where it is proposed that where, if not at school can important aspects of personal and skill development (such as decision making) occur? I further assert that the skills to be developed cannot be done as just part of a curriculum, they should be developed within the cultural context of the school, which becomes a small-scale democratic environment. The study further explores whether spaces exist within policy and practice in schools to integrate and embrace such opportunities for development and if there appears a genuine desire to do so within Uganda.

Sen (1999) would argue 'agency' is a further critical element to enable participation and to support a paradigm shift of power. He describes agency as

'an agent who acts and brings about change, whose achievements can be judged in terms of their own values and objectives whether or not they are assessed in terms of external criteria as well' (p19).

Such agents could be considered as 'change agents' supporting and facilitating the transition to empowerment and the redistribution of power between actors. Facilitation, according to Oxfam (2005) should be more about releasing potential, not viewing empowerment as something that is 'done'. Lutrell et al. (2007) warn against the extent to which outsiders can bring about change due to risks of imposing western culture on other nations (discussed in Human Rights section). I support Lutrell in that change should come from within a nation and that it cannot be forced or imposed, if it is to be genuinely embraced. For example, in the case of education strong evidence suggests that despite years of adopting international education policy (such as MDGs) the system is simply not working (UNESCO, 2015). When changes that these policies bring about are not aligned with the cultural context and political structure of Uganda, therefore they become nothing more than words on a page. Uganda and other like nations need support and facilitation (as Oxfam, 2005 asserted) from the international community to unpick what these interventions mean to them instead of unilateral pressure for policy change. This support, for example could take the

form of creating a context specific interpretation of some of the language that the international community uses. Cheney (2011) observes that participation simply is not working for children in Africa and attributes this to institutions both

'local and global failing to create meaningful structural changes to improve the lives of children, or even avenues of participation for them, due to a protectionist - rather than empowering - interpretation of children's rights' (p167).

Her work in Uganda illustrates where external support could be of value, in creating shared meaning of rights and facilitating steady transformation and change in a more culturally relevant way.

Jupp et al. (2010) also highlight a further prerequisite to empowerment, the importance of understanding clear objectives. Consideration should be given to whether interventions are based on *'ends vs. means-oriented'* short term outcomes or whether they bring about more sustainable outcomes for actors. Objectives of any empowerment intervention should be clear at the outset and Fetterman and Wandersman (2005) would suggest a number of outcomes on which to base empowerment interventions including: improvement; community ownership; inclusion; democratic participation; social justice; community knowledge; evidence-based strategies; capacity building; organisational learning and accountability.

This section has identified a number of important pre-requisites towards empowerment. It asserts that greater democratic principles are essential in order to achieve empowerment beyond the rhetorical. An understanding of existing power structures is important in all circles of influence (family, community and national) coupled with a shared impetus towards a paradigm shift of power. To facilitate this paradigm shift individuals, communities and I would also argue, governments, need to acquire new skills and gain support to enhance agency. To create such opportunities, I envisage a role for change agents (internal and external to Uganda) to facilitate appropriate interventions, but not dictate or dominate to bring about transformation. Most importantly, to achieve a genuine paradigm shift towards shared power embracing the principles

of democracy there must be clarity and transparency of purpose and clear objectives ascribing roles and responsibilities.

2.5.4 Analysing and Measuring Empowerment in a Developing World Context

Jupp et al. (2010) in their report for Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) note particular challenges in measurement and assert that due to the nature of empowerment interventions it should be tracked as a process of change, with constantly shifting variables, rather than a set of finite results which some methods adopt (Social Accounting, Social Return on Investment, Social Audits, for example). I believe that this is likely because empowerment is a constantly evolving state of being (whether individual or national) and does not have a clear end point, similar to Maslow's self-actualisation. Metaphorically, plotting a route to an unknown destination, where one can track motion, distance and direction, yet the point at which the journey ends is as yet unestablished. I believe these highlights why many of the authors cited in this section are uncomfortable with empowerment strategies, due to their ambiguity.

The World Bank (2001) attempts to measure empowerment by analysing agency, opportunity and degree of empowerment through the application of indicators of domains (state, market and society) and levels (local, intermediary and macro). However, measurements are often led by project managers engaging recipients in questionnaires and interviews. This leaves questions as to the reliability of data samples and information harvested. There are further issues with this method in relation to social desirability and the very fact that it is unlikely recipients, whose position has been improved, would report negatively. Jupp et al. (2010) would argue that more self-reflection by recipient communities is needed and notes some success in Bangladesh through the adoption of an Empowerment Measuring Tool. This tool is a two phased approach, which captures self-evaluation and reflection at community level (perhaps focussing on social outcomes) followed by a review of the community level statements and reflections at an organisational/project management level involving a more detailed analysis of the four components of empowerment (social, economic, political and organisational). A further criticism could be that those who are

perhaps particularly marginalised (the disabled, women, children) may not be included as participants in community level activities, so again results may be affected by generalisations and inaccuracies.

As captured within this chapter, empowerment is a multi-dimensional, complex and often intangible concept to advance. Some express doubt as to its foundations being anything other than ideological, particularly when taking into account the developing world where power is often firmly established in a patriarchal framework. However, if we accept that empowerment, as posed by Sen and others and as defined within this chapter, provides a positive framework from which countries can develop, then there should be a strong correlation between empowerment initiatives, active citizenship and a healthy democracy. It would appear that in the arenas of health, community development and education, research on empowerment appears plentiful. As such the following section will focus upon empowerment and education and will explore contemporary perspectives in this area.

2.6 Empowerment and Education

Section 2.2 discussed the rights of the child to and within education and proposed a number of contemporary arguments surrounding rights-based approaches. This section concluded by reinforcing the need for an environment conducive to respecting the rights of the child. Such environments should include respect and dignity through the development of a supportive and nurturing network for the child, at home and at school, but this is not without its challenges. Section 2.5 introduced the topic of empowerment in general, providing definitions and an evaluation of contemporary discourse.

Drawing on the conclusions of the previous section, that empowerment is important in a healthy democratic society, this section will begin to examine empowerment in education and will explore the creation of spaces that are conducive to empowering children. This section explores the concept of empowered children, using contemporary examples of projects, strategies and analysing existing literature on the subject.

2.6.1 The Environment of Education - Setting the Stage for Empowerment

Key actors emerge as prevalent in the environment of education and relationships between these actors should be carefully nurtured to create a participatory dialogic environment. Levin and Lockheed (2012, p16) assert that *'the heart of meaningful education requires active participation among all who are involved in the process'* inferring that teachers, pupils, parents and the community are critical to this. Toll (2002) argues relationships extend beyond those highlighted by Levin and Lockheed, for example to include authorities and policy-makers.

These wider relationships can hold powerful influence and as such it is important to understand the power structures at play as discussed in section 2.5. A brief application of Gaventa's Power Cube identifies the local (School and community), national (Ministry of Education) and global (SDG's, World Bank and International Non-Government Organisation's (INGO)) spaces (Gaventa, 2009) in which visible power manifests. Hidden power is wielded by actors who may not be formal decision makers, but who can block agendas from behind the scenes, and internal and external agents who could use this power to influence teachers and schools (NGO's perhaps). Furthermore, application of the cube may also identify *'invisible power'* (Gaventa, 2009), the most intangible form of power which shapes psychological and ideological boundaries and can be used to make injustices *'invisible'* (Aikman, 2011). With such a complex and multi-dimensional system as education, approaches to empowering the powerless (pupils for example) needs careful navigation. The interconnected nature of the *'actors'* involved in education suggests a move towards power-with (Parpart, Rai and Staudt, 2003) as opposed to power-to, particularly when one is considering a patriarchal social construct such as Uganda's. But is this realistic, or merely idealistic? This is a question which clearly needs exploring and will be examined in the context of this study. Despite such socio-cultural challenges, examples drawn from contemporary literature support a step towards empowerment through collective collaboration and greater accountability between child, family and teacher (Henderson and Berla, 1994; Zygmunt-Fillwalk and Woods, 2007; Naker, 2009; Harris 2010; Levin and Lockheed, 2012). This would

essentially be a move towards empowering each of these important actors within the existing system.

Teachers play an important role in a child's life, since the places where children spend most time is the home and school. Teachers hold a trusted position to ensure the safety, security and education of the child when they are away from their parent (Harber, 2004). Paulo Freire, who since his early publications in the late 60's, was one of the best-known and influential writers on education-based empowerment. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire considered '*Education as suffering from narration sickness*' (1996, p52) due to the '*banking*' of education, wherein a teacher deposits knowledge and the pupils are passive recipients, filing and storing such deposits. He further asserted this is the result of education within an oppressive society. Freire strived for the liberation of education towards a dialogic problem-posing process of learning and claimed a culture of fostering creativity to humanise those previously de-humanised by banking education (1996). Similar calls were made in the UNDP (2009) publication on Uganda on behalf of Raising Voice Project.

If a change in the approach to education is to be considered a positive step, then teachers may well need empowering themselves to create this '*liberation*'. Marks and Seashore (1997) suggest that within schools, teachers should be given the power to focus on decisions that affect mid-level policies regarding school functioning. These are broader than a single classroom, but still clearly related to the improvement of learning environments. However, Freire (2001) warned that teachers cannot be effective when they remain in an exploitative system that robs them of their own voice, a situation which is rather prevalent in Uganda and other countries. UNESCO (2015) cites that education policies can only be effective if those responsible for their implementation are involved in shaping them and give opportunity for the involvement of teachers. Stone (1995) suggested that schools should be re-structured to realign power so that teachers gain the power to choose curriculum, create policy and make decisions concerning the school. Through this process teachers can become more motivated and can instil the same motivation in their pupils. Marks and Seashore (1997) however warn against the empowerment of individuals in preference to empowering groups of individuals in order to prevent a small number of the

empowered creating a sub-group of power and proceeding to disempower others.

In relation to the developing world, Levin and Lockheed (2012) noted community involvement is central to effective schools and as such fostering positive relationships between teachers and parents becomes ever more important. This stakeholder relationship, however, needs careful navigation. Addi-Raccah and Arviv-Elyashiv (2008) warned that when parents become more involved in their children's education and are more empowered, teachers can often feel scrutinised due to parents' interference and this can be counterproductive. However, Cairney (2010) counters this perception and claims that often schools, because they initiate many integration programmes, tend to dominate and seek conformity from parents to school expectations. It is therefore important to build teacher-parent relations. This should involve managing parents' perceptions of their involvement and the perceptions of the teachers, and concerted efforts should be made to value and encourage genuine collaboration (Cairney, 1994, 2010 and Addi-Raccah and Arviv-Elyashiv, 2008).

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of empowerment to consider is that of empowering the child. Indeed Cairney (2010) warned that in order for the relationship to be maximised, new ways to understand the complexities between the two social settings where children spend most of their lives needs to be understood. McCowan (2011) drawing on experiences from Brazil and Aikman from the Philippines (2011) note that building this relationship is critical to avoid participation as tokenism. Whilst this key relationship appears crucial, the ideology of these stakeholder groups working in effective partnership is beset by a number of problems. In her field research in Zambia Chiwela (2011) highlights the challenges, considered pan African and in relation to child empowerment, namely: the cultural attitude (children should remain silent in the presence of adults); lack of knowledge (of implementation of participation due to lack of models); political influence (maintaining the status quo); ignorance and illiteracy (low confidence and capacity of parents to participate themselves). This issue was also experienced in Integrated Centres of Public Education in Brazil (Leonardos, cited in Levin and Lockheed, 1993). Whilst not providing solutions or remedies to these challenges, these studies certainly highlight some

important and relevant obstacles which will need to be considered in this research.

Article 12 provides for *'the right for the child or young person to have a voice in decisions relating to them, both as an individual and collectively'*. What perhaps is a moot point (Thomas, 2012) when considering this right is hidden in the small print, in Article 12. It refers to participation to be given *'due weight in accordance to the age and maturity of the child'* and this is rather ambiguous. There appears little clarification of the rather subjective values of *'maturity'* and *'due weight'* - a key point and one which may often be used to constrain empowerment, as interpretation depends on an adult understanding of a child's capacity. That said, participation is a fundamental right which should be respected by each country that has ratified The Convention and therefore the challenge exists to create a child's rightful space to make decisions. However, Cheney (2011) highlights that

'while many organizations, governmental and non-governmental, are working hard to promote children's rights in Uganda, they often find it counterintuitive to work with children on even a semi-equal level, opting instead to implement children's rights according to the 'best interest principle', which posits that the fulfilment of children's rights must still lie in the hands of adults who know what is best for children'. (p169)

In order to empower the child, social attitudes and constructs will need to be evaluated. de Wall and Argenti (2002), Cheney (2007) and Achillu (2010), discussed the role of the child and their relative social status within the family. It is often shaped by a highly patriarchal structure in which power rests with the head of the family (usually the father), who has power over the child (even more so the girl child). In the *'typical'* African family, children are often seen but their voices are rarely heard or considered when decisions by the family are made (Cheney, 2007). According to Lundy (2007) the concept of voice needs: space (opportunity to express a view); voice (enabling the expression of views); audience and influence. These present particular challenges to children in Africa (Chiwela, 2011). Creating spaces could be part of a rights-based approach, in terms of UNCRC, but there are challenges to extending this beyond

tokenistic gestures to give children a platform. The critical challenge in Uganda is the cultural challenge of children being given genuine audience by those who will not only listen but take action upon what is expressed. This struggle for children to make words carry meaning (Kellett, 2010) is not insignificant and requires a deeper understanding of social and cultural attitudes towards children before even extending towards creating child-friendly spaces to provide self-advocacy. This presents a key area to explore within the research. In respect to the views of the child in Uganda, the UN in 1996 reported:

‘A study of the rights of the child at the village level, the participants agreed that it was a good idea to listen and to consult children in decisions affecting them. It was, however, expressed that most people in the community do not respect the views of children - their time has not come’ (p36)

Empowering the child within the family therefore appears a critical element to empowerment in wider social contexts. Indeed, the UN (1996) notes if the parent listened to the child this would greatly enhance respect for the child’s knowledge and empowerment. Changing the very foundation of the African family structure is no small task and cuts to the heart of the countries’ core values. Empowering a child within the family unit, will be challenging, at the very least. There is a fundamental conflict in Africa between what is considered to be an idea (as highlighted in the extract from UN 1996 report above) from the west and the manifestation in reality where it appears little has changed in terms of attitudes towards children in Africa in almost a decade since the report.

The empowerment of each of the stakeholders within education will demand a high level of change and some (particularly in a Ugandan context) may not be prepared for this nor indeed capable of such a transition. This may well be perceived as an interference by the west in Ugandan matters. In Uganda, there exists a culture dominated by strength, dominance, assertiveness and egoism associated with particular forms of masculinity. Change from a national perspective is highly challenging and as it is established there will likely be resistance to change per se. When bringing this into the education system

specifically, Aikman warns that understanding the complexities of power (echoing Gaventa, 2009 and Toll, 2009) is vital to unlocking the engagement of pupils in decision making and changing the perceptions and practices of those who wield power is the key challenge. Barron-Pastor (2011) Smith (2011) and Carnie (2011) as part of their studies in the UK highlighted resistance to change by teachers and infer a fear-based cynicism held by them about the scale to which pupils can be empowered. Fear of change and loss of power can foster a sense of helplessness and vulnerability (Carnie, 2011). This can make teachers feel resistant and dismissive of radical concepts such as pupils making decisions. This is disappointing because as Dhankar (2011) notes teachers (should) play a critical (and positive) part in empowering pupils as decision makers as children are not able to do this unaided.

The section so far has discussed the contemporary debate relating to empowerment in education and argued it is considered to be essential in enabling stakeholders to actively participate. Also highlighted is the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration in relation to a pupil's education to include: governments, schools, teachers, communities and parents, but questions whether the pupil should/could also play a part. This raises the potential to discuss whether children can be empowered to participate in decisions which relate to them and a discussion will now focus on discourse surrounding children as decision makers.

2.6.2 Why Should Pupils Be Empowered?

Often reasons cited for not empowering children is that they lack the capacity to make decisions, or in the Ugandan context they are not considered mature enough to have something to say. Yet growing evidence suggests children can and should make decisions. Susan Danby's work from Australia in 2002 and later in Danby et al., (2007) identifies that children manage their interactive spaces through rule production and enforcement. They are constantly in the processes of negotiating and constructing their own social orders, such as initiating strategies for making friends (Danby et al., 2012) and reflecting upon decisions made, such as exhibiting regret (Lee et al., 2012). Furthermore, Checkoway (2010) would argue that children simply care about what is happening around

them, particularly in school, where they spend a considerable proportion of their lives. Children often demonstrate understanding of power and Danby et al. (2009) draw attention to the fact that children claim ownership of materials to increase their power (an early acknowledgement that assets are important) and furthermore they negotiate participatory rights (who can play), interactive place spaces (where they can play) and the rules associated with play (the boundaries). It could be argued that the child becomes the expert at navigating their social world and that this world replicates that of the adult world around them. Danby (2002) however argues that children in classrooms and even at home (Danby and Farrell, 2004; Danby et al 2007; Checkoway 2010) operate within the physical boundaries of space, resources and time, all framed and influenced by adult and institutional practices. Indeed Lee et al. (2012) found that children use meta-cognition (the awareness and regulation of the process of the learners thinking) to solve many problems daily. However, their conditional knowledge (when and why to use strategies) and their procedural knowledge (how to use strategies) is often influenced by parents' behaviour in the same given situation (in this experiment monetary decision-making). In a Ugandan context this can often mean that the child is heavily influenced, perhaps dominated by their parents and teachers and elders in the home and within school. This could mean that the child becomes trapped in a repetitive cycle of behaviours and decision making that replicates their elders, rather than implementing their own decision. Awareness of this factor may well impede this research as it may necessitate a change in the very fabric of Ugandan society, which is unrealistic. However, the findings of the study could serve as a catalyst for small-scale change by raising awareness of the level of cognition in children, which is perhaps often underestimated.

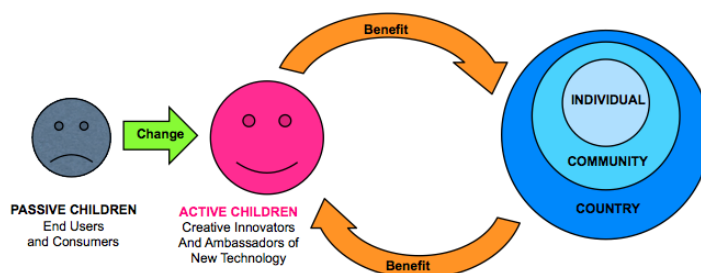
Adults and parents in particular influence culture which surrounds children but evidence presented in this section suggests children can independently be innovative and creative problem solvers.

A recent project, The Creative Leap Process (fig 6) demonstrates children actively developing innovations thus highlighting their capabilities as decision makers.

Fig 6 - The Creative Leap Process

This joint project between UNHCR, Save the Children and GIZ at the Kyaka II refugee settlement in Uganda elicits ideas and innovation from the children through age-appropriate methods (involving 6-10 and 11-16-year olds) and techniques to develop strategies to create a more child friendly, child specific and participatory protection process for refugee children (HiF, 2012). Since the inception of the project in April 2012 development partners are paving the way for children as innovators and have created a buzz in the development community in this respect. Indeed, Developing World Children Project is a strategic initiative of Keio-NUS CUTE Centre which focusses on children in developing countries as change agents who take a leadership role to improve their countries and communities (Ng, 2010). The project very much aspires to children becoming creative innovators and ambassadors of new technologies who will develop and originate radical solutions to improve themselves, their communities and countries. This vision is achieved through Creative Leap, a strategic initiative, posing three main think tracks: Think (strategy) - Make (Design) - Do (Workshop) with Change as the central focus.

The Creative Leap Process of Empowered Children in Developing Countries



In an educational context, consideration should be given as to the reasons for empowering pupils as decision makers. There should be consensus amongst stakeholders as to the mutual gain of having a more empowering structure, a mutual purpose if you will. There are indications that empowering pupils produces more economically productive citizens, depending on your view of the purpose of education (UNDP, 2014). Stone (1995) and Fennimore (2007) argue that empowering children should improve their view of learning and creates an environment where children [and teachers] become intrinsically motivated,

responsible and independent through creating a culture of respect, validation and success. Furthermore, Stone (1995) asserts that empowering children would actually free the teacher to join children in facilitating growth, rather than constantly monitoring, directing and supervising the children's learning and behaviour - a distinct move away from '*banking*' (Freire, 1996). From the perspective of the school, one could also explore the notion that engaging pupils may contribute towards the quality of the school, through greater pupil engagement (attendance and completion) and higher achievement.

Quality is very difficult and a much-disputed metric (Tikly, 2011) as discussed within section 2.2. Tikly (2011) and Levin and Lockheed (2012) assert that quality education arises from the interconnections between three overlapping elements: the policy, the school and the home/community. Barrett (2011) argues that the measurement of quality should reflect more qualitative indicators, but this may prove troublesome as they will become measurements of professional judgement. Alexander (2015) suggests that definitions of quality lack reference to pedagogy and this has prevailed for far too long. However, whilst somewhat dated, what is widely cited, although not universally shared as a guidance on quality, is the UNICEF and SDG indicators, as outlined:

- Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate*, learn and are supported by their families and communities
- Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive and provide adequate resources and facilities
- Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills
- Processes through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches, well managed classrooms, skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities
- Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society.
(UNICEF, 2000 and UNDP, 2014)

*It is important to note that participation as defined in this context is most likely to mean attendance and access, a very international development community notion of participation.

However, for the reasons stated earlier in the literature review (section 2.4.5), Uganda finds quality as proposed above challenging. For example, having healthy well-nourished children is not always possible in a country with such a high level of poverty. Many children walk several miles to school without a breakfast to sustain them and resources mean that school environments continue to be dilapidated and often dangerous to children. The curricula are constantly being revised to reflect different changes in national and international policy and teachers, as acknowledged by the government, are often poorly trained and highly demotivated (MoES, 2010). Educational outcomes are affected by significant pupil drop out. This situation presents a real challenge to Uganda (and other developing nations) as the indicators of quality posed by UNICEF appear to be almost utopian and, in many cases, simply unattainable. Therefore, this creates a dilemma of how can developing nations meet such standards given the constraints both financial and physical that are evident. Countries like Uganda constantly fall short (of the MDGs for example) of such international metrics perhaps because they are simply unrealistic.

An important question, in addition to metrics which define quality, is who judges quality: independent inspectors; internal audits or parents? But does there exist a space for the pupils to contribute and perhaps influence change and praise good practice? This potentially raises a possibility for pupils to contribute to the assessment of the quality in school (i.e. what happens in the classroom experience) and of school (which could be considered results/outcome based). There are many examples in the west, of studies which explore greater pupil participation, developing the democratic environment needed to empower pupils (Fowler, 2011) and education quality. In journalist Cushman's publication 'Fires in the Bathroom' (2003) she provides insight into the experience of 40 pupils greater involvement to demonstrate the benefits to the teacher and the pupil of greater involvement. Observing a situation from a pupil's perspective can be vital in developing the pupil as an individual. Cushman warns that if pupils feel shut out by not being understood or involved in decisions about school structures and policies, or they feel disrespected, they could sabotage any initiative by not co-operating. This is unlikely to happen in a Ugandan context, given the culture of the country, where children possess very little power and are taught to respect and obey their elders. However, what is

of relevance from this small-scale publication is the benefit of taking a different perspective and reviewing education from the eyes of the pupil, not a parent, teacher or head teacher.

Evidence collected by Mager and Nowak (2012) and Thomas (2012) identified that the strongest beneficial effects of participation on pupils and schools were found through participation in councils (if pupils are taken seriously) and class decision making, with fewer benefits experienced through participation in wider school decisions. Checkoway (2010) and Mager and Nowark (2012) also identified in their empirical research that moderate evidence exists for the positive effects of pupil participation on life skills, self-esteem and social status, democratic skills and citizenship (also Naker, 2009; Barron-Pastor, 2011; Fowler, 2011 and Yamashita et al., 2011), pupil adult relationships and school ethos. However, Yamashita et al (2011), argue that participation needs to extend beyond the tokenistic, with the remedy not just being about a school council, which provides a chosen minority with voice and power (Checkoway 2010), but is related to a change in culture (also Chiwela, 2011) and power infused social constructs (Aikmen, 2011).

2.6.3 How are Pupils Empowered?

There are several examples of initiatives which promote the principle of democracy underpinned through participation of the pupil, parents, communities, employers and political leaders. '*Rights Respecting Schools*' (UNICEF 2013) and Good Schools (Naker 2009) engage pupils more broadly in quality metrics, but these are not universally adopted. Engaging pupils in research is a way of developing meaningful relationships, understanding and participation (Danby, 2004; Springate and Lindridge, 2011; and Lolichen, 2011). Danby and Farrell (2004) argue that often in research contexts adults and teachers speak on behalf of the child even although the child could be considered a competent witness to their own lives. Harber (2011) argues that despite overwhelming evidence and projects (such as those highlighted below) genuine participation is rare. Harber (2004) attributes this to the persistence of an authoritarian based model of education which prevails throughout the world. Indeed, in '*Schooling as Violence*' he calls for a system reform to ensure a more

democratic approach to resolving conflicts, heralding an education enshrined in the values of peace and democracy. Much of what Harber (2004, 2011) argues holds true as it would appear that empirical evidence of empowerment in education (such as the examples in figs 7, 8 and 9) take place within the informal sector. As Harber suggests the informal sector has the adaptability by its nature to lend itself towards empowerment, but it could be argued that much could be learned (and adopted) by the formal education sector in relation to the pedagogies and approaches to teaching and learning adopted by these projects.

Figure 7, 8 and 9 illustrate some of the projects which have served to empower children.

Fig 7 - The YES Project

A 3 year after- school community-based project designed to promote problem solving skills, social action and civic participation amongst underserved elementary school youth's in West County Costa, California (Wilson et al 2008). Within this project are embedded opportunities to develop skills and competencies, confidence, connection, caring and contribution to the community.

'The core values of the project rely on building children's active involvement in participatory approaches to social action to help them develop stronger future orientation and creating a sense of cohesion with and influence over their world' (ibid, 2008)

Fig 8 - Farmer Field School (FFS)

The FFS approach, which is adopted in 27 countries in Africa and according to Friis-Hansen and Duveskog (2012) uses a learner centred, problem-based approach of teaching involving field observations. Their empirical evidence gathered from FFS projects in Kenya (NALEP), Uganda (NAADS) and Tanzania (ASDP) would suggest group-based learning can lead to empowerment and increased well-being and poses that many lessons can be learned from such projects in relation to supporting informal education and community learning.

Blaak et al. (2012) discuss two further non-formal education projects within Uganda that target out-of-school youths and deliver vocational skills training. Their empirical evidence suggests the projects have enhanced what is considered practical empowerment - that is acquiring marketable and business skills, and decision-making and social skills and developing an awareness of one's position and rights in society, self-esteem and assertiveness. They (2012) argue that this kind of empowerment is manifested through individual and collective agency and suggests all education should offer the opportunity to develop these skills, knowledge and attitudes to support the country's national development alongside traditional curricula. Classroom observations of the projects demonstrate an adaptive teaching environment and methods and changing teaching pedagogies, language and content according to the participants within the group. What appears important within these projects is that the teacher does not make these unilateral decisions; it would appear that decisions are made in consultation with the participants.

Fig 9 Student Centred Research - Uganda

Uganda was praised for the use of action research led by children, in a UNICEF paper in 2000, in which a joint project with USAID identified how quality could be improved by participation of children. The pupils of a school identified a problem of 'tardiness' within the school and set about researching and collecting data to map the routes and distances tardy children travelled. This pupil-led research project resulted in systems being devised to reduce tardiness, including more punctual pupils teaming up with those who were slower and lived nearby.

The literature presented draws from several empirical examples and literary discussions from across the world and appears generally supportive of the movement towards greater empowerment of children and their ability to make decisions in areas which concern them. It is not, however, simply about transition from non-empowered to empowered, but more of a graduated continuum, which moves in the right direction. What is often conflicting in evidence is how we empower children in a given context. Evidence is rather sparse in relation to the benefits of participation and a number of authors, including Harber (2011), Yamashita et al. (2011) and Mager and Nowark (2012) note that there are few attempts to measure the quality and benefit of pupil participation calling for further longitudinal and experimental research. This apparent conflict creates a blurring of the lines in terms of what is considered good practice as there appears no universally '*successful*' (a measurement which is highly subjective) method for enhancing empowerment, or indeed if it is of benefit at all.

What is of greater relevance to this study is that to date there are few specific examples of empowerment of children in Uganda which relate to mainstream education. This is an area in which few studies have specifically been conducted. Perhaps this can be attributed to the fact that the country is still addressing other inequities such as empowerment of women, and this could provide 'competition' to the concept of empowering children. Challenges arise as to whether current social structures and norms may influence people to consider or dismiss the empowering of children as being too much, too soon. Therefore, spaces simply cannot be conceptualised, and the very notion is overwhelmed by constraints and limitations. This is a core focus of the research questions of this study. However, this does not mean that the very ideal of empowering children should be postponed for future consideration, or indeed dismissed because it is idealist. The very core of this thesis will explore the opportunities and constraints of empowering children.

2.7 Conclusion of Literature Review

The literature review has drawn from the work of a number of contemporary authors, research studies, theoretical concepts and publications and has attempted to synthesise and extrapolate relevant, challenging and accurate information to demonstrate an understanding of the related topics at hand. The literature has been obtained from widespread sources, national and international journals, texts and studies. These were needed to consolidate a clear picture of the current vista so as to develop a rich context and as an aid in achieving the aims and objectives of this study.

The structure of the literature review laid initial foundations on human rights, from which the right to education and quality education evolved. It then progressed to an exploration of empowerment generally and in education to establish potential links between pupil participation and quality, a move which requires greater pupil empowerment (a particularly contentious movement). The review concluded with an analysis of contemporary literature relating to the potential of children participating in decisions about their education.

The literature in respect of Human Rights presented some interesting considerations. In terms of the implementation of human rights and despite being criticised as universal, it does have merit in creating a global and moral framework for all to aspire towards. Human Rights is clearly a global agenda, and this extends further to provide for the rights of the child. Exercising the rights of the child is not without its complexities and there are some who would argue that children's rights should not extend beyond protection and that civil/social structures are simply not culturally ready to accept children as anything more than passive citizens. What underpins arguments for human (and child) rights are issues relating to power, voice and empowerment and what, appears, as critical is how these global agendas manifest within the individual countries and more importantly in communities and in individuals.

Embedded in the Human Rights framework is the right to education (Article 28 and 29) and it is clear that the child has a right to education and the provision of this right. Although undermined by several residual issues, it is being upheld by the Government of Uganda. What is interesting from the literature is that Uganda shows considerable commitment to education and clearly embeds education within its development plans, but what is perhaps not so clear is why the system is presently not functioning effectively in terms of quality and meeting the individual development needs of the child. This apparent discrepancy between policy and practice will be analysed as part of a public policy analysis.

It has been argued within the literature review that quality education is underpinned by multi-stakeholder participation (Tikly, 2011) and to enable individuals or collectives to participate empowerment is a critical factor. Empowerment as defined by development agencies is related to enhancing capacity to participate and influence key decisions affecting the individual (Sen, 1999 and Oxfam, 2005). The very notion of empowerment is coloured by power dynamics that exist due to inequity in societies. In order to empower either individually or collectively the nature of social constructs of power in the surrounding vicinity fall into conflict (Hardy and O'Sullivan, 1998; Boje and Risile, 2001; Wong, 2003 and Gaventa, 2005) It is clear from the literature that empowerment occurs in a context which includes multiple dimensions and

stakeholders (Gaventa, 2005, 2006, 2011) and tools such as the 'PowerCube' are often used to explore these dimensions in the development field. As part of this conflict, relationships must be evaluated and re-structured which may mean that those with '*power-over*' need to re-focus on partnerships and collaboration, that is to say, become more '*power-with*'.

When reflecting on and consolidating the literature I find myself agreeing with Sen (1999) in that empowering individuals and collective empowerment are considered to be a positive step towards a 'healthy' democratic society. Encouragement should be given to developing nations to take such steps. I also believe that education plays a vital role in building a democratic society and therefore it could be argued from this perspective that since education is vital for such countries' continued development it would be entirely appropriate to empower those within the [democratic] education system as a starting point. By empowering key stakeholders within the system, a positive learning environment can be created which will prepare future citizens to participate in wider social aspects of their lives (UNESCO, 2014). It is clear from the literature that three crucial relationships will need to be addressed when exploring the feasibility of empowerment in education, namely the reciprocal relationships between the school, parent and the child. In relation to the school, further exploration is needed to develop empowered teachers within the system to transition from its authoritarian shackles (Harber, 2004, 2011). Power dynamics within social structures (family unit) may need to be renegotiated to actively involve children and also the relationships between teachers and parents. The final relationship is that of the teacher and the pupil, whereby literature would clearly indicate benefits from empowering pupils and empirical evidence would suggest various projects 'successfully' adopting an empowerment approach. But are these bold and ambitious changes culturally feasible?

Africa and indeed Uganda are clearly focussed on providing access to education (fulfilling participation in one sense), but there is little evidence of pupils exercising their rights within it. Encouraging research presented within the review and within Uganda and other parts of the world has demonstrated several projects which have been 'successful' in terms of reaping both tangible and psychological benefits for all involved. But a critical question which remains is

the actual measurement of success in terms of empowerment projects. All too often it is not specifically clear who has benefitted and how, particularly from a longitudinal perspective.

If children can become empowered as the literature suggests, then one must consider in what capacity children can make decisions. The final element of the literature review summarised the critical debates surrounding children as decision makers and made use of multiple studies, some of which have been undertaken in Africa. What is interesting from the literature is that many of the studies (of which this thesis will be one) regardless of geographical location have experienced similar challenges and there appears much that can be learned by sharing such experiences. The literature indicates that children have the capacity to make decisions regarding their social world and this easily includes decisions relating to their education. Children have the capacity to understand (and replicate) social and power structures and negotiate these on a regular basis. Therefore, a compelling argument exists that children should be respected and engaged as participants in decisions that affect them through recognition in the 'adult' social world too. However, despite encouraging supporting empirical studies in this regard, evidence suggests it is just not happening and we need to understand why (Harber, 2004, 2011).

There are obvious opportunities regarding the implementation of pupil participation programmes, such as councils and making local decisions in the classroom. But these can only be implemented by taking into account certain considerations including the social and political structures surrounding the pupil and whether the school, parents and the community can work cohesively together. Thomas (2012) highlights what he describes as the Yin and Yang of participatory theory namely the dependency between participation in everyday life and as something in more formal institutions. Underpinning these support structures are power structures whether visible or hidden that may subvert or influence those involved against involvement of pupils or dismiss the concept as idealist. A key theme underpinning the literature is that of power and what was of critical importance to this research thesis was developing an understanding of the specific power dynamics and relationships which exist within the spaces and

places which constitute the research parameters. Understanding of these power structures was essential before attempting to understand culture and practice.

Change itself can bring about resistance and teachers may feel particularly fearful and vulnerable as pupils are perceived to become more powerful and therefore may become more resistant. Parents may feel unwilling to participate themselves, due to their own fears and inhibitions and therefore as a strong influence over the child may discourage or disillusion them from wanting to be involved. Each of these factors needs careful consideration and management to understand whether such barriers can be overcome.

What could potentially support a change towards involving pupils is a more widespread understanding of the benefits of doing so. From an intrinsic perspective studies demonstrated increased self-esteem, confidence and the ability to interact with adults. From an extrinsic perspective pupil's gain skills to become active democratic citizens, an agenda which underpins the development policies of many African nations. However, evidence of deepening democracy is lacking and there are calls for further studies to support this movement. This research thesis may add to the present and steadily growing research corpus.

To conclude, the literature review supported the objectives of this research thesis from a theoretical perspective in a number of ways. Roche (1999), Freeman (2000, 2002) and Nieuwenhuys (2008) asserted that new approaches were needed to understand and advance individual and collective rights. In the advancement of such rights, De Waal (2002), Temba and De Waal (2002), Lundy (2007) and Achilihu (2010) suggested a social movement was required which engaged a range of actors to emancipate children and change traditional perceptions and attitudes towards them. Harber, (2004, 2011), Danby (2002, 2007, and 2009) and others clearly made the case for such 'emancipation' to recognise and engage pupils as active decision makers.

Finally, in terms of the rationale for this study the literature highlights that evidence is lacking in regard to children as decision makers generally and particularly in a Ugandan context. There were calls for further studies to support and examine the capacity and practicalities of engaging children as decision

makers (Harber, 2011; Mager and Nowark, 2011 and Yamashito et al., 2011;) or there becomes a risk of the movement being considered a romantic ideology. It is intended, therefore, that this research thesis adds to the present and steadily growing academic research corpus and stimulates discussion relating to existing cultural structures surrounding the child in Uganda and particularly in relation to education to consider change towards, as Harber (2004) poses, peace and democracy across Uganda.

In the context of these theories and this evidence, this study is based on the following broad question:

To investigate the extent to which Ugandan pupils participate as decision makers in education

To attempt to attempt to address the aim, the following research questions were formed:

To what extent does national development and education policy create spaces and opportunities for pupil participation in decision making?

What can be learned about education in Uganda from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders, including pupils?

To what extent do pupils have the capacity and opportunity to make decisions which relate to them in education?

To what extent do existing cultural, relationship and structural frameworks enhance or inhibit pupil participation in decision making?

By answering these research questions, it enabled me to explore the feasibility of participation in decision making by pupils within education in a small number of Ugandan schools and to evaluate the potential of embedding pupil participation in decision making within the school alongside current decision-making structures and in wider education policy.

Chapter 3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology of the study and the rationale relating to the selections made.

A thorough and well-considered methodology is crucial to any research. The defining criteria for making methodological selections were shaped by the overarching research paradigms inherent in my beliefs, in terms of ontological and epistemological perspectives. Furthermore, the research methods were selected for *'fitness for purpose'* in order to address the issues at the core of this research, which according to Cohen et al. (2011) is crucial.

The chapter initially presents an indication of the research paradigm involved, reflecting my own basic beliefs and the broad research agenda, which determined the course of the research. The chapter then discusses the research methods initially proposed and captures the process of refinement (via a series of pilot studies), which informed the final design. There were a multitude of differing research methods that could have been utilised in this research and this chapter explores some of the possibilities, the rationale behind their de-selection and also reinforces and justifies the final research design. The choices made have taken into account the role of the researcher, which according to Sikes (cited in Opie, 2003, p16) is to:

'..Investigate, to find things out, to interpret findings and to make sense of the aspect(s) of the world they are focussing on'

The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations which underpinned all aspects of the methodology.

3.1 Research Paradigms and Design Considerations

When considering the perspective from which I commenced this research, I felt it was important to identify first the research paradigms which are inherently characteristic to my own worldview. By understanding my own worldview and the perspective from which I was approaching this study, I could make sense of the methodological approaches available to me to ensure meaningful research. It was important at an early stage also for me to consider if my own beliefs would support the research aim, or indeed whether I may need to take an alternative perspective for the benefit of the study. In reflecting on my own perspective, it became clear that whilst I appreciate taking an objective approach to research, to possess tangible evidence that supports rational actions can form a reality, I believe that people may well share the same experiences, live within the same political and power structures, yet each may interpret their surrounds in quite a unique and individual way. Obviously, these individual views may be shaped and influenced by other factors, such as other people's realities (governments, family, friends), but in my opinion meaning is ascribed by your own interpretations of what occurs around you and how that affects you. I am intrigued by how other people view the world surrounding them, as this may well differ from my perspective of their world and this in particular interested me. Additionally, I am interested in what influences people's reality, how it changes and why, which contribute to the reasons I am passionate about understanding the perspectives of those who perhaps do not have opportunity often to share this with others.

Therefore, having reflected at length, I deduced that I lean towards an interpretive stance and that this may well be appropriate to the research. This paradigm according to Opie (2008), Cohen et al (2011) and Burton et al., (2008) obtains facts and insights into how an individual creates, modifies and interprets their world. Indeed Burton et al., (2008) states that interpretive research aims to

'Explore perspectives and shared meanings to develop insights and a deeper meaning of a phenomena in the social world' (p85)

This paradigm is subjective, meaning that we see the world through our own construction of it (Lichtman, 2013). It is based on a social constructivist ontology (nature or essence of social reality) in which reality is constructed by the observer (ibid) and an epistemology (the nature of knowledge) that

‘Recognises the multiple realities, agentic behaviour and importance of understanding a situation through the eyes of participants’ (Cohen et al., 2011, p116).

Interpretive research naturally lends itself towards more qualitative research methods, as opposed to the positivistic approach which, according to Opie (2008) tends towards the collection of quantitative data and testing of hypotheses, such as data from questionnaires and hard facts from experimental work. When considering the nature of the interpretive paradigm I reflected on whether the study may take a critical approach, which according to Lichtman, (2013) has the purpose of changing social contexts. Whilst at first the emancipatory potential of this type of research may have leaned towards a critical approach to the topic, I felt that it would have been inappropriate to be critical of a system or reality until first I developed greater understanding of it. Therefore, whilst I believe that change is needed, it was not appropriate for this particular study to assume its direction and therefore I attempted to step back from the critical perspective.

In terms of the present study, it was deemed entirely *‘fit for purpose’* to gather qualitative data. The topic in question is related to understanding a pupil’s perspective (their reality) and developing an understanding of what influences and shapes their reality in terms of social structures surrounding them. It is further fitting to place the pupil perspective within a wider social context, which takes into account the views of teachers and then placing this into a further significant context of national education and development policy. As such I felt it lent itself towards a qualitative design. I argue that I could not have undertaken this study by adopting a positivist design while capturing the same depth and breadth of insight. However, in a bid to create a more robust interpretation of this reality and to support gaining insight into structures surrounding the pupil, an interpretive qualitative policy analysis was deemed to

add to the study's fitness for purpose. According to Yanow (1999) documents can provide background information and corroborate observational and interview data, which was deemed appropriate to add substance to this study.

Moreover, as I mentioned previously, I was interested in understanding people, their beliefs, their lived experience and their truth. In particular this was extremely exciting to me, given the nature of the subjects who contributed to this study. Those people involved shared their lives and gave me a unique insight into their realities. However, I was constantly aware that within this type of research design, it could have been all too easy to find that what I was investigating and observing would then be shaped by my own subjective perceptions. Therefore, what could have inevitably emerged could have been my version of their reality. So how could I know that I was researching the truth? This troubled me. According to Hattiangadi (2010), the love of truth should not be the proper epistemological goal anyway and that knowledge is more crucial: '*We should not aim merely to believe the truth; we should aim to know it*' (ibid, 2010, p422). Additional approaches, such as meta-synthesis, saturation and returning to participants for verification, may assist in establishing when 'we know' (May, 1994). On this basis, I was conscious that I must be careful in my design to ensure that the truth of those engaged in the study was faithfully represented as an interpretation of human experience (meta-synthesis) to as great an extent as possible and this, I believe, was achieved through a robust research design and ethical framing which included verifying my interpretations and results with the participants (Cutcliffe and McKenna, 2002).

I was aware that even with a robust design and verification, there could be material distortions in the truth, for example social desirability responses, which according to Frey and Oishi (1995) occur when respondents give answers because they believe it is what they should say or what the researcher wants to hear. Equally I was mindful of bias, which according to Sica (2006) affects validity; it exists in all types of research and takes a number of forms. In the context of any research, bias can occur either consciously and overtly, or unconsciously, which according to Pollard (1991) is

'Where as a result of normal cognitive processing and stereotypical associations the subject may be completely unaware of biased responses.'
(p1)

Just by being aware of the difficulty in establishing truth (or 'knowing') and the underlying potential for bias Sica (2006) suggests, will allow a more meaningful scrutiny of the results and conclusions of my research.

When adopting a qualitative approach, I was aware of several other criticisms, as summarised by Cohen et al. (2011), which assert that qualitative research: abandons scientific procedure or verification; is micro-sociological; and often does not take into account the power of external structures and forces which shape behaviour and events. Indeed, this final criticism was refuted by this research design, as the very core of the research questions was to explore notions of power (and its impacts) from the participant perspective and the policy analysis helps to frame their views. However, in support of qualitative research in education, Freebody (2003, p32) argues that *'education is about people and their inherent 'qualities' that influence and shape their world'* and furthermore it could be considered that the logical constraints of quantitative research could leave out important aspects of the 'personal' and experiential of a phenomenon or situation. This could limit the potential for application to professional practice due to the *'stripped down portrayals'* (ibid, 2003, p37) of this research paradigm. This research sought to understand experience and opinion and capture it in a creative and dynamic manner, which could inform future professional practice and as such it was deemed that quantitative data collection methods could not capture this in a meaningful manner. Freebody (2003) highlights that qualitative research can capture the

'Unpredictability, idiosyncrasies and quirkiness built into the experiential life world of human beings' (p37)

The design of the final research methods demanded critical analysis of the multiple methods available to the researcher to obtain qualitative data. Methods immediately deemed as inappropriate included experiments, tests, meta-analysis and systematic analysis and ex-facto research (analysis of an

effect), due to their quantitative leanings and not really being considered as yielding the rich context desired. However, some methods, such as action research, ethnography and case study were considered, but on reflection, were de-selected.

Action research, according to Opie (2008, p79) '*enables a reflective cyclic process to be brought to bear on the understanding of a problem at hand*'. The general process of action research follows a staged design of problem analysis. This involves: intervention design; implementation; monitoring; evaluating effect and then a period of reflection and modification. This method, although initially appealing to me because of the closed cycle nature and the possibility for creativity, was carefully considered and its implementation appeared far too interventionist for the sensitive nature of the research. Indeed, a practical influencing factor in addition was that I would probably not be in the position to do this. Firstly, action research is often more appropriate for a practitioner in-situ to conduct (which I am not). Secondly, to complete a full cycle of action research significant and extended time within Uganda would be needed to provide any meaningful findings, which simply was not possible for me to execute. Furthermore, Cohen et al. (2011) debate the potential for emancipatory action research (which was clearly appealing to the research), however, warn that it can be value-laden, lacks neutrality and has an agenda of changing the status quo. Indeed, reflecting on this method, it felt inappropriate and slightly idealistic, as well as rather ambitious from my position, to implement a system within the Ugandan context to challenge social norms and education policy. Furthermore, I considered that whatever would emerge would be highly westernised in design and I hold the firm belief that should a system be implemented to capture the voice of pupils, it should evolve out of collaboration of local stakeholders not because of an outsider's influence, ambition and pressure.

Also appealing was the prospect of conducting an ethnographic case study. Ethnography, according to Cohen et al. (2011) is linked to natural and social science and is aimed at describing and analysing practices, beliefs of cultures and communities. Within ethnomethodology contexts are rich and enable the researcher to develop meaningful understanding of how people make sense of

their everyday world (Freebody, 2003 and Cohen et al., 2011). An ethnographic design was considered appealing to me in order to elicit rich experiential data from the children who experience schooling on a daily basis, but also to develop wider understanding of the cultural context from the teachers' perspective and glean ideas as to the extent of engaging pupils as decision makers. It was also appealing due to its flexible nature, although the researcher was mindful that criticisms by ethnographic sceptics raise questions of representation and legitimisation. However, a critical factor which influenced my consideration was that ethnographies tend to require immersion in a culture or environment for extended periods of time (Lichtman, 2013). This was not practically possible for me to execute, given my own circumstances and constraints and therefore, I questioned whether I could really complete a robust and valid ethnographic study. Unfortunately, I felt that I could not. However, within my limited time frame, I proposed to work within the spirit of ethnography in terms of developing an understanding of my participants' realities at school.

A case study was then considered as an alternative appropriate approach, which could capture a particular instance of educational experience (perhaps over a shorter period of time than an ethnography) and could attempt to gain theoretical and professional insights (Freebody, 2003). Case studies, according to Opie (2008, p74) enable the provision of interactions of a single instance in an enclosed system, with the focus on either a single person, a group within a setting with the emphasis on a real situation, with real people. Case studies can be exploratory, explanatory or descriptive, but the features are its focus on attempting to document the naturalistic experience of the participants. This approach seemed ideal to me, until I started to question the practicalities of the study and underpinning research aims. Often in case studies there is a particular behaviour, entity, trait or characteristic (Lichtman, 2013) which is considered, but my research was more multi-dimensional than that. For example, in a study undertaken in 2004, conducted by Backett-Milburn and Harden, they used a sample of families from Scotland and East Lothian. The families chosen for the analysis were distinguished by two axes - location (urban/rural) and family structure (lone/dual parent). These axes were chosen to reflect '*the most prominent structural distinctions between families within the sample as a whole*' (p430). As my intentions were to consider three variables, the pupils,

the teachers and the socio-cultural structures which surround them and therefore considered: what would be the case? I was not considering a specific school, a pupil's trait, or an individual pupil. I was intending to research multiple parameters and therefore, found myself in a position where case study too did not seem to fit.

I found myself concerned that my research did not really fit into one of the previously pre-defined research methods designs and I was faced with the decision to re-frame the research to conform to the generally accepted parameters or keep with what I intended. After much reflection I developed some confidence that I would be happy to proceed with the thesis framed around a *qualitative study*, without a particular design label, but drawing on a range of approaches.

3.2 Initial Research Design

At the outset of the research I formed an initial conception of the research methods I intended to adopt. This will be explained and justified in this first section. The research design was first refined as a result of my reflections on the results and procedures adopted as part of the various pilot stages of the study. Further refinements were made based on continual reflection of process until the final research design emerged, which is shared in the later part of this chapter (section 3.4).

In my initial design I intended to conduct a policy analysis, which would be complimented by observations and interviews to give greater substance to the study. The policy review was intended to corroborate or refute the observational and interview data and provide a greater depth to my analysis and a richer context to the findings. As a result, section 3.2.1 (below) captures my intended approach to analysing Ugandan education policy and the wider research design.

3.2.1 Public Policy Analysis

The first stage of the policy analysis was to select an appropriate policy to analyse, which may sound rather straightforward and logical. However, due to the many changes within Uganda, post-independence, coupled with interventions by global NGO's, there were many policies, plans and strategies which have been published.

I therefore consulted several documents, both government and scholarly, which explained public policy formation and outlined existing education policies. Table 3 identifies key milestones and policies which emerged over the years which had led to government practice at the time of the study.

I elected for inclusion in the analysis the most recent Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2010-2015 as this key document related to national development priorities for the same period as the study. I further included content analysis of the National Development Plan II, as this gave me indications of education strategy for the coming years (up to 2020) and beyond the expiration of the ESSP. As part of the content analysis I interrogated the documents to identify contradictions, tone and identify spaces of hope for children in education.

Table 3: Collated Policy Documents

These were the documents which were considered for inclusion in the policy review

Date	Policy	Summary
1963	Castle Commission	Emphasis on quality of education for all, raising standard of agriculture and technical education, girls and adult education - Basis of Ugandan education policy until 1992
1992	White paper on Education	Basis of all official policy, highlights purpose of education system
1997	Universal Primary Education Government Act 1997	Education for all Decentralisation of public services
1998	Education Sector Improvement Plan	1989 - 2003 addressed implementation of UPE
1995	Education Sector Strategic Plan	2004 -2015 period identifies short to mid-term strategy
2008	Education Sector Strategic Plan (Updated)	2007 - 2015 period identifies short to mid- term strategy
2010	National Development Plan	2010/11 - 2014/15
2010	Education Sector Strategic Plan	2010-2015. Aligns sector plan with national development plan
2013	National Strategy for Girls' Education in Uganda	2015-2019 five year strategic focussed on girls' education
2015	National Development Plan II	2015/16 - 2019/20

The questions I interrogated the selected policies for inclusion were:

- How are the concepts of human rights, participation and empowerment interpreted in the documents?
- Where does evidence exist of genuine participation from all stakeholder in policy formation?
- Does opportunity exist for greater participation at community and individual level?
- How is education quality defined and measured? Does this correlate to wider definitions, such as those posed by the UNDP

- Does evidence exist of clear accountability and responsibility regarding matters of quality of education?
- Is there a clear purpose for education, aligned to national strategy?
- How is the education sector prioritised as part of national strategy?
- What evidence exists of intervention and actions beyond the rhetoric?

The themes (and codes) which emerged were:

- Contextual definitions and interpretations (CDI) - of human rights, participation, empowerment, quality
- Opportunities/spaces (OS) - for participations and empowerment
- Measurements and metrics (MM)
- Interventions and actions (IA)
- Responsibility and accountability (RA)
- Rhetoric (R)

I had considered inclusion of the girls' education paper, published in 2013, but felt that as my study was not gender focused, it was not an entirely relevant policy to analyse. Therefore, whilst it held currency in relation to the period of this study, it was excluded due to its not being specific to the study at hand.

3.2.2 Primary Research Sample

The primary research focussed on a combination of four primary schools run by the State and NGOs within Ruhanga, SW Uganda. From the Ruhanga district, the study was to focus on a specific village, Ntungamo, which has a population of approximately 31,000. The sample was purposeful and was intended to be small, in order that in the limited time available for field work, I would be able to gain depth of insight in this small range, rather than superficial insights into a larger sample of schools. By having a small sample, I was able to return to the school and the pupils on several occasions to collect data. The sample therefore included six pupils and six teachers from four different schools. The schools within the village are co-ordinated via a central school (see image 1) and within this vicinity, there are 16 schools. The sample therefore included a quarter of the schools within this location.

a more advanced linguistic ability than their younger peers. In addition, they would also hold a greater understanding and experience of the school.

Six teachers were also selected, again from P6 and P7; the reason that teachers and not head teachers were included was to enable me to gain greater insight into the environment surrounding the pupil at their school and teachers were naturally closer to this. Furthermore, the fact that decision making can happen at classroom level makes teachers critical gate-keepers in this respect (Morrow, 2008 and Mortari and Harcourt, 2012) therefore I felt this compounded my decision to include the teacher in the study. To gain further insight into the environment surrounding the pupils, I further proposed to share the research themes and initial observations in an interview with a Head teacher from each school, as they set the ethos and drive practice within schools. Their perspectives on the research I was conducting, testing the feasibility of greater empowerment of their pupils, would enable me to further my understanding of the constraints or freedoms that are afforded to teachers within their classrooms. Parents were not intended to be included, as the focus of the research was relating to specifically to the school environment and not wider social contexts.

The initial sample as outlined in this section was one of the few areas of the study that did not change throughout. I stood by the rationale for this sample during the entire study and considered it to be suited to the nature of the study and sufficient to meet the requirements of the aim and objectives.

3.2.3 Data Collection

Once I had decided that a qualitative study was an appropriate basis on which to proceed and had formed a broad plan rationalising my intended sample, I began to consider options relating to the data collection methods suited to both the pupils and their teachers to provide rich data for analysis. Popular choices I considered included questionnaires, interviews and observational research. By analysing the methods which other similar researchers had adopted and reflecting on the suitability of these to this study, I carefully selected those which were most fitting and ethically appropriate. For example, questionnaires

were considered, as they are a popular form of quantitative (and qualitative) analysis and could have yielded some interesting data. However, on reflection I wanted to be able to capture the emotional context of the participants, perhaps simple body language cues which could have enhanced the research and therefore the questionnaire seemed inappropriate. Furthermore, in relation to questionnaires, I considered at length the language in which they would be presented, local language or English? I pondered that if English were used, I could not guarantee the level of comprehension and was concerned that meaning may be lost or misunderstood by the participants. Moreover, I was concerned that a lack of flexibility of response to questionnaires meant that I may not capture the worldview I richly desired for this research.

For the research involving pupils, I had previously considered narratives and essays to capture life stories, a popular method to capture first person accounts in story form (Lichtman, 2013) but felt that the issue of language could present a problem. However, given the nature of the multiple local language dialects in Uganda I would find it near impossible to translate from local languages to any sort of written commentary, so I would have needed for it to be in English to suit the purpose. This presented an ethical concern to me as the pupils, who are in primary school would have been required to undertake an essay/written exercise in English, to be submitted to a highly educated western woman. I was concerned that this would place them under unnecessary stress, which is obviously unethical. Additionally, I was concerned by matters of the validity of a submission if the child were to take the piece home to complete (as I had envisaged) because I would not be able to guarantee that the child had indeed written the piece. Perhaps feeling under pressure to please and deliver the child may have asked someone with superior English to complete the task on their behalf. Furthermore, I was conscious that I may not fully have time to establish the appropriate relationship with the children to be able to understand the wider context (familial, social, personal) within which the story is framed, and this could again affect my being able to re-tell the story (Lichtman, 2013). I therefore decided that this method was not appropriate to my needs at this stage.

In terms of interviewing as a method, I felt that a one to one would have really enhanced the study and therefore, believed that if an interview was conducted in a highly ethical manner I could capture the individual reality of the pupils involved. I envisioned this as a critical underpinning element to my subjective qualitative study. Within the interview I hoped to capture the individual level of decision making and the perceived potential that the pupils felt they would like to engage in making decisions.

There is a growing body of support for interviewing generally within the research community. This is used, for example by family sociologists who often conduct research which generates and compares parents' and children's perspectives as a way of ensuring children's voices are heard and building an understanding of family practices and culture. I identified several researchers who had undertaken a study similar to which I intended. One example was Backett-Milburn and Harden (2004), who conducted research relating on how children and their families negotiate risk safety and danger. Backett-Milburn and Harden (2004) completed a case study analysis and conducted interviews with children to explore: children's everyday lives; fears; concerns and their attitudes to the boundaries set by parents. The study, conducted in Edinburgh and the semi-rural area of East Lothian, comprised 52 children and 42 parents from 30 households, evenly divided between the areas. Thirty-four children were aged 12 or under and 18 were 13 and over; all but two children were white, reflecting the ethnic composition of the areas.³ There were 27 boys and 25 girls. Data collected from the children's interviews helped to shape those with parents. A further study, which considered multiple perspectives on the 'family' lives of young people, was conducted by Ribbens-Mccarthy, Holland and Gillies in 2001. This study was based on interviews of nine individuals from three case study families and the project studied the family life of young people aged 16-18. The interviews identified similarities and gaps in perspectives of a given situation and the authors posed that '*researchers can make important discoveries based on silences, gaps and contradictions interviews afford*' (p15) and that multiple interviews enable one to understand how the complexities of issues are interwoven (p19). Millar and Ridge, in 2009 studied care relationships between working lone mothers and their children. Interviewing children as well as the mothers was an important part of this study. The sample was drawn from Inland

Revenue (as it then was) records between October 2002 and October 2003. Families were interviewed on two occasions, initially between January and June 2004, which included 50 lone mothers and 61 of their eight- to 14-year old children and a second time, between June and October 2005, including 44 mothers and 52 children. The mothers and children were interviewed on the same day but separately, usually with the mother first.

I acknowledge that these successful studies were all placed within a UK context, so I looked for evidence of interviewing children from further afield. I researched the methods used by Danby (2002, 2011) who had provided me with some excellent insights into children as decision makers when preparing the literature review sections. I noted that in her study with Farrell in 2007 and again in 2009 with Farrell and Cobb-Moore, interviews were used to examine how young children make sense of, and construct, rules within one early childhood classroom. In her later 2014 study with Melinda Miller and Julie Boyd, Danby undertook a qualitative study of children's and teachers' experiences of the programme in three preschools. Data was collected through an interview with the programme designer and what Danby describes as conversations with child participants of the program. This confirms that not only was the use of interviews appropriate at the time of this study, it is a legitimate and popular method in social sciences. The studies conducted by Danby, whilst in Australia (a context far removed from Africa), provided me with some confidence that the sensitive areas I intended to explore had been studied using individual interviews. At the time I decided that the only way to achieve significant data would be to talk to the pupils one to one. However, after a period of reflection I felt that interviewing a Ugandan child on a one to one basis may appear intimidating, particularly given the power dynamics between me, as the researcher (adult, western) and the child (proportionally little perceived power). The issue of language was also of consideration and the possible presence of an additional adult translator (either young or adult) seemed only to enhance the potential discomfort that an individual child may experience. As such I then considered the group interview.

The semi-structured group interview was deemed to be an appropriate alternative to a one to one and would allow the pupils to benefit from peer support and encouragement, and to interact with me in a more relaxed environment. I felt it important to hold a group interview, as an alternative to one-to-one, which would additionally serve to develop my understanding of how individuals interrelate with one another, important for my understanding of socio-cultural aspects of the surroundings. There are a number of supporting arguments for interviewing children in a group context, but also warnings that some difficulties can be encountered, such as: distractions from one another; boredom; reliability; domination and peer pressure and bullying (Vaughn et al., 1996 and Cohen et al., 2011). To avoid these Cohen et al., (2011, p435) suggest *'a group size of 6/7, duration of 15 minutes, simple language open ended questions which get to the point quickly and a sensitivity to social dynamics'*. MacLean and Harden (2014) reflected on the use of 'family group' interviews with children discussed the analytical challenges presented by the data from these interviews, in their reflections of the advantages and disadvantages of interviewing parents and children together. Their relatively small sample comprised fourteen families (fourteen mothers, eight fathers, and 16 children aged between 7 and 11 years at the inception of the research). They proposed that family group interviews gave insight into the tensions, constructions, and negotiations of relationships within the families. They concluded that group interviews are a useful and interesting method to add to the toolkit for use in research with children in the context of families. Whilst my own research differed somewhat in context, I felt that their insights provided compelling evidence that children may well contribute effectively in a group situation. Lewis explored group child interviews as a research tool in her 1992 publication and whilst somewhat dated she concluded that group interviews have several advantages over individual interviews. She proposed that they: help to reveal consensus views; may generate richer responses by allowing participants to challenge one another's views; may be used to verify research ideas or data gained through other method and may enhance the reliability of children's responses. She proposed that children may be less intimidated by talking in a group than when talking individually to an adult, particularly if the interviewer is not well known to the children. Group talk may be very natural and less stilted than in individual interviews. *'A strength of this naturalness is*

that non-responses from one child do not curtail or stop the interview. Other children take over and so the flow is sustained' (Lewis, 1992, p414). She did acknowledge, however, the difficulties in carrying out group interviews which require skilful and sensitive guidance by the interviewer. She further asserted that *'whilst there have been few reports of their use with primary-aged children her work suggested that they are a viable and useful technique with that age group'* (ibid, 1992, p415). This encouraged me greatly in my own quest for an appropriate method to collect data, but I remained conscious that many of the research papers I have read were not placed in an African context, with a non-native researcher.

I investigated further and looked towards the work of Cheney, a Dutch researcher whose work had helped to shape my literature review. Her work in Uganda between 2001 and 2011, sought to engage children in discussion of what they thought of their social positions and the ways the alarming trends that were happening in their country affected them. This study had some interesting parallels to my own in scope and context and I shared many of her own approaches to the study. She wanted her research to be collaborative, participatory and to create spaces for meaningful participation to challenge broader structures of power in research about children, *'in the hopes of making children's rights more relevant to their everyday lives'* (p167). Whilst her study was ethnographic, I noted that she interviewed Ugandan children based on illustrations they had made about their social settings. Children were organised into five focus groups, one for each class from kindergarten to fourth grade. Her findings on those children's life histories were recorded in her published book, *Pillars of the Nation* in 2007.

Having reflected on the use of interviews, empirical studies which have used them, both in group and individual form, I deduced that semi-structured group interviews were entirely appropriate for this study. I then progressed to considering the interview questions. These would be the basis of the interviews and was conscious they should be designed to reflect a child-friendly approach (Powell and Smith, 2006) and use simple language. My initial proposed questions were formed (See page 120) and I believed ready for testing and scrutiny as part of the pilot study.

Initial Proposed Pupil Interview Questions:

1. Why do you go to school?
2. What do you enjoy/not enjoy about school?
3. What changes would you make to your school? Why?
4. When do you make decisions in your day? What sort?
5. What decisions would you like to make?
6. When do adults listen to you?
7. When would you like them to listen to you?
8. What is your vision of a school of the future in Uganda?

Like Cheney, I envisaged that the group setting would enable me to make use of some additional activities, which would enable me to gain a greater insight into the environment surrounding the pupil and their capacity for decision making. I elected to use Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation, a useful tool when one considers empowerment and I hoped it would assist me in examining the pupil's perception of their position in the school and wider society. Hart's ladder of youth participation is a reflective 'tool', born of similar design to Arnstein's ladder of participation insofar as 8 'rungs' relate to increasing levels of participation ranging from manipulation through tokenism towards youth driven change and equity. Hart's ladder was designed to support adults and youths negotiating and examining why and how they can participate in communities and indeed Hart (1997, cited in Thomas, 2012) noted examples around the world, of children taking active part in social and political life with support from adults. Hart's ladder has been modified since its inception, notably by Franklin (1997), Treseder (1997) and Shier (2001), but due to the divergence of these latter models in terms of vision, the original Ladder of Participation was what I initially anticipated to be used in this particular study, as it is considered a dominant endogenous (generated by reflection within the field) model for practice (Thomas, 2012).

My original intentions in using the ladder were twofold: first, I wanted to make use of the ladder to gain greater insight into examining the potential for participation from the perspective of the child and their teacher. Secondly, I wanted to use it as a tool to assess the decision-making capabilities of the pupil. I envisaged its application would lead to the children mapping their degree of participation and this would require them to consciously make a clear decision, I further anticipated that the pupil would also be able to discuss their choice, providing an element of justification for decision making. I hoped that this would enable me to gather some useful insights to help address the research aim.

I initially intended to use a large-scale replica of the ladder, in a group exercise and as a visual aid. After explained the ladder and its rungs using child friendly language, I proposed that the pupil place themselves on the scale of where they felt they were positioned currently, using a marker pen (or sticker) and then where they would like to be. I originally anticipated that a discussion would then surround their choices. I intended to make an audio recording, to aid in transcription and analysis and some photographs of the final 'ladder' (not the children), to be included in the analysis chapter.

For the data collection for the teachers I initially proposed to mirror the design adopted with the pupils and hold a group interview at each school. The justification for this was twofold, firstly, it would aid in the comparative analysis process with the findings from the pupils. Secondly because the methods were fitting and appropriate to meet the needs of the research aim.

Initial Proposed Teacher Interview Questions:

1. Who makes decisions about education? What sort?
2. Who makes decisions about what happens in your school? What sort?
3. Who makes decisions about what happens in the classroom? What sort?
4. How could pupils participate in these decisions?
5. What types of decisions could pupils make?
6. What might be the benefit/disadvantages be of including pupils in decisions?

My initial intention was to share with the teacher the Hart's ladder exercise completed by the pupils (although maintaining individual confidentiality) to instigate discussion and then make use of a further exercise, Gaventa's Power cube to build greater understanding of the power dynamics surrounding the pupils and their teachers. The intended purpose was to enable me to establish whether existing social structures either enhanced decision-making capacity or inhibited it. I anticipate that the groups were audio recorded and photographs would be taken of the completed power cube templates to be included in the analysis chapters.

To add additional depth to the study, I spent time considering classroom observations. The use of observation appealed to me as a direct method of identifying power dynamics in the classroom and ascertaining the level to which the pupils participated in class. I was concerned that the presence of a western researcher in the classroom may have led to 'unnatural' behaviours from both the pupils and the teacher, which may have affected the reliability of the data, as Cohen et al. (2011) warned in 2011. I spent time considering whether observation would enhance my study and concluded that despite the potential of faux behaviours, classroom observation should still form some part of the initial research design. I was encouraged that in the 2010 study *'Locking the unlockable: Children's invocation of pretence to define and manage place'*

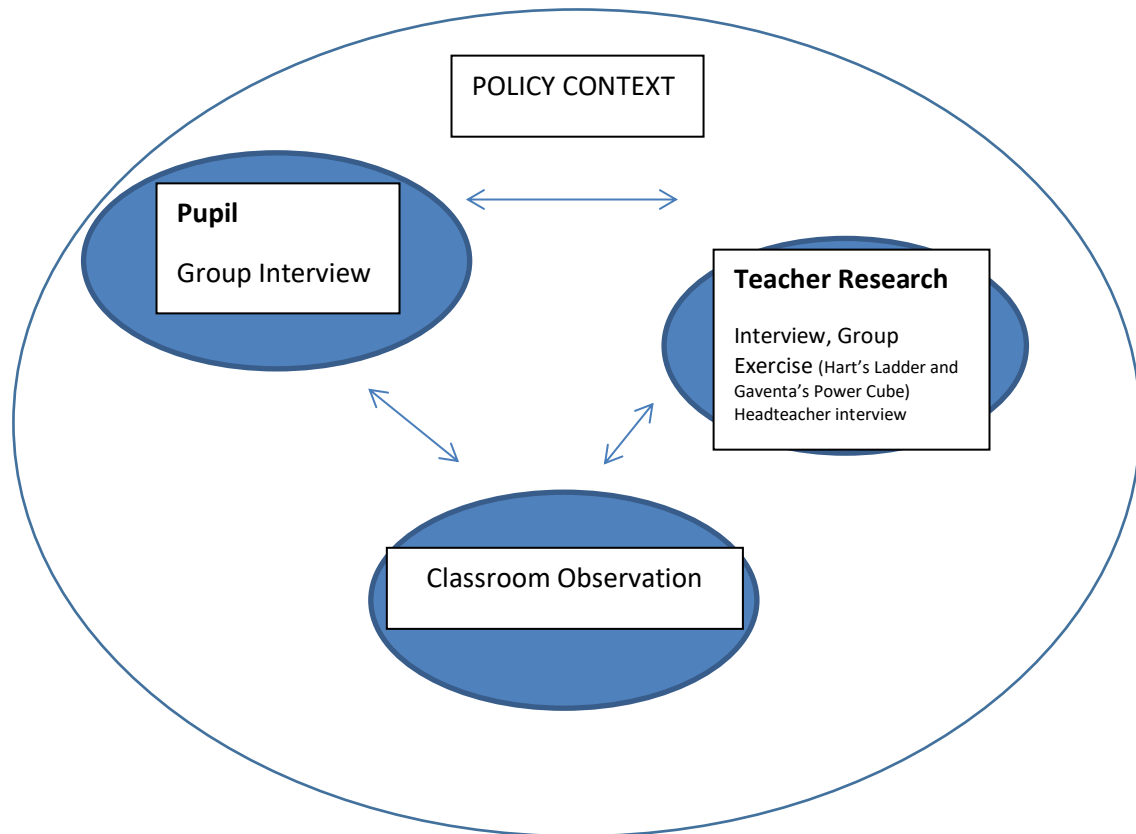
Danby, Cobb-Moore and Farrell, used video-recorded data of children's naturally occurring peer interactions in a preparatory year classroom in an elementary school in Australia. The children were aged 4-6 years and recorded observations were taken of approximately 20 hours over 4 weeks, they also noted that prior to commencing video-recording, a period of observation took place. In 2016, Houen, Susan, Farrell and Thorpe used 140 hours of video footage to inform their publication '*Creating spaces for children's agency: 'I wonder...' formulations in teacher-child interactions*', published in International Journal of Early Childhood. Video recording would not have been logistically appropriate for my own research (due to lack of power and potential loss of equipment through theft) and I believed it would be distracting for the pupils. I chose to conduct observations more traditionally. I intended the observations to take the form of 'learning walks' a common method used by OFSTED in their school inspections. I believed that this method would enable me to gain a more holistic view of each school, with minimal disruption to students and their teachers and make best use of the time I had available to me to conduct the research. I intended to include observation in addition to the group interviews and group activity to make the study more robust and reliable. Classroom observations, therefore, were planned to take place at each school, providing me the opportunity to gain further insight into the potential power dynamics at play in the classroom between the pupils and their teachers and supporting a more meaningful analysis of Gaventa's Power Cube.

In summary, my original plan for the research design was strongly influenced by the intention to engage pupils and their teachers across multiple activities. The intended activities were designed to elicit voice and take into account dialogue but also silences and social cues (Schatz, 1993). What I originally intended at this early stage of the study, was to apply a combination of data collection methods, intended to enhance validity and build a deeper level of understanding. The methods originally planned included: group interviews (one with the pupils and one with teachers in each school); application of Hart's Ladder of Participation (pupil) and Gaventa's Power Cube (teacher) through mapping exercises and supported by classroom observation. Using the combination of these qualitative methods, it was my original intention to build a

rich practical context for analysis and later comparison to the policy context (See Fig 10).

Fig 10: Initial Planned Research Design

The design illustration below is surrounded by the document analysis of national policy. This overall reflects the conceptual framework underpinning the study, in relation to key influencers and power and also replicates the circles of influence surrounding the child.



When I was satisfied with my initial intended design, I began to contemplate more seriously a matter which had influenced some of my earlier methodological selections - that of language. Having spent time in the community intermittently over a period of several years, I was all too aware that spoken English was used rather sporadically, particularly in three of the schools, who rarely happened upon a *muzungu* (white person). My Ankole (local language) was also rather limited. I therefore spent time considering the potential of using a translator. Temple (1997) points out that the use of translators can be of epistemological consequence due to their potential influence on findings. More recently Squires (2010) indicated that inappropriate use of a translator can

affect the trustworthiness of the data. Knowing the potential impact of using a translator in my research weighed heavily on my mind as I was ever hopeful of maximising validity in the study. I spent much time contemplating advantages: clearly articulating my questions so meaning is understood; capturing clearly and holistically pupil responses and translating conversations that may be an aside and in local language. I also weighed the disadvantages, including those points which were made earlier in the paragraph. I made the decision that I would conduct the pilot in Uganda and decide if a translator was required as I had anticipated. Despite the warnings, I was hopeful that a translator may enhance the richness of the interviews. I anticipated I may require a translator within the group interviews and activities to translate my questions from English to Ankole and the responses, back to English. I was anxious that meaning may be lost but felt that more could be lost without an interpreter '*on hold*' as necessary pending a pilot of the research methods in situ. In preparation for the field study I began to contemplate carefully who the translator should be. I needed someone who would appear to children as friendly and would be less intimidating than perhaps I might have appeared, therefore deduced it should be someone local - not muzungu. I further pondered that perhaps someone nearer to the age of the pupil may serve equally as non-threatening and therefore less likely to affect the participant (as Kluckhohn warned). I intended that whoever the interpreter might be, that they were fully briefed and clear parameters would be drawn as to the extent of their involvement in the data collection. I intended to use my network of contacts within the village to identify someone who would be suitable to help me.

3.3 UK Pupil Pilot Study

In this research it seemed entirely appropriate and important to engage children within the research design. Therefore, testing the robustness of the proposed research design and its child-friendliness (Powell and Smith, 2006) was important to ensure understanding and comprehension by children, of the topical areas of study. Therefore, pilot studies were conducted in both the UK and Uganda to enable children to participate in refining the final research design.

Permission and informed consent were given to conduct a pilot of the proposed research design at a junior school near to my location in England. The pupil pilot took place on 12th July 2013 and a teacher pilot was anticipated to take place in September of the same year. This section will discuss what I learned from the pilot in terms of my initial proposed methodology and what alterations I proposed to make to the design in preparation for the field studies.

The junior school was approached to participate in the pilot, mainly because I had once been a pupil at this school and it appeared '*fit for purpose*' (Cohen et al., 2011) to make use of this valuable relationship. Initially I visited the Junior School at the invitation of the head teacher in April 2013 to explain the nature of my research and to discuss the potential for involving pupils from Year 6. At this point I also met with the Head of Year 6 and met the class from which my potential sample related, to explain my intentions and ask for their support. Year 6 was selected because the children would be of the same age as those in Uganda who I intended to include in my research. To my delight the school and the pupils appeared willing to participate and we agreed a convenient timeframe, which would be after SATS and closer to the end of term. A final date of 12th July 2013 was agreed. At this point I was hoping for two sessions containing 6 pupils, which would replicate the group size which I intended in Uganda.

Full of ethical mindfulness I provided the head teacher with a letter explaining my research and my intentions for the pilot, to obtain the school initial consent. The letter had been approved by the University of Birmingham Ethical Review Committee previously (27/11/2012, see appendix 2) as had all written consent involved in the pilot and wider study. Once I had obtained consent from School a further letter was provided to the Head of Year 6 to issue to parents on my behalf (due to confidentiality I could not be provided with any names at this stage and had no contact with parents or pupils) and a consent form was attached for parents to sign and return providing permission for their child to participate. These stages are vital when working with children (Harcourt and Conroy, 2011 and Mortari and Harcourt, 2012).

During the interim between the initial visit and 12 July 2013, the Head of Year 6 and I remained in contact and on my behalf the Year Head discussed my research with parents at a parents evening and asked for the consent of willing parents to their child participating. Therefore, the sample was randomly selected (not self-selected) and was dictated by parents, who provided the necessary consent forms in preparation for the day, of whom 9 did so. Therefore, I was again pleased that I had a sample and a date on which to pilot my research design.

No child was permitted to participate without the appropriate consent form. On the day a number did offer, which was very tempting to accept in order to make up the numbers to my original 12, but for ethical reasons I declined.

At the point of the pilot, a full explanation of what would happen during the session (see table 4) was provided to each pupil verbally, as was their right to withdraw and right to access any of the findings pertaining to their group and the wider research - critical ethical behaviour when dealing with children (Morrow, 2008, 2009, Alderson and Morrow, 2011). Furthermore, the opportunity was provided for each pupil to ask questions relating to the research, which some did choose to do, to clarify my purpose and their involvement.

One child asked if I was 'comparing them to children in Africa' (Boy 2), another asked if their audio recording 'would be played in Africa' (Boy 1) and another was concerned that their teachers might hear what they are saying (Girl 1). I found these interesting questions, which demonstrated a real interest in what I was doing with them and also a consciousness of how others may perceive what they might say.

An audio recording was made of the entire session, which lasted 50 minutes in total. This was stored confidentially and as I explained to the pupils, would only ever be listened to by me, for the purposes of reviewing the session and making changes to future session design. To some of the pupils (3 in particular) this had to be explained several times, as they appeared rather excited at the prospect

of being recorded and did what one could describe as ‘acting up’ as this was obviously a novel experience for them.

Due to the time constraints at the school it was agreed that all nine pupils would be engaged in the research in one session, which was not as I had originally intended. The session followed the format outlined in table 4:

Table 4: Pilot Session Outline

Approx. Time	Session Activity
0-10 min	Introductions: Introduce me, explain research, consent forms, explain activities and session guidance, questions
10-40 min	Group questions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why do you go to school? 2. What do you enjoy/not enjoy about school? 3. What changes would you make to your school? 4. When do you make decisions in your day? What sorts? 5. What decisions would you like to make? 6. When do adults listen to you? 7. When would you like them to listen to you? 8. What is your vision of the school of the future in the UK?
40-50 min	Harts ladder activity: Explain 8 rungs of the ladder, pupils then indicate where they feel they are presently and where they would like to be, including discussion
50 min - 1 hour	Explanation of what happens next, feedback on the session from pupils, questions...

3.3.1 Logistical and Procedural Aspects

The school provided me with a classroom in which to conduct the pilot and I arrived early to set up the room for the group interview and the activity. I decided to set the chairs in a circle, without any tables (as I didn't want to create barriers) and then laid out the ladder exercise on some desks without any chairs, as I anticipated us circling the tables to conduct the activity (image 2 demonstrates the setting of the room). I felt that the room was laid out effectively although one of the participants (boy 1) likened it to a 'meeting that people go to who drink too much'. An interesting observation, but I felt whilst this may be something pupils are conscious of in the UK (surprisingly!), I did not feel this would present a problem in Uganda, where I anticipate sitting on the floor in the same circle format (image 2), with the activity laid out on the floor.

Image 2: Pilot Study Classroom

Classroom layout at junior school participating in the pilot



The timing of the session is critical (Vaughn et al., 1996 and Cohen et al., 2011) and what I found with the pilot is that my session suffered to some degree with poor timing. Firstly, it was towards the end of term and secondly was at 11.30am, which happened to be between a school wide baking and cake selling competition and lunch time. As such the children were rather excitable as the day was not structured as part of the normal routine of school. Reflecting upon this point, I anticipated similar excitement may be generated around my

presence in Uganda, especially as a western woman, therefore I was keenly aware of this factor and also considering how to minimise disruption. I therefore intended to hold the sessions within a normal school day, mid-term time and either mid-morning or mid-afternoon which will hopefully reduce the 'buzz' to some extent.

The session itself offered many points of reflection for me and these key areas will now be discussed.

Group Interview Size

As mentioned earlier, the session contained nine pupils (four Girls and five boys), which was more than I anticipated and had planned for in one session. I had originally hoped for six, which is suggested as an appropriate size by Cohen et al. (2011), but due to time constraints at the school and my own reluctance to minimise disruption for them, I agreed to involve all nine pupils in one session. On reflection this was a mistake and as Vaughn et al.(1996) and Cohen et al, (2011) warned, I experienced some of the difficulties encountered in interviewing children, such as distractions (from one another mostly) and domination of some members of the group. If I repeated the session I would certainly have reduce the group size to two sessions one of four and one of five in this pilot.

A key point of reflection throughout the interview and afterwards, was that I found myself constantly being torn between whether one to one interviews (as I had earlier de-selected) in Uganda would yield richer answers leading to greater understanding, rather than having small groups. Certainly, nine was too big, as I experienced from this pilot, but even if one to one could be more helpful I remained conscious of not wanting to hold a one to one interview where a pupil may feel uncomfortable and intimidated by my presence, due to power differentials (Morrow, 2008 and Alderson and Morrow 2011), which could be equally as destructive to the study. Having spent time reflecting post UK pilot, I decided to remain with the group interview, but insist on small groups of 2/3 at most in the interview and then a larger grouping in the activity.

I was also very mindful that the pilot was in the UK and that Uganda was completely different contextually. Therefore, whilst this initial pilot was providing me with some areas to reflect and revise, the changes may still not be sufficient for the research design to stand up to application and later scrutiny in Uganda. I realised that the Ugandan pilot was an essential step and whilst I may have to make last minute modification to the design, this was far more important than inappropriate methods being used.

Interview Questions

What I found with my questions was that some were rather broad in nature and when pupils did not really understand what I was asking, they were easily distracted from the question posed to abstract discussions which tended to be instigated by one or two members. So, at times, I found the discussions related to random topics (such as bodily functions, food and football) as opposed to me getting the specific answers I had hoped to what I was asking. Therefore, I became increasingly mindful of the child friendliness and clarity of the questions (Powell and Smith, 2006).

At this stage again, I found myself in a position of anxiety that promoted a further reflective thought process. As the pupils strayed off track I found myself wondering how to manage the session if this happens in Uganda. To some extent I felt that the pupils were making a clear decision to take the discussion in a specific way, which demonstrated their abilities to extract their own meaning to take control and interact, which is positive for my research in terms of pupils taking decisive action. From the opposing perspective, without actual answers to the questions, I felt concerned that I would find it hard to extract any meaningful analysis to validate my research. Underpinning these thoughts was a consciousness that I did not want to be directive and affect developing positive relationships (Harcourt and Conroy, 2011) by becoming an authority figure. This could effectively shut down their discussions and it seemed contrary to what I was trying to achieve in this study. However, I was acutely aware I needed something to analyse and compare, to draw some meaning to this thesis. As a result of the reflective process I increasingly came to appreciate that if I asked more specific questions, I might reduce the abstract discussions to some extent,

thus negating the need for my intervening too much in their discussions and debates. Therefore, I decided to re-frame some of the questions (such as when do you make decisions in your day?) and relate them more specifically to school, which I hoped would place them in a context the pupils can relate to. Revised questions are framed in section 'Proposed Alterations', please see below.

Research Design - Group Activity based on Hart's Ladder

The group activity generally went well, although the moment pupils were given the pens they were already starting to doodle on the transparencies without me explaining their purpose. Minor point, but in future I would hand out the pens once I have explained the task!

To ease their understanding of the ladder, I explained each rung, in what I hoped was a child friendly manner (Powell and Smith, 2006) giving examples that could be related to each rung but were not leading. I then asked them to make a mark on the ladder of where they felt they are positioned currently and then where they would like to be (see appendix 1, pilot ladder). Each pupil did this in turn and then a discussion ensued surrounding their choices. What I was mindful of, for future sessions, was the need for a longer period for these discussions to get some clear examples from the pupils to explain their choices. I had wanted to spend time asking why they had selected what they had however, there was pressure on me to finish the session, as other pupils began to congregate outside the room (which also doubled as a lunch area). Therefore, an all too brief discussion ensued and there was little time for any feedback on the session itself.

A final reflection on the entire session was that at almost an hour, it lasted too long. Cohen et al. (2011, p435) suggests '*a duration of 15 minutes, simple language and open-ended questions which get to the point quickly*'. Therefore, I decided to split the sessions into two separate ones. Post the UK pilot, I proposed to conduct the interview session one day and then meet with the pupils again and do the activity another day. In this way, I hoped it would enable me to establish greater rapport with the pupils (Harcourt and Conroy,

2011 and Mortari and Harcourt, 2012) and also take more time for discussion relating to the activity.

3.3.2 UK pilot findings and analysis

As well as enabling me to explore the logistics and implementation of my research design, the pilot also enabled me to test the research question underpinning this entire study - my question being: To what extent can Ugandan [UK] children be empowered as decision makers in education?

What emerged from the UK pilot was very exciting in this respect and I felt a very positive step towards the themes I had been exploring and their potential in the classroom, not only for Uganda, but also in the UK. Indeed, some of the findings correlate with those of multiple authors including, Danby, (2002), Danby and Farrell (2004), Danby, Farrell and Cobb-Moore, (2007) and Danby, Thompson, Theobald and Thorpe (2012), in which pupils are seen to navigate their social worlds and make decisions.

The interview section of the pilot identified some clear evidence that pupils have the capacity and willingness to make decisions about their education and the environment in which they are educated and that they have clear comprehension of the complexities surrounding such decisions. To provide an example of this, I provide an abridged summary of a response to the question: what changes would you make to your school? Why?

Abridged Transcript 1: 12/7/2013

Girl 2: The change I would make will be popular with the boys and that would be to buy some goal posts for the fields. But the school bought computers instead, I don't understand that

Boy 2: Yeah goal posts good idea, I have seen some good goal posts in Argos and they are not that expensive

Boy 3: Yeah I have 2 computers at home, I don't need more of them here I want to play football

Girl 2: But I think they buy computers because they last longer than goal posts, but if we look after the goal posts then they will be worth it

Girl 1: But then if we buy goal posts from Argos that are cheap they will not last and then we will have no goal posts or computers

Boy 4: Yeah but we have lots of computers already, we don't have any goal posts

Girl 2: We do have lots of computers and I think that they should buy us what we need

The conversation then ensued into a discussion of how the school make money and how expensive it might be to run a school because of the electricity, but this portion of the conversation demonstrated problem identification and highlights that the pupils do have something to say and have a desire to understand why decisions are made on their behalf and perhaps why they are not consulted.

A further example was demonstrated by boy 2, who at one point took direction of the group, when addressing the question: when do you make decisions in your day? He claimed

Boy 2: I decide what I want to do for a job in the future, like. I think what would be really interesting is if we go round the group and see what each person want to do for their job, starting with [boy 1].... What do you want to do?

Boy 2 then proceeded to facilitate a discussion regarding jobs with the other participants and I remained passive throughout as this was something he was keen to explore and made the decision to do so with his peers.

These examples created a positive feeling that the underpinning hypotheses within my thesis were proving valid and holding some merit. This was of great relief and excitement. What was additionally interesting regarding the activity was the distribution of start point and end point on Harts Ladder (table 5)

Table 5 - Hart's Ladder Distribution

The table demonstrates the initial perception of pupil present position and that which they desire to be.

Pupil	Position Now	Position Desired
Boy 1	Rung 6	Rung 8
Boy 2	Rung 6	Rung 6
Boy 3	Rung 6	Rung 8
Boy 4	Rung 4	Rung 6
Boy 5	Rung 3	Rung 8
Girl 1	Rung 6	Rung 7
Girl 2	Rung 6	Rung 7
Girl 3	Rung 6	Rung 7
Girl 4	Rung 6	Rung 8

The ladder exercise, as highlighted above, shows that majority of pupils felt that they are at the rung 6 - 'adult initiated, shared decision making with young people' and would like to be at the 7th and 8th rungs. Comments relating to this exercise included:

Hart's Ladder Exercise Discussion Extract

Boy 2: I am happy where I am, I think I make enough decisions; I wouldn't want to do too much on my own

Girl 2: I think people like us needs adults to help us make decisions, we could never do everything on our own

Girl 4: I would like to make more decisions and sometimes I think I don't need adults to do it for me, not always, but sometimes

I was mindful of in this exercise that whilst the trends were positive, the clustering of the choices did not 100% convince me that the pupils were acting on their true feelings, rather selecting similar rungs to others as they seemed to cluster on the same rung choice. This would have been an ideal opportunity for discussion (if time had permitted) which could have enhanced the data and would have provided me with some reassurances that each pupil had an understanding and reason to make their choice. However, what was encouraging was that at least some of the pupils demonstrated an ability to decide independent of my intervention, some perhaps taking the lead from one another, but there were pupils that did lead. Because of the UK pilot I contemplated that individual ladders may be useful to demonstrate independence of decision making.

3.3.3 Alterations to Research Design, Post UK Pupil Pilot

Overall reflecting on the entire UK pilot, I felt that it had gone well and that I had learned a good deal from the process and would make certain adjustments to the design in preparation for the Ugandan field visits in 2014. The main adjustments were:

- Timing of sessions. I would ensure that when the session/s take place it will be during normal term time and will be either mid-morning or mid-afternoon, not directly before or after lunch time.

- Group Size - For the interview there would be 2/3 pupils as a maximum participating; this was to ensure minimal behavioural disruptions. However, for the Harts activity a larger group (all 6) would be accommodated.
- Questions - the key questions for the pupils were re-framed and re-ordered slightly, to ensure clarity and reduce the potential for pupils to take abstract directions when they are unsure of what a question asks. Questions therefore have been revised to (table 6).

Table 6 - Revised Pupil Research Questions - Post UK Pilot

This table illustrates the changes made to the interview questions post the UK pilot

Previous Question	Re-framed Question
Why do you go to school?	Why is school important to you?
What do you enjoy/not enjoy about school?	Same
What changes would you make to your school? Why?	What changes would you make to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your classroom? - Your lessons?
When do adults listen to you?	Could you tell the teachers about the changes you would make to your school? Why?
When would you like them to listen to you?	Removed, as appeared presumptuous.
When do you make decisions in your day? What sorts?	What decisions do you make about what happens at school?
What decisions would you like to make?	Are there times when you would like to make other decisions about school? Example?
What is your vision of a school of the future in Uganda	Question withdrawn

- Split Sessions - The interview and the ladder exercise, would now take place at separate sessions, allowing time for reflection for both myself and the participants and also allowing time for richer more detailed discussion - particularly with the ladder exercise.
- Individual ladders would be used to avoid 'group' think and peer influence
- Don't issue pens before activities have been explained (trivial I know, but worth a mention)

This pilot stage was valuable in testing the potential of the topic of pupils as decision makers. From indications at the UK pilot, there was evidence that the pupils wanted to be involved in decisions about their education and felt able to do so, not only with adults leading, but in partnership with adults. This was very reassuring and provided me with much excitement for the next stage of research and to identify whether the same potential existed in Uganda, or indeed, if a very different situation exists, and identify the any reasons contributing to this.

3.3.4 UK Practitioner Pilot Study

After the successful pupil pilot on 12th July 2013 a further pilot was proposed which would engage with the teaching staff at the same school. However, what unfortunately emerged was the original contact was lost due to long term sickness and the School therefore could no longer provide me with the platform needed to 'test' the second aspect of my research within the timescales needed.

The Contingency Plan

Working in a higher education institution (HEI), which has a faculty dedicated to teaching early years, I managed to locate three experienced practitioners, one of whom had previously spent 5 years teaching in Uganda and also a current student who had been formally educated in Uganda. I decided that this convenience sample would provide me with the potential to discuss my research design and reflect on their experience and guidance in this area.

Informal Pilot Discussions

Rather than conduct the session I had proposed to hold with the two individuals (far too small and contextually not applicable), I decided to hold an informal discussion at my place of work - a location we are familiar with and where experiences/reflections/thoughts could be shared openly. This took place on 23rd October 2013. My approach to this informal meeting was to discuss my proposed method, describing each aspect of the method in detail and ask for general comments and critiques. What emerged from this meeting was very useful indeed and as a result changed the course of the methodology again.

Reflections on practitioner pilot

The individuals were supportive of the topic being researched and found it to be an interesting subject, very encouraging for me to hear, particularly from someone who is Ugandan.

Regarding the interview element, all felt that the questions were easy to interpret by those who may not have English as their first language. There were positive comments relating to the questions' potential to open wider discussion within the interview. This was the intention.

Final Proposed Teacher Interview Questions:

1. Who makes decisions about education? What sorts?
2. Who makes decisions about what happens in your school? What sorts?
3. Who makes decisions about what happens in the classroom? What sorts?
4. How could pupils participate in these decisions?
5. What types of decisions could pupils make?
6. What might be the benefit be of including pupils in decisions?

With regard to the procedure, the participants felt that sharing the pupil's ladders of participation was a good idea and would complement the interview in terms of enhancing discussion.

However, the most significant aspect of conversations related to the use of Gaventa's Power Cube as part of the data collection. Interestingly the practitioners commented that the use of the cube may well lead to confusion amongst the planned field participants, as the model is rather technical and complex in nature. I explained that it is a model often used in the international development community (Gaventa, 2006) and can be easily adapted to suit the participants (Gaventa 2005).

My justification did not seem to placate one of the individuals (the Early Years Practitioner), who held firm that perhaps by making use of the Cube I would be pre-empting outcomes and results and assuming that power is of significance in the study context. I was appreciative of the dialogues and reflected upon this critical point over some time. I came to the realisation and to some degree of consensus with my colleague that perhaps using the cube may well influence the participants to discuss power and explore it. This could have been rather misleading. In my bid to seek 'truth' I realised that perhaps I should wait for the discussion of power to emerge from the participants, should they feel it an important factor, rather than direct them towards it. I was anxious to be non-directive.

I felt that the practitioner pilot had elicited some very relevant points and again after a process of reflection, I felt that further modifications needed to take place prior to the pilots in Uganda. However, I remained concerned of the limitations of this initial pilot mostly that it is in the UK, which is contextually different to Uganda. The importance of the Ugandan pilot was consistently reinforced throughout the UK pilots of both pupils and teachers.

3.3.5 Proposed Alterations - Post UK Practitioner Pilot

The most significant aspect of this pilot was the placement of Gaventa's Power cube within the study. After lengthy reflection I decided that the method needed to change slightly, and the changes proposed were as follows:

- Remove Gaventa's Cube from the data collection part of the research. This would allow any debate surrounding power to emerge naturally and most importantly, by the participants, rather than via my subtle direction. However, as this is an internationally recognised tool, it may well be beneficial to make use of in the analysis section, should power arise in the data collection. This would mean that aspects of power theory can be applied and analysed in the context of the research findings, which could make for a richer analysis.
- Make use of Harts Ladder of Participation with the teachers, getting them to repeat the same mapping exercise as the pupils, prior to sharing the pupil's results with them. As with the pupils this would make for a useful discussion and reflection point for the participants.
- As the pupil exercise and interview are separate, it would be logical to split the teacher sessions in to two separate sections. This would allow teachers to reflect on what could be considered 'new' concepts between the phases of the research.

3.4 Amended Methodological Approach post UK pilots

As I reflected upon my initial proposal against my experiences of the two pilot studies in the UK, I amended my original design, in preparation for the field visit to Uganda, where a further pilot would take place.

Table 7 - Logistical Plan for Uganda

Timing	Pupil Research	Teacher Research	Observation	Head teacher
Session 1, Day 1 (am pupils, pm teachers)	Group Interview (a)	Teachers Interviews (group)		
	Group Interview (b)		1 hour (between group interviews)	
Session 2, Day 2 (am pupils, pm teachers)	Practical Group Exercise Harts Ladder - all	Practical Group Exercise 1		
		Practical Group Exercise 2 Sharing pupils ladder	1 hour (between pupil exercise and teacher exercise)	
Session 3, Day 3		Practical Discussion - Consolidation		Semi-structured interview

The design remained with group interview for both pupil and teacher data collection and would make use of Hart's Ladder of participation as an individual exercise. The final proposed pupil questions can be found in table 9 and the teacher questions in table 10.

With regard to observation, my intention remained to minimise potential disruption in the classroom by adopting a learning walk approach. I opted to spend two hours at each school compound, essentially as a passive observer of general life taking place around me. I did not have a schedule of classes I would attend. More importantly I sat quietly and as non-interactively as possible at break times, watching the pupils interact with one another. I completed further observations via a learning walk approach. I was lucky that the schools are

essentially windowless and some even wall less, so I was able to observe as 'quietly' as possible without sitting in a class, making obvious notes about the people around me.

An interview with each head teacher was scheduled and followed a similar structure to that of the teacher interviews. It was essential for this meeting to be separate from the teachers to ensure that there was every opportunity for them to be open and honest and without influence. The semi-structured questions were the same as those asked of the teacher and this provided me with opportunity for further insight, from the most influential and powerful level of authority at the school.

To bring all the data collection methods together I also invited the participating staff to attend a meeting, in which I disseminated some of the initial data and in particular the potential for pupils to participate in decisions relating to their education.

3.5 Ugandan Pilot

A final in-situ pilot was conducted to ensure that all the planned activities from the UK would indeed translate to a Ugandan context and to also add an additional level of integrity to the research and rigour to the design.

During my field visit to Uganda, on the first day within the community and after the presentations requesting volunteers to participate in the research, an additional small cohort of volunteers was recruited to provide a final test of the proposed method. This final pilot was essential to ensure any final refinements could be made to my proposed design to ensure the most efficient use of my time in the community.

The Ugandan pilot study was conducted a few days prior to conducting the actual research activities. The pilot took place at School 1 and four pupils (two boys and two girls) were in attendance. School 1 was the location of preference, as this was the school I had worked with most in previous research and was central to the community, with parents living in the closest vicinity, to facilitate the gaining of consent.

In anticipation of the research, I had been pondering making greater use of an interpreter, than just for recruiting volunteers. Although English is the national language in Uganda, from my previous experience researching there, I had found that the local language Runyankole (or Ankole as it is often abbreviated to) tended to be more commonplace in the rural communities. As I conducted the pilot, it became apparent that my anticipation of the need for an interpreter had been validated, as English comprehension was relatively low and some of my questions needed repeating and reinforcing in Ankole. Similarly, some of the responses needed translating into English as the pupils appeared to lack confidence in speaking perhaps with a (white) native English speaker. As confidence (in and being around me) developed, the pupils started to directly answer my questions, however, much of the discussion between themselves was in Ankole and I felt that this additional background discussion would very much enhance my research and help me gain a greater insight into the experiences of the pupils. This was an important observation from the pilot and without this, my research may not have benefitted from the rich dialogue that these children were having between themselves. For example, the two girl pupils began muttering to themselves whilst I was talking to the others about what they enjoy about school:

Extract of interview strand with pupils during pilot study:

Q: What do you enjoy about coming to school?

R: Learning new things (Boy 1)

R: Gaining knowledge (Boy 2)

R Muttering (to each other girl 1 and 2)

Q: What is it that the girls are saying? (to interpreter)

R: They are saying that the boys like football and fighting, they say the boys are saying good things to you, on best behaviour, but it is not so always

Q: Are there other things you enjoy about school? (to the boys)

R: Yes, they are true, I like playing with my friends (Boy 2)

R: Sometimes there is fighting but I try not to be there, but sometimes it comes to me (Boy 1)

R: (all laugh)

Having worked with the community since 2009, I used my networks to identify a suitable interpreter: a young (17-year-old), well known member of the community, who had benefitted from primary education, but was unable to progress to secondary. He played football for the local team and was hopeful of a football scholarship to continue his education. He also worked on his family farm and had just set up his own small business rearing chickens to sell eggs and chicken meat for food. He possessed excellent English and as a youth within the community, I felt he was best placed to translate to and for the children. I felt that the pupils would be able to trust him, as he was nearer to their own age. I also felt that this trust may extend further towards me, if the pupils could see me working with him. Trust and relationships are an important factor and one which emerges later in the research (to be discussed in the analysis). More importantly, he was very keen to work with me on my research as he claimed he was hopeful to practice his English, as *'no one but those who come to volunteer at the project and in business in the city really does'*. This was a point of interest to me, especially when the language of assessment and national language is English, a point which will also be elaborated on further in the analysis and discussion.

I spent time with him to discuss the data collection methods and exercises I had planned and we came to agreement as to the extent he would be involved and interact with the participating pupils (and teachers). I felt confident that this would prove invaluable and would ensure that I could gain greater understanding of the pupils and their experiences.

When conducting the pilot, an interesting aspect arose regarding Hart's ladder, and one which will be elaborated upon further in the main discussion. I had prepared an illustration of the ladder resting against an oak tree (see appendix 1, my ladder exercise) to use in my research - a commonly used metaphor with UK children. But early use of the ladder emerging from the pilot, raised a couple of concerns in my mind as to its applicability in-situ. The first issue was the metaphor of the ladder itself; the pilot pupils needed some explanation of what the ladder was; secondly, and perhaps more importantly I found some issue with the ladder posing what appears to the pupils to be a hierarchical structure. The pupils told me that they didn't want to be '*at the bottom*', so they picked the middle. Furthermore, when I explained clearly each stage of the ladder in descriptive format, the pupils couldn't decide where on the ladder they featured, one of the girls claimed (laughing) we are '*somewhere under the bottom*'. I will elaborate on this further, but at the pilot stage I was concerned that the well-established ladder may not be entirely 'fitting' for rural Uganda. I did, however, remain optimistic that the ladder would prove a useful framework in the actual research and concluded, perhaps I just needed clearer explanation to the participants. As I conducted the pilot and reflected thereafter, I began to ponder to what extent pupils (children essentially) do participate, not only in school, but in the family unit and in the wider community. I started to question what the pupil's perception and meaning of '*participation*' was in their context and how this may well differ from perceptions in the West.

I made the decision that to test the ladder's relevance I would make a slight modification to the research tool. I elected to work with the original ladder metaphor as I had planned, as one exercise, but also chose to add an additional exercise. A deconstructed ladder (see appendix 1, deconstructed ladder), using the rung descriptors, but just scattering them on the floor space in no order, was my immediate choice. I proposed to ask pupils to stand on the one they

thought would most effectively represent where they were, in terms of their own participation in school. I felt that by making this additional change, I would not only be able to capture a greater perspective of the children, but also would enable me to critically evaluate the relevance and use of the ladder in a developing world context.

3.6 Proposed Data Analysis

The nature of my research was very much exploratory, so it was deemed logical to undertake an inductive thematic analysis, a common qualitative approach, where the codes and themes emerge from the data, rather than being predetermined.

As my research data would require a qualitative analysis I considered the use of NVIVO. I was aware that this suite of software would support me in identifying codes and potential relationships between the data and would also help me to make purposeful questions of the data. I considered this would be extremely useful to this study.

The alternative to this was a manual thematic analysis, whereby I would extrapolate themes myself, through manual coding and various relationship mapping exercises, such as mind maps, influence and multiple cause diagrams. As I pondered these options, I found that I was more inclined towards a manual analysis. I found myself excited at the prospect of getting both mentally and physically emerged in the data and this seemed more appealing than to make use of the software to extrapolate the data (however timesaving and convenient QSR International promised it would be). I also felt that I really wanted to get close to the participants who had taken time to contribute to the research, to get closer perhaps to making a genuine attempt at representing their '*truth*'. Somehow, I felt that using NVIVO would be to do the participants an injustice. It became almost a moral decision, as I felt that the people in the study were so resource limited, that for me to rely on cutting edge software to analyse their lived experience, just appeared unjust.

Personal preference, therefore dictated my choice of data analysis and as a result, I proposed to engage on a manual thematic qualitative analysis.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The chapter has, so far, discussed the initial methodology and via various stages of refinement through pilot study, the final research design for the study. At this point I would like to spend time discussing an extremely important and underpinning aspect of this research - Ethics. Please note that due to a transfer in university, ethical approval was granted for this research by initially University of Birmingham (21/11/12) and also latterly University of Glasgow Approval Committee (24/9/13, see appendix 2).

This section will summarise the ethical considerations underpinning my research. Freebody (2003), Gregory (2003), Opie (2008) Cohen et al. (2011) recommend consideration of ethics at all stages of any research project including research design, recruitment, data collection and dissemination of results. Ethics according to Cohen et al. (2011) presents a major dilemma, which requires balance in the pursuit of truth and the rights of the research subject.

However, university researchers often tend to see ethical issues more in terms of institutional regulations than in terms of sound pedagogy and respect for persons in the schools (Gregory, 2003). I was very conscious that this can occur, and that ethics can become an administrative process, a means to an end, rather than an on-going social practice (Powell and Smith, 2006). However, I view ethics as a reflection of my professionalism and strived to maintain a high standard of ethical mindfulness and conduct which genuinely respects the local people who took the time to contribute to my work (Scheyvens and Leslie, 2000).

3.7.1 Ethical Sampling

The selection of the sample included within this the study demonstrated an ethical mindfulness towards the subject. The study included pupils from four schools in SW Uganda, from both genders and aged approximately 10/11.

Some may question the appropriateness of children taking part in this research, however, it is widely considered (Danby and Farrell, 2004; Bell, 2008; Morrow 2008; Alderson and Morrow, 2011; Mortari and Harcourt, 2012 and Kellett, 2010) that all too often researchers address parents, teachers and care givers as 'gate-keepers'. Mortari and Harcourt, 2012 and Morrow 2008 advocate on a child's behalf that this stance should be challenged and pose that children not only have the cognitive ability, but also the right under the UNCRC (Bell, 2008; Morrow, 2008; Mortari and Harcourt, 2012 and Smith, 2011) to engage in research as competent participants.

In the context of this research it was deemed both just and vital to engage children in sharing their own experiences and that these should not be diluted or interfered with (Mortari and Harcourt, 2012) by traditional gatekeepers. However, I was extremely conscious that a number of further ethical considerations and challenges are raised specifically when engaging children in such research.

Firstly, as I wanted to work with children, rather than on children, I strived to create a positive relationship with the children (Harcourt and Conroy, 2011). Such a relationship with the participants observed basic moral responsibilities and the relational agency (Mortari and Harcourt, 2012) based on trust, care and respect for those participating in my research. There were likely to be inevitable imbalances of power in this research relationship (Duncan et al., 2009), but particularly so when one takes into account the fact that I am not only adult, but white and from the affluent West, adding further dimensions to power differentials. Such power (Morrow, 2008 and Alderson and Morrow 2011) differentials can cause problems with creating a positive relationship and can be the biggest ethical obstacle, creating a huge challenge to researchers (Powell and Smith, 2006; Duncan et al 2009 and Kellett, 2010;) and can compound a child's vulnerability (Carter, 2009).

Secondly, children are considered as vulnerable (Bell, 2008; Morrow, 2008 and Carter, 2009;) and therefore when conducting this study, it was imperative that this vulnerability was not exploited in any way whatsoever and that my research

was well designed and thoughtful. In this vein Alderson and Morrow (2011) and Duncan et al. (2009) suggest a risk and hoped for benefit analysis as a balanced ethical approach. Indeed, Carter (2009, p861) warns that '*acknowledging children's vulnerability should not preclude them from involvement in research*' and indeed did not deter me from engaging children in my research.

In addition to the children participants, teachers would also participate in the research and would be mixed gender and include a diverse mixture of ages and experience. As with the children participants I maintained an ethical mindfulness which respected each participant and created a positive environment in which they could comfortably share their experiences.

3.7.2 Ethical Recruitment

To ensure ethical recruitment, an open letter of participation was sent to the head teachers of each school, requesting consent to conduct research on the premises and with staff and pupils (see appendix 2) and for the translator to be present. This permission, according to the British Educational Research Association (BERA) is vital for studies engaging pupils under sixteen years old (Mortari and Harcourt, 2012). Once the consent was provided, I proposed to notify the school in advance of when the study would be conducted so that the head could make staff and pupils aware that the research will be conducted.

Recruitment of all participants (teachers and pupils) took place once I had arrived at the school, and a meeting for teachers, parents and children was arranged. In the meeting the research was explained, and any questions answered (in English and also using a local language interpreter). I had considered earlier in the study that many of the parents could well be illiterate and this is why a verbal presentation of information was provided, to ensure full clarity of the research intentions, design and methods.

Inclusion criteria were bound by the parameters of the research, so children from the final two years (P6, P7) of primary education and adult teachers actively working within the final two years of primary education were targeted. Pupils volunteered themselves to participate in the research and were provided

with a written letter of informed consent, for both themselves and their parent/guardian to sign. On issuance of the consent letter, the content was also read out, to again ensure clarity and to enable the parents and child to ask any questions (Morrow, 2008, 2009 and Alderson and Morrow, 2011). At this point participants were told of their right to withdraw at any point in the research.

A cornerstone of ethical behaviour (Gregory, 2003 and Howe and Moses (1999), cited in Cohen et al., 2011,) is that informed consent should be sought from the individual pupil, but because of their age, enhanced consent was additionally sought from parents/guardians and verbal consent reaffirmed at the beginning of each encounter with the children (Harcourt and Conroy, 2011). I was very conscious that keeping participants informed is not only good research practice but would also enhance the validity of my research. Therefore, participants would not only be given access to the findings at the end of the study visit in a follow-up presentation, but also have the opportunity to review any of the research notes and analysis work pertaining to their particular study group as they were produced and before I left Uganda. I was conscious that the literature review highlighted contradictions in language and meaning of words in differing contexts. Therefore, to ensure comprehension, each participant was provided with the opportunity of an oral summary of the findings after each stage of the research to ensure that the participants had control over accuracy and the opportunity to amend any admissions which were misrepresented or misunderstood.

Furthermore, prior to leaving Uganda, all participants and their families were invited to attend a short presentation which summarised my initial analysis of the data and to give parents and pupils a chance to ask questions, make comments and to discuss the potential for engaging pupils in the future research. There was little uptake (only 2 parents) of this opportunity, but I additionally advised the participants that I intend to make an abridged version of the thesis findings available to them via the head of each school, on its completion.

3.7.3 Confidentiality, Data Collection and Analysis

To ensure confidentiality during data collection and its analysis, information was collected anonymously, and identities of all participants protected.

At the interview stage all participants were treated confidentially and assigned ID codes to protect their individual identities. As I made use of voice recording, no individual was referred to other than in the context of the general themes of the conversation. However, it was noted that within the school it is likely that the participants will be known to each other and the school staff. In order to protect confidentiality as much as possible, information exchanged within the group interviews remained confidential to those attending and this was explained to the participants at the time and in advance at the recruitment meetings. At no point were individual comments referred to outside of those participating in the groups, therefore the teachers were not told who expressed comments from among individual pupils, to protect them from any potential repercussions and the school authorities were not told comments from either focus group until they had been written up anonymously.

Any data collected was retained in a secure filing cabinet and on one PC at a secure location, with a backup at my home residence. The data was shared with no one other than the Supervisors of this research and will be available to the participants should they wish to access it at any point. On completion of the thesis, the data will be kept no longer than a period as specified by the University of Glasgow, to ensure that the PhD is completed and will then be shredded and placed in confidential waste and deleted from all computers.

3.7.4 Data Dissemination

Only parties who have specific interest in the research will be provided with access and any further parties will need to expressly request access and the reason for this. This is to enhance protection and safeguard the participants to the fullest degree.

3.8 Methodology Conclusion

The methodological chapter has discussed the paradigms shaping this research, justified the proposed research design from an ethical and philosophical perspective and outlined some of the modifications which have arisen from the UK and Ugandan pilot. Within this chapter was the genuine desire to capture the 'truth' in terms of representing those who took time to participate in this research and to ensure the integrity of the individuals and the research. Every effort was made to ensure that participants of all ages were treated with the utmost respect and dignity. It is considered to be not only ethically mindful, but the duty of a good researcher to interpret the results with continued respect and sensitivity now I have completed my field research.

3.9 Research Limitations

The study was conducted using a small sample of pupils from a rural community within Uganda. The size of this sample and the period for which I was able to conduct the field research may well have limited the potential richness of the results within. Furthermore, with focus the being on young pupils in primary education, I found that they naturally appeared quite shy (even with the translator present) and therefore at times the interviews were a little stilted and the breadth of discussed narrowed somewhat.

Additionally, with the focus being on primary age I believe that teachers within the school were somewhat sceptical of notions of decision making, given their low social status in general in Ugandan society. It may have been better received had the focus been at secondary age, where pupils may have been considered to have a greater maturity and experience on which to base decisions.

Chapter 4. RESULTS

This chapter presents the initial results of the field research and highlights how the themes and sub-categories of the study were identified. This chapter leads directly into the full analysis of the themes which emerged and an ensuing discussion placing them within a wider research context (chapter 6). Eventually my findings culminate in the formation of summary conclusions and resultant recommendations (chapter 7).

4.1 Summary of Primary Research

This section serves to recapture the final research design for the study as proposed in Chapter 3.

Four Schools were included within the research. The original school (also used for the pilot) was referred to as School 1 (private) with 3 other schools in the locality, identified as 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Schools 2-4 were government schools. Six pupils from each school participated in the research once parental consent had been given to undertake the data collection activities. Pupils are referred to as School 1, 2, 3, 4 Boy 1, 2, 3 and Girl 1, 2, 3, respectively to ensure confidentiality, as part of being ethically mindful.

In addition to the pupils two teachers (an additional teacher in School 3) from each school participated in the research and were referred to as School 1, 2, 3, 4 Teacher 1, 2, 3 respectively. The head teacher of each school was also later invited to an individual meeting for their comments on the research and are addressed by their formal title, School 1, 2, 3, 4 Headmaster/mistress 1, 2, 3. A further consolidation meeting was held post the research activities, bringing together the teachers and Head of each school to discuss initial observations. The heads from two of the schools attended this meeting. The headmistress of School 2 sent apologies due to a family bereavement and the headmistress of School 4 arrived later after the formal questions had been completed.

Participant Distribution is detailed in the table 8:

Table 8: Participant Distribution

School 1 (private)	School 2	School 3	School 4
Boy 1 Boy 2 Boy 3	Boy 1 Boy 2 Boy 3 Boy 4	Boy 1 Boy 2 Boy 3	Boy 1 Boy 2 Boy 3
Girl 1 Girl 2 Girl 3	Girl 1 Girl 2	Girl 1 Girl 2 Girl 3	Girl 1 Girl 2 Girl 3
Teacher 1 (P6) Teacher 2 (P6)	Teacher 1 (P6) Teacher 2 (P6)	Teacher 1 (P6) Teacher 2 (P7) Teacher 3 (P6)	Teacher 1 (P6) Teacher 2 (P6)
Headmaster	Headmistress	Headmaster	Headmistress

As per my final research design the data collection activities with the pupils were divided in to two parts. Initially a semi-structured group interview was undertaken and then the two Hart's ladder activities were conducted. The ladder activity was divided into two sections, the initial ladder diagnostic and then a further de-constructed ladder. The sessions with teachers mirrored the activities undertaken by the pupils with the exception of the de-constructed ladder. A semi-structured interview then took place with the head master/mistress of each school, following the same question format as that with the teachers.

General unstructured observations took place at each school. I spent up to two hours on campus at each school observing children at play in their breaks and also watching lessons from outside the classroom, so as to limit my impact as a potential distraction. I found this to be rather easy, as none of the classrooms had windows, some did not even have fully structured walls. I made notes of my observations in a journal for later reflection. My intention was to observe the general social structures that existed in the school between the pupils and with the pupils and their teachers. These observations provided me with a richer context on which to base my findings in addition to the structured research methods and policy review. The observations gave me the opportunity to gain a more holistic view of the pupil (and teacher) experience within the school environment and an opportunity to explore some of the answers and early themes which emerged from the interviews and exercise.

All interview and activity sessions were audio recorded and anonymity maintained wherever possible between teachers and pupils. Furthermore, each session was attended by a local language interpreter, who had familiarity with the research and direct experience of the local schools.

4.2 Findings from Semi-structured Interviews

On my return to the UK after a month in Uganda, I commenced analysing the data. Prior to coding the transcripts, I conducted a broad mapping exercise, using the interview transcripts. I collated the pupil and teacher responses to questions and mapped these to the specific research questions. This enabled me to gather confidence that my research design had achieved the desired outcomes in addressing the core questions.

Mapping Exercise

What can be learned about the present state of education through insights provided by the pupils?

The tables (9 to 11) consolidated the raw data responses in relation to the interview questions pertaining to each of the research questions. The red colour/italics coding denotes negative response and the green/standard font positive.

Table 9 Raw Data Collation Q1-3

Interview Question	Why is school important to you?	What do you <i>enjoy</i> / <i>not enjoy</i> about school?	What changes would you make to your classroom?	What changes would you make to your lessons?
Summary of Pupil Responses	Getting Education. Learn skills: (reading/writing) Gain knowledge. Become important. Get jobs: (Doctor, teacher, electrician). Prepare for Future: (job, wife, wealth). Learn to behave.	<i>Friends</i> <i>Studying</i> <i>Playing</i> <i>English</i> <i>Fighting</i> <i>Enemies/bullies</i> <i>Punishments: (chores/beatings)</i> <i>Failing</i> <i>Not respecting teachers</i> <i>Not listening</i> <i>Shouting</i> <i>Bad time keeping (teachers and other pupils)</i> <i>Being excluded</i>	Better facilities: (Blackboards, floors, windows). Books and Paper. A desk. Decorated classrooms. Need light to study in winter. Cleaner compound.	More equipment. More English. More revision. No shouting. To have newspapers. Pass exams. Need to know more about future: (jobs/family/land). We want to tell them [teachers] what we don't like.

What types of decisions are made/would like to be made by the pupils participating in the study?

Table10: Raw Data Collation Q5-6

Interview Questions	What decisions do you make about what happens at school?	Are there times when you would like to make other decisions about school? Example
Summary of Pupil Responses	Can report bad pupils. We don't make decisions. We can't make decisions. We must follow teachers and adults they know more than us.	Examples Would like to decide when we can do our revision. Would like to decide we want to do more work on English. Want to do more vocational skills not always main topics. We would like to paint and decorate our compound.
Interview Questions	What types of decisions could pupils make?	
Summary of Teacher Responses	They do not know enough. Tell their parents about bad teachers. Tell the teachers about bullies and bad behaviour.	

To what extent do existing cultural, relationship and structural frameworks enhance or inhibit pupil participation in decision making?

Table 11: Raw data Collation Q4

Interview Questions	Could you tell teachers about the changes you would like to make to your school?	Why?
Summary of Pupil Responses	<p>No, we can't say about this.</p> <p>It is for teachers to decide what we can tell them about.</p> <p>We can only ask the teacher if we do not understand something.</p> <p>Not happy to approach teachers.</p>	<p>We fear them.</p> <p>Teachers don't listen.</p> <p>Parents listen the most.</p> <p>They are paid too little to listen to problems.</p> <p>Teachers should decide for us.</p>

Table 12: Raw Data Collation Teacher Questions

Interview Questions	Who makes decisions about education? What sorts?	Who makes decisions about what happens in the school and classroom?	How could pupils participate in these decisions?	What might be the benefit of including pupils in decisions?
Summary of Teacher Responses	<p>Ministry / Government - national curriculum (sets the curricula).</p> <p>SMC and PTA (decides on monetary decisions).</p>	<p>Head teacher.</p> <p>Teachers (but in line with the curriculum).</p>	<p>Prefect role.</p> <p>They should not.</p> <p>We want them to think they do.</p> <p>They tell their parents about poor teachers and we replace them.</p> <p>They could not, they must wait to be told.</p>	<p>The Prefect maintains discipline.</p>

Having satisfied myself that the collective data was sufficient in breadth to address the underpinning research questions, the coding process commenced (see table 13 example of coding).

Table 13: Examples of Codes

Code	Signifier	Code	Signifier
Authority	AU	Play	PL
Bullies	BU	Poverty/Po or	PO
Discipline	DI	Punishment	PU
Enemies	EN	Resources	RE
Exclusion	EX	Respect	RES
Fear	FE	Skills	SK
Friends	FR	Status	ST
Hope	HO	Teachers	TE
Knowledge	KN	Trust	TR
Listen	LI	Voice	VO
Money	MO	Work	WO
Parent	PA	Wealth	WE

In a process of continual review of the codes which evolved, I began to observe clearer categories emerging whereby some of the themes related to the physical (people, resources and place), some to the psychological (feelings such as hope and fear) and relational (such as play and status). Likewise, some were positive and other were expressed as negative. Early themes which emerged were very broadly categorised in table 14:

Table 14 Early Themes

Theme	Positive	Negative	Both
Emotional / Psychological Themes	Hope/Knowledge	Fear/Exclusion/poverty	Respect Trust
Resource/Physical Themes	Play Status (could also be psychological) Skills Wealth Work	Poverty Discipline Exclusion (can be both physical and psychological) Punishment	Resources / Money / Status
Relational Themes	Friends Parents Play Status	Bullies/Enemies Teachers	Voice/Listening

When I first began this study, I was extremely keen to represent ‘truth’. I had hoped to identify themes on a semantic level which would enable me to capture explicitly what the participant had said and the significance of any emerging patterns, highlighting their implications in relation to wider literature (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun and Clarke, 2006; Mills, et al., 2010). However, as I conducted the data collection methods in Uganda, I felt that I needed to look beyond the semantic and attempt to look at ideas and assumptions and ideologies that shaped the semantic. I began to identify themes at a more latent level.

Initially, this decision was influenced by the fact that the explicit data was quite light in content. For example, responses to questions were often brief and in basic forms of English. Secondly, there appeared equally rich data in exploring what was not said explicitly, what was inferred and what has perhaps influenced and given meaning to some of the responses; this became of key interest. This approach did indicate that I may need to interpret the meaning of some of the findings, but to minimise this, I asked probing and searching questions during the data collection to clarify any possible misunderstanding or misrepresentations.

As the themes became clearer I began to explore the relationship between the themes. At times some of themes appeared to overlap and some appeared to lack in depth and as such I continually refined the themes, until I felt that I had captured a 'true' picture of the chapters of the 'story' of these pupils and teachers. The challenge for me was to fit individual themes into a broad overall story which would help me address my research question.

4.3 Results from Observations

The observations from each school were intended to provide me with further context on which to form an understanding of school life. When I reflected upon my observation journal (see example in appendix 1, observation journal), in a similar coding exercise to that with the interview transcripts, I found that what I had observed did indeed correlate with the physical and psychological themes the interview had identified. My observation ended up qualifying the context as I had intended for their purpose. My observations are presented in the analysis section and were coded using the same thematic codes as the interviews for ease of analysis.

4.4 Results of the Application of Hart's Ladder in Uganda

After the interviews had taken place, the participants undertook exercises to help to map levels of participation and compound the findings of the interviews. A discussion of the findings and initial observations from these exercises is now presented.

4.4.1 Pupil Participants

The ladder exercise was distributed to the pupils individually (see appendix 1, my ladder). Each of the rungs of the ladder was explained to the pupils, with examples in both English and local language by the translator and time was allocated to make a decision. Each pupil was asked to place an indicating mark where they felt that their position within school presently resided and a second mark where they would like to be, in terms of their participation. The

distribution of the responses is highlighted in table 15 and will be analysed in Chapter 5.

As discussed in the reflections of the pilot in Uganda, a second exercise was used to see if the ladder's metaphor had indeed led the participants to a conclusion which did not truly reflect the situation. In a similar exercise to that posed by Treseder (1997) Degrees of Participation, I removed the ladder and the hierarchy it represented and opted to put the rung descriptors on to placards (see appendix 1, deconstructed ladder). These were unrelated to each other and placed in random positions on the floor. Again, the wording (although child friendly) and illustrations were explained with examples. The children were asked to stand on the words and image card that represented where they felt they were, then where they would like to be. For this exercise, to avoid any peer pressure, I invited students to a space in the room away from the others to complete the exercise. Each pupil underwent the same activity and each of their responses was recorded. I also added what I called a 'wild spot' which was where the pupils could stand if they felt none of the words or images held meaning for them. To avoid appearing intimidating in any way, I did not prepare questions for the pupils to answer in this one to one situation. I asked each of them why they had chosen to place the marker where they had. Discussion was somewhat limited, but I felt that having a reason for making a selection was extremely important to demonstrating decision making capacity.

Table 15 Frequency Distribution and Analysis of Pupil Responses to Ladder Exercises

Key: 0=wild spot, 1=Manipulated, 2=Decorated, 3=Tokenism, 4=Assigned but Informed, 5=Consulted and Informed, 6=Adult Initiated, shared decisions, 7=Child Initiated and directed, 8=Child initiated shared decisions with adults

School	Pupil	Exercise 1: Formal Ladder		Exercise 2: De-constructed Ladder	
		Present Rung	Ideal Rung	Present Rung	Ideal Rung
School 1 (private)	Boy 1	1	4	1	4
	Boy 2	4	4	2	4
	Boy 3	3	4	1	4
	Girl 1	4	4	1	4
	Girl 2	2	3	0	4
	Girl 3	3	4	0	4
School 2	Boy 1	3	4	1	4
	Boy 2	2	4	2	4
	Boy 3	1	4	2	4
	Boy 4	2	4	0	4
	Girl 1	2	3	0	3
	Girl 2	2	4	1	4
School 3	Boy 1	2	5	0	5
	Boy 2	3	4	0	4
	Boy 3	3	5	1	4
	Girl 1	2	5	1	5
	Girl 2	2	4	2	4
	Girl 3	3	4	1	4
School 4	Boy 1	3	5	1	5
	Boy 2	3	4	2	4
	Boy 3	3	5	2	4
	Girl 1	2	4	1	4
	Girl 2	2	5	1	5
	Girl 3	2	4	0	4

Summary of Frequency Distribution

Rung	Exercise 1: Formal Ladder		Exercise 2: Deconstructed Ladder	
	Response Present	Responses Ideal	Responses Present	Responses Ideal
Wild spot			7	
Manipulation	2	-	11	-
Decoration	11	-	6	-
Tokenism	9	2	-	1
Assigned but informed	2	16	-	19
Consulted and informed	-	6	-	4
Adult initiated	-	-	-	-
Child initiated and directed	-	-	-	-
Child initiated shared decisions with adults	-	-	-	-

4.4.2 Teacher Participants

After the pupils completed their exercises my attention turned to the teachers. With them I elected to leave the ladder in its traditional format but to ask them to complete mapping against the rungs from two different perspectives. 1. where they felt that the pupils are presently and 2. where they themselves felt they were placed within the school system in terms of their own participation. It was important to obtain these two aspects from the teachers, in order to correlate with some of the emerging themes from the interviews. The teacher's responses are collated in table 16 and will be analysed in Chapter 5.

Table 16 Distribution and Analysis of Teacher Responses to Ladder Exercise

Key: 1=Manipulated, 2=Decorated, 3=Tokenism, 4=Assigned but Informed, 5=Consulted and Informed, 6=Adult Initiated, shared decisions, 7=Child Initiated and directed, 8=Child initiated shared decisions with adults

School	Pupil	Ladder Exercise 1	
		Present Rung Pupils	Present Rung Teacher
School 1 (private)	Teacher 1 (P6)	3	2
	Teacher 2 (P6)	4	3
School 2	Teacher 1 (P6)	4	2
	Teacher 2 (P6)	5	3
School 3	Teacher 1 (P6)	4	2
	Teacher 2 (P7)	4	2
	Teacher 3 (P6)	3	3
School 4	Teacher 1 (P6)	5	3
	Teacher 2 (P6)	4	3

Summary Frequency Distribution

Rung	Exercise 1: Formal Ladder	
	Pupils	Teachers
Manipulation	-	-
Decoration	-	4
Tokenism	2	5
Assigned but informed	5	-
Consulted and informed	2	-
Adult initiated	-	-
Child initiated and directed	-	-
Child initiated shared decisions with adults	-	-

4.5 Final Thematic Codes Emerging out of Results

The coding of the initial findings and identification of key relationships in the data identified in addition to the results from the ladder exercise resulted in the establishment of three key themes and several sub-categories. These were used to form my analysis:

- Theme 1: Implications of Causal Relationships/Key Relationships (Sub-categories: Voice and participation, Trust (distrust), Respect (disrespect))
- Theme 2: Ideology of Education (Sub-Categories: Expectations, Hope and Limiting Factors)
- Theme 3: Pedagogy of Domination (Sub-categories: Fear, Authority vs Authoritarian: the role of teachers,)

These themes encompass both the physical and psychological perspectives of the participants and the relational to one another. I believed that these themes make an informative analysis and would address the aim of the study and coupled with a policy analysis will provide substantial insights into the opportunities and barrier to pupil participation in the community.

An analysis and discussion of the key findings of these research activities is introduced in chapters 5 and 6, which places my findings within a wider context encapsulated in the literature review and government policy.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion

The previous chapter presented the results of the primary research of this study. This chapter will analyse the results to extract meaningful findings synthesising the policy analysis, thematic analysis of the interview transcripts, Hart's Ladder and observations in order to further address the research questions. The findings will be presented with the policy analysis first and then the primary research findings will be shared. It is important to present the policy context first to provide a macro context for the study. Salient aspects of the policy review will then be integrated with the wider primary research findings and literature review to provide critical insight into the micro environment surrounding the child in education. Through careful synthesis of data sources this section will seek to illustrate the rhetoric or policy against the backdrop of reality within the parameters of the study and make careful conclusions as to the extent to which these pupils can contribute to decision making.

5.1 National Policy Analysis

The policy context forms an integral part of the framework underpinning this study. Policy enables human rights to be integrated into national practice which in turn shapes social and emotional context. Therefore, a review of primary education policy in Uganda was necessary to add context, depth and substance to the main findings of the study and to provide insight into the government's education priorities. This critical review is triangulated with the key themes of the primary research findings to form part of the analysis and to aid in understanding reality beyond the rhetoric. The review involved a content analysis which sought to scrutinise the policies to identify absences, contradictions, tone and spaces of hope for children in education. Key questions asked of the documents included:

- How are the concepts of human rights, participation and empowerment interpreted in the documents?
- Where does evidence exist of genuine participation from all stakeholders in policy formation?

- Does opportunity exist for greater participation at community and individual level?
- How is education quality defined and measured? Does this correlate to wider definitions, such as those posed by the UNDP
- Does evidence exist of clear accountability and responsibility in regard to matters of quality of education?
- Is there a clear purpose for education, aligned to national strategy?
- How is the education sector prioritised as part of national strategy?
- What evidence exists of intervention and actions beyond the rhetoric?

Two key policies were analysed in relation to primary education: Firstly, the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2010-2015, which updates the ESSP 2007-2015 and was in turn an updated version of the original 2004-2015 plan. It is relevant to note that the ESSP expired in 2015 and as yet there is no publication of an ESSP for 2016 onwards. However, there is a National Development Plan (NDP) 2015/16 - 2019/20 which forms the second document for review. This document was also scrutinised for inclusion of government priorities related to education and includes sections of President Museveni's Uganda Vision 2040 'A Transformed Ugandan Society from a Peasant to a Modern and Prosperous Country within 30 years' (published June 2015). These documents were selected due to their political significance during the period of the study and because they are the basis for the country's ambitions for growth.

Education Sector Strategic Plan 2010 - 2015

The Government's White Paper for Education (1992) set out the purpose of Uganda's education system and can be summarised as aiming to promote:

'..Citizenship; moral; ethical, and spiritual values; scientific, technical and cultural knowledge, skills and attitudes; literacy and equip individuals with basic skills and knowledge', '..to contribute to the building of an integrated, self-sustaining and independent national economy' (MoES, 2010, p11)

The ESSP was based on the government's White Paper for Education and discussed the long-term commitments to the international community and included the medium-term goals, plans and current undertakings of the Ministry of Education and Sport. The Plan covered all sectors of education, however, the analysis focussed most specifically on sections relating to primary education.

The 2010 version provided a useful narrative of the various revisions of the original 2004-2015 ESSP and the previously revised 2007-2015 ESSP and also aligned the sector plan more explicitly with the NDPI 2010/11 - 2014/15. A summary of the content was analysed using the key questions presented earlier in the section. The purpose was to identify whether, where and how it addressed questions relevant to children's participation. The analysis considered the past ESSP's as they informed the present document, to highlight the key influences that culminated in the various revisions.

The original ESSP was prepared in 2003 and covered the period 2004-2015. Its purpose was to address national concerns relating to education and to provide a policy and financial framework for the sector. The key concerns it was designed to address related to failing literacy, numeracy and basic life skills at primary school level and failing secondary and tertiary educational institutions. It was underpinned with a mathematical model of the education system which focussed on key metrics such as enrolments, resources (ratios of classrooms, books, and teachers) and investment needs.

The need for re-costing of the original ESSP prompted a revision in 2007 as costs far exceeded budgets. The revision was also prompted by the intervention of global stakeholders (notably UNDP) wherein pressure was placed on Uganda to align national strategy with MDGs and EFA to ensure that these could be financially achievable. The sector still experienced poor achievement in literacy and numeracy and little impact had been made by the interventions of the original ESSP. Key elements to the 2007 revision included: the introduction of a thematic curricula and local language instruction at primary level; ensuring all completing P7 pupils had access to either secondary education, or Business, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (BTVET - similar to an apprenticeship in the UK); increased investment in STEM education; increased

participation in tertiary education and increasing the attractiveness of teaching as a profession.

A similar need for re-costing of the 2007 ESSP prompted a further revision in 2010 as the MoES recognised that the cost implications of the proposed reforms would require significant supplementation from the private sector, including households, enterprises and charitable organisations. Furthermore, the MoES identified the need to consider the effectiveness of some of the initiatives proposed, given the country's wider NDP, therefore the 2010 ESSP proposed to align sector and national strategy for what appeared to be the first time. A pertinent question raised as part of the review related to why such a considerable period had been taken to reach the realisation that there would be benefits to aligning the policies. This highlighted the importance of the connectedness between government and individual sectors and the wider connections with supranational organisations such as the UN and which perhaps were most imperative to the government.

The key objectives of the ESSP 2010-15 for primary education were:

- 1. Increase equitable access to improve progression and enhance completion of primary education**
- 2. Improve the quality and relevance of primary education, ensuring pupils master basic numeracy and literacy (p61)**

The objectives were critically analysed during the review and are discussed below:

Increase equitable access to improve progression and enhance completion of primary education (p61)

Section 1.4.2 of the policy referred to education as a right and then quickly in section 1.4.3 referred to access to education being the MoES method of accommodating this right. This aligned with contemporary discourse presented in the literature review surrounding the right *to* education, rather than

extending to embrace rights *in* education. And as I read through the document, I found little evidence of rights *in* education throughout.

Participation was another term mentioned within the policy on numerous occasions

‘Participation in education is therefore held to be part of the solution to poverty reduction through its potential to increase the quality of life’
(p13)

‘Uganda needs citizens who can actively participate in their communities’
(p38)

What appeared to be considered as participation (like rights mentioned earlier) seems to relate more specifically to access and attendance rather than active participation *in* education. It appeared that the government was utilising the least controversial and challenging interpretations of participation and I wondered why this was. The word may have been added to policy documents to ventriloquise international influences, perhaps. Without a clear meaning to the word in a Uganda context, it appeared quite superficial within this policy and more related to being present than a genuine attempt to create a culture of participation. For example, despite claims that the revised version moves away from access to experience an objective proposed in the Plan related to *‘reaching out to the disadvantaged to get them in to education’*. In this regard the MoES indicated a role for *‘NGO’s in reaching these communities to get them to participate in education’* (p50). However, the focus appeared to be on gaining access to education, with emphasis on enrolment and rather less about what happens once they are in education. Much like Cheney in her ethnographic studies of Uganda (2001-2011), I was left to wonder whether perhaps the meaning of the word participation differed in a Ugandan context as highlighted from the inferences in the plan and what real participation may look like in Uganda (Cheney, 2011).

The document appeared to have been formed with little consultation from outside of the MoES and referred to key Government documents and policies which informed the ESSP but did not discuss any wider consultation with other stakeholders. In the ESSP the MoES describe themselves as *'the engine to propel the implementation of the Plan'* (p80). There appeared a role for SMC's in overseeing the implementation of the Plan. Similarly, there was an inferred role for communities and parents in *'monitoring, inspecting and where possible funding the education of their child'* (p80). There is little evidence which suggested that these important stakeholders had been consulted as part of the development of the Plan or had participated in the formation of its objectives. This indicated a clear example of top-down policy formation which Uganda had often received criticism for (Easterley, 2006). What seemed interesting was the clear prioritisation of external (those outside the country) contributions from select stakeholders *'external donors have been involved and will continue to be so'* (p80) donors include: USAID (under the UNITY project), Irish Aid, UNICEF and United Nations World Food Programme). It seemed there was little participation in policy formation from wider grassroots stakeholders (internal to Uganda), only a role in implementing and monitoring. This is typical of the *'planners at the top lacking knowledge of the bottom'* (Easterly, 2006, p5). Perhaps the government consider a lesser value of participation from internal stakeholders, or as this is not usual practice, they defer to external stakeholders. It seemed of little surprise, given the tone and content of the ESSP that the GoU does not identify opportunity for genuine participation by a child in education. A child is perhaps perceived as one of the less significant stakeholders, despite growing academic evidence (Harber, 2011; Danby, 2002; Cheney, 2011 for example) that they have the capacity and capability to participate in the education system and in fact the country.

Despite what appeared as a lack of consultation on the Plan, it did indicate a greater role for parents and communities in monitoring education. By *'adopting a business-like approach to improve delivery of public service'*, *'citizens have a greater voice and influence'* (p22) over public services. However, to increase opportunity for voice there needs to be agency (Sen, 1999). There does not appear an avenue to engage change agents or other methods to increase agency for citizens in the policy. This could raise the opportunity to start developing a

voice in school. Yet in school, a lack of ability to participate seems to rob the child of voice and propel them towards a life of passivity (Freire, 1979). I felt that this presented a misalignment between government expectation and citizen capability.

There was acknowledgement in the plan that poor completion and progression from P1 to P7 indicated that the system was not efficient and identified '*an urgent need to improve progression, reduce drop out and avoid repetition*' (ESSP, p38). However, I was unable to locate anywhere in the plan that clearly addressed how these inefficiencies could be overcome, other than pledges to restrict enrolment to age six and reduce teacher absence. Therefore, the acknowledgement became just that, more a statement of intent with little substantial intervention.

The Plan prioritised achievement, but also stated that at primary level, the skills needed for life-long learning should be produced - these being '*critical analysis and problem solving*'. In fact, the document (p26 and p46) further alluded to the education sector '*equipping young people with appropriate life skills*' and also to the term '*empowerment*' (p47) although only in relation to health decisions. The use of this term reinforced the question posed in the previous paragraph - where, if not in school, is the capacity to begin to learn these skills for life? Yet at the time of this study there was evidence of an absence of life skills in the teaching syllabus and a lack of opportunity to accommodate what could be considered citizenship skills in the context of the school. The school setting would have created a 'safe' space for children to interact in a familiar social setting such as the classroom and playground and learn, practice and be encouraged by teachers to embrace these important future skills.

3. Improve the quality and relevance of primary education, ensuring pupils master basic numeracy and literacy (p61)

The original ESSP of 2004 (p3) held three purposes:

- a. Help the Ministry to fulfil its mission, which is to support, guide, co-ordinate, regulate and promote quality education

- b. To guide all sub-sectors in their regular medium-term and annual planning and budgeting
- c. To help the MoES co-ordinate investment (from other government agencies and external funding agencies) in the education sector (MoES, 2004, p3)

The emphasis on cost and quality education remained constant themes throughout the various later revisions. Earlier versions of the ESSP focussed on getting children in to education and the later versions more emphasis on quality. The term '*quality education*' featured heavily throughout the plan, but little was said about what it means from a Ugandan perspective - what is considered quality education? Like Alexander (2015) I question the metric and measurements of quality which exist in current UNDP policy and agree a paradigm shift to include pedagogy is needed. Pedagogy is not mentioned in the policy as integral to quality. Page 18 of the document provided some insight in relation to the term and posed '*a quality education - what participants learn and how they learn*'. This statement also interestingly placed emphasis on 'raising standard of learning' and that a quality school '*..pursues strategies that ensure children learn*' (p52). When I considered the tone and wording of these statements, I particularly found '*raising the standard of learning*' (p52) an interesting phrase. I considered this seemed to place quite a lot of emphasis on the learner, almost enforcing the learner to learn - '*learn more, learn better*' sprang to mind. I considered what the role of the teacher would be in raising the standard of teaching and learning as this was not clear in the policy.

The frequent citation of '*quality education*' was almost always followed by reference to performance metrics, benchmarks, and ratios. It became apparent that quality-enhancement was measured by key indicators including ratios of primary pupils to classrooms, teachers and text books, net enrolment rates, completion rates and pupil achievement in literacy and numeracy. These metrics seemed to focus on input (enrolment) and outputs (achievement) and less on the process in between. Similar to Alexander (2015) I believe learning takes place in a classroom and therefore to raise its standard (if this is indeed possible) attention on what happens here seemed to be critical to achieving '*quality education*'. However, a quality focus consistently linked to learning

outcomes being achieved fails to address this key part. It was argued in the literature review that quality is something that all key stakeholders (including the children) could play a part in, yet the narrow focus within the plan on performance metrics and measures seemed to miss this opportunity.

In acknowledging a '*lack of quality education*' the ESSP (p18 and p36) placed what appeared a high degree of blame at the door of teachers and schools. The ESSP claimed that high absenteeism of pupils and teachers, weak management and ineffective SMCs, inadequate teaching materials, large class sizes and lack of midday meals for pupils were key contributory factors. It did state that further factors, clearly the responsibility of the MoES, included: difficulties in attracting teachers to disadvantaged areas; insufficient teacher training and poor-quality inspection could also play a part. However, a substantial part of the plan focussed directly on the responsibilities of schools and teachers. For example, section 3.3.6 (p38) referred to quality education being '*children who are regularly and well taught*'. I wonder what was meant by the term '*well taught*' and how this would be achieved. With quality being a focal point of the plan, one would have anticipated that key priorities would have included a focus on defining and achieving '*well taught*', yet the ESSP indicated them as:

- Strengthening data regarding admissions, enrolment, progression and completion
- Reducing repetition to reduce overcrowding
- Better control of the P1 intake enrolling at age 6
- Reducing teacher, head teacher and pupil absenteeism
- Making optimal use of financial and material resources (p38)

Although these priorities were identified, the plan was rather vague on how they might be achieved and does not clearly assign ownership by any stakeholder to remedy these areas. As such this could lead to no one taking responsibility and creating a tendency to defer to someone else with nothing being achieved, further evidence of Easterly's planners (2006) who focus on rhetoric, rather than practice.

An interesting contradiction emerges as the plan was scrutinised in that objective 1 sought to develop access to education, yet parts of the plan stated that by widening access to primary education, the quality of education can be put at risk (p15, p24) and it proposed that schools reduce access and only enrol pupils who are 6 at P1, to address the issue. Again, the school and its teachers attract criticism for enrolling too many pupils, rather than the MoES providing the resources to help the schools to run efficiently.

Section 3.3.8 and 3.3.9 asserted that to ensure quality the controversial thematic curriculum (introduced in 2007) remained but would be subject to further revision. This revision included greater timetabled sessions in literacy and numeracy and less for other subjects. This creates a tension of where the curriculum makes way for the development of the 'life skills' (p47) mentioned earlier in this section. Another intervention to enhance quality suggests a feasibility study on continuous assessment - to help teachers '*provide remedial help when pupils fall behind*' (p54). This could relieve the pressure of performance (by both pupil and school) on final exams but requires carefully trained teachers to feedback and forwards continuously. A further strategy to support achievement, proposed working with the private sector to provide pre-primary education, to '*prepare children for the intellectual requirements of primary school*' (p55). However, this creates a further tier to an education system which is failing in the first instance. However, it is acknowledged that pressures exist from the UN, UNESCO and OECD to set up early education.

Furthermore, a class cap of 53 pupils per class was suggested in addition to the potential to stream (p52) classes by ability to reduce class sizes. 53:1 still seemed high and would continue to challenge a teacher in terms of classroom management and differentiation, as has been the case for many decades in Uganda. Similarly, the method of streaming may well leave children feeling labelled and isolated. I was again drawn to thoughts of the disadvantaged children mentioned earlier, children that the Government was so keen to give access to, who could be labelled further in such a system.

The Plan also promised '*sound teacher orientation and training and ensuring adequate instructional materials*' and referred to teachers as '*the backbone of*

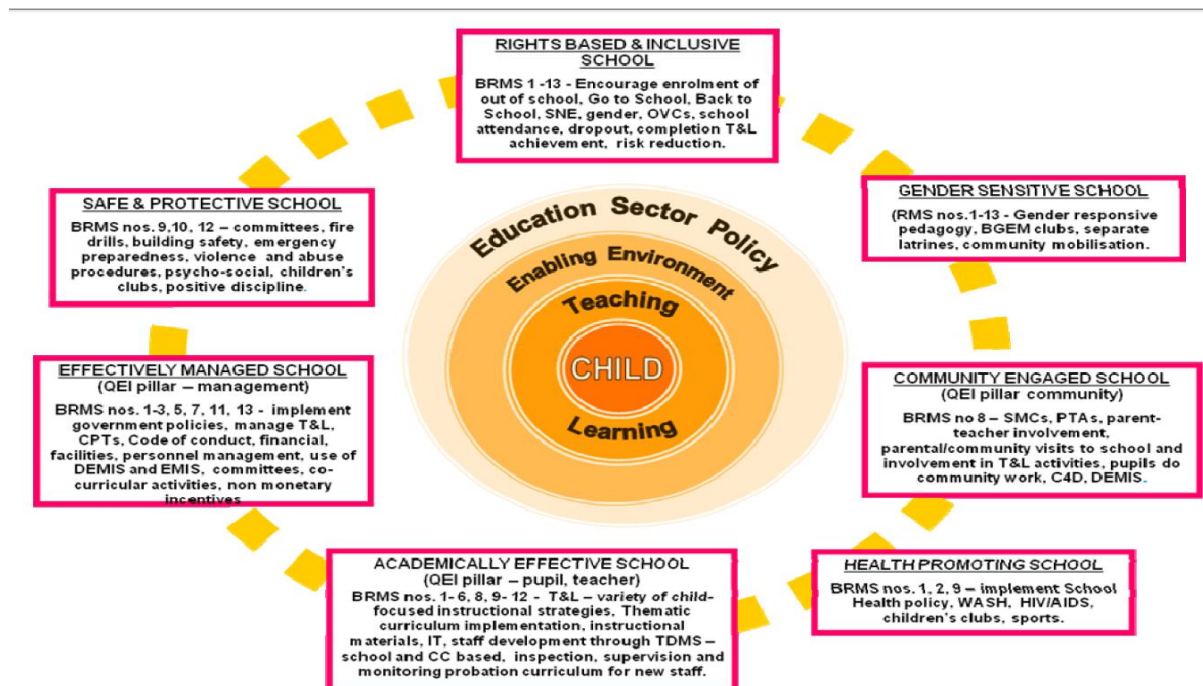
Education' (p54). It proposed new teacher training and a new Primary Teacher Education (PTE) Certificate. However, given the acknowledged national lack of teachers perhaps policy could have focussed on retaining existing teachers in addition to attracting new ones to the profession, especially those in disadvantaged areas. Furthermore, in 2010 the MOES openly acknowledged that teacher training was inadequate, and this remains so despite support from UNESCO in 2010. Despite this acknowledgement I noted that the budget for education had been reduced (Among, 2014) and teachers remain poorly paid and with low morale (UNESCO, 2012). This questions to what extent practice reflect policy and teachers are genuinely valued as 'the backbone of education'.

The Basic Requirements Minimum Standards (BRMS, p40) were revised in 2009 and formed part of the basis of school monitoring and improvement plans. These remained in the ESSP 2010 as a quality measure (section 3.3.10). The framework identified the child at the centre of the teaching and learning environment, a seemingly promising step towards participation. However, whilst the model (see fig 11) does place the child at the centre of the system, there are few direct references to the child in the Plan, only to the system surrounding them.

The section relating to 'rights-based' and 'inclusive school' appeared slightly misaligned with the metrics assigned to it, which referred to enrolment (right to education as mentioned earlier). In relation to 'safe and protective school', the term 'positive discipline' seemed ambiguous may have been interpreted at differently at school and teacher level.

Fig 11: BRMS

Figure 11 provide an illustration of the revised BRMS (p40)



Section 3.3.11 related to a 'sound monitoring system which is the NAPE' which tracks achievements in literacy and numeracy. However, the Plan openly acknowledged that better use should be made of the results as 'no change can be brought about by simply measuring performance' (3.3.12). The Plan suggested better teacher training, curriculum development and materials, would support bringing about this change. But it lacked any clear strategy to address this, given the sector's forecast budget cuts.

What is evident from reading the Plan is the value placed not only on quality education as part of the nation's development, but on education per-se. The Plan states on numerous occasions:

'..[education is] critical to Uganda achieving its goals is to continue to improve capacity of education and training to produce the human capital for sustained development' (p12)

'Education of children and youth is an essential contribution to these [national development] goals' (p38)

Yet despite this apparent value, budgets were proposed to be cut and solutions proposed in the revision were prioritised to achieve *'high value given their modest impact on the aggregate budget of the education system'* (p9). The MoES further suggested key success of the ESSP would be determined by *'prioritising and investing in reforms that offer good impact relative to cost'* (p48). This sentence is printed in bold and underlined. The term *'costed'* appears numerous times within the proposed strategies to achieve objectives. The MoES promised that budgets would be provided to schools but be allocated at district level. This appeared to be distributed in a spirit of trust so that the districts allocated these budgets fairly and equitably amongst the schools. Given the high degree of corruption experienced in Uganda (UN, 2008), the devolution of funding might help or hinder the sector depending on how equitably it was dispersed. Furthermore, the GoU had steadily reduced the education sector budget since 2002 from 20.6%, to what was indicated in this plan as 15.3% as indicated in the plan. The reason provided was due to *'competition from other priority sectors, in particular infrastructure and energy'* (p13). The 2010-15 ESSP proposed an incremental increase in the sector's budget to 17.4% by 2015, but this was still somewhat less than the sector received in 2002, when it was acknowledged as a failing underfunded sector. The strategies proposed within the Plan indicated that the GoU would fund 78% and the other 22% be contributed by private enterprises, households and charitable organisations. In a country stricken with poverty I am conscious this was unlikely to be feasible and the revised plan would not meet its objectives as with its predecessors and wider interventions such as MDGs.

One of the key strategies to invigorate the sector was reducing teacher absence as one low-cost: high value action (p48) - but there was little indication within the document of how this could be achieved. The Plan stated that addressing teacher absence would be *'catalytic'* in raising quality and pupil achievement - this seemed a bold statement and once again placed emphasis away from the MoES onto schools who could hold their teachers accountable for poor quality. There appears no impetus to identify the causes of teacher absence, only to

(vaguely) address it. This appeared rather naïve in many respects because with no clear understanding of the causes, how could appropriate measures to address it be implemented? The UN, among others, has on several occasions (2014, 2016) posed that poor salary, lack of motivation, poor living accommodation and high workloads as contributory to staff absences and staff leaving the profession, yet there seemed no ownership of these issues by the government within the policy.

The ESSP, despite its several revisions, appeared to continue to follow the same path as its predecessors with focus on access and achievement and lesser interest on what happens in between. As each version of the plan was formed, key stakeholders seemed not to have been consulted and this was perhaps why the essential aspect of the implementation process appeared overlooked. Without a clear grasp of what happens within districts and schools, the GoU policy had become fragmented and implementation strategies sporadic and inconsistent. This perhaps contributed to why the sector continued to fail in the same areas and why progress appeared stagnant. The role of teachers and schools in the formation of policy perhaps reflected the GoU perspective of the importance of consultation and communication at this level and therefore the notion of participation seemed muted. As a result, the role of child has become less significant. This is despite a system which inferred (via their BRMS) that the child plays a central part. The plan did not make any explicit reference to the role of the child in society or in education, other than to perhaps learn. This plan has now expired and perhaps could be deemed as unsuccessful in its outputs in relation to education and these shortfalls are picked up in the National Development Plan II. The next section continues a critique of some of the themes already raised, but in relation to the National Development Plan. This plan is currently operational and includes a reflection on the achievements and failings of the predecessor ESSP's.

National Development Plan II (NDPII) 2015/16 - 2019/20

The goal of this plan is to *'propel the country towards middle income status by 2020 through strengthening the country's competitiveness for sustainable wealth creation, employment and inclusive growth'* (p1). It is the second of six

five-year development plans to emerge under the Comprehensive National Development Planning Framework (CNDPF) with a view towards realising the Uganda Vision 2040. The document first reviews the performance of NDPI “Growth, Employment and Socio-economic Transformation for Prosperity” covering the period 2010/11-2013/14. It was beneficial to analyse this briefly first because it directly reviewed progress against the ESSP analysed earlier for the same period. A critique of the content in relation to education is presented with the sustained objective of identifying whether, where and how it addresses questions relevant to children’s participation in education.

In summary the six national development plans set out the priorities for Uganda, which are listed as:

- i) Agriculture;
- ii) Tourism
- iii) Minerals, oil and gas;
- iv) Infrastructure development
- v) and Human capital development (p101)

On review of NDPI it became apparent that the strategies in relation to education (also part of the ESSP 2010-15) were generally unsuccessful. Whilst some achievements were acknowledged in the Plan, most notably an increase in transition from P7 to S1 of 26% (p6), the document acknowledged that key areas of policy stagnated: pupil/book ratios; student drop out and repetition; teacher and pupil absence and limited community participation (p35). It described the sector as providing ‘*low quality education at all levels*’ (p37). As such it appeared that much of the ESSP had failed, as had the educational objectives of the NDPI. What the ESSP considered to be the key to unlocking quality education - the schools themselves, are directly acknowledged in the NDPI, as being underfunded, understaffed and suffering from fragmented teacher policies and guidelines. Further acknowledged is that inspection of schools ‘*remains a challenge*’ (p36). Therefore at 2015, having revised education sector strategies twice since 2004, it seemed that the same residual challenges persisted. Similar to the findings of UNESCO in 2012 and UNDP later in 2016. The sector appears static with the government making little move forwards in addressing the basic

aspects of primary education provision. Policy mistakes seem repeated in a damaging and perpetual cycle. The government appeared to acquiesce and accept that after decades of donor support and government plans the education sector appears to have failed the country's citizens. It seemed that the government was placing priority and funding elsewhere focusing on securing economic growth and national security rather than addressing the needs of the education sector. Perhaps they simply do not know how to tackle the multiple challenges effectively given the multiple competing priorities for funding, this is certainly a challenge more widely experienced around the globe. Is a more radical plan required to address the failing sector? Could/should Ugandan ministers design an education system which suits their needs, rather than base it on models from the west, heavily influenced by entities such as the UN? However, given the UNDP (2016) emphasises universalism as being the solution toward increasing human development it seems more likely there will be pressures to integrate more international models, rather than less.

It is not only the education element of the NDPI that was considered unsuccessful, many of the other sector strategies were too. This was attributed to several factors, including slow implementation of core projects; limited alignment of planning and budgeting; limited prioritisation and poor sequencing of interventions; limited financing and weak public sector management (acknowledged on pages 8 and 9). What was apparent from the review of NDPI was that administrators acknowledged the country was '*faced with poor quality of administrative data*' (p22) and yet did nothing about it. It appeared that nationally Uganda was struggling to make changes and implement strategies, so it was not in the least surprising that the education sector was.

The NDPII set four objectives to be attained during the five-year period of 2015 - 2020. These were:

- i) increasing sustainable production, productivity and value addition in key growth opportunities;
- ii) Increasing the stock and quality of strategic infrastructure to accelerate the country's competitiveness;
- iii) enhancing human capital development

iv) and strengthening mechanisms for quality, effective and efficient service delivery (p5)

Over the Plan period of 5 years the NDPII provided guidance to the country to focus on attaining results. This was primarily related to growth in GDP (to 6.3% from 5.2%), reducing those who fall in the NEET sector (by 20%). It also listed increased exports; increased access to electricity, roads and water in rural areas; reducing maternal and infant mortality rates; increasing primary to secondary school transition rate (from 73% to 80%) and net secondary completion (from 36% to 50%).

The Plan is financed by both public and private resources with about 57.8% being Government and 42.2% being private contributions. The overall cost of the NDPII *'is estimated at approximately UGX 196.7trillion, of which UGX 113.7 trillion is Government funding and UGX 83.0 trillion is private sector contribution'* (p5). Time will tell if this is a realistic and achievable estimate as the plan reaches completion in 2020. The reliance on private funding raises concern of the feasibility of the country being able to sustain itself independently.

The national priorities as set in the document, place health and education beneath fiscal growth and building industry and infrastructure, which seemed amiss. Enhancing Human Capital was the third of four objectives (and education the seventh and tenth as it also appeared within the human capital subsection). Education is also listed towards the bottom (p102) of the country's *'core projects'* (p128). In some respects, I perceived this situation as a classic 'chicken and egg' and argue that without the education sector working efficiently and effectively, growth of industries such as agriculture and tourism (cited as key priorities) would likely be stunted. The development of skills and creating opportunities to retain talented people within the country seemed essential to achieve the growth that the plan was proposing and surely this could not be achieved without quality education. However, from the opposing perspective, I appreciated that without income generated from these industries the investment required to make the education sector efficient and effective may not be available. This continues to be a significant challenge to the GoU in terms of prioritisation and something it appears they acknowledge and continue to

struggle to decide upon - perhaps offering little explanation as to why NDPI failed.

The education component of the plan appeared to focus quite generally on: Strengthening Early Childhood Development (ECD) placing special emphasis on early aptitude and talent identification (p126); increasing retention at primary and secondary levels, especially for girls, as well as increasing primary-to-secondary transition; increasing investment in school inspection and reviewing and upgrading the education curricula. My initial reaction was sceptical, as I identified a rather similar scope to previous plans pre-dating even the first ESSP in 2004 which had failed. Similar to UNESCO in 2012, I was concerned that the sector would continue to be stuck in the rut it presently was and stagnating in progress towards an education system expected of a middle-income country.

The term '*relevant education*' appeared for the first time on p132 (of 344) then frequently thereafter and often attached to '*quality*'. Section 12.2.2 lists objective 1 as '*achieve equitable access to relevant and quality education and training*' (p196) and objective 2 '*ensure delivery of relevant and quality education and training*' (p197), which were uncomfortably familiar to the objectives of the ESSP 2010-2015. What was also disappointing was to achieve these objectives, the proposed interventions were also very similar to the ESSP (which has already been implied, although not specifically stated in the Plan, as having failed). On a further note, for such a frequent term, it was not apparent within the entire document what '*relevant education*' actually meant and who decided what was relevant and what was not.

In relation to objective 3 *enhance efficiency and effectiveness of education and sports service delivery at all levels* (p197) it was interesting that the interventions proposed referred to empowering schools to manage programmes, then later proposed returning to re-centralised inspection, it seemed to be a case of giving power and then taking it away.

The plan proposed to allocate a percentage of the annual budget to each sector for its duration. What was of note was that the allocations for education and sports was 11.1% (Year 1), 13% (Year 2), 13.5% (Year 3), 15% (Year 4) and 19.8%

(Year 5). The earlier years of the project imposed a budget which was significantly lower than what was allocated at the end of 2015 in the failed ESSP (17.4%) but inferred a steady growth. This was of concern as financial restrictions were responsible for the failings of both the ESSP and NDPI and whilst there was an incremental increase across the lifespan of the plan, if estimated costs (identified earlier in the section) began to spiral, that these budgetary allocations would inevitably be cut, leaving the sector being continuously underfunded.

As with the ESSP the term participation appeared within the NDPII frequently, particularly in relation to community and citizen (p73. P214, p220 for example). However, unlike in the ESSP it provided some hope that in the context of this document, the principles of genuine participation were aspired to, at least at the level of rhetoric.

‘..Increased people participating in making decisions that affect them, right from village to parish ‘(P73)

There were further encouraging references to

‘Rally all stakeholders’ (p214)

‘all sectors...are expected to adopt a Human Rights Based Approach in respect of their policies, legislations, programmes and plans.....will be guided by the following principles: express linkage to human rights instruments; equality and equity; accountability; empowerment; participation; non-discrimination and attention to vulnerable groups’ (p214)

‘Empowering communities to harness their potential’ (p230)

In relation to social development, objective 2 explicitly proposed interventions to **enhance effective participation of communities in the development process**. Furthermore, an illustration of the NDPII implementation and coordination framework does include *‘village and households’* as a part of the

hierarchical structure (albeit at the bottom). To achieve effective participation, the government proposed to '*mobilize and facilitate communities to appreciate, demand, own and sustain personal and national development programmes*' (p230). There is little discussion of what methods may be adopted to gain appreciation from communities, or with whom responsibility resides to ensure this. There appeared no further discussion on how this would be achieved so it seemed open to interpretation. The tone of the statement inferred a degree of empowerment, sharing power for the development programmes and perhaps creating spaces to explore this in wider dimensions. Yet there was a degree of scepticism that the language selected seemed to pay lip service, perhaps to that of global interests, given their high level of donor dependency.

Having critically reviewed both key plans there appeared consistent objectives in relation to education (access and quality for example). This caused some concern due to the residual problems which have been part of the nation's objectives for almost two decades with little progress being made. The fact that the sector still requires significant financial resource yet NDP II allocates a budget lower than ever causes grave concern, as does the prioritisation placed on education in the country's wider development plan.

What is striking in both documents is the numerous ambiguous terms and multiple statements of intention, but little in the way of actions to ensure intentions are achieved. Whilst I remained in absolute agreement of the intention to raise quality of education I was not convinced, having read the documents that a clear plan was proposed and without this I continued to be concerned that quality will remain low.

There was nothing within either document which alluded directly to the role of the child or explicitly to child participation, other than in terms of access to education and their implied duty to learn. However, what was encouraging was that the NDP II and Ugandan Vision explicitly referred to people participating in society and making decisions about what might affect them. This appeared a positive step towards participation which promoted hope. I felt hope that this vision could be extended to include children more explicitly as part of those communities and within a setting where they spend significant time - school. At the very least the inclusion of '*participation*' in the form in which it is generally

more accepted being placed on the national agenda provides impetus to enliven discussion on how to build citizens who have the capability to participate. I concluded my review hopeful that this move towards strengthening citizen participation might shine a light on where most citizens develop such capabilities - at school.

5.2 Primary Research Analysis and Discussion

It is important for this study to represent the voice of the pupil and as such the responses of the pupils in the group interview will form the core of this analysis. However, the data collected from observations, from teachers, through their own interviews and through the meetings with the Head teacher will also provide additional context in which to place the pupils' perspective.

In addition, and to add depth to the analysis, this chapter will also integrate aspects of a national policy analysis and attempt to contextualise and correlate the findings into a wider context of established literature and additional and alternate empirical evidence.

The analysis will commence with exploring the relational aspects which surround the pupil which shape the micro culture which surrounds the child. This culture strongly influences the extent to which a child has voice and can make decisions. This analysis will then develop by exploring opportunities and constraints which affect voice and decision making and were identified by the pupil's themselves. This demonstrates that the pupils have a voice, they have opinions and that they can articulate them.

Further to this Chapter, Chapter 6 will present additional discussion in light of the outcomes arising from the application of Hart's Ladder. Chapter 6 will present a contemporary and situational critique and revision of the Ladder, based on my experience of its implementation during the primary data collection.

5.2.1 Theme 1: Implications of Causal Relationships/Key Relationships (Sub themes: Voice and participation, Trust (distrust), Respect (disrespect))

Levin and Lockhead (2012) assert that meaningful education relies on relationships with those stakeholders involved in the process, most notably teachers, parents, pupils and the community. Tikly (2011) and also Levin and Lockhead (2012) would further add that a positive interconnection between policy, the school and the home/community would enhance the quality of education experienced by the pupils. In the analysis of primary research, these key relationships also emerged as themes. Pupils in the study alluded to several key relationships, both positively and negatively, that were important in their life, positively and negatively: parents; teachers; friends and enemies. The pupils identified that the relationships with their parents were far more positive than those with their teachers. The relationship with the family is suggested by UN (1996) as a positive starting place towards enhancing the child's position within the community and their voice within a school environment.

School was perceived to develop some of these relationships. Boys cited the value of socialising/playing as an important aspect of school. Girls appeared more concerned with learning and how to be socially acceptable in their behaviour. Both socialisation through play and social acceptance are important aspects of building relationships, as is voice, trust and respect, and these aspects will now be discussed in relation to the key relationships identified.

Various studies across the developing world support close collaboration between the pupil, family and teacher (Henderson and Bewrla, 1994; Zygmunt-Fillwalk and Woods, 2007; Naker, 2009; Harris, 2010; Cairney, 2010; McCowan, 2011; Aikman, 2011 and Levin and Lockhead 2012). Kohn (1996) discusses the importance of creating a positive relationship between the teacher and pupil in ways that foster reciprocal care and respect. He argues that this will enhance pupil performance. In contrast, there appears little evidence in my own research to suggest collaboration exists and in particular, the relationship with teachers appeared to be especially negative and was hampered by a lack of trust that was further undermined by behaviours exhibiting dis-respect, such as routine punishments discussed earlier.

The findings of this study are similar in nature to those of Chiwela (2011) in her research in Zambia. She established that cultural attitudes towards the child, lack of knowledge of participation models (by teachers) and ignorance and illiteracy of parents (limiting their own capacities) affects relationships between these key stakeholders. This study would suggest that the role of 'child' in Uganda is very much shaped by the patriarchal nature of the African family [and state] which enforces their relatively low social status, and this is consistent with de Wall and Argenti (2002), Cheney (2007), Meinert (2009), Achillu (2010), and Aikmen (2011). Indeed, children it would appear are not considered as citizens within the community and as such not afforded the rights of others. Walby (1992), Bulmer and Rees (1996) and King (1997) refer to partial or incremental citizenship which relates to the journey between exclusion to inclusion (for women in society in relation to Walby) for groups such as children. King (1997) called for respect and recognition of children as social beings, but not with equal rights to adults. It is not evident that this journey is one which communities within the study would be committed to undertaking. As such, this study observes children remaining on the periphery in Uganda, with little weight given to their opinions and little impetus to develop positive relationships. It would appear therefore, that this study served to further expose the low status of the child within the community and indeed within their school. Vital components of a positive relationship appear missing and will be discussed next.

Voice

The UNCRC provides us with a framework in which to place a context of the primary findings of this study; it served to clarify that pupils were not given the rights they had been afforded by UNCRC, particularly in relation to voice.

Servaes (1999, cited in White 2004) and Stainton (2005) state that communication is critical to creating a participatory structure and communication needs self-advocacy, agency and voice (UNICEF, 2001; Naker, 2009). Article 12 the CRC on voice states that children have the right:

- To express their views freely
- To be heard in all matters affecting them

- To have their views taken seriously
- To respect their views in accordance with their age and maturity (UNICEF, 2001)

The literature review captured some of the contemporary discourse relating to the '*imperfect instrument*' (Freeman, 2000) that is human rights approaches to development. In relation to UNHRC writers as Uvin (2002), Falk (1980), Rapport and Overing (2007) have claimed that universal rights-based approaches often demonstrate western '*powers at work*' and a homogenisation of cultures manifesting as a '*universal human*' (Robertson et al., 2007). Sen (1999) and also Geertz (1973) warned of the dangers of generalisations and a lack of cultural relativism. Similar discourse was exchanged in relation to UNCRC with regard to its Universalist nature and some of the many critics include Roche (1999), DeWall and Argenti (2002), Nieuwenhuys (2008) and later Achilihu (2010) claimed that despite ratification across Africa, progress in embedding the rights of the child remains disappointing.

In relation to this study it would seem critiques of Human Rights appear to resonate in situ and perhaps shape the experiences of the pupils. The pupils demonstrated awareness that on occasion when they are listened to, adults in the community and especially teachers, tended to dismiss them. This may well be related to an earlier discussion in theme 1 in that at this point in their life, the pupils are simply not considered to hold value due to their lack of meaningful work. As such, it could be contextually deduced that those who are without value have nothing of weight to say.

Within each school there appeared an un-voiced acceptance that violence, fear and domination are part of the school experience. Whilst it appears universally disliked, it would appear the pupils do not see any way of this changing (see extract, p192) or voicing their view.

Extract of an interview strand with all pupil participants at School 2:

Q. Would teachers listen to you pupils?

R. No (all responded together)

Q. Should they listen?

R. Yes (all responded together)

Q. When should they listen?

R. When we have important things to say, things that we don't like
(Boy 1)

Q. What sort of things do you not like?

R. Punishments, bullies (Boy 1)

Q. Can you tell them [teachers] you don't like it?

R. No, we can't say about this (all responded together)

Q. Why?

R. We fear them (to interpreter)

R. It is for teachers to decide what we can tell them about (Boy 2)

R. Some people listen, some don't.. teachers don't (Boy 3)

R. Teachers don't want to know us (Boy 1)

Q. How do you feel about this?

R. It is how it is (Boy 1)

Pupils can and do feel frustrated that their voice is not given genuine credibility, particularly by teachers and highlighted that there is no real point of talking when they are not listened to anyway (School 2 and 4). Indeed, of note in one school (school 4) the pupils claimed if they had problems, teachers did not want to know and would send them to their parents or send them away from the school. It would appear as far as a UNCRC based framework is concerned, the pupils within the sample reported not to be afforded their basic rights within the school setting.

Conversely, teaching staff claimed that they listened to children and were in no way dismissive, in contrast to the pupil's own perspectives highlighted above. In fact, at School 1 and School 4 staff claimed students were '*welcome to approach them at any time*', whereas the pupil's response was a resounding '*no*' when asked if they could talk to their teachers. Perhaps their responses were more influenced by a social desirability to appear approachable to pupils to me,

rather more than perhaps is generally the case, or perhaps the teachers were genuine in their belief, but power differentials and the culture are engrained such that pupils do not believe this.

From the pupils' perception it would appear that teachers do not feel that the pupils have anything of note to say. Danby in particular (in Danby, 2002; Danby and Farrell, 2004; Danby, Farrell and Cobb-Moore, 2007 and Danby et al., 2012) suggests that children have the cognitive abilities to navigate their social worlds and should have opportunities to advocate on their own behalf (Lansdown, 2006; Theis, 2010; Schweisfurth, 2011, 2013). Findings in this study would bear these claims out as pupils did indeed demonstrate understanding of a wide range of social factors (status, relationships, acceptable behavioural norms), fundamental aspects of capitalism (work, money, wealth accumulation) and some of the challenges facing their communities (poverty and disease) and yet teachers are reported to dismiss them.

De Waal and Argenti (2002), Cheney (2007), Penn (2007) and Achilihu (2010) would further argue that lived experiences and pressures to take responsibility early mean African children have more of an understanding of the adult world than western children. This could infer more respect and maturity could be afforded to these pupils, however this study does not provide evidence of this happening. Teachers simply do not perceive the pupils as holding anything of importance to say (like findings by Rozga, 2001; Lundy, 2007; and Kellett, 2010). Or alternatively they are under such great pressure to teach the curriculum spaces cannot be created that would detract from this. As such pupils' voices therefore appear marginalised.

Despite some promising frameworks and initiatives such as Rights Respecting Schools (UNICEF, 2013) and Good Schools (Raising Voices project, Nakar 2009) and BRMS (2009), it would appear that pupils' right to voice is clearly not being respected. In fact, staff at School 1 received training via the Good Schools team in Uganda, and whilst the practitioners appreciated the training, little has converted into ongoing practice (According to Headmaster, School 1).

At School 2, I observed a poster depicting an Attitude Scale (see image 3) and it was interesting because the question asked, ‘*where are you?*’ prompted a scaled response. Up to Stage 5 of the attitude scale placed emphasis on ‘I’, however from stage 6 onwards, cited ‘we’. Given the apparent lack of voice that the pupils hold, it is interesting to reflect on the use of this collective.

Image 3: Attitude Scale

Poster displayed at School 2

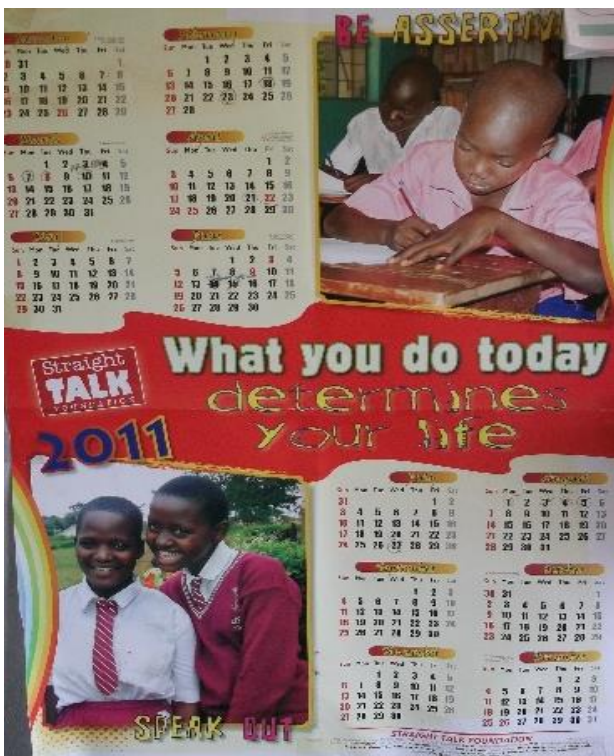
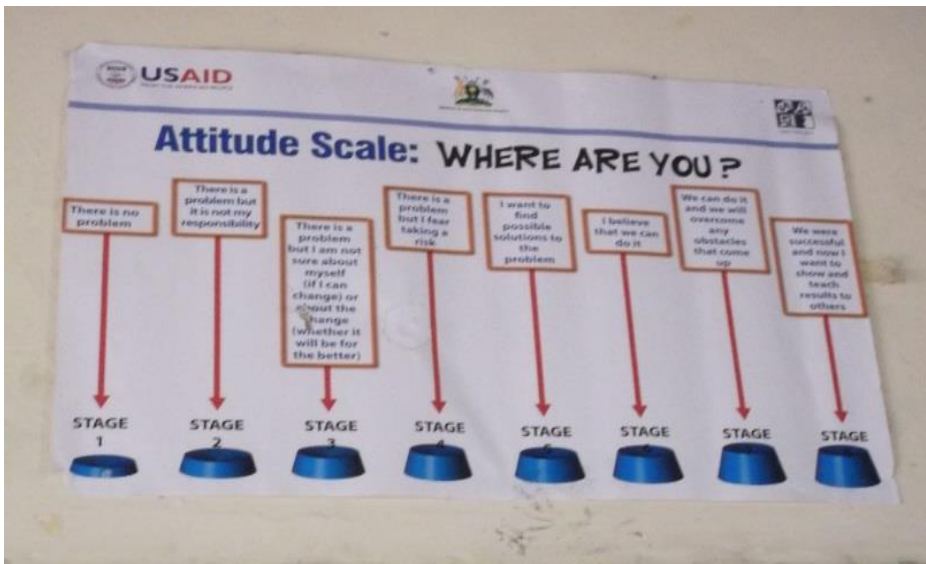


Image 4: Speak Out Poster

A similar poster, from School 4, prompts pupils to ‘speak out’ (image 4) and be assertive. When teachers do listen to the pupils, it would appear that the pupil’s voice is often subverted by teachers within school, to manipulate them to pre-determined directions.

'I want them to think they participate.... I know... but I want them to contribute so they can expose their knowledge. We can then give direction to get the end result. It's like steering a path to the end' School 1 Headmaster

'..we council them [pupils] to our thinking' School 2, Teacher 1

This *'tokenistic ear'*, interestingly, does not go unnoticed by the pupils as discussed in the section below, who claimed/observed that staff often 'lie', 'tell us things that we want to hear and then change their minds' (School 4, Boy 1). This could create quite a pervasive and destructive culture within the school, founded on a lack of trust and respect.

Parents were identified by both teachers and pupils as a useful conduit and appear to hold a good deal of power and influence over both. Interestingly, both the pupils and their teachers demonstrated an understanding of how to manipulate agency through parents and the PTA. This enables them to increase the weight of their voices in absentia through careful navigation of 'the system'. Pupils and teachers are aware that parents represent certain interests at School Management Committees/PTA. Pupils often use their parents to add legitimacy to the children's concerns because they know their teachers will have to listen to parents.

'I tell my parents about school, I can ask them to talk to teachers for me' School 1, Boy 1

As a method to deal with their own sense of powerlessness, staff appear to use a similar manipulation technique as the pupils to enhance their position. Pupils make use of their parents to communicate to the teacher and teachers appear to manipulate the pupil's voice to their own end, to place pressure on parents, who can then advise management committees.

An example of this is the subtle communication by teachers that they are poorly paid and about which all pupils commented upon at interview. As highlighted in my earlier discussions of the pupil transcripts, pupils are aware that staff are poorly paid and that this contributes to their own lack of resources at school. Teachers appear to use their position to manipulate the pupils in to voicing their 'plight', such as the need for paid lunches/higher salary (School 2 and 3) to parents. The pupils are promised better education if teachers are treated better; the children then take this message to parents and as such the notion gathers greater momentum for discussion at community level meetings. The classic example of manipulation depicted here is compounded by a poster which was attached to a window at School 3 (see image 5). The placement of this poster was in clear and regular view of the pupils thus serving as a constant and subliminal reminder of the apparent '*plight*' of the teacher. Despite the outright manipulation the poster appears to be, it does serve as a reminder of the very real problem of poor pay for teachers.

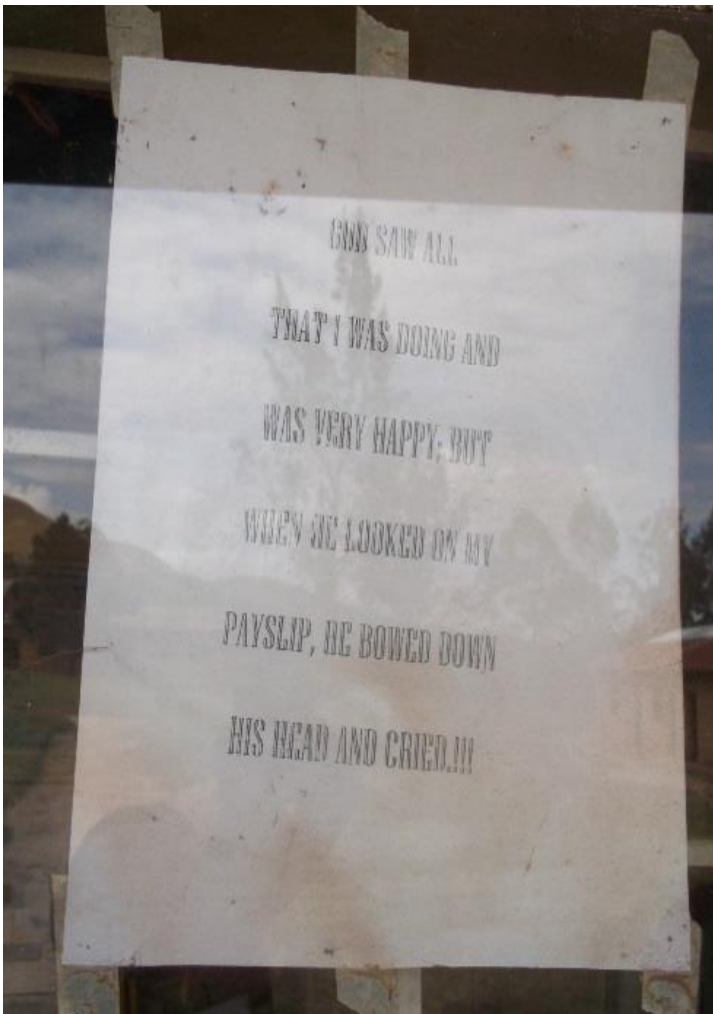


Image 5: Manipulation Example

Poster displayed at School 3

In terms of the teachers' voices, the primary findings highlighted that they too are marginalised and disempowered within the system. The situation in this community is reflective of Freire's (2001) concerns about education, in which he warned that teachers cannot be effective in an exploitative system which robs them of their own voice. A further poster (image 6), from School 2

provides a visual cue highlighting a lack of empowerment of the teacher. It would indicate that there appears to be a pre-occupation at this level, without an understanding of how this might also reach downwards toward the pupil. I also wonder to what extent these posters become wall decoration and their meaning is generally lost.

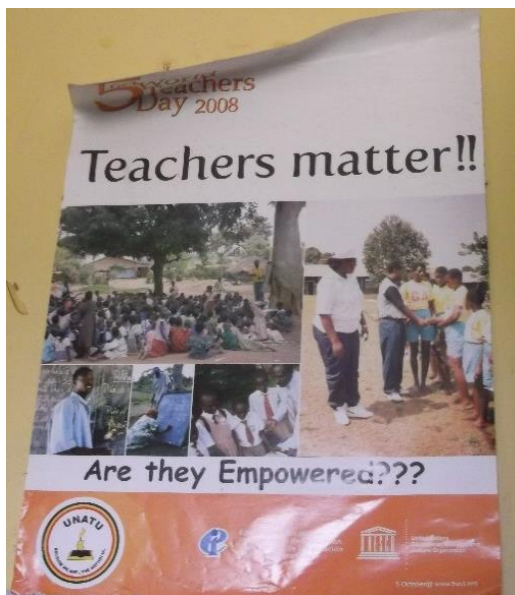


Image 6: Teacher Empowerment Poster
Poster displayed at School 2

Developing a ‘voice’ could be argued as an early stage towards empowerment which can lead towards enhanced capabilities and quality of life, to democracy (political freedom) and greater civil rights such as participatory politics and open debate (Sen, 1999). However, the placement of this study within the wider context of

Uganda, means that many of these vital areas are not commonplace in communities and general society. It is therefore of little surprise that such characteristics are not exhibited in schools and like Cheney (2011) I wonder how change could take effect. In the meantime, the NDPII does offer some hope that spaces can be created for greater citizen participation, placing stronger emphasis on empowering communities and rallying all stakeholders.

At this point I would like to consider the voice of the teacher, within the wider system to perhaps offer some balance to the analysis of the situation within the schools and a greater context of the environment surrounding the pupils.

When discussing their own degrees of authority all of the teachers within the schools and the heads noted that power remains firmly with the MOES and with School Management Committees.

‘They [MOES] provide the curriculum, the syllabus, we have to work to it’
School 2, Teacher 1

'They [MOES] do not consult at this level what it [curriculum] is, they just do what they choose, and we have to implement it' School 3, Teacher 1

Across the schools in this study Staff noted that the MOES governs the curricula and their frustrations about how this is implemented are rife. Teachers are not consulted on curricula and as noted in the comments above all decisions are made at MOES level. The voice of the practitioner is not heard and often the curriculum is troublesome to implement. The policy analysis undertaken within this thesis would support the view that practitioners as stakeholders are not consulted. External donors are consulted on policy matters above those who implement the policies. It would seem that this is a clear area of contention in the schools in this study and this may be an additional contributory factor as to why teachers feel undervalued and de-motivated alongside factors relating to salary. A recent example relates to the reversion of P1-P5 taught in local language, but examined in English, discussed earlier in the analysis.

Staff are powerless and voiceless to affect curriculum and head teachers are equally disempowered regarding local decisions. Each head teacher interviewed stated that the 'real' power locally resides with the SMC and PTA. These are key decision makers and they would meet to discuss key factors affecting the school

'Management Committee is representative of parents, staff and government. They make decisions about the school, not lessons, monetary decisions like buildings, staff having paid lunches, they have financial influence' School 2, Headmistress

'This is a government school. We can't make changes, governments do. Parents have more control than us - we go with their decisions' School 2, Headmistress

Teachers by default are subject to decisions made by School Management Committees and only have authority over their own lesson plans/delivery, although these are clearly shaped by national curricula. It would appear the same culture of dominance and authoritarianism felt by the pupils prevails over

the teachers who are essentially compelled to conform. This has the potential to cause great frustration, but acquiescence and apathy prevail within the teaching staff (see short extract below).

**Extract of an interview strand with
Headmistress at School 2:**

R. We are civil servants, they have control

Q. Would you prefer more control over your school?

R. No, that is how it is - if they pay us, we are happy (laugh)

Participation

The teachers within the study were pleased to demonstrate the extent of pupil participation, claiming that pupils were given voice and some responsibility, and this was often meted out in the form of the ‘*Prefect*’ role. However, on further investigation, the ‘*responsibilities*’ of this role appeared to extend to ensuring that pupils clean their classrooms and complete chores, to reporting troublemakers to the teacher and administering local discipline in the teacher’s absence.

‘We have Prefect Body, they work on our behalf, they supervise, monitor, keep control of the class when the teacher is out. They maintain discipline. Bad habits are reported to us, they know more than us’ School 2, Headmistress

‘[of Prefect role].. they monitor and discipline’ School 3, Teacher 1

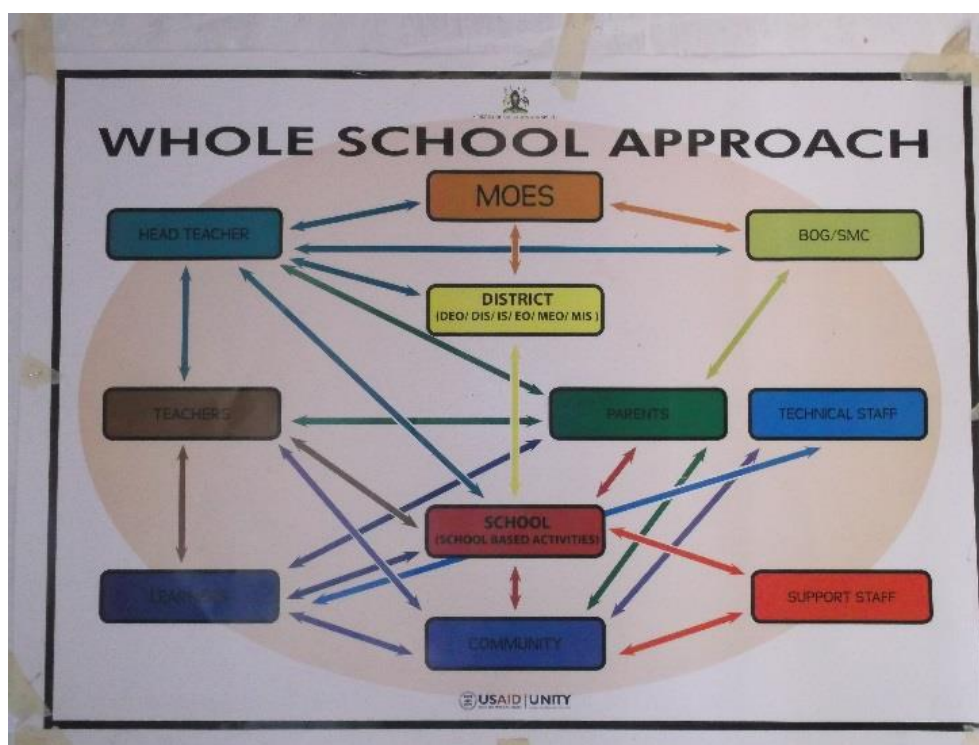
‘The class ‘monitor’ represents the class to the Deputy. They talk about behaviour, cleanliness, time management and discipline’ School 1, Headmaster

The role of the Prefect appears to be less about participation and more related to extending teachers control over other pupils. Although pupils are 'elected' to the role by other pupils, the candidates are chosen by the teachers and according to this study, the role is frequently occupied by 'the people who bully' (School 4, Girl 3). This is perhaps because of the fear experienced by pupils who do not select these bullies or have no power to speak against the prefects. Through this role, authority is given to the pupil to punish others on behalf of the teacher. This was observed in School 1 during observations. A pupil was given authority to '*patrol*' the classroom, identifying peers who were not sitting quietly and still and would administer a strike with a stick. At this point the teacher remained at the front of the classroom at her desk, marking pupils' workbooks. This role appears to extend the fear that exists within the classroom, as pupils' behaviour is modified by the fear that the Prefect will report them to their teachers and further discipline will be administered. The '*Prefect*' is evident of what Checkoway (2010), Mager and Nowak, (2012), Yamashita et al (2011) and Thomas (2012) would define as tokenistic, providing a minority with voice and the opportunity to extend their power base. The role appears less about participation and more an extension of the notion of Foucault's Panopticon to maintain order.

As a stakeholder in their education and according to western principles the pupil should participate, yet on observing a poster on the wall at School 2 (image 7), which depicts the whole school approach, there seemed to be an absence of this particular group represented.

Image 7: Whole School Approach

Poster displayed at School 2



ol 2

Trust (distrust)

Data from the interviews suggests that the pupils trust their parents. However, it would appear that pupils are very much aware that when they themselves speak to teachers, in particular, this is perhaps disingenuous

'Teachers say yes [to vocational tours] if we can get the money, we can go, but they already know that we can't get the money' School 4, Girl 2

'some adults, especially teachers tell lies, they say things but they do not happen' School 1, Boy 1 and Boy 2 'Teachers tell us tomorrow will be like this and it does not happen'

Pupils demonstrated a distrust of what teachers are telling them or had an awareness that they are perhaps being deceived, or just humoured. This is troubling as a crucial relationship is that between the pupils and their teachers,

particularly if the pupils' ideals of education are to be realised. Yet a fundamental aspect of a positive relationship is missing, that of trust. This may well relate to earlier points raised regarding punishments and fear and perhaps by inference it would appear that pupils feel consistently misled (or 'lied to' as they put it) by their teachers thus breaking down the trust that should prevail. This also may be underpinned by some of the apparent exploitative behaviours exhibited by teachers captured by the responses of pupils at School 2.

Pupils also demonstrate a dis-trust of fellow pupils, a prevalence of bullies and fighting between them. I found the descriptor of '*enemies*' referred to frequently in discussions and the notion of bettering oneself to '*outsmart*' these enemies as being an important priority. When asked about the fighting it appeared mostly between boys, although the girls identified that boys would '*attack them*' (School 2, Girl 1) and referred more often to '*being bullied*'. The interviews sought to elicit why the fights occurred,

'Fights happen when they have things and others want them' School 2, Boy 1

'My enemies want what I have, I have to show them they can't have it'
School 1, Boy 2,

'I sometimes fight [laughs] it shows I cannot be defeated, I am strong, they know this' School 1, Boy 1

Fighting, appears to be an intervention to gain position and status. Where the children feel less valued by adults within the community as they are yet to prove their worth, in the playground they can establish identity and power over others (through their displays of dominance and possessions). A further attribute that fighting and subsequent power brings is respect, which will now be discussed.

Respect (disrespect)

Respect (and lack of) appeared as a consistent theme throughout the interviews with both the pupils and the teachers. Respect is held in high regard as a method of gaining status within the community. Teachers and pupils aspire to being respected by others (through the accumulation of wealth and social status), as illustrated through some of the extracts in the preceding pages. In spite of this, pupils and teachers seem to experience disrespect more frequently than respect.

Pupils are disrespected by one another through fighting and bullying and by teachers by having their voice marginalised through acts of dominance. The position of pupil (child) earns little respect from any of the key relationships which surround them.

Similarly, the teacher is also marginalised by the wider system with regard to their voice and also viewed by those with whom they hold key relationships as holding a poorly respected profession. Even the pupils demonstrate a lack of respect for their teachers, perhaps an inevitable by-product of their own mistreatment.

What is of interest is that the teachers demand respect; obedience = respect and the pupils want to give respect demonstrating genuine concern when behaviours are poor, but the themes discussed above create barriers to reciprocal respect being founded.

In a system where teachers appear powerless it is not surprising that pupils are also disempowered. The experience the pupils depict mirrors that of their teachers. Core foundations to building successful relationships (respect, trust and communication) appear to be lacking and without these, attempts to empower pupils (and teachers) appear merely tokenistic, perhaps unrealistic.

5.2.2 Theme 2: Ideology of Education (sub themes: Expectations, Hope and limiting factors)

Expectations and Hope

From a national policy perspective, the ESSP and the NDPII place high value on education as being a *'catalyst'* for the nation's development and pose that development of the nation's young people is critical to the economy and for Uganda to become a middle-income country by 2020. It would seem that the pupils within this small-scale study would share the government's sentiment and pupils at each of the schools identified that receiving education was highly important to them, most notably,

'Education is for the future, I can get a job, wife, family and wealth'

School 2, Boy 1

'We get to talk to people, get knowledge for our future, to get good jobs'

School 4, Boy 2

'I go to school, so I can become an important people' School 1, Girl 2

The pupils demonstrated a great aspiration that education would indeed lead them towards a working future. The notion of the importance of working is prevalent within Uganda, particularly within rural communities (Sen, 1999, Cheney, 2011). This perspective is shaped by the general national culture and is captured within the NDPII which infers that the country's success is dependent on everyone becoming economically productive and that citizens must rally to participate in the development of the country. Such sentiments create a sense that one defines their value within the family and community by the work that is generated, and it could be argued that work gives meaning to one's existence. It could further be argued that until children are able to *'work'* they are perceived as less valuable to their families, due to their lack of perceived productivity and this could contribute to their relative low social status. Certainly, in my own experience during visits to Uganda I have observed distaste by members of the community towards those who do not work and/or who choose to squander their

time drinking and sitting around. These people are very much treated as peripheral to the community where there appears a utilitarian approach with each individual contributing towards the greater good (Bentham, 1843). Through this a degree of self-reliance is achieved within the community. A joint report by International Labour Organisation (ILO), UNICEF and the World Bank in 2008 (Understanding Children's Work in Uganda) would support my assertion and attributes the need for children to work as also being due to the economic situation of the family, where work is deemed a lesser expense than the child attending school and more of a benefit to the family. This perspective would naturally shape a child's view of the importance of work. The same report highlighted that half of all children were economically active by 13 years old. The report highlights a real barrier to children proceeding in school beyond primary education and this may perhaps account for some of the pupils in my study finding it hard to envision a career beyond their current existence or indeed may drop out.

The pupils who held ideas for a 'job' demonstrated a practicality in their work choices, electing vocations such as teachers, soldiers, builders and drivers, for example. All the pupils seemed practically grounded in their hopes for their future. This may at first demonstrate a maturity and realism in their outlook towards the future, however, the more likely reason for this is that these roles are those which the pupils are exposed to on a daily basis which require education and as such aspirations are managed accordingly. With little access to wider career guidance from teachers and sources such as the internet, the wealth of potential careers is essentially hidden from these pupils (Meinert, 2009) and as such is shaped by what parents and teachers deem the most useful professions to the community. Perhaps a point to consider is that parents and teachers are also managing the children's expectations based on their own limited career choices when they were children. During previous visits I have often observed a lot of jealousy in the behaviours of the people in this community, exhibiting very aggressive behaviour towards those who are seen to be benefitting more and not sharing (perhaps a successful crop for example) with neighbours. I noted jealousy between pupils in the playground during my observations. The pupils were often quite aggressive should another pupil possess a toy, or book and seek to take the offending item from them. This

jealousy could possibly transpose into parents and teachers wishing to deter children from taking careers they did not have opportunity to take themselves.

A further contributing factor could be that parents wish to keep some of their children (particularly the girls, for future dowry via marriage) close to them and the community, working to support family farms and indeed to offer care assistance as they age. As such agrarian and local service-based professions would serve this purpose well. Perhaps one child may be favoured to work in higher paid professions, in the city, or further afield, but this opportunity is unlikely to be afforded to all offspring (Cheney, 2011).

Despite this clear need to work and education being considered a critical path towards this, some of the pupils noted that schools were not preparing them sufficiently.

*‘I want to know about the future, jobs/buying buildings/family land, I want to know more about family inheritance and adult responsibilities’
School 1, Boy 1*

‘I want to be a doctor, but I don’t know how ‘ School 1, Girl 1

Pupils expressed interest to learn skills, which fall outside the curriculum - wider vocational skills, for example, which would help them towards work. However, they maturely acknowledge that there are resource limitations to achieving this

‘We ask them to go on tours to help us learn vocational skills, like farming, I want to learn about animals’ School 4, Boy 2

*‘I want to learn hand craft, manners and social skills’ School 4, Girl 2 and
‘Musical instruments and crafts and how to behave in social situations’ Girl
3*

Pupils perceive education as a platform for obtaining skills and knowledge for work, but there appears something more complex intertwined in what at first appears a simple means to an end. Pupils not only perceive education as a

pathway towards work, but there is a hope that work will bring something else to them. In the interviews pupils indicated their hope that work will lead to becoming a valued part of the community which will enable them to engage in more profitable relationships and to secure a marriage (very much an expectation by parents whether the child is male or female). Secondly, there is a correlation which exists within the pupil's expectations that work will also lead to wealth. Wealth is perceived by the pupils in the interviews as twofold; having a wealth of knowledge and holding resource wealth (money, land, cattle, plantations, etc.). Knowledge certainly is perceived as bringing power. Power brings respect - a very much valued attribute in Uganda. Wealth is also perceived to bring respect, although it also attracts jealousy. The pupils appear to share a similar vision to their government in terms of education leading to growth and development. In relation to the questions at the heart of this study, I have learned that the pupils appear to value education, much like the GoU and very much understand the pathways which education should open for them.

'..to know things, to know more than others, then we can outsmart them!'
School 2, Boy 1

Pupils also hold that if education can bring about wealth (knowledge and resource), it becomes a tool to support them achieving a far more fundamental objective. That wealth will be the key to removing themselves from the daily poverty they experience. Each of the pupils demonstrated an awareness that they were poor and that wealth (and conversely education being indicative to wealth) was instrumental in getting away from this. Again, this perception of education is not unlike the visions of the ESSP and NDP II and I wonder if the national policy has created this mind-set, or whether other more local factors have. It is interesting to note that the pupils associate a physical/geographical move away from poverty, rather than identifying that the community could be improved and developed to reduce poverty. It is almost as if being rural, being Ugandan, is the cause of poverty and this can be alleviated by a physical move away either to urban locations, or overseas. Perhaps hope/foresight has been lost for changes within the community/country as the cycle of poverty continues, or perhaps the lure of Kampala, given that wages and conditions are better there, is seen as the only way to progress.

I contemplated if awareness of being poor is heightened to these pupils because of their frequent exposure to ‘muzungu’ who are visiting/volunteering at the local NGO School and/or travel onward to expensive safari locations. The pupils could become more acutely aware of things they do not have, or have access to such as computers, internet, for example through observing ‘muzungu’ and as such consider that moving away may give them better access to such things. Or perhaps communities are exposed to influence from donor agencies (UNESCO for example) who communicate promising links between ‘*education and poverty eradication*’ (UNESCO, 2001, 2014 and UNDP 2016) and refer to such things as MDG’s, SDG’s and Human Rights may also hold influence and the rhetoric of national policy may also serve to influence.

"Education is not a way to escape poverty - It is a way of fighting it."

Julius Nyerere, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, cited by UNESCO (2001)

As I listened to the pupil’s responses in the early parts of the interviews, I heard great hope and high ideals of what education could achieve, much as I had analysed within the pages of national policy. However, as the interviews progressed further I became acutely aware of limitations which they consider affect their ability to succeed as they hope. As I conducted the interviews throughout the study period the pupils seemed acutely aware of the difference between the vision and the reality, something I felt that the government had less clarity on.

I noted relevance to research by Meinert (2009) and Cheney (2011) who in their long term ethnographic studies in Uganda, highlighted that despite widening access to education in Uganda, pupils experience disappointments, rights are abused, outcomes become limited and there are few salaried jobs or business opportunities. This results in education becoming de-valued and citizens disillusioned. The pupils acknowledged that in some cases that there are no jobs but did not appear to let this affect their hopes and aspirations for what education could bring.

When interviewing the teachers, it appeared there was little in their responses which demonstrated the same high hopes and expectations of education shared by the pupils and by the GoU. Teachers perceived their role as undervalued and poorly paid and certainly did not share the same enthusiasm for school as the children.

‘..it is a job, but it is a job for the poor, no one wants to be a teacher, not here, it will never be a wealthy person in the community’ School 2, Teacher 2

‘..we are not paid well, we pray that god will give us more, but he does not listen, so we do what we do, it is something’ School 4, Teacher 1

The children hold such high hopes, yet the staff seem not to share this mindset. This correlates with Among (2014) and UNESCO (2012) conclusions about Ugandan teachers and why there is a significant number of teachers leaving the profession. Teaching appears to be a poorly respected profession from the perception of the staff and those in the study appeared very demotivated with low morale and a general disinterest in their job, not recognising the value it could provide to the community. It would appear Aguti (2002) and almost a decade later Altkinyelken (2010) offer an answer which resonates with the findings of this research, in that causes are attributed to poor salary and working conditions. The MoES in the ESSP and NDPII highlight teachers as the *‘backbone of education’* and they stress the importance of training and orientation of new teachers. However, there is little in the policy documents about re-training/developing or re-inspiring existing teachers. With donor funding and budget cuts to the sector proposed until 2020 (MoES, 2004; Among, 2014 and GoU, 2015), it seems that the teachers’ prayers are unlikely to be answered.

As teachers are poorly paid they may well perceive their respect within the community is lessened. A further rationale for their attitude is not just a poor salary, but something more fundamental, one headmistress commented below

‘..people send their children to school because it is free, they want what they are entitled to, the children will still work the field, but they had their entitlements, it’s theirs to have’ School 4, Headmistress

This comment was a particularly stark and sullen view of the value of education and appears to reflect that working is of greater priority to some families within the community than learning. Whilst the pupils envisioned education as a pathway towards employment beyond their local community, the head mistress clearly offers grounding in a very different context. Her comment also reflects the general rights-based view, which prevail in policy documents, that of the right to education. Many rights-based frameworks highlight a right *to* education, but there is little focus on rights *in* education, particularly in Uganda. Within the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2004-2015 Uganda’s education system aims 2 and 3 relate to:

- To ensure that all children participating *in* the education system achieve education goals
- To maintain an effective and efficient education sector (MoES, 2004, p3)

The emphasis appears to be participation *in* education, to essentially pass exams and this appears an input-output model very much, where the clear focus is on the quality of output (essentially achievement statistics) rather than a quality of process. This was certainly reflected in the high emphasis on passing exams which both teachers and pupils alluded to in the primary research, a cause of much anxiety for both. Using the word *‘entitlement’* the headmistress clearly places parents (and to some extent the children) as claiming what is rightfully theirs - access to education. I did not observe evidence of the head mistress (and other teachers) sharing the vision of the children and the GoU which places education at the heart of achievement of the country’s ambitions for growth. An example of the rhetoric of policy against reality, which Easterly (2009) warned of.

It is no surprise, therefore, that while the pupils seem grounded in their choice of vocation it would appear that the decision may already have been made as to their future at least as far as teachers are concerned. What is, however, still

heartening is that despite the reality presented by teachers, the children and the government remain in hope of something more. Even if the government's perspective appears as rhetoric ventriloquising wider global agendas, there is still a clear hope for education bringing about change.

Overall, it would seem there exists a divergence of perspective relating to education. This divergence appears to be between practitioner and policy and a pupil's own experience is shaped by both of these powerful influences. There is shared vision between the aspirations of the pupil for education and those of the government, however this aspiration it would seem, is grounded by the lived experience within school which is predominately shaped by teachers who are generally demotivated and to a degree quite despondent about schooling. The pupils in this small study had a very mature and rational balance of both ideal and practice, making them perhaps the most grounded. Yet for their 'due weight' this insight is often unheard by those who have greater influence and power. It is clear to me that young people do have opinions, ideas, something to say which supports the aim of this study.

Limiting Factors - Resources, Pedagogic practice, Language of Instruction

It is widely accepted that a key limiting factor in education is that of a lack of resources. Acknowledgement 8 years ago by the MoES lamented that education provision is still '*falling short*'. The schools within this study continue to be lacking fundamental resources (such as books) and it would appear that little is being done to address the matter. The stagnation in the sector which was identified by Lockheed and Verspoor (1991), Hanushek (1995) and Glewwe (1999) and later Okidi and Mugambe (2002), Lawson et al (2003) and Glewwe and Kremer (2005) and UNESCO (2012 and 2014b) appears not to have changed in the last 20 years. A more recent research project conducted by UNESCO (2014) alludes to the same residual problem as '*teacher issues in Uganda*'. No books (or one text book per class), not enough desks (if any at all), lack of amenities and often lack of infrastructure and electricity were commonplace (UNESCO, 2014). The pupils noted the lack of resources as having a significant impact on their studies but appreciated that the schools had no money to change this. The teachers also commented on a lack of tools to be able to do their jobs.

'We only have 1 book for the teacher, we need maths sets as teachers miss equipment too (and School 1, Boy 2), we need blackboards and better floors - it's too much dust.' School 2, Boy 1

'We have no books or paper' School 2, Girl 2 and School 4, Girl 2 'we do not have books and pen, we don't have the equipment to do well at school' and

'We have no desks, we have to fit many around desk, or sit on the floor - its dirty' School 4, Boy 2, Girl 1

'We have no papers, pens, book, how are we to teach?..... We cannot', School 2, Teacher 1

'I need light so that I can study later - I have to study with a torch, if I can get battery, especially in the winter' School 2, Boy 1

Schools appear to be hampered from the same lack of physical resources experienced from the outset of UPE, despite supplementation from parents. It would appear the situation has seen little progress despite several reforms over the last decade. The approach appears to focus on getting pupils to school, rather than the experiences which take place in school, which is not unsurprising given the focus of the MDGs. It would appear that in this instance both the pupils and the teachers share the same perspective on education. The GoU whilst acknowledging that education needs investment, presents few solutions to this in their national policies. There is little accountability or responsibility placed on providing schools with the necessary equipment to enable pupils to learn effectively and with budget cuts highlighted in the ESSP to 2020, it seems that the government's financial priorities lie elsewhere. The present stalemate is reflected in multiple research studies (for example UNESCO 2012, UNESCO 2014, UNDP 2016) which paint a picture suggesting stagnation in the sector, as far as resources are concerned. Despite the value of education being shared between the pupils and the GoU, learning is being affected by resource constraints and there appears little intervention to address this from a top down

perspective. The teachers and pupils, whilst acutely aware of the impact, seem powerless to change anything.

‘we need money to buy materials, we ask and they [Government] say ‘there is no money for you’ so we do what we can’ School 4, Headmistress

This reality does not reflect the policy intentions laid out in the now expired ESSP and the NDPII which promise quality education (NDPII Objective 1 and 2) and an efficient and effective sector (objective 3). To achieve quality in the classroom, teachers need a minimal of resources and this clearly is not happening in any of these rural schools.

Pupils also commented on ‘*bad teachers*’, referring to ‘*teachers who are late*’ and ‘*do not turn up*’ as affecting their learning. Along with a lack of resources, the behaviours of these ‘*bad*’ teachers also impact the quality of education and again there is little direction from the government as to how this should be addressed. These ‘*bad*’ behaviours correlate with literature relating to low staff motivation and morale and may also be related to the issues mentioned in the previous section (e.g. value of the profession, poor salaries) which culminates in what appears to be a lack of overall professionalism and contributing to the lack of overall quality of education. This study identifies frustration by the pupils who feel the impact of their teachers’ behaviours is affecting their hopes and aspirations of education and again poses questions as to the quality of the education they are receiving. The pupils made clear links between poverty and their present situation and again the topic of money reappeared as the solution to resource shortages in many of the discussions.

‘I want to give teachers more salary, if they had more money, they would make better time keeping and we would have better teachers’ School 4, Girl 2 and Boy 3

This research would indicate that pupils are growing increasingly aware that their education is being hampered by such matters. Teachers are aware too, as is the Government and yet all appear to lack the will to address these issues. National policies (ESSP and NDPII) appear rather ambiguous when it comes to

accountability and responsibility relating to matters of quality and this may contribute to a situation which appears to be in stalemate. Lack of resources and teacher motivation are not the only contributors to poor quality education. Reflected in a growing body of research (UNESCO, 2014; Alexander, 2015 and UNDP, 2016 for example) the quality of schools is further hampered by unmanageable numbers of pupils creating high pupil: teacher ratios, low literacy and numeracy achievement and difficulties in implementing many of the top-down Government led changes due to lack of communication and time. It would appear there exists a dysfunctional relationship between world donors, the GoU and the schools themselves, where quality appears integral to conventions and policy strategies, yet the practicalities of ensuring quality are not clear. This dysfunctional relationship is hampering progress of the sector due to a lack of communication and multi-stakeholder involvement which results in top-down donor led initiatives which cannot be supported by the infrastructure within Uganda. These prevailing issues, as is evident in this small-scale study, continue to result in a sector which is under-funded and resourced and is failing to prepare children to continue their education and become economically productive citizens of the future. The resulting implication could be pupils dropping out of education. National figures reflect a 75% drop out and the average years completed in education being 5 of the 10 years considered as compulsory education (UNDP, 2014). A contributory factor that pupils are dropping out of education is likely caused by poor education quality, including poor teaching and inadequate facilities.

The reason identified by the pupils and their teachers as attributed to the lack of resources and indeed '*bad teachers*', is a lack of funding. Government expenditure on primary education, according to EMIS (2016) was 1.02%, comparably low to some African neighbours. However, this situation is likely to worsen. Among (2014) of the East African highlighted donor funding to Uganda dropped to 15%, (\$300 million) in 2012 amidst allegations of corruption, and further aid has been cut from Northern Europe and World Bank due to Uganda's rulings on homosexuality (which is perceived as prejudice). The consequences could lead to additional borrowing to plug the aid gap and Uganda's education budget may be reduced further leaving parents to foot the bill which has implications on the country's ability to sustain UPE (ibid, 2014). This study would

suggest that reliance on parents is already proving a strain for some and leads to default of payment and ultimately the child suffering through exclusion from education. I ponder the already resource-scarce schools I had sat within some months ago and wonder if these pupils (and to an extent their teachers) may never attain the quality education that they so greatly desire largely due to matters very much beyond their control.

Within lessons it appears a lack of resources also extends to limited pedagogic practices. Pupils are rarely given the opportunity to work together (peer learning), or at their own pace (self-directed/learner centred) or within their own preferred learning styles, despite expressing some interest in doing so.

'Teacher gives us instructions and we follow' School 1, Boy 2, Girl 1

'I would like to be able to revise more and have newspapers in classes and ask more questions' School 3, Girl 2 and 'I want to revise more, I don't want to fail my exams' School 2, Boy 1

Classes are teacher led and this is the style which dominates teacher training (MoES, 2010 and UoG, 2015). Rote learning is a core element and brighter, faster pupils often wait for peers to catch up, not having the confidence or inclination to continue to go on ahead. In what appears to be Freire's (1996) *'banking' concept* of education, there exists a preoccupation on successful examination outcomes, rather than quality of learning experiences. Teaching practices appear less than effective (MoES, 2010 and GoU, 2015). During my observations, I noted there is little, if any differentiation in the classroom, despite the significant age diversity which exists within a class. Pupils remain at a specific level until examinations are passed, so potentially a 17-year-old could remain within the primary education sector. Pupils were repeating spelling of words printed on a board. Meanwhile their teacher marked workbooks and some pupils were obviously tired and were sleeping. In 2006 Alison Croft brought together theoretical insights of teachers' current practice and identified that by addressing diverse pupil needs major achievements can be made towards achieving Education for All. Although somewhat outdated Croft's book (2006) highlights the benefits of differentiation in the classroom. In the classroom of

this study however, there was no flexibility and pupils lacked the confidence to challenge themselves further:

'If we finish activities we wait for others, we don't go ahead... we are allowed to but we don't want to' School 4, all supported comments

The Government places significant emphasis on achievement, yet the sector still lacks appropriate teaching pedagogy to prepare the pupils to achieve. The focus therefore shifts again towards the responsibility of the Government and to Teacher Training. This is an area in which the MoES, (in 2003, 2005, 2006, 2010 and more recently 2016) and UNESCO (2012, 2014) already acknowledge is outdated and creates teachers who are inadequately trained and lack the competencies to fulfil their roles. Policy (ESSP section 3.3.6, p38) asserts quality education as being *'children who are regularly and well taught'*. This term is not defined or quantified but left to my own interpretation and from my observations I did not witness *'well taught'* and without clearer guidance from the GoU, I am not convinced teachers would understand what is *'well taught'*. Learning is appreciated and valued, but on observation, does not appear stimulating or fun. This perhaps reflects my earlier comments that pupils observe school and education as preparing them for work. Work is hard, conditions are often difficult and perhaps this early exposure to these conditions is seen as a rite of passage: endure school, pass your exams and then endure a life of work. Perhaps my expectation of seeing fun in the classroom was misplaced given the harsh reality of the world which faces these children.

'You should come to school to study - not to play - to work' School 2, Boy 1

As part of my observations and to perhaps provide some element of positivity to what is appearing a rather bleak outlook, musical practice was noteworthy. It is not part of the formal curricula, but I observed the School Choir (School 1) practising during a lunch break one afternoon and the energy and relationship between the pupils and their teachers was completely different. There appeared a shared passion in the instruments and in singing which to me, appeared to completely uplift both parties and unite them. Falola and Abidogun, in their 2014 book, *Education, Creativity and Economic Empowerment*

in Africa discuss the rich musical heritage of Africa and how this can be used as an empowering tool. There may well be something which could be learned about the positivity of the environment which is created through music instruction which could perhaps serve to enhance other classes to inject the element of fun into the wider learning experience.

A final limiting factor is the language of instruction. In the last 10 years government statistics from MoES and NAPE indicate that literacy needs improving. An attempt to remedy this date back to 2007 in which the ‘new’ thematic curricula was introduced. This incorporated local language instruction with exams in English. However, this change appears to have impacted negatively on the schools with teachers commenting that literacy remains poor. The teachers believe that the thematic curricula is failing and one can only be drawn to comments by them in relation to the lack of consultation on the matter. An example of the top-down nature of policy implementation previously discussed.

‘.. a big issue is the language of instruction, we have major challenges to teach in local language but do exams in English. This affects the performance of the students as they don’t know enough. Their results then affect the performance of the school’ School 3, Teacher 1

‘Performance at the school is good, especially numeracy, but there are challenges in literacy especially at P4 and P3. We need more specialist teachers, but they don’t want to come here from the city’ School 1, Headmaster

Pupils are aware of this limitation and within each school it was noted that despite English being a national language they needed more support. I observed poor conversational English amongst many pupils and also teachers, yet written English is significantly better. This may be attributed to the teaching which follows a structure of copying from the board. This also may be attributed to the fact that (although limited) there are English text books for teachers and pupils to follow, whereas the spoken word is more difficult to capture unless you have the required vocabulary skills.

The poor quality of conversational English really compounded my need for an interpreter with both pupils and staff, as local language was certainly more dominant. What I found of particular significance was that the interpreter also became useful in translating dialogue between myself and the staff, something I had not anticipated, especially when the staff are responsible for teaching the pupils English. It appeared to me that the skills possessed by the staff were limited also and this could only further hamper adequately preparing pupils for their PLE.

Overall, the pupils within the small-scale study demonstrated an awareness of the limiting factors that affect their education. They understood their situation and held opinions and perspectives on these matters. Placed in this more practical environment the pupils share more perspectives of the reality with their teachers. This appears to be at odds with that of the GoU, who whilst alluding to quality as imperative to national strategy, do not appear to have a clear grasp of what is actually constraining quality at school level.

5.2.3 Theme 3: Pedagogy of Domination (Sub themes: Fear of and Fear for, Authority vs Authoritarian: the role of teachers)

As I continued with the interviews, I began to realise that more subversive factors influenced these pupils' experiences at school. These rather more subversive themes appeared to manifest in each of the schools and appeared to compound, along with the lack of resources, limited opportunity for the ideals of education to become reality.

Rights afforded by the UNCRC in relation to education relate to: respect; dignity and enabling the development of a child's personality, talent and abilities *in full* (UNICEF, 2009). Whilst it is questionable as to what is meant by '*in full*', the notion of developing personality, talent and abilities in the context of the schools appears to be lacking. Pupils appear to be perceived as homogenous and encouraged to be passive. What was reflected in the primary findings appeared to be inhibiting factors such as punishment and violence preventing the development of the individual through compromising dignity and respect,

like what Harber (2004) proposed in schooling as violence. The ESSP and NDPII do acknowledge rights and to a lesser extent, the rights of the child, but the dominant position is very much rights *to*, for example the right to access education and widening access to education.

The present culture within Uganda, at school and in the general community, places the rights of the child as low priority. Perhaps there may be aspects of cultural norms to consider here. In terms of social constructs and attitudes towards children in Uganda by adults, children are not perceived as the vulnerable beings which the UN often depicts (UNESCO, 2001). My perspective is influenced and informed by Rogoff (2003). In her research of indigenous American communities as depicted in her 2003 award winning publication, *The Cultural Nature of Human Development*, she identified that often cross-cultural differences on child development are taken for granted and are frequently 'judged' through middle-class American norms of human development. A further example is depicted in the book by Eichstaedt (2009) *First Kill Your Family* and research by Cheney (2007); both discuss the use of children as soldiers in the Northern Sudanese Border war. These children were not distinguished as fragile, or deemed to need protection, but were trained as lethal fighters, soldiers and part of an army and a resource to be used as adults. Whilst this is not condoned by the author, it serves to illustrate a point that accepting attitudes towards violence and aggression and punishment are more socially acceptable than perhaps we would consider in the UK, this is perhaps a reflection of the harsh realities of life experienced in Uganda.

The findings of this study reflect the nature of the harsh reality depicted above and demonstrate that fear inhibits the ability of the Rights of the child to be upheld. Fear, in its many forms prevails within school and this will be discussed across the next sections.

Fear of Punishment

During my time within the schools, violence and fear appeared to manifest like those in Harber's (2004) *Schooling as Violence*, creating fear and resentment. This was especially prevalent within the government schools. Whilst corporal punishment is widely discouraged and often forbidden, this study and indeed a similar study in Uganda conducted by Cheney (2007) identified that it still exists in many schools. Further research conducted by UNICEF in 2013 discovered that despite MoES Safe School Contracts and Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards (BRMS) introduced in 2010 to protect children from violence at school, abuse is common in school. In their sample of 40 primary schools it was found that 81% of children experienced forms of violence, of which corporal punishment (mostly caning) and sexual abuse were most common. The gaps in school policy and practice as identified by UNICEF certainly still exist in the small number of sampled schools in this study. These gaps are probably compounded by ambiguous terms which appear in BRMS, namely '*positive discipline*' which appears without definition and therefore could be open to individual or school level interpretation.

A common, although not exclusive area which attracts punishment, and is of resentment among pupils is that of being punished for lateness. Ironically, the pupils interviewed in two of the four schools highlighted that lateness was also a persistent problem exhibited by teachers (School 1 and 4) therefore creating an interesting double standard.

'If we are late then we can get beaten or do chores' School 4, Girl 2, supported by School 2, Boy 1 and 2 ' If you are late or fail activities they beat you'

'I get disappointed if I fail, I get punished, it helps me pass' School 2, Boy 3

'We get heavy punishments - hard work does not save us.' School 2, Boy 2

It is interesting to note that although the pupils share a resentment of punishment, one feels that the outcome enhances performance and the other feels that despite his best effort, punishment will still be inevitable. This highlights the point that discipline such as beatings is unlikely to result in positive tangible outcomes, particularly where schools are driving pupils to pass exams. It also further highlights that pupils do not all react in the same way and therefore in some instances punishment may well be futile.

The comment at School 2, by boy 3 highlights a further aspect of fear. This will be elaborated upon later. There is a fear of failure, most notably because it brings about punishment, but also it touches upon a wider fear, that failure could mean they remain '*trapped*' in the present, in poverty.

Although beating appears to be the punishment of choice in government schools, School 1 (an NGO school) is not without its own methods of punishments, which could still be considered as a violation of rights:

'..sweeping, cleaning and chores' School 1, Girl 3

A further tool often exercised is the use of exclusion. Some pupils noted their dislike of being excluded from school, particularly when parents have not managed to make payment to the school. The pupils found this to be unfair as lessons strictly follow a syllabus to pass exams and exclusion means content is lost and topics are often not repeated.

'I don't like missing school due to money not being paid, I miss days to wait for my parents to pay them, I don't get these days back' School 2, Boy 1

'If we don't pay, we are sent home' School 4, Girl 3

Under UPE in government school's education is free. Many schools, including all of those in this study, make supplementary payment requests of parents, towards building costs, exams and augmenting teacher salary and benefits. Failure to pay often results in the child's exclusion from school until funds are found. Pupils are reminded again of the power and influence of money.

Fear ofTeachers

What is fundamental in each of the government schools, although less so in School 1, is that all pupils disclosed a sense of fear when asked about how they feel about their teachers. Teachers are feared because they administer discipline and punishments, and because of the hierarchical structure the pupils cannot retaliate. Fear causes resentment of what appears to be an authoritarian regime that requires complete obedience thus limiting collective freedoms. This left me with some apprehensions about the potential of pupil voice within the system.

What was also of some concern, particularly in one school (School 2) was that the pupils inferred that teachers use their domination in order to exploit them. The pupils discussed one method of punishment as

'..make us do extra work like gardening' (Boy 2). 'They make us do the garden. They take the food we grow and eat it or sell it - but they don't share' Boy 1

The pupils are fearful to resist their teachers demands yet are acutely aware of the injustice of the situation that they are placed within. In this type of environment, genuine participation based on mutual respect does not prevail and would be a distant goal.

Fear of... .Other pupils

Pupils reported violence amongst each other, creating a sub-culture within each school which appeared to demonstrate bullying and fighting and displays of domination between them.

'I don't like enemies - other students - bullies' School 4, Girl 1

'I don't like fighting' School 1, Boy 2 and School 3, Boy 2

Pupils also expressed dislike of the legitimised authority to punish afforded to the class 'prefect', a role which will be discussed in more detail later.

5.2.4 Fear of.... Disease/Poverty

An area which emerged, and which highlights the significance and extent of fear felt by these children, is that of disease and poverty which was alluded to in some of the interviews.

Some of the pupils referred to cleanliness and dirt and that this may have implications for health and injury. This demonstrates that pupils are aware of hazards facing them and also the prevalence of disease in the area, which include malaria, cholera and diarrhoea, as well as HIV.

'We sit on the floor - it's dirty' School 4, Boy 2, Girl 1

'We need a cleaner compound... rubbish needs to get collected to avoid injuries' School 3, Girl 2 and Girl 1

'Sometimes it is so dusty, it is hard to see and breathe, it makes us sick' School 2, Boy 2,

Fear for.....The Future

The pupils expressed desperation to pass exams and be successful in their education. The children in this study believed that education was a route out of poverty and this may explain the strong desire to pass. Within their beliefs, education unlocks potential to work and a move away from poverty to a prosperous future. Because of this the pupils appear to endure the day to day domination and punishments they experience as they genuinely hold hope for their future.

‘I don’t want to be poor, I want to be successful, wealthy, for my family, education will help me do this, but I must be good [at exams] and pass, then I can work, for my family, I must pass’ School 1, Boy 1

But some of the pupils appear to find it frustrating when they experience some of the limitations highlighted above, perhaps a fear that these barriers will affect the fulfilment of their hopes. They reflect a fear that their futures, that they may not be as they hope, a fear that they will fail and will remain in poverty. The extract of an incidental discussion (below and overleaf) between one pupil and the translator illustrates these concerns and frustrations:

Extract of an aside discussion with Translator and a pupil participant at School 4:

Strand starts:

(to me) ‘we do not have books and pen, we don’t have the equipment to do well at school’ Girl 2

(to me) ‘ we must do well at school, it is for our future’ (Girl 1)

‘if we do not do well we fail, we stay, we stay poor, here’ (Boy 1, to translator)

‘then you must do well in school, yes’(translator)

‘But how can we do well, when we do not have the equipment, for knowledge, to pass?..... you know this’ (Boy 1 to translator)

‘I know this.....then we will stay poor [laughs]’(translator)

‘Then what? if this [school/education] does not help us, for the future.....we will be poor?..... always?’ (Boy 1 to translator)
 ‘that is how it is [laughs]’ (translator)
 ‘teeth suck’ (Boy 1)
 ‘..talk to the muzungu, she wants to hear you..’ (translator)
 Strand end

It is interesting that the translator chooses to laugh in this extract. Whilst not intending to analyse the translator, I can’t help but think that at 18, with only primary education completed, perhaps he has already had some of his own hopes unfulfilled and has become aware of the impact of limitations of his own life. Or perhaps he intended to lighten the mood, to protect them from harsh realities.

The findings of the empirical research highlighted fear as significant to the pupils’ daily experiences and that their teachers played a large part in creating this. What emerged from the literature however, as could very well be reflected in this study, is that teachers themselves could be victims of fear. Often when one discusses concepts such as empowerment, participation, enhancing voice, this brings about the potential for change, but also a fear of it. Barron-Pastor (2011), Carnie (2011) and Smith (2011) identified vulnerability and a fear of change as resulting in resistance, cynicism and dismissive behaviour towards pupil empowerment. These characteristics were observed as being exhibited by teachers in this study. There could also be a fear of giving over power to the pupils, which could illicit similar responses in teachers and will be explored within the subsequent section.

Authority vs Authoritarian: the role of teachers

What perhaps is of equal significance is that whilst the pupils expressed a dislike of what appears a highly authoritarian regime populated with punishments and fear, all pupils expressed the need for a legitimate authority to maintain some order as highlighted in the section above. At each of the schools bullying and fighting was identified as something that pupils didn’t like. Conversely, they cited disrespect to teachers and bad behaviour in the classroom as equally disliked. The need for an authority to deal with these behaviours was frequently

cited. This theme will be analysed further in the discussion chapters, but it appeared clear that many of the pupils believed they could not self-regulate their behaviour and valued if the authority figure intervened.

Pupils distinctly felt the need for *'someone'* to be in authority to regulate violent and disrespectful activities between them and that this legitimate authority should mete out punishments to pupils who are exhibiting these behaviours to others

'I don't like not respecting teachers, shouting in the class' School 3, Boy 2
and

'I don't like shouting in class when teacher leaves the room' School 1, Boy 1

'Bullies should be punished hard by teacher' School 4, Girl 3, Girl 2, Boy 1
and Girl 1

Pupils felt that because of their position of power teachers should be given authority.

'There are things we need teacher to tell us, we need them' School 3, Girl 2

'We must follow teachers and adults, they know more than us' School 3, Girl 1

They also felt that the extent of this authoritarian approach, particularly in the marginalisation of freedoms and the exertion of discipline, was universally disliked. Indeed, when the topic of voice was discussed it was certainly felt that the existing authoritarian regime allowed for little agency for pupils to express themselves despite them having things they would wish to say. One pupil excused this behaviour due to lack of salary,

'They are paid too little to listen to problems' School 4, Girl 3.

The nature of the social constructs in Uganda seems to result in teachers possessing power over pupils with the use of coercion and threats to manage their classrooms (Escobar, 1995; Veneklassen and Miller 2002 and Eyben et al., 2006). The exercise of such power appears to manifest in what Harber (2004, 2011) refers to as the persistence of an authoritarian based model of education. This model affects the ability to form democratic education and evidence from Lansdown highlights that such a model only serves to create a sense of powerlessness and exclusion felt by children and young people (1995). Despite the evidence to suggest the negative impact of such a model of education (Harber, 2004, 2011), it would appear it is still prevalent in the schools in this study.

Perhaps to balance their own powerlessness in the wider system this study has posed that teachers exhibit authoritarian tendencies when managing their pupils. This is very much counter to the notion of pupils being empowered and certainly correlates to the literature review which demonstrated that the need for empowerment exists because of inequalities in power (Hardy and O'Sullivan 1998; Boje and Risile, 2001; Wong, 2003; Gaventa, 2003, 2005 and 2006) that change is needed to address such inequalities (Lyons et al., 2001; Gaventa, 2009; Aikman, 2011; Barron-Pastor, 2011; Carnie, 2011 and Smith, 2011) I observed little impetus for change during the period of this study.

5.3 Analysis of Hart's Ladder Exercise

Analysing the results from the tables in Chapter 4, indicates that all of the pupils suggested that they wished to be at a higher level than they were presently, so it could be argued that there is a desire for greater opportunities in making decisions. What perhaps was more interesting were the discussions that surrounded their choices of position.

Of particular interest in relation to the ladder exercise was the capability for the pupil to make a decision, not only to make a conscious decision on the placement of themselves on the ladder, but also to explain and indeed justify their selection. This presented some promising preconditions to support the

potential for the pupil to decide and empirical evidence of them doing so. In particular, they were asked why they had selected the rung they felt represented their present status and each pupil supplied a justification. One pupil commented that, 'I don't want to be the bottom' (School 1, Girl 2) similar to findings in the pilot. Others agreed with this statement. On further explanation of what the bottom rung represents, some of the pupils agreed that perhaps this was a more accurate representation of their status. Two of the participants claimed that they were probably even lower than this (School 4, Boy 1, School 3, and Girl 1). Again, there were ripples of agreement across pupils on these remarks.

When asked how much they would like to participate, the identification of the rungs demonstrated a subtle increase in their existing position. One pupil stated that

'I just want to speak for myself, and for them [teachers] to be honest with me' (School 3, Boy 1)

'I would like for [teachers] to have time to listen to me, even if what I say is foolish' (School 1, Girl 1)

'I want to ask questions... and get answers' (School 4, Boy 1)

The pupils' commentaries revealed more to me than the use of the ladder itself, but also compounded concerns over the very possibility of participation within this environment (this will be revisited later in the chapter).

In the first exercise, what was of particular interest was that pupils claimed that they were at a higher level of participation than was reflected in their interviews and commentary. This could be attributed to the hierarchical structure alluded to, where there appeared reluctance in many to be too near the bottom (or the top).

The results overall indicated that a high proportion of pupils believe that at present they are being educated within a non-participative framework. One

pupil indicated that they wished to just be given opportunity to be heard and to be *'told what's happening'* (School 1, Boy 1).

The deconstructed exercise demonstrated a similar distribution in terms of the level of participation which would be ideal, but interestingly there was a distinct shift towards the lower rungs when the ladder was represented in examples outside of the hierarchical format. In this exercise, 7 chose the wild spot, which on questioning identified that pupils felt the school was outside of the parameters highlighted in the ladder. Responses to questions on why this was chosen were wide ranging:

'I don't like to talk to teachers and sometimes they do not speak with me'
(School 1, Girl 2)

'I think that teachers do not want to hear us' (School 2, Boy 4) and *'They do not want our voice'* (School 2, Girl 1)

'I do not understand, how do we participate, it is not possible' (School 3, Boy 1)

Conclusions from the pupils' exercise, reaffirmed concerns that the concept of participation differs contextually from that perhaps which is presented in UNESCO (2012) and UNDP (2016) documents. However, the activity did demonstrate decision making capability and a desire for inclusion.

The teacher's exercises were also interesting. Each respondent felt that the pupils were afforded greater levels of participation than they were and that their own position represented non-participation. There appears a real disconnect when considering the teachers' perspective of their pupils' participation and what the pupils believe to be the case. Interestingly teachers perceive the pupils to be at rungs 4 and 5, where the pupils would wish to be in an ideal situation. There appears evidence that through roles such as the *'prefect'*, teachers genuinely feel that there is democracy within education, perhaps wishing to appear more participatory than the reality bears out from the perception of the pupil. If the parties could be brought together and focus on

the relationship between the two, there could be opportunities to align both realities and create a more ideal situation.

The application of Hart's ladder deepened my understanding of the reality experienced in these establishments and led to an unexpected consequence of the research. As experienced, during its initial application during in the Ugandan pilot, I deduced that the ladder (and many of the other participation frameworks I had previously investigated, such as Treseder (1997), Shier (2001, 2010), White (1996 to name a few) did not appear to '*fit*' in this context. In particular, the universal metaphor of a ladder is questionable in a Ugandan context, in that the traditional ladder commonly used elsewhere does not exist in Uganda. But more importantly than the metaphor itself, there appears emerging evidence for additional '*rungs*' below non-participation to represent where these young people perceive their present status to be. A re-imagining of Hart's ladder may be called for to perhaps include how establishments such as those in the study, with all the complexities facing them, can grow towards participation. It would appear at this stage, even notions of the first rungs appear to be optimistic now. This will be analysed further in Chapter 6.

5.4 Observations

Observations essentially enabled me to verify what the pupils and teachers were depicting as school life. Whilst observing School 3, there was much fighting and aggression in the playground, yet rather more silence in the classroom. At school 2 and 3, there appeared a similar picture, one which could be classified as '*chaos*' in the playground. Whilst chaos ensued in the playground with pupils fighting and hurting one another, the teachers sat together, quite passively and let the chaos ensue around them. Yet on return to the classroom, their authority was firmly re-established, and the teacher was in clear control. This demonstrated what Gaventa (2006) would describe as domains of power, whereby the teacher chose not to intervene in a domain outside of their classroom. Observations also highlighted micro social cultures existing, where some pupils clearly led, and others followed. This provided further evidence in this study of what Danby (2004) would describe as children successfully navigating their social worlds and indeed provides further evidence of the

capability to make decisions. The choir practice in School 1, provided a different perspective from that which had appeared to emerge from the interviews and other observations I had undertaken and really served to suggest evidence of a more positive interaction between teachers and pupils. I observed collaboration between the teacher and the pupils on the arrangement of music, the pitch, pace and tone of singing verses and the dance moves.

5.5 Post Research Meetings and Concluding Remarks

Prior to leaving the schools, the participating head teachers and teachers were invited to come together for dissemination of initial thoughts on the fieldwork. The meeting took place in one of the classrooms at School 1.

Bringing these key people together was one I felt of greater importance than just dissemination and that was an opportunity to begin to open communication between the schools. By bringing these professionals together dialogue could be fostered to share good practice within the limited resources that they had and to start to build relationships which should improve the experiences of the young pupils within the community. School 2 were not in attendance, due to the the member of staff experiencing a family bereavement, which resulted in the school being closed for the week.

During the meeting, the group were welcomed in their local language, offering traditional tea and cake. This was an appropriate gesture from the '*muzungu*' and this was very much appreciated, creating a warmth to the atmosphere. The head teachers were thanked for granting access to their school and some of the main findings were summarised for discussion.

Emerging themes were raised and so punishments were discussed as it was particularly relevant to the group since School 1 did not use beating and corporal punishments, yet the other schools did. The exchange between the teachers on this was very interesting indeed, particularly between staff from Schools 1 and 3 (see extract p232). Discussions were facilitated as the aim was to open greater dialogue between the participants and therefore it was important not to

influence conversation in any way, with what could be perceived as white, western, female judgements.

Extract from Post Research Meeting, discussion thread relating to punishments

Q - So if you are saying that we cannot beat the children, what do we do to maintain discipline? (Headmaster, School 3)

R - We try to punish them through different ways, chores, like cleaning, withdraw them from access to the story books, or we involve their parents (Headmaster, School 1)

Q - But then someone needs to monitor this, to make sure the chore is done properly? Who is to do this? (Headmaster, School 3)

R - Yes, if we use the stick, or smack, [hand clap], it is done and we can get on (Teacher 1, School 3)

Q - But is it not disrespecting the child if they are beaten? (volunteer teacher, School 1, from UK)

R - But they must learn, it is for their best interest, they must behave for us, they must show respect (Headmaster, School 3)

R - But there are other ways, we do not use the stick anymore, we decided not to (Headmaster, School 1)

Q - By using other ways, do the children now always behave? (Headmaster, School 3)

R - Not always, but they do not if you beat them too (Headmaster, School 1)

R - Then it is not effective, we need to maintain discipline, it is the only way (Headmaster, School 3)

R - There is a different way, choosing other means (Teacher 1, School 1)

R - Then you must tell us your ways and we shall see (Headmaster, School 3)

The same trend emerged in terms of respect in the thread in that respect is deemed by some participants to be something afforded to adults, rather than naturally and culturally as seen should be bestowed upon a child. The notion of teaching respect seems a difficult one to draw any consensus or at this point. However, the potential of further discussion on the matter was most encouraging.

The discussion also covered lateness of pupils and responsibilities to ensure pupils having meals whilst at school. These topics were nominated by the host school, to 'open conversation', see extract:

Extract from Post Research Meeting, discussion thread relating to schools providing meals:

R: [some pupils] can walk many miles to go home for lunch, this is why they return late, or not back to school at all.

Schools should ensure that pupils get a meal during the day, we give them all porridge to give them nutrition

(Headmaster, School 1)

R: We do not have the money for this service, we do not have sponsors in our school, who give us money

(Headmaster, School 3)

R: We use some money from the NGO and parents too, they know the children need to eat (Headmaster, School 1)

R: If the parent wants their child to eat they send them with food (Teacher 1, School 3)

Q: What if they don't send them with food? (Teacher 1, School 1)

R: Then they don't have lunch, it is not the problem with the school, it is the parents who do this (Headmaster 1, School 3)

R: If they are hungry, they don't do well, they can't concentrate (Teacher 1, School 1)

R: It is not for the school to do this, we have no money [laughs] if children don't concentrate, then we punish them

[laughs] (Headmaster, School 3)

R: We need to help the children to do well (Headmaster, School 1)

R: Then again, you must show us the way (Headmaster, School 3)

Demonstrating a concern for the welfare of the child is an encouraging factor as is the willingness demonstrated by the Headmaster at School 3 to learn and 'be shown the way' by other professionals.

The meeting closed on a positive note, with schools agreeing to the potential of a 'conference' later in the year, when term finished in order to share more practices and discuss challenges further. There seemed genuine intent to keep communication open between the schools offering possibilities for greater dialogue and sharing of practice.

My initial analysis indicated that despite the ideology of Freire and Sen that talks of creating democratic freedom from authoritarian structures, the findings of this study present a reality which is far removed from this ideal. Raising capacities and capabilities (Sen, 1999) and freeing teachers and pupils from oppression (Freire, 1972) within education are, at this time, simply unattainable in the schools which formed part of this study. Basic rights such as dignity and respect give way to violence, mistrust and domination, making it difficult to see how these schools can be effective at preparing pupils to become anything more than docile, passive and disillusioned. The underpinning question therefore, is why does the gap between the theoretical framework of this study and the actual findings exist? The response to this question shall be explored and discussed presently.

Schooling itself is a form of social control (Harber, 2004). The education system and schools within it are authoritarian by their very nature and design with an overarching purpose to maintain compliance and obedience. School is an early opportunity to indoctrinate the young mind in to the beliefs, values and truths that dominate the society in which they inhabit and is often controlled by the ruling group. Furthermore, the universal purpose of education is based on control (via teachers) and obedience (of the pupil) as being accepted as normal and natural (Harber, 2004). Therefore, it could be argued that principles of human rights and democracy are rather unrealistic, given that power is clearly not in the hands of the pupil in an education context. That is not to say that there are not opportunities for change away from authoritarian models. However, such a change needs a catalyst and change agents (Sen, 1999) with the impetus to implement it.

As the 'ruling group', the GoU dictate education policy which informs curriculum and pedagogy. In a country which has based its education system on its colonial predecessor (who themselves did not outlaw corporal punishment until 1986 (Harber, 2004)), I was not surprised that I observed pedagogy reminiscent of a different era and one of violence. Government policy could change this situation, yet this thesis posits that the present policies are purely for administrative and bureaucratic compliance, containing rhetoric surrounding democratic freedoms and empowerment of citizens and little more. The policies

lack clarity of the purpose of education and this thesis argues that without purpose, education holds little value. The apparent lack of clarity has created a system which experiences a dislocation between policy and practice at grassroots level, creating a sector which is essentially failing and of poor quality. Despite ambitions within the policy documents for the creation of empowered citizens and an active democracy, this thesis argues that without structures in place to create opportunities for empowerment (such as within school), little will change within Uganda and its people will remain docile and passive.

There appears little impetus from the GoU to create empowering structures or make significant social change, with national policy focusing rather more on economic objectives than education. Harber (2004) argues that education must offer opportunities to learn democratic and political skills and that schools which achieve this are far more effective than the conventional school models. Without an apparent impetus to facilitate change through policy or practice this study asks whether the GoU genuinely desire a democratic, agile and educated citizenship and based on the indications of its findings, it would appear not at this time.

‘. there has always been a conflict between education for control in order to produce citizens and workers who were conformist, passive and politically docile on the one hand and those who want to educate for critical consciousness, individual liberation and participatory democracy on the other’ (Harber, 2004, p59)

The lack of apparent government prioritisation placed on education may well drive other stakeholder groups to undervalue its necessity. The teachers in this study do not value their role as they perceive they are just providing a service for which parents are entitled. Pupils value the idea of education, but often become disillusioned and demotivated themselves due to large classes, demotivated and absent teachers and an oppressive and violent learning environment. These pupils will inevitably drop out. Parents view education as executing their right to an entitlement afforded to them by the government. A parent may consider that from a human capital perspective, as Harber (2004) alludes, the hidden costs of sending the child to school, coupled with the loss of

labour to the family makes schooling a bad personal investment, driving its worth further downwards.

Based on the findings of this study it is a combination of the present authoritarian system lacking clarity in purpose that in turn drives the worth of education downwards and challenges the very theoretical underpinnings which form its ideological foundation. The education system clearly requires further reform and if the GoU are genuine in their intent to deepen democracy this will take time. However, as Harber (2004) recommends, individual schools (such as those in the study) can seek to make micro level changes to create a more peaceful, democratic and non-violent learning environment and I propose that this is attainable in the schools contributing to this study.

Chapter 6: Reflections on Hart's Ladder in Context

The use of the ladder within the study presented a methodological tool, but also a rather challenging but positive result. As captured in chapter 5, the use of the ladder demonstrated an ability of the pupils to analyse their situation and make decisions. The use of the ladder therefore provided evidence that would support the rights-based framework of this study.

However, in the process of using the ladder, it became clear that the ladder lacked cultural meaning and appeared to set a minimum rung which was far too optimistic to achieve for the participants of this study. As a result, this prompted me to re-visit the ladder from a more critical perspective. This chapter presents a contemporary and situational critique of the Ladder, based on its implementation within the primary data collection.

Hart's ladder is one of many established participation frameworks (see table 17) which has been used since its inception, as a principle which should guide children's participation projects (Fielding, 2012 and Agud, et al., 2014). This was a critical influencing factor in the methodological decisions for this study and since many other participation frameworks adopt similar levels/rungs/descriptors (see summary table 30) or would be far too complex to work with children where English is not first language, it seemed entirely fitting to make use of it.

Table 17: Summary of Participation Frameworks*

This table consolidates the multitude of participation frameworks which have emerged since the original Arnstein model in 1969

Frameworks of Participation/Diagnostic Tools
<p>Arnstein, Sherry (1969) Ladder of Citizen Participation; Hart, Roger (1992) Ladder of Children's/Youth Participation; White, Sarah (1996) Typology of Participation; Phil Treseder (1997) Degrees of Participation (no ladder, but same descriptors as Hart and Arnstein); OECD (2001) Active Participation Framework (horizontal levels of influence: Information, Consultation, Active Participation); Harry Shier (2001 and 2010) Pathways to Participation (hierarchical levels of participation from listened to, to share power, also includes a flow chart identifying openings, opportunities, obligations) and The Participation Tree (Oak tree metaphor, progressing from trunk, to branches, to leaves - leaves similar descriptors to ladders); Clare Lardner (2001) Clarity Model of Participation (Six dimensions, mapped across a continuum of power, dimensions are similar to ladder); David Driskell (2002) Dimensions of Youth Participation (graphical representation of participation, non-participation, descriptors similar to ladder); Adam Fletcher (2003) Ladder of Volunteer Participation (as Harts and Arnstein); Tim Davies (2009) Matrix of Participation (same levels of participation as ladders, but includes horizontal axis consisting of different approaches); Shier et al (2012) Yinyang Model of Youth Participation, Fielding, Michael (2012) Patterns of Partnership</p>
Spaces/Places and Domains of Participation
<p>Jans & de Baker (2002) Triangle of Youth Participation and Youth Participation in Society; Francis & Lorenzo (2002) Realms of Participation; John Gaventa (2006) Power Cube (Levels, Spaces and Forms of Power); Driskell & Neema (2009) Key Dimensions of Participation; NCVO (2009) Pathways through Participation</p>

(Adapted from Models of Participation and Empowerment, Version 2, November 2012, www.nonformality.org)

*Please note this list is not exhaustive, but seeks to capture contemporary frameworks which were considered for the study

However, the application of Hart's Ladder in Uganda called in to question its relevance in developing nations and also questioned the very principles of participation in education, a notion which is heralded in the relevant literature as essential to societal development. As such, after reflection upon the application of the ladder in Uganda, there was a need to return to the foundations of the ladder to take a more analytical perspective of Hart's seminal essay for Unicef in 1992 '*Children's Participation - From Tokenism to Citizenship*' and other notable critiques and discussions in this area.

6.1 The Ladder as a Metaphor

The first and most direct criticism in relation to this study is that of the ladder metaphor. Whilst Hart acknowledges that the ladder metaphor is based on that of Sherry Arnstein (1969), the metaphor itself is very culture specific (as are many of his points of reference, which will be discussed later in this section). A ladder in this form is not one which is widely used in Uganda, as this structure is very expensive. The usual ladder is built by workers using branches/wood and twine and depicts an 'A' frame (image 8).



Image 8: Traditional Ugandan Ladders

When using the ladder with the children and their teachers, it was first important to describe what the ladder was as the general form was not familiar to them. It may be argued that this was something that I should have addressed prior to conducting the research and that a simple modification could have been made to make the context more familiar. However, despite the representation of the ladder itself a more fundamental issue emerged with the metaphor - that of the hierarchical nature of the ladder or any ladder. The pupils within the research commented that they didn't want to be at the bottom and similarly neither did the teachers. The hierarchical nature of the ladder infers

progression from bottom to top. Tritter and McCallum (2006) criticised Arnstein's original ladder in a similar manner. There was genuine reluctance for pupils and teachers to place themselves at the bottom of the ladder opting for the safer middle ground (as highlighted in the commentary of the ladder exercise results above). It is quite culturally and contextually relevant that these pupils (and teachers) opted to align themselves to the middle rungs (despite clear evidence that this was not a true reflection of their position), not wishing to stand out near the top, or assign themselves to the lowest rung for the same reason.

Furthermore, the ladder itself appears to offer a rather linear progression, sequentially progressing from one level of participation to another. This point has been referred to by Leibel (2008) and Tisdall (2008) also in their critique of the ladder. Of relevance here are several key questions: Do all individuals wish to participate at the same levels and progress in the same linear method? Once levels have been achieved at a point, are there measures in place to ensure the sustainability of the intervention? Could quality be compromised in exchange for perceived or genuine progression up the ladder? Perhaps more importantly than any of these questions, were pupils or their teachers even concerned with participation (or lack of) given the wealth of other challenges facing them each day.

Based on this exercise and then deconstructing the words from the metaphor (as discussed above) there is potential to re-imagine the metaphor into something more contextually relevant, which allows for a more realistic identification of the reality of the situation and perhaps identifies a route towards greater participation. Alternatively, it will be argued that there should be additional rungs, below non-participation, which reflect the grave reality of life within Uganda.

6.2 The Theoretical Foundations and Philosophy of the Ladder

The focus of Hart's publications relates to rights-based approaches to participation afforded via UNCRC (1990) and championed by colleagues within organisations such as UNICEF (2009). The basis of much of this movement is the premise of democracy, citizenship and the relationship between the two. Hart proposes that genuine participation creates '*...responsible, participating adult citizens*' (p5) and calls for schools and communities to promote greater democracy stating, '*democratic theory requires that citizens be allowed to consider changing their form of government, but there is little or no recognition of this in school curricula*' (p36). He further claims that the benefit of true participation is '*two-fold; to the self-realization of the child and to the democratization of society*' (p36). At this point of reflection, there is a dilemma, to what extent is Uganda really the democracy it claims to be? There are questions as to whether its full principles have been embraced. During my observations I recall one of the members of the community reported the army patrolling the roads to '*pull voters out of their homes, to make the right choices for Uganda*'. Indeed, only very recently (2014) there were sanctions against Uganda placed by the West in relation to widespread corruption in parliament, as discussed in the literature review (Among, 2014; MoES, 2014). In such an unsettled democracy, it is little wonder that education does not instil such principles within Uganda's children and without this critical foundation participation is not possible based on Hart's philosophies. There is a challenge of identity, or perhaps language here, which sets the participatory against the representative/formal democracy which prevails within Uganda.

Furthermore, Hart's essay claims it is directed towards '*.. people who know that young people have something to say but who would like to reflect further on the process*' (p4). It is also written for '*those people who have it in their power to assist children in having a voice, but who unwittingly, or not, trivialize their involvement*' (p4). '*Children become competent, caring citizens throughout involvement with competent, caring adults*' (p5) deducing '*it is ultimately the best interests of all children to have a voice*' (p7). This is not, as it appears, an essay for a situation which marginalises, quietens and exploits voice, as experienced in Uganda. At one-point Hart (p14) refers to the need for

'impressive insight and creativity of a caring schoolteacher' (the example cited being from the USA to support achievement of 'Child initiated, Shared Decisions with Adults' - rung 7). The essay further establishes the need for the important role of the 'Animator', which is defined as *'..the kind of professional who knows how to give life to the potential in young people'* (p14). This raises a key question for the current research, in that if this key role is not present, as evidence suggests in the sampled Ugandan schools in this study, does Hart infer that true participation cannot occur?

At times the Hart's essay could be regarded as rather idealist

'every child should be able to find a route to a meaningful role in his or her community and to discover both the rights and the responsibilities for participating with others in the development of this community' (p23).

A key question is 'what is meaningful?' particularly in a Ugandan context where the role of children within the community is not particularly *meaningful* from a Western perspective although it is more so from an economic perspective since children often contribute to family farms through working. In this way, it could well be meaningful. However, Hart would argue:

'..comparisons of child-rearing in many countries reveal that families with adequate economic resources tend to value independence and autonomy where low-income families place higher value on obedience from their children' (p33),

Such obedience is counterproductive to participation by many (Harber, 2011, Biesta, 2015, for example) in development circles. Indeed, Hart acknowledges

'the implications of these inequalities are that advocates for children need to work doubly hard to liberate the voices of poor children, for without such extra efforts it is likely that only middle-class voices will be heard' (p33).

It is often those who are afforded privileges in higher income countries where we see many of the child participation initiatives. When defining the higher rungs of the ladder examples in the essay cite locations such as USA, New Zealand, Canada, Paris, Belgium and England as centres of excellent practice. Hart himself (interviewed by Smith for a 2014 publication) admits that much of the world's understanding of childhood development originates from western countries like the US and further asserts that he himself has been uncomfortable with his writing attracting such universal coverage when, *'I really do not understand the issue in cultures different to my own'* (cited in Smith and Greene, 2014, p116). This is further compounded by concerns of what I had witnessed in Uganda during this research, which was not conducive to this participative framework.

Hart attempts to draw parallels with play, work and child development and does acknowledge that play in a developing world context is very different from wealthier contexts. However, many parts of this discussion within the essay are littered with generalisations:

'..the luckiest children find jobs demanding skills which they can develop and time for education to help them further their search for a meaningful place in society' (p21)

'..they [children] are effectively slaves working in factories, plantations or mines', a young child is trapped in a house working all the time, it is hard to blame parents for this exploitation if they themselves are doing this out of economic necessity' (p22).

In a complex system where children are effectively dominated by parents and teachers and rarely have the opportunity to play to develop social skills and self-governance, there appears little space for children to participate in Uganda.

It is worth acknowledging that much of Hart's original work, although citing practice from the west, does draw from time spent researching in developing nations. However, this research involved street children (in Brazil, Kenya, India

and Philippines). These children live outside of conventional social structures and outside of traditional child development stages. Hart claims that:

'..the best examples of children's self-governance came from working children living apart from their families on the streets... where parental dominance has been broken' (p5)

There is little within Hart's work which explores children who live within a society where parental dominance is not broken, such as those within this study.

6.3 Levels of Hierarchy of the Ladder

Of the ladder itself (see fig 5) *'Manipulation'* is the lower rung and defined as *'children have no understanding of the issues and do not understand their actions, children are given no feedback'* (p9). In Uganda children appear aware of issues affecting society, that their voice is often unheard, and that adults will not feedback, but will perhaps exploit them. Agud et al., (2014) citing Council of Europe Recommendation (98) 8 states that participation should not be used by adults to further their own interests. There has been evidence to suggest this is the case in the present study in Uganda.

Decoration is the next rung and described as *'one rung up from manipulation. Adults do not pretend that the cause is inspired by children, they simply use the children to bolster their cause in a relatively indirect way'* (p9). Following Decoration, Tokenism is defined as projects in which children *'appear to be given voice but have little or no choice what the project is'*. Hart later describes this *'the projects are in the best interests of the children, but they are manipulative nevertheless'* (p9). It seems that the terminology is interchangeable and whilst all of these early rungs are considered non-participation there is a lack of clarity which distinguishes each rung. Furthermore, there appears something less than non-participation which resides within Uganda based on the evidence within this study.

In relation to applying the ladder in the current research it emerged that the pupil (and the teacher) found it hard to visualise the higher rungs of the ladder as this was so far removed from their existence. The pupils could not see an opportunity to initiate anything due to the existing social cultures surrounding them. To them, the concept itself appeared rather aloof and bizarre and serves again as an example of the importance of cultural relevance and a danger of universal frameworks being applied in developing nations.

A final and more general criticism of Hart's ladder would identify that despite Hart's intentions towards child participation, it is acknowledged that there is still insufficient '*knowledge about ideal models that would help to foster children's participation in all areas of their lives and no theories which involved children in the formulation*' (Agud et al., 2014, p10). Perhaps a research opportunity exists beyond this thesis to work with the schools (staff and pupils) to develop such a model/theory.

To summarise and consolidate the critique of Hart's original essay, the proposed pre-requisites for participation include:

- commitment to democratic principles;
- 'animators' who facilitate the empowerment of children to participate;
- opportunities for children to make meaningful contributions beyond work;
- opportunities for genuine, developmental play, and
- opportunities to be heard.

Hart further asserts that self-esteem is a critical stage of child development which underpins the ability to participate, '*children with low self-esteem develop coping mechanisms which are more likely to distort how they communicate their thoughts and feelings*' (p31). What is of concern is that many of these pre-requisites, particularly but not exclusively, self-esteem do not exist within the school structures observed in this study. As such the ladder clearly needs re-framing and perhaps re-imagining to support schools in this

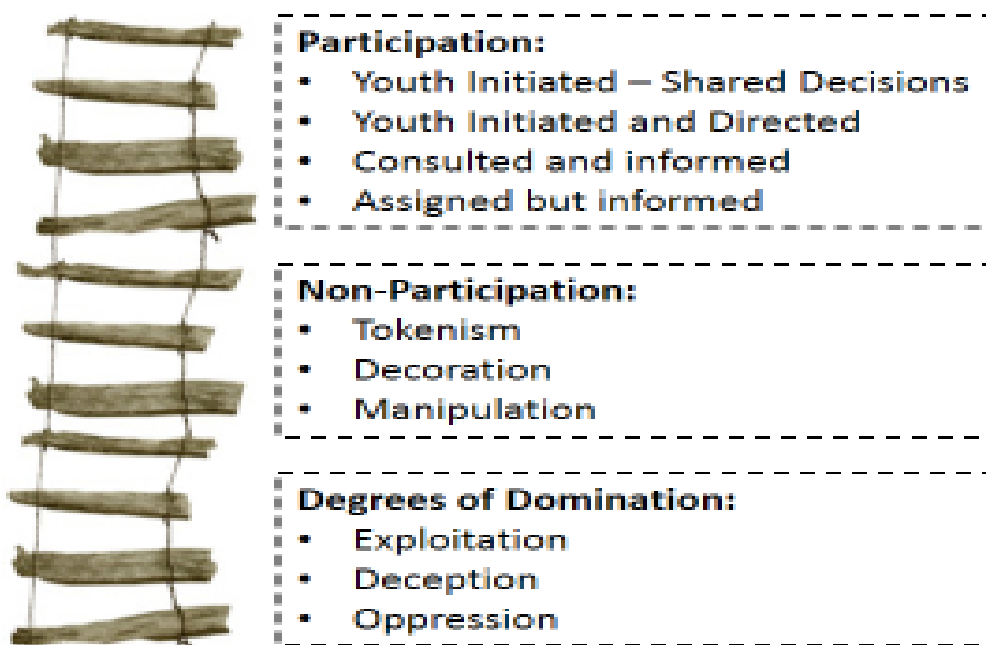
region to become more participative and less authoritarian in nature. But to achieve this will not be without challenge, particularly in a system which effectively disempowers its head teachers and staff, relegating their own levels of participation to the lower rungs. This suggests a wider systemic change is perhaps called for.

6.4 Recommendations for the Re-imagination of Hart's Ladder

From on the ground experiences in Uganda, I felt that the ladder as it exists at present is missing vital rungs on the pathway to participation. These rungs are rather more sinister in nature and perhaps demonstrate areas which lurk beneath the surface, inhibiting opportunities for genuine participation, but exist nonetheless. These rungs could exist under the heading of 'Degrees of Domination', however, in an alternative illustration a different, more culturally and contextually relevant metaphor, captures more accurately the challenges of the existing situation of schools in rural Uganda.

However, prior to this, the additional aspects within the context of the ladder will provide insight of their positioning against this familiar framework, see figure 12.

Fig 12: Revised Ladder of Participation

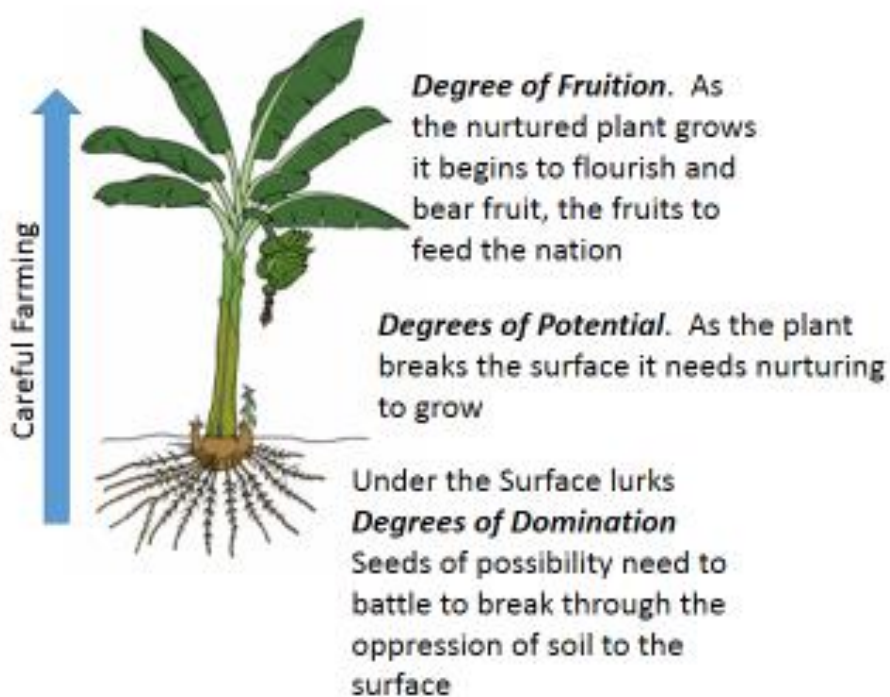


The '*Degrees of Domination*' capture the essence of the observations in Uganda. The additional rungs can be defined and supported by their literal Oxford dictionary translations: Exploitation - the action or fact of treating someone unfairly to benefit from their work; Deception - Misleading, falsehood; Oppression - the exercise of authority or power in a cruel or unjust manner. These are certainly not positive characteristics, but it is vital that they are acknowledged within a given culture so that measures can be taken to grow towards participation.

I propose a more culturally relevant metaphor with focus on the premise of growth and have developed a more relevant model - '*Growing towards Participation*' (fig 13), which could be used to frame participatory projects within education and within Uganda.

Fig 13: Growing towards Participation

Alternative metaphor to Hart's Ladder



The metaphor draws a little from Shier's Participation Tree (2010) but makes use of the more familiar plantain in Uganda. It was important to capture the notion of the real battle for any plant (or young person) to liberate themselves from the harsh environment of the soil and start to grow towards the surface. In these early stages the darkness of the soil and the fact that much of the early growth is hidden from view, captures the essence of the domination, described in this thesis. In this stage hidden from view are subversive and potentially dangerous themes, such as exploitation, oppression and deception which must be successfully navigated and overcome, before the seeds can grow (much like young minds). The ground needs to be fertile for the seeds to grow and the uncertainty of the conditions of the soil makes this a challenging stage to successfully navigate. As the seedlings break the surface they are faced with many possibilities and the potential to grow, or to wither and return to the soil (again very much like the young individuals encountered in this research). During this growth stage, they will need further careful navigation through manipulation and tokenism to build strength and vitality to bear fruit. This model captures at the final stage, that the tree is needed to bear fruit for people in the community to survive, perhaps a metaphor for the future of Uganda which lies with the young people who are receiving education. These young minds will nourish Uganda's hunger for development and democracy, much like the plantain provides sustenance for a rural family.

Included within this alternative metaphor is that these pupils need careful nurturing and nourishing, just like a crop needs a farmer to bring it to full fruit. This role in some ways is like what Hart identifies as the Animator and this role is crucial to participation and development of the child (or plant). The role of the teacher is crucial and at present appears to be preventing the pupils from breaking through to the surface. Much work will need to be done to change the culture within schools and I acknowledge this is no small task to be accomplished. Teachers need to feel valued themselves and to be provided with the resources to 'Grow' these young people. This challenge is perhaps one of the greatest to overcome, nationally as well as locally.

The proposed metaphor followed a similar hierarchical structure to Hart's ladder in that participation is an upward journey and therefore a growth cycle would remove this. A metaphor which is cyclical in nature demonstrates a constant movement, whereas a hierarchical model demonstrates that a pinnacle can be reached and begs the questions what thereafter? From the work carried out in this thesis domination must first be overcome, before participation can blossom, but a metaphor representing a growth circle may serve to remove the notion of aiming for an upper point.

As the re-imaging of the ladder was not intended in this research, there is opportunity for its development to exist as a further research project and as working with the pupils of the community again to further develop a model, with them, rather than for them and this may well serve as potential future research beyond this thesis.

Chapter 7 Conclusions and recommendations

This thesis is based on a qualitative study over a period of 6 years and explores the extent to which pupils in Uganda participate in decisions relating to their education. The study has drawn on public policy analysis of national education strategy and the experience of pupils and their teacher based in Ruhanga, SW Uganda. It examines cultural and structural frameworks which may serve to enhance or inhibit pupils from having a voice in education. A lack of voice potentially affects the extent to which a pupil can make and articulate any decisions on their own behalf.

The premise underpinning the study was that pupils hold opinions in matters relating to their education. Their opinions (and ideas) should be heard and considered by other stakeholders (teachers for example) when making decisions about education. Through greater involvement of pupils in making decisions the quality of a pupil's education experience could be enhanced, as could education outcomes. This will facilitate the development of more agile, less passive citizen emerging out of education into economic existence and adult citizenship.

The overarching purpose of the study is:

To investigate the extent to which Ugandan pupils participate as decision makers in education

To provide some response to this aim, firstly the sub-questions proposed by the research are addressed, drawing summary conclusions from the findings, analysis and discussion of the empirical data.

7.1 To what extent does national development and education policy create spaces and opportunities for pupil participation in decision making?

The policy context formed an integral part of the framework underpinning this study. Policy enables human rights to be integrated into national practice, which in turn shapes the social and emotional context. Therefore, a review of

primary education policy in Uganda was deemed necessary to add context, depth and substance to the primary findings of the study and to provide insight into the governments education priorities. The review involved a content analysis but also sought to scrutinise the policies to identify absences, contradictions, tone and spaces of hope for children in education.

Two key policies were analysed in relation to primary education: Firstly, the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2010-2015, which although it expired in 2015 focuses directly on the education sector across the period of this study. It is noteworthy that as yet there is no publication of an ESSP for 2016 onwards. However, there is a National Development Plan (NDP) 2015/16 - 2019/20, which forms the second document for review. This document was also scrutinised for inclusion of government priorities related to education and includes sections of President Museveni's Uganda Vision 2040: A Transformed Ugandan Society from a Peasant to a Modern and Prosperous Country within 30 years (published June 2015). These documents were selected due to their political significance during the period of the study and because they are the basis for the country's ambitions for growth.

Having critically reviewed both of the key plans there appear consistent objectives in relation to education (access and quality for example). This causes some concern as the original ESSP identified the same residual problems but never addressed them. These residual challenges have been acknowledged in Uganda's strategies for almost two decades, but little progress has been made. Therefore, the fact that the NDPII follows a similar structure raises some concern. 20 years ago, the education sector needed significant financial resource yet the allocation of the budget is now lower than ever, as is the prioritisation placed on education in the country's wider development plan.

What is striking in both documents are the numerous ambiguous terms and multiple statements of intent, but little in the way of action to ensure intentions are achieved. The rhetoric of policy V practice. There appears intent to raise the quality of education, but no clear plan is proposed aligning specific accountability and responsibility.

Nothing in either document alludes directly to the role of the child or explicitly to child participation, other than in terms of access to education and their implied duty to learn. However, what is encouraging is that both the NDPII and Ugandan Vision explicitly refer to people participating in society and making decisions about what might affect them. This appears to be a positive step towards participation and promotes hope that this vision could be extended to include children more explicitly as a part of a community and within a setting where they spend significant time - school. The inclusion of the term 'participation' in a form which is more widely recognised in the development community is encouraging and demonstrates that Uganda is perhaps embracing universalism, as espoused by UNDP (2016) as being integral to human development. Participation being placed on the national agenda may enliven debate on how to build citizens who have the capability to participate. This move towards strengthening citizen participation might shine a light on where most people start to develop such capabilities - at school.

7.2 What can be learned about education in Uganda from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders, including pupils?

From the insight of the pupils, several important perceptions emerge. Pupils hold great expectations and hopes for education. They perceive education as a path towards a prosperous future, attracting employment, wealth and marriage. They also value education to gain knowledge and skills and used it to gain respect and power-over others. The real hope for education is that they perceive it as a way of elevating them from poverty. A clear correlation between education and poverty reduction emerges from this thesis, along with a fear of failing to be able to achieve this. The study highlights that the pupils hold education in high regard and it is of much value to them. Conversely, the evidence suggests that education is not so highly valued by teachers. This study found that teachers feel undervalued and suffer from low morale, affecting potentially their performance in, and commitment to, the role they occupy. That said, the teachers appear to believe that parents are taking what they are owed (right to) in terms of their child's entitlement to UPE, but they do not hold education or teachers in any great regard.

Of the present state of education, the pupil insights demonstrate an acute awareness of the lack of resources to which they have access. The study highlights that not only are the pupils aware of the lack of physical resources (books, desks, pens, mathematical equipment) but they are aware of the impact of this on their education. The evidence suggests frustration felt by the pupils through the lack of basic infrastructural resources, such as safe, clean compounds, but they also identify the impact on their studies of not having basic amenities such as light. Rather than provide a superficial listing of the lack of resources, the study uncovers a deeper understanding of the reasoning behind their absence from the perspective of the pupil. An understanding of economic factors is highlighted by some of the pupils, demonstrating a degree of maturity and wider social awareness.

The pupils are extremely conscious of their English language ability and this arises from the fact that they are assessed by examination only and all exams are presently in English. This places pressure and stress on the pupil as there is a clear imperative to pass exams - something they were all too aware of. It also adds an additional concern as to whether their English is proficient enough to interpret exam questions and more importantly to answer them. Teachers provided more context here, but it appears that the perceived need for more English support requested by the children is compounded by the fact that the new thematic curriculum focuses on delivery in local language, yet the examination is in English. It appears that the present syllabus may be inadvertently setting pupils up to fail as pedagogic infrastructures seem ill equipped to prepare students adequately to pass their exams.

The prospect of exams, in English, presented the pupils with a degree of trepidation but other more sinister responses emerge from the study. Fear shapes many of the pupils' daily education experiences. Education in school equals an environment which brings about fear of other pupils, fear of failure and of punishment and teachers. Bullying is evident within school as is fighting and it appears there is little that could be done to resolve the matter. The bullies could simply be reflecting the actions of their teachers and wider challenging social structures, as anyone would mirror those of an adult role model in their surroundings. Playground struggles were centred on possessions,

claiming power over places and spaces and exerting domination over those perceived as weaker. This results in a school which is a haven for violence and fear of other pupils.

Every pupil in the study alluded to corporal punishments exerted for varying reasons including lateness. They cite an obvious dislike of this and a powerlessness to do anything about it. Teachers play a crucial part in compounding their fear, not just because it is usually the teacher meting out punishment, but because they are deemed to be unapproachable. Communication appears to shut down and as such the pupils take their punishment. In relation to the role of the teachers and from the perspective of the pupils, it appears that adopting an authoritarian approach is disliked; yet there clearly exists a need for authority; for someone to take charge and lead. This presents a challenge to the existing structure of education within Uganda, which is based on an authoritarian model. This style dominates teacher training and there appears little commitment from the government to change this. However, such an authoritarian model may leave little room to develop creativity, critical thinking and innovation and as such the pupil becomes passive. This does not reflect the future citizen which Uganda states it needs as a developing nation.

The pupils indicated that they could not communicate with their teachers on matters which were important to them. They perceive that teachers are not interested in their concerns and they are often dismissed. Pupils appear to lack voice, and this is critical to participation. Teachers provide vital agency to pupils to enable them to express themselves and to advocate on their behalf. Sadly, there appears little willingness or inclination for teachers to fulfil this important role. Ironically, when similar themes were discussed with the teachers, it appeared that like was reflective of like, as teachers themselves appeared to be robbed of their own voice and equally powerless locally and in the wider education system.

The insights provided by the pupils certainly demonstrate that they were aware of factors affecting their education and they had, indeed, opinions relating to this. The evidence demonstrates an awareness of their current position (evidence of navigation of their social world) and the limitation of self to do anything about it. However, when pressed for what could be done with the present state, the pupils appeared hesitant and unsure. They could not visualise an alternative to the position they were currently placed within. Perhaps this is indicative of wider systemic and social structures which limit the child from the opportunity to critically question, or to think for themselves, to propose solutions and make decisions. It seems that potential exists to grow their awareness of social constructs, but this appears to be stifled by the cultural and structural environment surrounding them.

The study allowed for the development of insight into the pupils' daily realities and schooling experience. Yet, despite my own subjective views about this, the pupils seem to hold an acceptance that this is how it is; that there is little that could be done. Therefore, they would nobly endure their studies, in continual hope that education delivers all they hope for their future. I wonder if the same quiescence is replicated in their teachers within a wider circle of influence and perhaps also the Government functioning amongst global stakeholders?

7.3 To what extent do pupils have the capacity and opportunity to make decisions which relate to them in education?

Very few decisions are made by the pupils directly and it appears that within some of the schools, pupils are led to believe that they are making decisions, when in fact they are being navigated by their teachers towards an outcome - manipulation. Classroom pedagogy is dominated by rote and this appears through observation to prevent the child from flourishing creatively or independently. This may well contribute towards their seemingly passive nature and apathy towards making decisions. The pupil cannot envisage a structure in which they could make decisions, therefore, they simply do not.

The application of Hart's ladder in the study demonstrates that pupils have a desire to participate further in decisions about their education. Whilst the ladder exercise itself highlights some methodological issues, it elicits empirical evidence that the pupils desire an improvement to their existing status in relation to their level of participation. By undertaking the ladder activity, more than any of the other data collection methods, the pupils demonstrate their analytical and decision-making potential. The activity requires them to personally and independently map themselves to the ladder framework and then cogently explain and justify their decision. Each student demonstrated the ability to decide by choosing appropriate rungs of the ladder and explain their rationale. This is very encouraging and really demonstrates evidence of their decision-making potential.

7.4 To what extent do existing cultural, relationship and structural frameworks enhance or inhibit pupil participation in decision making?

Ugandan culture places the child in a low social status (the girl child even lower). The country has a patriarchal structure and as such children are rarely afforded the rights of others. Despite universal frameworks such as UNCRC, children are considered partially included in society so are therefore frequently marginalised within the wider community. Their place in the community dictates the relationships they have with teachers (within the school) and it would appear that they are marginalised in the critical environment of school.

It was earlier highlighted that the relationship between the teacher and pupil was governed by fear. Evidence within the study suggests that existing frameworks within each school demonstrate a lack of rights being upheld. The teacher exerts power over the pupil in the same way the MoES and local SMCs exert power over them. This study has been unable to find sufficient evidence to be confident about rights, such as respect and dignity being met. I have also found that children may not reach their full potential in the current system. Dignity cannot be maintained in an environment that chooses corporal punishments; respect cannot be developed through fear and growing potential cannot take place in a school which is resource scarce. Furthermore, the relationship lacks trust and overall appears damaged. The evidence supports

that the pupil simply does not trust the teacher and there was a widespread scepticism relating to promises, which are often broken by teachers. These elements are not conducive to a positive relationship between the teacher and pupil and do not lend themselves to an environment supporting a pupil's personal growth. As a result, the structure which surrounds the pupil robs them of their rights meaning the potential to participate and be empowered becomes a significant uphill battle.

What appears to be taken for granted in rights conventions such as the CRC and Banjul is that of the right to express views, to be heard, and be taken seriously, given voice and agency. This is not evident in this study. Teachers simply do not feel that pupils have anything of merit to say, despite earlier evidence provided in this study. Therefore, pupils are not given the opportunity to have a voice. Without voice, participation becomes more challenging.

However, the school teachers believe that participation does in fact take place. The controversial 'Prefect' role demonstrates what teachers believe to be a representation of the pupils, by a pupil. But in fact, the role is an extension of the teacher's power by administering punishments and controlling pupils' behaviour. This role is not how one might define participation but is an example of perhaps a concept lost in translation. The question of whether the true nature of terms such as empowerment and participation as espoused by proponents such as the UN, UNICEF, Oxfam and the World Bank generally translate to Uganda is of ongoing concern.

7.5 To what extent can Ugandan pupils participate as decision makers in education?

What appears on the surface to be a rather simplistic research question, has enabled me to explore the multi-dimensional relationship between the pupils and their education. I chose to use their education in the previous sentence, as this entire thesis is underpinned by the assumption that education, as entitled to a pupil, is as much owned by the pupil as it is Ministries, schools, teachers and parents. As such the pupil has a right to participate actively *in* decisions which

concern them. This study did not seek to consider pupil decision making in an emancipatory capacity, or indeed promote fully autonomous decision making as practicable. The right to make such decisions is inevitably dictated by the capacities and capabilities of the individual and their social situation. However, my intention was to explore the extent to which the pupil in Uganda can participate.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the pupil has an awareness of the nature of his or her own and others' existence and a consciousness of what is happening in the environment around them. Likewise, the study identifies an ability to make decisions by the pupil (although opportunity is generally limited) and more importantly an ability to justify and provide reason for their analysis (as established in the Hart exercise). Evidence therefore suggests a potential existing for pupils, even at primary level, to make decisions which affect them, and which supports the findings of scholars such as Danby (2002), Cheney (2007, 2011) and Kellett (2010).

However, there appear to be rather complex and multi-dimensional socio-cultural political factors which serve to inhibit the pupils agency in relation to decisions they may wish to make. The placement of the child or pupil within this study and potentially more widely, is such that they are afforded partial inclusion rights. These rights are rather limited in their scope and despite wider universal rights such as those afforded by UNCRC, children appear marginalised.

Within school, fundamental rights are lacking; those of dignity and respect. Evidence in this study depicts a rather sinister learning environment. This environment is one undermined by fear and violence, which robs the pupil of their voice and creates disrespect and a lack of trust of their teachers. It is this same environment which should enable the pupil to begin to fulfil his or her potential and yet suffers further from a lack of resources and limited teacher training. This, therefore contributes to a school experience which is not structured towards fostering an environment to enable the pupil to have a voice, let alone to actively participate in decision making.

The teachers are not wholly the point of blame here. They too are subject to a system which robs them of their own voice and a profession which is perceived as lacking value. These teachers are poorly paid and suffer from the same lack of resources as pupils, meaning that they are often unable to do their own job to their fullest potential. This causes general low morale, which understandably impacts on their daily duties and their teaching. Their teaching practices, by the admission of their own government, are outdated and ineffective and this can be perhaps attributed to national teaching training policies and not the individual. Other national issues relate to lack of funding being disseminated to local SMCs and poor inspection frameworks which have created an entire education sector which is less than effective. Holistically, this has created a system in which individual schools are unable to effectively undertake their role. However, what is not acceptable and is within the realms of teacher control, is the reliance on degrading punishments. The pupils voice a dislike for beatings and punishments and at least one school (School 1) has successfully withdrawn its use. Yet within each of the other schools it is still prevalent.

The relationship between the pupil and teacher is critical to creating an environment for the pupil to flourish and to develop skills to become an active future citizen. If democratic principles do not exist in the classroom and the school then it will breed passive and docile future citizens, which I believe will not ultimately support the economic and demographic growth of Uganda.

The extent to which pupils can participate as decision makers is strongly influenced by the environment surrounding them, and as such, at the time of this study, the extent was rather minimal. What is needed is an impetus and willingness to change, yet there appears widespread apathy/quiescence. There are potential change agents, who, given time may influence the other schools in this community, such as the Headmaster from School 1. There also appear those willing to learn, such as the Headmaster from School 3 and it is with such people that hope for the pupils in this study lies.

7.6 Recommendations

Throughout this thesis I attempt to capture the voices of the pupils within rural Uganda. Voices which have not previously had agency or opportunity to express themselves. The study demonstrates the ability of these pupils to make decisions and a good level of awareness of some of the challenges facing them within education. It therefore seems inappropriate to end the study and not consider a future for these pupils. Indeed, this sits uncomfortably with me to do so, as this PhD is as much a platform for the participants in this research as it is testament to my own academic self-development. Therefore, I present a series of recommendations which I believe may serve to further the study that is submitted within this thesis.

Recommendations are posed at multiple levels and I am all too aware that the influence of this small-scale study is unlikely to reach all of these proposed levels. However, I would still wish to acknowledge that the present state of education is a manifestation of a system and as such recommendations stretch to the wider influencers of this system. On my planned return to Uganda in December 2018, I intend to share the insights of this study and also these recommendations.

7.6.1 National Level Recommendations

What appears to be happening in the schools in this study is not solely the responsibility of head teachers, nor solely is it a result of poor practice at the level of the school. Responsibility arguably lies with the MoES and GoU. Priorities which emerge from the study include a review of existing teacher training, alongside the current review of inspection and as a matter of priority. The NDPII focuses on economic development, placing industry and building ahead of education. I would argue that this may not be the most effective balance of priorities. Teaching pedagogy and the dominant model of education within which teacher training is framed is outdated. This has been acknowledged in the ESSP for over 8 years, yet policy fails to direct the sector towards how this can be addressed, neither does it highlight responsibility and accountability. The authoritarian model which presently exists is simply not reflective of what

Uganda hopes to achieve in their national development. It is common sense that for Uganda to realise its national ambitions to become a middle-income country, it needs creative minds, those who would take a risk and be innovative and to think differently. School at present stifles this. Teaching, based on rote learning, prevents the pupil from learning anything more than repetition. As such it is recommended that an independent review of teacher training is undertaken, alongside the present inspection review.

However, training cannot change practice alone; quality of education is of equal importance. Clear quality metrics and measurements need to be established which align the purpose of education with national strategy. These metrics should take into consideration not just access to education and educational outcomes, but also focus on pedagogy and practice. Therefore, the inspection review taking place presently must consider the recruitment of more inspectors, who have a clear vision of quality and extend their scope to the rural communities to ensure quality is consistent outside of Kampala. This will be imperative to ensure change takes place.

It is further recommended that the MoES and GoU develop greater insight of the practitioner and I would suggest that top-down initiatives are not unilaterally imposed but involve greater consultation with those who will be charged with implementation and delivery. Consultation should extend beyond Kampala, to consider the views and experiences of the rural practitioner.

In addition to a teacher training review and enhancing the existing inspection review, a further recommendation would be to review the existing curriculum. In line with this study examinations in English remain troublesome and are resulting in poor performance and this must again be subject to review by the Government. The current curriculum was put in place in 2007 (although updated in 2010) and this study would assert that performance against this curriculum is inconsistent and has negative backwash effects. Teachers need to be supported to deliver quality education in English and this appears rather fragmented at present. To support this, I would recommend an English specialist be appointed either on a district or school basis, to support the development of practitioners

within the school. Or I recommend a further curriculum review to consider mother tongue language of instruction and examination.

7.6.2 Local Level Recommendations

At this level I would recommend that the communication between the local schools is extended to include the other 12 schools within the vicinity. The small group which was set up at the end of my field visit was extremely productive and served to open a channel to share practice, resources and new initiatives and this should continue. I see great opportunity and an impetus in the Headmaster of School 1 to do this and I will continue to provide as much support to him after this study concludes as I am able, to ensure that communication remains open. The group could meet regularly, and this was certainly the intention amongst those who attended as I left Uganda. I set forth below, an agenda of proposals which I would recommend that this group consider because of the findings of this study:

- Explore the opportunity to share physical resources (books, buildings and equipment). By pooling resources, it may serve to address some of the limitations that are experienced by teachers and the pupil.
- Identify a basic standard of acceptable conduct regarding the relationship between the teacher and the pupils. This should be based on enhancing dignity and respect, as a minimum. This should also extend to the pupil in relation to their peers. I would recommend teachers work with one another and with the pupils to create a set of minimum values for the school and in the classroom and rules regarding conduct that reflects these. All should be encouraged to emulate these shared values.
- Review the role of the 'prefect'. This appears to be rather more an extension of teacher power than the participation it is thought to be. The school teachers are recommended to work with one another, to identify a clear purpose for the role of the prefect, and to create a definition of participation which is contextually relevant and perhaps

based on its wider principles as promoted by the development community and enshrined in rights conventions.

- Remove corporal punishment from daily practice. The headmaster of School 1 is the role model in this respect and it is encouraging that the headmaster of School 3 is willing to learn of the alternatives. I would suggest the group should explore further behaviour management approaches.

7.6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

This study was originally formed as an exploratory piece as part of a corpus of research. Most directly the study seeks to add to the work of Kristen Cheney (2011) and attempt to further her question of what real participation could mean in a Ugandan context, as well as contribute to the growing work of academics such as Susan Danby et al. (2012), Clive Harber (2011), Michele Schweisfurth (2013) and others who believe in furthering the rights, capabilities and capacity of children and young people. I believe that through this process of exploration and the resulting thesis, several opportunities for continued research exist.

In the first instance I would recommend extending the sample of this research to further exploratory studies. I suggest a series of studies which take account of the extent to which pupils within secondary and tertiary education participate in decisions as well as extending the geographical area within Uganda. This would provide for a more holistic sector review. Furthermore, by extending the study it would enable the notion of 'due weight' in relation to voice to be considered and a greater understanding of the placement of a child within existing social structures in Uganda may be developed.

In addition, further research is recommended within the primary cohort. This small-scale study has provided evidence of the ability of some pupils to make decisions and I would deem it entirely appropriate for these pupils to work in partnership with adults towards building minimum standards and exploring opportunities to enhance agency within the school and wider community. Extending the sample within this population will create a fuller, more generalised set of findings.

Further research is also recommended regarding creating networks to increase school collaboration to share resources (physical and intellectual). The group which was established in this small-scale study started to share ideas and insights and if this could be replicated and its impact measured it may serve as a catalyst for other districts to follow.

Action research is advised in relation to jointly creating a participation framework, with specific cultural and situational relevance to education in Uganda. With particular reference to Hart's ladder, recommendations in relation to this model are captured in the thesis and could serve as a starting point for consideration.

My final closing remarks bring me back to my research title 'Ugandan pupils as decision makers: freedoms and constraints'. As I reflect on this study and the wider national and global policy context which surrounds the pupils and their teachers, I feel a sense of hope. With some movement towards accomplishment of SDGs and a national development plan which places emphasis on greater citizen participation, it seems that the tide is turning, and that Uganda is on the cusp of genuine change. I am hopeful that this steady change will present opportunities to challenge some of the constraints facing children such as those in this small-scale study, and that other children like them will learn in environments which promote respect, dignity and rights to all.

8 References

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9 Appendices

Appendix 1: Sample Evidence from Field Study

Pilot Ladder Exercise

Ugandan My Ladder

Deconstructed Ladder

Influence Diagram

Themes and Coding Key

Coded Transcript (sample)

Observation Notes (sample)

Appendix 2: Ethical Documents

Ethical Approval (University of Birmingham)

Ethical Approval (University of Glasgow)

Transfer Letter (University of Glasgow)

Pilot School Invitation and Consent Letter (example)

Pilot Parental Invitation and Consent Letter (example)

Ugandan School Recruitment Letter (example)

School Consent Form (example)

Parental Consent Form (example)

Teacher Consent Form (example)

Pupil Consent Form for Pilot and Field (example)

APPENDIX 1 - Sample Evidence from Field Study

Pilot Ladder Exercise

Ugandan My Ladder

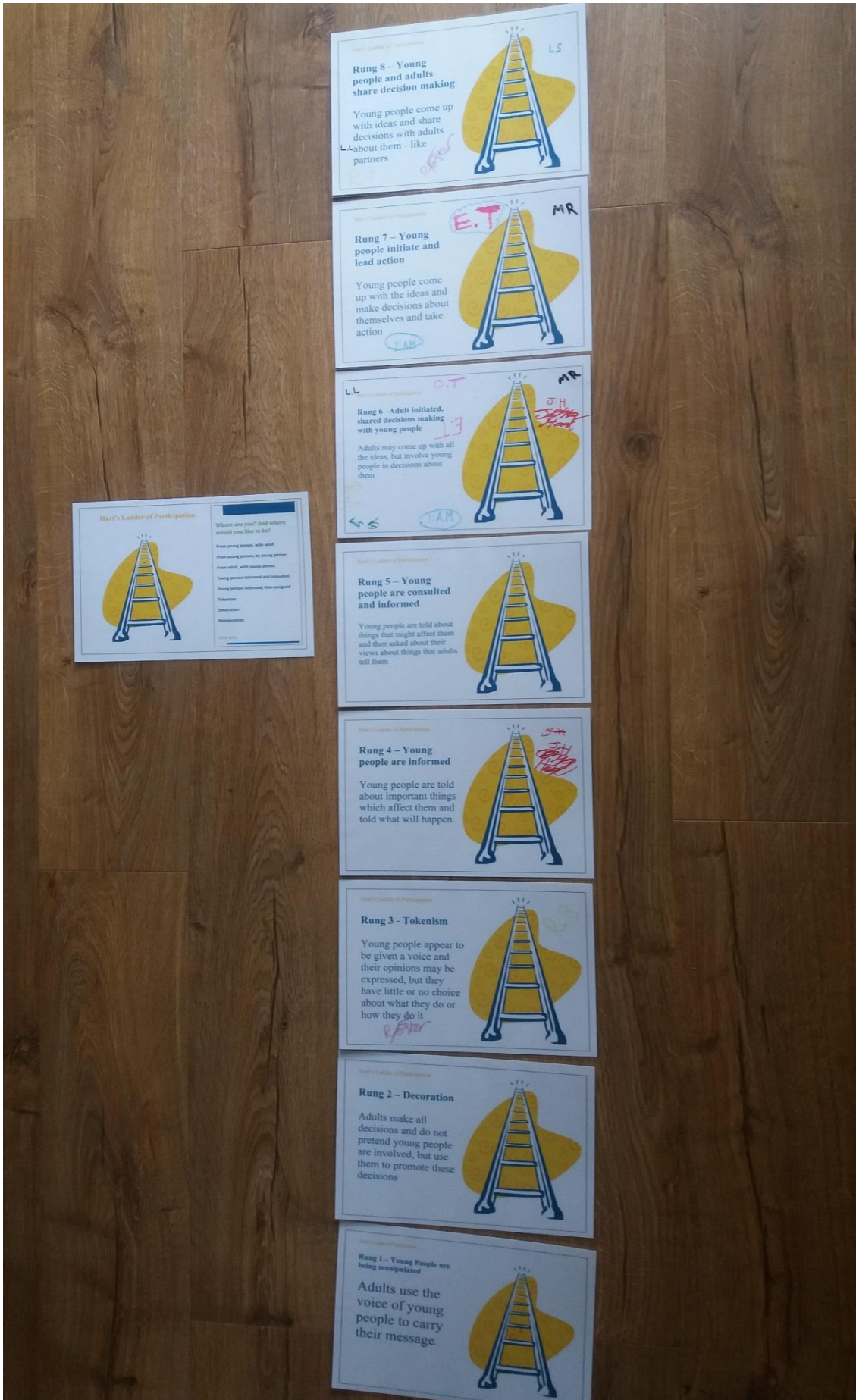
Deconstructed Ladder

Themes and Coding Key

Interview Transcript (sample)

Observation Notes (sample)

1.1 Pilot Ladder Exercise



views about things
tell them



Hart's Ladder of Participation

Rung 4 – Young people are informed

Young people are told about important things which affect them and told what will happen.



Hart's Ladder of Participation

Rung 3 - Tokenism

Young people appear to be given a voice and their opinions may be expressed, but they have little or no choice about what they do or how they do it

R. Foster



Hart's Ladder of Participation

Rung 2 – Decoration

Adults make all decisions and do not pretend young people are involved, but use them to promote these decisions



Hart's Ladder of Participation

Rung 1 – Young People are being manipulated

Adults use the voice of young people to carry their message.



Hart's Ladder of Participation

Rung 8 – Young people and adults share decision making

Young people come up with ideas and share decisions with adults

LS

L.L about them - like partners

RS

Hart's Ladder of Participation

Rung 7 – Young people initiate and lead action

Young people come up with the ideas and make decisions about themselves and take action

E.T

MR

Hart's Ladder of Participation

Rung 6 – Adult initiated, shared decisions making with young people

Adults may come up with all the ideas, but involve young people in decisions about them

O.T

MR

J.H

J.H

Hart's Ladder of Participation

Rung 5 – Young people are consulted and informed

Young people are told about things that might affect them and then asked about their views about things that adults tell them

Hart's Ladder of Participation

Rung 4 – Young people are informed

Young people are told about important things which affect them and told what will happen.

Participation

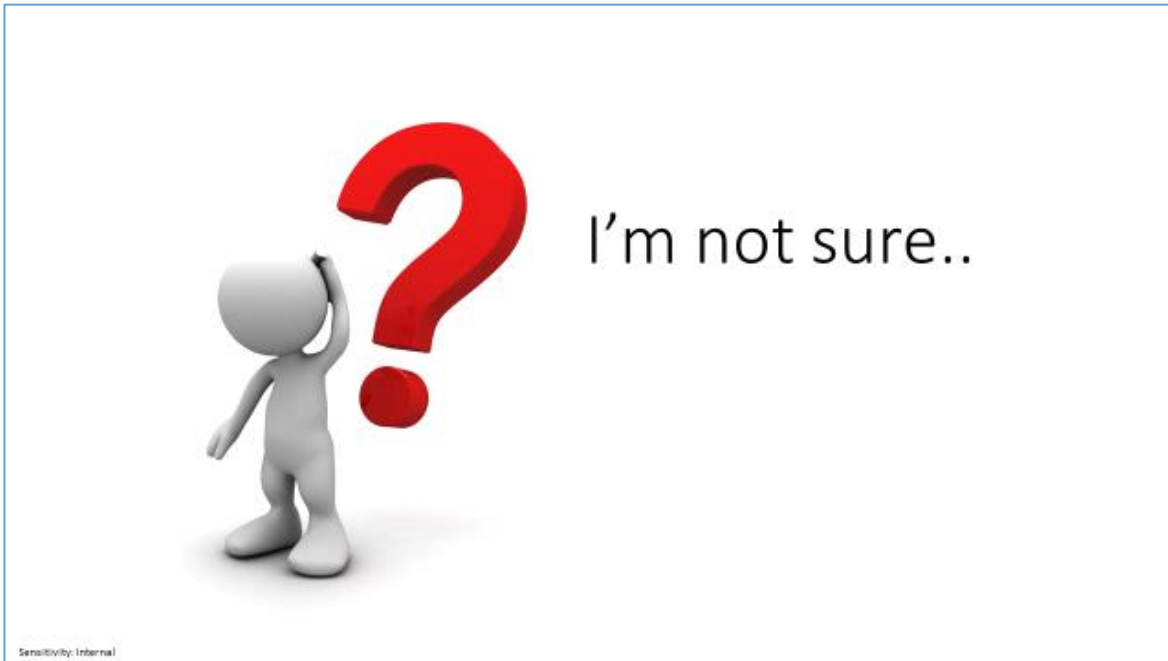
Where are you? And where would you like to be?

- From young person, with adult
- From young person, by young person
- From adult, with young person
- Young person informed and consulted
- Young person informed, then assigned
- Tokenism
- Decoration
- Manipulation

1.2 Ugandan: My Ladder



1.3 Deconstructed Ladder Exercise




Manipulation

Teachers control

I have no voice

Teachers use me to get what they want

I am not heard



Sensitivity: Internal

Decoration



I take part in events to promote what teachers want

Teachers make decisions

I do not make decisions myself

Sensitivity: Internal

Tokenism



Teachers ask me things and then don't listen

I only give an opinion when I am asked

Informed

Teachers tell me about important things that affect me



Teachers tell me what is happening

Sensitivity: Internal

I make some decisions for myself, but teachers guide me

Consulted and informed

Teachers ask me my views about things that are happening



Sensitivity: Internal

Adult initiated, shared decisions



Teachers come up with all ideas, but I ask me to help make decisions about them

Sensitivity: Internal

Initiate and lead

Teachers trust me to make my own decisions



Teachers want me to come up with ideas and make decisions

I come up with ideas and take action

I have a voice and am heard

Sensitivity: Internal

Shared decision making

Teachers and I are partners



I make decisions with my teachers about things that affect me

We share decisions

1.4 Themes and Coding Key (Example)

Theme: Ideology of Education

Code	Signifier	Code	Signifier
Hope	HO	Resources	RE
Knowledge	KN	Skills	SK
Money	MO	Status	ST
Poverty/Poor	PO	Wealth	WE
Respect	RES	Work	WO

Theme: Pedagogy of Domination

Code	Signifier	Code	Signifier
Authority	AU	Play	PL
Discipline	DI	Punishment	PU
Exclusion	EX	Teachers	TE
Fear	FE	Violence	VI

Theme: Implication of Causal/Key Relationships

Code	Signifier	Code	Signifier
Bullies	BU	Parent	PA
Decision Making	DM	Respect	RRES
Enemies	EN	Teachers	TE
Friends	FR	Trust	TR
Listen	LI	Voice	VO

1.5 Interview Transcripts (sample)

Un-Coded Transcript

At point of transcription, pupils were signified by initial and this was later transferred to a coded signifier, Boy 1, Girl 1, etc

School 1

Q - What changes would you make to your classroom?

A – Better facilities, it needs to be cleaner, we need to sweep and keep it tidy

Ji – Books in play time, I want to be able to read when I want to

A – To be able to revise myself, not under supervision, not with teachers

Ju – More time in school. It should be better organised. Teachers are late and we don't get that time back.

A – I want to have opportunity to be creative. I want to decorate classrooms ourselves, not the volunteers do this, but us, in free time. The volunteers can help, they can show us the way to decorate and paint.

G - I don't want to be poor, I want to be successful, wealthy, for my family, education will help me do this, but I must be good [at exams] and pass, then I can work, for my family, I must pass. We need to be better at passing. This is what I would change.

Q – What changes would you make to you lessons?

G/J – We want more equipment, this would make it easy to learn, for example when we do angles, we want to be able to do this with the right equipment. The teachers are missing equipment, so they can't do their job well. New equipment would make teachers better at the job and this would help us to learn and be better too.

J/Ju/G – All three agreed. We need to follow teacher's instructions. They will show us the way. We must listen to them

A – I would have more lessons in English. Sometimes our teachers do not know this well and sometimes we know the words better than them. But we must learn in English, to pass the tests and to do well.

Coded Transcript

School 1

Document2 - Word

FILE HOME INSERT DESIGN PAGE LAYOUT REFERENCES MAILINGS REVIEW VIEW

Sensitivity: Internal \ Internal with visible marking Personal Public Internal Confidential Secret

Revisions

11 REVISIONS

- Sarah Digby Commented RE
- Sarah Digby Commented RE
- Sarah Digby Commented DM
- Sarah Digby Commented DM
- Sarah Digby Commented DM
- Sarah Digby Commented WE ST
- Sarah Digby Commented FE
- Sarah Digby Commented WO
- Sarah Digby Commented RE
- Sarah Digby Commented TE
- Sarah Digby Commented DM

School 1

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J/Ju/G - All three agreed. We need to follow teacher's instructions. They will show us the way. We must listen to them

A - I would have more lessons in English. Sometimes our teachers do not know this well and sometimes we know the words better than them. But we must learn in English, to pass the tests and to do well.

Un-coded Transcript

School 2

Q What don't you enjoy about school?

P – I get disappointed when I fail. I know I will get punished for this [failing] and this is not so good. Q: If you get punished, does this help you to pass?

P – Yes. I pass so that I am not punished again

Q: Do you fear punishment more than not passing?

P – Yes.

I – I do not like missing school due to none payment of school fees. I miss days sometimes as I have to wait for parents to pay money. I do not get those days back, I lose knowledge.

I – I also do not like fights happen when they happen.

Q: Why do fights happen?

I – When they have things and others want them

Q: Do you fight for this reason? Do you want other people's things?

I – It depends what they have.

Q: What would you fight them for?

I – If they have something I want, like a book, or pen, I may take it from them. Then they sometimes take it from me.

F – I don't like getting beaten if you are late or fail activities

Q: Who beats you?

F – Them, the teachers

B – Yes. We get heavy punishments. Even hard does work not save us all the time. We must do extra work for them [teachers], we are told to do the gardening sometimes, even when we should do our school work

I - They make us do the garden. They take the food we grow and eat it or sell it – but they don't share, not the money or the food.

Q: Do you tell the teachers that you do not like to do this?

I – No.

Q: Why?

I – We fear them

Coded Transcript

School 2

Revisions

10 REVISIONS

Sarah Digby Commented
FE

Sarah Digby Commented
PU

Sarah Digby Commented
FE

Sarah Digby Commented
MO

Sarah Digby Commented
KN

Sarah Digby Commented
VI

Sarah Digby Commented
RE

Sarah Digby Commented
PU

Sarah Digby Commented
TE

Sarah Digby Commented
FE

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Q: Do you tell the teachers that you do not like to do this?

I – No.

Q: Why?

I – We fear them

1.6 Observation Notes (sample)

23rd June

Page 2

11:45 The bell has gone. I assume break time, as there is shuffling in the classroom next to me. Pupils are running in to the compound, there is a lot of excitement, noise!

The pupils find a space in the compound by the looks of things. Small groups cluster together. They seem to enjoy being outside, although I note there are no real play facilities as such. The compound is dusty, hot in the midday heat.

I noticed that the shuffling had continued for almost 15 minutes and as I glance around the compound, I observe a lot of fighting.

A boy pushes a girl to the ground, she appears to have something he wants in her hand. He sits on her and grabs at her hands. She is very upset. No one goes to help her.

The boy finally wrestles the item (what appears to be some chalk) from her hand. He kicks her and then moves off with

23rd June

Page 3

another 2 boys. She is upset, no one goes to her aid. I wonder why?

I see the teachers, on a small patch of grass under the shade of the tree. They sit and chat amongst themselves. They are separate from the pupils and do not interact. A boy approaches towards them and is shooed away. Maybe they are keen for a break themselves?

The girl is still crying.

I see more squabbles in the compound. Girls kicking one another and boys grappling. This is rough play! Perhaps as they don't have equipment, they amuse themselves, but this is rough play - slightly chaotic.

The teachers keep a distance, they neither stop the violence ~~or~~. Why?

18th June

Page 1

10:00 Choir Practice.

The desks have been moved backwards against the walls to enable the students some space.

Two drums are brought out by the teacher. Male teacher. Female teacher is sitting in the left corner, she has baby with her. She is feeding the baby.

The pupils stand in a circle. Teacher is in the middle. He counts to 5 and then they all start to sing. Two boys to the drums and 4 girls come to the centre of the circle. They take turns to lead the chorus. They are confident among peers.

The teacher pauses the singing, he wants to discuss the form of the song. The closest to him asks him if they can try a different way. Others quickly

5th June page 2

begin to make suggestions. Lively discussion
It is a discussion two ways.

The teacher listens to the suggestions. He decides to take on board the first suggestion made, 'let's try it'. The teacher counts 5 and they sing again, in the new arranged style.

There is evidence of enjoyment in the room. Pupils smiling, laughing and seemingly engaged in the singing - no Prefect!

Teacher stops the first song. Teacher is still in control of the space. However, asks the group 'what shall we do next?'. Hands are raised quickly (maybe 7 of the 15 pupils). The teacher takes suggestion and picks. 'Could the group have picked?'. This time more pupils enter the circle and 2 boys and 2 girls stand opposite each other. The boys stamp their right foot, 5 times and the singing starts. The 4 pupils in the middle dance. The girls squat, seeming to pick imaginary vegetables and the boys stand over them, stamping their feet and puffing out their chests.

APPENDIX 2: ETHICAL DOCUMENTS

Ethical Approval (University of Birmingham)

Ethical Approval (University of Glasgow)

Transfer Letter (University of Glasgow)

Pilot School Invitation and Consent Letter (example)

School Pilot Consent Form

Pilot Parental Invitation and Consent Letter (example)

Parent Pilot Consent Form

Ugandan School Recruitment Letter (example)

Ugandan School Consent Form (example)

Ugandan Parental Consent Form (example)

Ugandan Teacher Consent Form (example)

Ugandan Pupil Consent Form for Pilot and Field (example)

2.1 Ethical Approval: University of Birmingham

Sarah Digby

From: Susan Cottam [s.l.cottam@bham.ac.uk]
Sent: 27 November 2012 11:25
To: Michele Schweisfurth
Cc: Sarah Digby
Subject: Application for Ethical Review ERN_12-1247

Dear Dr Schweisfurth

**Re: “To what extent can Ugandan children be empowered as decision makers in education?”
Application for Ethical Review ERN_12-1247**

Thank you for your application for ethical review for the above project, which was reviewed by the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee. The study was granted conditional ethical approval on 21st November 2012.

On behalf of the Committee, I can confirm the conditions of approval for the study have been met and this study now has full ethical approval.

I would like to remind you that any substantive changes to the nature of the study as described in the Application for Ethical Review, and/or any adverse events occurring during the study should be promptly brought to the Committee’s attention by the Principal Investigator and may necessitate further ethical review.

Please also ensure that the relevant requirements within the University’s Code of Practice for Research and the information and guidance provided on the University’s ethics webpages (available at <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/Research-Support-Group/Research-Ethics/Links-and-Resources.aspx>) are adhered to and referred to in any future applications for ethical review. It is now a requirement on the revised application form (<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/Research-Support-Group/Research-Ethics/Ethical-Review-Forms.aspx>) to confirm that this guidance has been consulted and is understood, and that it has been taken into account when completing your application for ethical review.

Please be aware that whilst Health and Safety (H&S) issues may be considered during the ethical review process, you are still required to follow the University’s guidance on H&S and to ensure that H&S risk assessments have been carried out as appropriate. For further information about this, please contact your School H&S representative or the University’s H&S Unit at healthandsafety@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

If you require a hard copy of this correspondence, please let me know.

Kind regards

Susan Cottam
Research Ethics Officer
Research Support Group
Room 119, B Block
Aston Webb Building
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston B15 2TT
Tel: 0121 414 8825
Email: s.l.cottam@bham.ac.uk
Web: <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/research-support-group/Research-Ethics>

2.2 Ethical Approval: University of Glasgow



CSS May 2013

Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

Staff Research Ethics Application Outcome

Postgraduate Student Research Ethics Application Outcome

Application Details

Application Number: 400130010

Application Type New Resubmission

Applicant's Name Sarah Digby

Project Title To what extent can Ugandan children be empowered as decision makers in education?

Date application reviewed (d.m.yr) [REDACTED]

Application Outcome **Approved**

Start Date of Approval (d.m.yr) 24/09/2013

(blank if not approved)

End Date of Approval (d.m.yr) 01/09/2016

If the applicant has been given approval this means they can proceed with their data collection with effect from the date of approval.

Recommendations (where application is Not Approved)

Please note the comments below and provide further information where requested. All resubmitted application documents should then be uploaded. You must include a covering letter in a separate document (uploaded as the Resubmission Document online) to explain the changes you have made to the application.

Major

[REDACTED]

Minor

[REDACTED]

Comments (other than specific recommendations)

[REDACTED]

Please retain this notification for future reference. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Terri Hume, Ethics Administrator.

End of Notification.

Page 1 of 1

University of Glasgow
College of Social Sciences
Florentine House, 53 Hillhead Street, Glasgow G12 8QF
The University of Glasgow, charity number SC004401

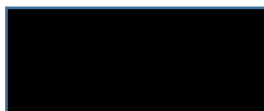
Tel: 0141-330-3007
E-mail: Terri.Hume@glasgow.ac.uk

2.3 Transfer Letter from University of Birmingham to University of Glasgow



Mrs Fiona Green
College Graduate School Administrator
Enquiries to:- Graduate School gradschool.socsci@glasgow.ac.uk

Reference: GSSSO/HY/464241



2 August 2013

Dear Mrs Digby

I am pleased to inform you that the University of Glasgow is making you the Unconditional offer of a place as a Research student. Entry and progress is subject to the regulations of the degree of PhD. This offer relates to your application for admission to the University of Glasgow only, it does not include funding. If you have also applied for scholarships or other funding you will be informed of the outcome of these applications separately.

Programme of Study:	PHD EDUCATIONAL STUDIES (R) <i>(Important – see Note 2 attached.)</i>
Mode of Study:	Part Time
Duration of Study:	Part Time – Minimum 3 years, Maximum 4 years <i>(Note that annual readmission is subject to satisfactory progress.)</i>
Session Start Date:	Monday 23 rd September 2013 (Transfer from University of Birmingham after 2 years part time.)
Supervisor 1:	PROF MICHELE SCHWEISFURTH
Supervisor 2:	MRS MARGARET SUTHERLAND
Research Topic:	The extent to which pupils can be decision makers in education within Uganda.
Fee Status:	STANDARD HOME FEE
Tuition Fees for Session:	£1950 <i>(Note that International students will normally pay the fee set at the date of entry to the course throughout the course of study. Home and EU fees will be subject to an annual increase of approximately 3%)</i>
Annual Cost of Living	See attached notes.

Notes for Applicants for Research Degrees are attached.

The Graduate School for Social Sciences has an Induction programme which starts on Monday 16th September. All new students are expected to attend. Full details of the programme will be published nearer the time and you should make the necessary travel and accommodation or work arrangements to enable you to attend this programme.

Please respond to this offer by sending the enclosed Reply Form by email from the email address recorded on your application as soon as possible and within 6 weeks at the latest or your offer may be withdrawn.

Please note that should you require a further letter for Visa purposes this letter will not be issued until you have formally accepted the offer.

We look forward to welcoming you to the University of Glasgow.

Yours sincerely

2.4 Pilot School Invitation and Consent Letter

C/O University of Birmingham

Date

To Head of School/Head of Year

XXXXXXX

XXXXX

Dear XXXX,

Re: **Invitation to participate in research**

I am writing to ask your permission to conduct a pilot research study at your School on 12th July 2013. If you recall this has been discussed with yourselves at a recent visit to the school and verbal and email consent was given at this time. I wonder now, however, if I can request more formalised consent.

I am undertaking a PhD and am keenly interested in notions of empowerment and pupil participation in Uganda, a country for which I have a great admiration and respect. I have found myself particularly drawn to Uganda because of its commitment to education despite many challenges including lack of funding and resources which creates specific problems in Uganda. Yet despite these challenges many children are committed to their education and schools to teaching, as a means to help themselves out of poverty.

In this project, I am keen to understand from the perspective of staff and the pupils the potential for empowering children as decision makers in education, a concept gathering momentum in the UK and other countries. This research is very much exploring the concept of pupil participation and will involve gathering opinions and views of its potential benefits and challenges facing implementation. I outline below the research aims and objectives and also the proposed methodology, which could, with your permission, involve pupils and teachers from your School in the essential pilot stage. I would appreciate your careful consideration of this proposal and would ask for your written permission using the form attached, if you would be happy to proceed.

Research Outline

Aims and Objectives

Research Question: To what extent can Ugandan children be empowered as decision makers in education?

Objectives:

- Identify what can be learned about the present system of education, through the insights provided by the experiences of the child
- Explore how Ugandan schools can create an environment to empower children as decision makers in education
- Investigate the potential of participation in decision making within education by the pupil
- Discuss the potential of embedding pupil participation in decision making within the school/s with current decision makers

Rationale

As a review is taking place within Uganda of the inspection frameworks, it presents an ideal timeframe to consider the notion of pupil participation and the potential of wider pupil engagement. Furthermore, the findings of the thesis will add to the current and growing body of knowledge surrounding the field from the perspective of pupils within a developing education system in a country committed to education.

Pupils have a right to education and a right to voice, yet are often not considered to have the ability (or power) to make decisions so adults advocate on their behalf. Evidence suggests that pupils not only have the cognitive abilities to navigate their social worlds, but in the vein of democratic education should be able to advocate on their own behalf in relation to decisions about them. In particular, it could be argued that children within Africa, perhaps because of their lived experiences have more of an understanding of the adult world than other children, and are often dealing with the many responsibilities of adulthood (being parents, working, caring for siblings and others, disease, poverty), yet are legally defined as 'child'. The benefits of engaging the pupil in decisions could be argued to enhance the quality of education (a Ugandan priority), enhance the ability of the child to become more confident and agile citizens (integral to the social development of

Uganda) and can enhance achievement and motivation in education (a further policy imperative).

Methodology

The pilot study will involve 2 sessions with 6 pupils at each (subject to parental consent) and each volunteer would be required to attend a group interview followed by a group activity based on ranking their levels of decision making on a ladder diagram (Hart's ladder of youth participation). Furthermore, it is requested that at least one teacher might be available to pilot questions proposed for teachers. All sessions will be audio recorded only.

The wider field studies will take place in 2014 and would include 6 pupils (from either P6 or P7) and 6 teachers (who teach P6 and P7) from three different schools and will use a similar method to that which will be piloted.

Informed Consent

In the spirit of informed consent, on request participants from each education institution will be given access to the findings at the end of the study, but will also have the opportunity to review any of the research notes and analysis work pertaining to their particular study group as they are produced. This will ensure that the participants have control over accuracy and the opportunity to amend any omissions which are misrepresented, or inaccurate.

If you would be willing for your School to participate in the pilot research, please do complete the attached consent form and return it to me. If you would like the opportunity to contact me to discuss the nature or details of the research further, then please do contact me by email ([XXXXXX](#)) or telephone (XXXXXX).

If you prefer not to be involved in the study may I take the opportunity to thank you for your kind consideration.

With kindest regards

Sarah Digby

2.5 School Consent Form**Name:****Position:****School:****Contact Email:****Contact Telephone:**

I consent to the participation of the School in the pilot research proposed by Sarah Digby. I understand that Sarah Digby will make use of the School premises to undertake this research, including the recruitment of volunteers and will also be in contact with Staff and Pupils within the School as part of the research design.

I understand that Pupils will be required to undertake an interview as a group and an appropriate research activity and that audio recording of the sessions will be taken.

I further understand I have the right to withdraw access to the School from Sarah Digby at any point and can request access to the findings of the study on its completion.

Signed.....

Date.....

2.6 Pilot Parent Invitation and Consent Letter

C/O University of Birmingham

1st July 2013

To Parent/Guardian

c/o XXXXXXXXXX School

Birmingham

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Invitation for your child to participate in pilot research study (12th July 2013)

I am writing to ask your permission for your child to be involved in a pilot study at XXX School on 12th July 2013.

I am undertaking a PhD at University of Birmingham, and am a past pupil from XXXX School (a good while ago now!) and am keenly interested in the notions of empowerment and pupil participation in Uganda. However, I am conducting a pilot study in the UK prior to field visits in Uganda in 2014.

I have found myself particularly drawn to Uganda because of its commitment to education despite the many challenges faced and understand from my previous research how lack of funding and resources creates a number of specific problems out in Uganda. Yet despite these challenges many children, teachers and parents in Uganda are committed to education and value education as a means to help themselves out of poverty.

In this project, I am keen to understand from the perspective of Staff and the pupils, the potential for empowering children as decision makers in education, a concept gathering momentum in the UK and other countries. This research is very much exploring the concept and will involve gathering opinions and views of its potential benefits. I outline below the research aims and objectives and also the proposed methodology, which could, with your permission, involve your child as part of the pilot for this valuable research project. I would appreciate your careful consideration of this proposal and would ask for your written permission using the form attached, if you would be happy to proceed with granting permission for your child to participate.

Research Outline

Aims and Objectives

Research Question: To what extent can Ugandan children be empowered as decision makers in education?

Objectives:

- Identify what can be learned about the present system of education, through the insights provided by the experiences of the child
- Explore how Ugandan schools can create an environment to empower children as decision makers in education
- Investigate the potential of participation in decision making within education by the pupil
- Discuss the potential of embedding pupil participation in decision making within the school/s with current decision makers

Rationale

As a review is taking place within Uganda of the inspection frameworks, it presents an ideal timeframe to consider the notion of pupil participation and the potential of wider pupil engagement. Furthermore, the findings of the thesis will add to the current and growing body of knowledge surrounding the field from the perspective of pupils within a developing education system in a country committed to education.

Pupils have a right to education and a right to voice, yet are often not considered to have the ability (or power) to make decisions so adults advocate on their behalf. Evidence suggests that pupils not only have the cognitive abilities to navigate their social worlds, but in the vein of democratic education should be able to advocate on their own behalf in relation to decisions about them. In particular, it could be argued that children within Africa, perhaps because of their lived experiences have more of an understanding of the adult world than other children, and are often dealing with the many responsibilities of adulthood (being parents, working, caring for siblings and others, disease, poverty), yet are legally defined as 'child'. The benefits of engaging the pupil in decisions could be argued to enhance the quality of education (a Ugandan priority), enhance the ability of the child to become more confident and agile citizens (integral to the social development of

Uganda) and can enhance achievement and motivation in education (a further policy imperative).

Methodology

The pilot study will take place in 2 (1 hour) sessions on 12th July 2013 at XXXX School; each session will involve 6 pupils from the School. Each volunteer would be required to attend a group interview followed by a group activity based on ranking their levels of decision making on a ladder diagram. Sessions will be audio recorded only, for ease of later transcription and analysis. Please note that the identity of your child will remain confidential and undisclosed all times throughout the study and eventual thesis.

The wider field research will take place in Uganda in 2014 and will involve 3 separate schools in different locations and will use a similar method to that which will be piloted in the UK.

Informed Consent

In the spirit of informed consent, your child has the right to withdraw from the study at any point and furthermore you will have the opportunity to review any of the research notes and analysis work pertaining to the particular study group to which your child takes part (just make a request in writing using the details below for access). This will ensure that all participants have control over accuracy and the opportunity to amend or rectify any omissions which are misrepresented, or inaccurate.

If you would be willing for your child to participate in the research, please complete the attached consent form and return it via your child to XXXX at XXX School.

If you would like the opportunity to contact me to discuss the nature or details of the research further, then please do contact me by email ([XXXXXXXX](#)) or telephone (XXXXXX). If you prefer for your child not to be involved in the study, may I take the opportunity to thank you for your consideration.

With kindest regards

Sarah Digby

2.7 Parental Consent Form – Pilot Study

I have read the attached summary of research and consent to my child being part of the pilot study to take place on 12th July 2013, at XXXX School. The letter explains that my child will have a group interview and will participate in a relevant research activity during the session and this will be audio recorded. I also note that my child's identity will remain anonymous throughout the research and thesis.

The letter further highlights that if my child wishes to withdraw from the pilot study at any point they can do so.

I am also aware that I may have access to any of the research findings relating to the study group my child participates in at any time during the research and after it is done, subject to written request.

Signed.....

Date.....

2.8 Ugandan School Recruitment Letter

C/O University of Glasgow

18th October 2013

To Head of School

Dear XXXXXXXXXXXX

Re: Invitation to participate in research

I am writing to ask your permission to conduct some field research at your School during 2014 (end of May/June). If you recall you very kindly participated in research with me during 2011, as part of my MSc dissertation and I would like to again extend my gratitude to you in this regard.

I am now undertaking a PhD and am keenly interested in the notions of empowerment and pupil participation and more particularly in Uganda, a country for which I have a great admiration and respect. I have found myself particularly drawn to Uganda because of its commitment to education and hold head teachers such as yourself and the staff who work for you in high regard. As a teacher, I know that the profession faces many challenges and understand from my previous research with you how lack of funding and resources creates a number of specific problems for you. Yet despite these challenges many children are committed to their education and schools such as yours to delivering this to them.

In this project, I am keen to understand from the perspective of Staff and the pupils, the potential for empowering children as decision makers in education, a concept gathering momentum in the UK and other countries. This research is very much exploring the concept and will involve gathering opinions and views of its potential benefits. I outline below the research aims and objectives and also the proposed methodology, which could, with your permission, involve pupils and teachers from your School. I would appreciate your careful consideration of this proposal and would ask for your written permission using the form attached, if you would be happy to proceed.

Research Outline

Aims and Objectives

Research Question: To what extent can Ugandan children be empowered as decision makers in education?

Objectives:

- Investigate the potential of participation in decision making within education by the pupil
- Explore how Ugandan Schools can create an environment to empower children as decision makers in Education
- Identify what can be learned about the present system of education, through the insights provided by the experiences of the child
- Discuss the potential of embedding pupil participation in decision making within the school/s with current decision makers

Rationale

As a review is taking place within Uganda of the inspection frameworks, it presents an ideal timeframe to consider the notion of pupil participation and the potential of wider pupil engagement. Furthermore, the findings of the thesis will add to the current and growing body of knowledge surrounding the field from the perspective of pupils within a developing education system in a country committed to education.

Pupils have a right to education and a right to voice, yet are often not considered to have the ability (or power) to make decisions so adults advocate on their behalf. Evidence suggests that pupils not only have the cognitive abilities to navigate their social worlds, but in the vein of democratic education should be able to advocate on their own behalf in relation to decisions about them. In particular, it could be argued that children within Africa, perhaps because of their lived experiences have more of an understanding of the adult world than other children and are often dealing with the many responsibilities of adulthood (being parents, working, caring for siblings and others, disease, poverty), yet are legally defined as 'child'. The benefits of engaging the pupil in decisions could be argued to enhance the quality of education (a Ugandan priority), enhance the ability of the child to become more confident and agile citizens (integral to the social development of

Uganda) and can enhance achievement and motivation in education (a further policy imperative).

Methodology

The study will take place over a period of a week and would include 6 pupils (from either P6 or P7) and 6 teachers (who teach P6 and P7) from your School. Two additional Schools will be used in the study to provide a comparison of findings. The participants will be recruited via a presentation that will be undertaken by me on arrival in Uganda and at your School. During this presentation I would anticipate parents, children and teachers attending and I shall explain my research intentions and also request volunteers for the field research.

Each volunteer would be required to attend a short interview, a group interview and then will be observed in the classroom during the week. I would ask for your permission and consent therefore for me to make use of your School in order to conduct the research and also to engage in these activities with pupils and staff. I will ensure that I present no disruption to the current activities within the school and will be guided by you as to the appropriateness of timings of the research activities and observations.

Informed Consent

In the spirit of informed consent, participants from each education institution will be given access to the findings at the end of the study, but will also have the opportunity to review any of the research notes and analysis work pertaining to their particular study group as they are produced. This will ensure that the participants have control over accuracy and the opportunity to amend any omissions which are misrepresented, or inaccurate.

If you would be willing for your School to participate in the research, please do complete the attached consent form and return it to me. If you would like the opportunity to contact me to discuss the nature or details of the research further, then please do contact me. On receipt of your consent I shall be in touch with further details and perhaps you can indicate suitable dates for the study to be undertaken in May/June.

If you prefer not to be involved in the study, may I take the opportunity to thank you for your consideration and past involvement in my research and to wish for your health and happiness for the future.

2.9 Ugandan School Consent Form - Glasgow**CONSENT TO THE USE OF DATA**

University of Glasgow, School of Education Research Ethics Committee

I understand that ____ Sarah Digby _____

(name of researcher)

is collecting data in the form of

_____ Taped Interviews, group activity and observations _____

for use in an academic research project at the University of Glasgow.

Please see attached information sheet for details on the research

I give my consent to the use of data for this purpose on the understanding that:

- All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be kept out of the research
- The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
- The material will be destroyed once the project is complete.
- The material may be used in future publications, both print and online.

Signed on behalf of the institution from which participants will be selected

_____ Date:

Researcher's name and email contact: Sarah Digby (2107108D@student.gla.ac.uk)

**Supervisor's name and email contact: Prof. Michele Schweisfurth
(michelle.schweisfurth@glasgow.ac.uk)**

Department address: School of Education, St Andrew's Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH

2.10 Ugandan Parent Consent Form

CONSENT TO THE USE OF DATA

University of Glasgow, School of Education Research Ethics Committee

I understand that ____Sarah Digby_ (name of researcher)
is collecting data in the form of _____Taped Interviews and
observations_____

for use in an academic research project at the University of Glasgow.

I have attended a presentation by Sarah Digby on her
research and would like my child to be part of it. I have been told that my child will have an
interview on their own and one with other children and will be watched in class as part of this
research. My child's name is

I also know that if my child does not want to do the research at any point they do not have to do
it. I also know I can look at the information at any time during the research and after it is done.
This has been explained to me.

I give my consent to the use of data for this purpose on the understanding that:

- All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be kept out of the research
- The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
- The material will be destroyed once the project is complete.
- The material may be used in future publications, both print and online.

Signed on behalf of the contributor (i.e. parent/guardian in case of a person under 18)

Date:

Researcher's name and email contact: Sarah Digby (2107108D@student.gla.ac.uk)

**Supervisor's name and email contact: Prof. Michele Schweisfurth
(michelle.schweisfurth@glasgow.ac.uk)**

Department address: School of Education, St Andrew's Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH

2.11 Teacher Consent Form

CONSENT TO THE USE OF DATA

University of Glasgow, School of Education Research Ethics Committee

I understand that _____ Sarah Digby _____
(name of researcher)

is collecting data in the form of

_____ Taped Interviews and observations _____

for use in an academic research project at the University of Glasgow.

Please see attached information sheet for details on the research

I give my consent to the use of data for this purpose on the understanding that:

- All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be kept out of the research
- The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
- The material will be destroyed once the project is complete.
- The material may be used in future publications, both print and online.

Signed by the contributor

Date:

Researcher's name and email contact: Sarah Digby (2107108D@student.gla.ac.uk)

**Supervisor's name and email contact: Prof. Michele Schweisfurth
(michelle.schweisfurth@glasgow.ac.uk)**

Department address: School of Education, St Andrew's Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH

2.12 Pilot and Ugandan Pupil Consent Form

Pupil Consent Form

I have been told about Sarah Digby's research and would like to be part of it.

I know I will have an interview with Sarah and with other pupils and take part in a research activity which she will record with a voice recorder. I also know that my name will not be used in the research.

If I don't want to do it, I can tell Sarah and I will not have to and if I want Sarah to talk to me about what she finds out, I will ask her, and she will tell me.

Sign: