# Peace Education and Its Discontents:

## An Evaluation of Youth, Violence, and Peace Programs in Northern Uganda



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This paper is dedicated to all children and youth affected by war and living in disadvantaged neighborhoods, slums, ghettos, urban city centers, displacement and refugee camps, rural areas with limited resources, whose access to quality education has been drastically reduced because of circumstances over which they have no control. Oftentimes they are seen as helpless and vulnerable instead of creative, ambitious, innovative and agents of change.

You are what Maya Angelou calls the “black birds of promise who defy the odds and gods to sing [your] songs”

## About the Author

The principal researcher of this study, Jayanni Webster, is a senior in College Scholars at The University of Tennessee (UT) pursuing a Bachelor's degree in an interdisciplinary program entitled "Post-Conflict Education in Africa." Her research is centered on the emergence and impact of peace education programs in northern Uganda, the connection between education and conflict and operationalizing the success of peace education. She is a Baker Scholar for the Howard H. Baker Center of Public Policy, president of UT's Amnesty International chapter and core member of The Jazz for Justice Project, which promotes music and the arts as tools for peace-building and reconciliation in northern Uganda. In her work she also focuses on issues regarding internally displaced children, human rights, humanitarian relief and peace-building, race, structural inequality and violence.

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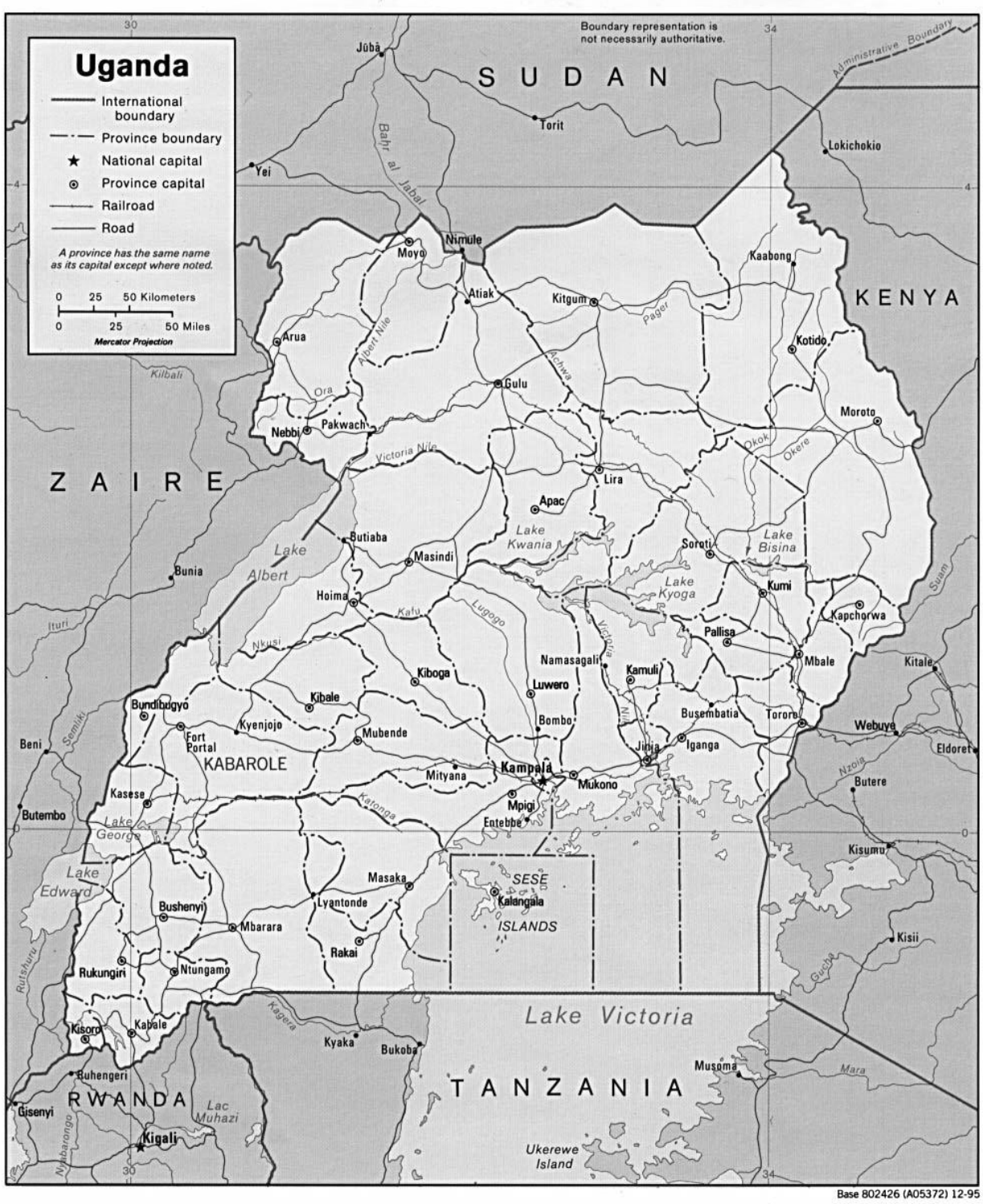
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## Acronyms and Definitions[1]

**BEPS** (The Basic Education and Policy Support): provides professional and technical services to USAID offices and regional bureaus. BEPS seeks to assist developing and independent nations to improve the quality, access and management of their educational systems, with special emphasis on basic education.

**FHAO** (Facing History and Ourselves): An international education and professional development non-profit organization based in the United States. FHAO examines racism, prejudice and anti-Semitism to promote social responsibility, tolerance, and democracy in classrooms across the world.

**GEM** (Girls Education Movement): promotes education equality for girls by using a child-centered, women-led model. Was founded in 2001 in Uganda and operates GEM clubs in over a thousand primary schools in 45 Ugandan districts.

**Insight Collaborative**: A conflict-resolution organization that provides conflict management education and dispute resolution services in the private sector; based in Boston, Massachusetts they also operate a peace education project that works on special initiatives in global peacemaking and strategic partnerships.

**Insight Collaborative Peace Education Project**: Pilot-peace education program in northern Uganda that promotes the prevention of violence by providing conflict resolution education to primary school children and their communities; implemented by Insight Collaborative.

**Internally Displaced Persons** (IDP): Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes (places of habitual residence), in particular to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.

[1] These definitions have been gathered from various sites and original works. They have been cited in the bibliography.

**LRA** (Lord's Resistance Army): Rebel group formed in 1987 in the wake of Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement; led by Joseph Kony in opposition to President Museveni's government; internationally known for child-soldiering and mutilation.

**MoES** (Ministry of Education and Sports) in Uganda: The government branch that works to improve the quality of education and sports activities in schools while providing equitable access to basic education for all children; peace education partner with SPRING and UMECS.

**NGOs** (Nongovernmental organizations): Groups or organizations that are seen as unaffiliated with the government, and that provide emergency and post-crisis assistance and services for others, particularly in situations of humanitarian need.

**REPLICA** (Revitalization of Education, Participation, and Learning in Conflict Areas): Program initiated by The Pincer Group International Ltd. in conjunction with the Girls Education Movement. Pincer is an education consulting agency that now works to implement the government's Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP); partner to USAID's peace education program in primary schools.

**SPRING** (Stability, Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Uganda): A three-year stabilization project funded by USAID, it began operation in February 2008 with the goal of mitigating the causes and consequences of the conflict in northern Uganda by implementing activities in three core component areas: peace-building and reconciliation, economic security and social inclusion and access to justice; peace education partner with the MoES and UMECS.

**UMECS-Uganda** (United Movement to End Child Soldiering in Uganda): supports higher and secondary school education for children and youth affected by conflict as well as school-based peace education and counseling and guidance programs; peace education partner with SPRING and the MoES.

**UNITY** (Uganda Initiative for TDMS and PIASCY): USAID supported and sponsored program for the Teachers Development Management System or TDMS and Presidential Initiative on AIDS Strategy for Communication to Youth or PIASCY.

**UPDF** (Uganda People's Defense Force): The standing armed forces of Uganda under the leadership of Ugandan's current president, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. Previously known as the National Resistance Army (NRA).

**USAID** (United States Agency for International Development): An independent federal government agency that receives foreign policy guidance from the Secretary of State. Their work supports long-term and equitable economic growth and advances U.S. foreign policy objectives in five regions of the world: Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and Eurasia, and the Middle East. They operate a branch in northern Uganda under which the SPRING program functions.

## Overview


Nursery school children during recess

This research study is the result of six and a half months of field work in Uganda. The primary objective of the study was to analyze current efforts and programs designed to address the issues of peace and conflict resolution, post-war recovery and education. Through the collection of stories of life after war, I discuss the experiences of children and youth living in northern Uganda and examine school-based pilot peace education programs in secondary and primary schools. Northern Uganda was the site of a brutal civil war waged between the rebel group, the Lord's Resistance Army, and the government's Uganda People's Defense Force. The war resulted in the mass abduction of children and the forced displacement of the northern Ugandan population into internally displaced persons' camps. At the height of the war, 1.7 million people were living in the camps, resulting in a rapid shift of traditional social structures and an increase in domestic violence and abuse. Although active combat ended in a cease-fire called in 2006 and most people living in the affected regions have since returned home, there are still challenges and lessons to be learned that could aid in understanding the conditions that give rise to violent uprisings and movements. In addition, there are still several thousand people inhabiting the camps and a decade of displacement has birthed various tensions between the youth and adults in the face of changing customs and the return of abducted children. The young people of northern Uganda occupy a unique position in their community given the role they played in the war, their potential part in the post-war reconstruction process, and their positions as "the pillars of tomorrow's Uganda." The Ugandan government and international organizations, recognizing a need to

remedy factors that could lead to a relapse into conflict, developed peace education (and counseling programs) with the goal of creating a "culture of peace" that would support sustainable peace in the region through education. My fieldwork focuses on two such programs and this paper examines early attempts to implement these programs. It also explores the meaning of peace and peace education to northern Ugandans as well as in the international community. Finally, it explores the obstacles to operationalizing the success of this type of education. With conceptual issues surrounding practices and policies, I argue that to an extent these programs encourage a "culture of complacency" in the face of a harsh economic and sociopolitical reality. Although there have been recorded positive outcomes, there remain some oversights in curriculum, teacher training, and facilitation that require analysis if the education offered is to stimulate agency among children and youth in a post-conflict environment[2].

[2] The conclusions drawn in this document are not necessarily those held by NGO staff persons, administrators, northern Ugandan community leaders, teachers, students or UT professors and faculty.

## Introduction

Rebuilding the education sector in a post-conflict society is founded upon the idea that education can be used for conflict resolution by fostering an atmosphere of non-violence and reconciliation in schools that will emanate out into the community. The participant focus of this study is children and youth living in a post-conflict environment amidst a harsh socio-political reality. I take the approach of anthropologist Sverker Finnstrom when he notes in his ethnography, *Living With Bad Surroundings: War, History, and Everyday Moments in Northern Uganda*: “Young people’s stories, in public only too commonly sidestepped or reshaped, are comments on contemporary Ugandan society as such. Their stories can deepen the understanding of contemporary African societies in emerging global realities” (2008: 25). Their voices are essential to realizing the potential of peace education programs and addressing larger systems of dependency, agency, violence and the capacity for social change and democracy.


Kampala (the capital of Uganda)

*Greetings from Uganda!*

*"Now She is Rising" is a line from Maya Angelou's poem entitled "Africa" ... I believe it is a befitting title that describes Uganda as well as me. I'd heard my share of stories about Uganda before arriving- the people, the food, the culture, the history and so on. When Erin Cagney and I arrived she would say, "That wasn't there before" and, " When did they build that?" I realized that the "Pearl of Africa" is reclaiming her title ... she is rising. And I hope to get to know her better in the weeks ahead.*

*As for myself, I am on a new journey. I'm traveling, learning, growing ... I too am rising. To*

*where? I have no idea at this point, but I invite you to join me as I discover. These are my reflections- these are my stories . . .*

Written January 24th, 2010, this was the first entry to my blog *Now She Is Rising* which chronicles my journey and research in Uganda. After two days of getting settled in Uganda, my travel companion and fellow UT student, Erin Cagney, and I found an internet café in Luzira (the neighborhood in which we were staying while in Uganda's capital, Kampala) so I could start my blog. It would be five and a half months before I would leave Uganda, and as I reflect, I still cannot believe I was fortunate enough to spend that amount of time living and working there. I had never traveled outside the United States before and in fact I had done little traveling around the U.S. It was truly a growing and intellectually stimulating experience filled with many memories fond and not so fond, moments of excitement and exhaustion. The most vital thing I learned, however, was flexibility. To work in a "developing country" requires one to be extremely flexible, especially working in a post-conflict region where infrastructures are in the midst of reconstruction. The atmosphere of Acholiland nurtured my ability to be patient and creative. In the summer of 2011, I was able to travel back to Uganda to pursue follow-up research and facilitate as well as participate in the Gulu Study and Service Abroad Program, UT's first program in East Africa. Family and friends who found that I was returning were surprised by the news. But to never allow myself to travel back to Uganda would be to deprive myself of something that has become a part of me. My time in Uganda, particularly the north, has given me experiences that shape the way I conceptualize the world and I am all the better because of it.

## Methodology

My research study was conducted from February to June 2010 and July-August of 2011 and took place several years after the ceasefire was called between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Ugandan government's military forces. Central questions addressed in my research include: how is peace education being used and not being used to foster an atmosphere of non-violence and reconciliation? How can these curriculums and programs be utilized to prevent a return to conflict and address structural inequality? How is peace being defined and can northern Uganda's school system support peace education? Other questions of interest include: Are youth and children being incorporated as active participants in the curriculum and how do curriculum topics address the reality in which they live?

The districts that were the focus of my fieldwork included Gulu, Amuru and Kitgum. The site locations were chosen based on the following factors: (1) Whether or not there was a school implementing peace education programs, (2) the school's accessibility, and (3) the type of school (private, public, rural or municipal). The category of *children* for the purpose of this study is defined as persons under the age of eighteen. Similarly, *youth* refers to children, but can be thought of more broadly to include those over the age of eighteen but who are still in primary or secondary school due the war's disruption of their education. The category of *students* refers to all children and youth that participated in my research. The terms *teacher*, *instructor* and *peace educator* are used interchangeably to refer to those who received peace education training and are now teaching it in primary and secondary schools. Although I use and define these categories for my study, I acknowledge that "children" is not a universal category and "youth" is a fairly recent category of being. "Youth," in particular, is a problematic category in the African context, as individuals can retain the status of youth well into their thirties, especially if they are

not married. In Sierra Leone youth is a "relatively recent category, also intimately tied up with the rise of schooling … [and] is inextricably linked with colonialism and the growth of Western-style education as a normative practice" (Shepler 2003: 61). In Uganda, "youth" continue as a category not only in this respect, but politically if one considers those who have been abducted, whom are often referred to as "the lost generation." This is a result of both local conceptions of childhood and of the presence of non-governmental organization terminology which permeates the vocabulary of the community. While more research needs to be conducted along these lines, I realize that I am limited by language in this regard and that deconstructing these constructed categories is beyond the focus of this research study.

From the districts listed, four secondary schools were chosen to conduct my research. They include: Kitgum Alliance, Pabo Secondary School, Gulu High School and Gulu College. These schools are four of six secondary institutions chosen by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) in conjunction with the United Movement to End Child Soldering-Uganda (UMECS), and the United States Agency for International Development's Stability, Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Uganda program (SPRING). They served as the first participating schools for this peace education pilot project. I conducted research in four primary schools as well. They include: Pece, Gulu, Police and Liliyah. One of the four primary schools was implementing Insight Collaborative's pilot peace education project and the others either had peace clubs or peace education books distributed by the MoES and Revitalization of Education, Participation, and Learning in Conflict Areas (REPLICA) program. In addition, I observed what are known as "peace clubs," in several of these schools, but they were limited to Gulu municipality. All of my participants were of the Acholi ethnic group, with the exception of two students living in Kitgum, who were Sudanese refugees. Due to gender inequality in the school system, I made an effort

to have an equal number of willing girl participants selected as well as boys so that I could accurately interpret their stories and understanding of peace education.

My fieldwork consisted of open-ended interviews with thirty-three secondary and primary school students along with weeks of participant observations in classrooms and during peace club meetings. Because of the size of this study, I mainly focused on qualitative data, but I practiced careful quantitative data collection on who I interviewed and where. Other participants in my study included instructors and civic, religious and government leaders, foreign, nongovernmental and community-based staff and administrators. Depending on the willingness of the participants, interviews were conducted one-on-one or within groups. Practicing confidentiality was a major component of my research. I took precaution to protect all participants in oral and written accounts mandated by UT's Institutional Review Board for Research. Names have either been omitted or changed in this study. In addition I was careful to observe how my presence affected the data I received or did not receive. I did this by using commentary by students to follow-up with teachers and implementing staff and vice versa. I do not claim that the information I received is purely objective, but this study seeks to prioritize the complexity of people's lives as well as situate their daily experiences into the larger macro-level structures and processes to understand certain themes and patterns. In the schools, most but not all, one-on-one interviews were conducted in the presence of the instructor. This factor, I felt, in some cases hindered my research, but in other ways assisted it. The presence of some instructors helped in bridging the pronunciation barrier between the students and me. However, in other cases I felt students engaged in selective telling because of the instructor's presence.

It is said that many groups who occupy subordinate roles in society exhibit "selective telling" (King 2009: 135). Northern Uganda is a region that has experienced government

marginalization since colonial rule. This marginalization has now been coupled with two-decades of war. It is understandable that most participants, especially youth and children, would paint a picture that is consistent with the influential and dominant powers around them, whether it is for their own well-being or because they are reproducing a narrative or belief, perceived or real, that has been widely accepted. In some cases, I could sense when this was taking place, and in other cases, it was not as clear. In either instance my methodology follows closely that of Elizabeth King, who conducted research in Rwanda: “such material, especially if it is collected with caution and self-awareness on the part of the researcher, contains a wealth of information about the hidden transcripts informing social behaviors, as well as the self-censoring that people feel they need to impose upon themselves. Hearing and recognizing patterns in respondents' comments can allow researchers to discern what informs the patterns” (ibid).

## Chapter 1: War and Histories of Violence in Uganda

"*Things, take, time … recovery can't take place in a short time" – education official, Gulu*

### A. Branding of the War in the North

There is a more complex version of the socio-political reality that exists for children and youth in Uganda that is not reported internationally or even nationally. The history of the war, rehearsed by humanitarian and advocacy groups, involves a linear progression of peace to war to peace again. Familiar statements on "child-soldiers" and internally displaced persons' camps and the lingering threat of a rebel group un-apprehended betray the complexity of a historical narrative that has largely been told in reductionist tones by humanitarian organizations and the Ugandan government. Children and youth live out meaningful lives full of hardships and disappointments, but also of joy and creativity. Yet still they are rarely called upon to narrate their lives outside the sensationalism that western donors want, or rather need, to hear. Many young people's hopes hinge on a new interpretation of the historical past, present and future that connects them to a national identity rooted in the local: "as they shape their future, perhaps the young generation that grows up with war, conflict, and bad surroundings will be able to achieve this balance, exactly because of their experiences in life" (Finnstrom 2008: 244). It is exactly their experience that will contradict the "propaganda of war in relief" to reveal their political dignity. Recounting the history of the war will provide context for understanding why children and youth occupy a unique position in (northern) Ugandan and why they must "negotiate their places in Ugandan society among competing notions of what children should and should not be" (Cheney 2007: 3) to become active participants in the future of their community.

**B. Colonial Legacies and the LRA Insurgency**

For a little over two decades, from 1986 until late 2006, northern Uganda was home to one of Africa's most brutal and lengthy civil wars. This conflict was waged between the Lord's Resistance Army, led by the rebel leader Joseph Kony, and the Ugandan government's Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF). The history of the conflict itself can be traced back to post-colonial social and political grievances expressed by those living in the north against the standing government to the south. Those in the north, largely Acholi, were marginalized and availed of fewer opportunities than their counterparts in the south (largely Buganda) because of hostilities created between the two regions by British colonizers. British colonizers primarily recruited northerners into the army ranks, while those from the south were formally educated through higher educational institutions built disproportionately in the south:

> They placed the colony's administrative center in Buganda and favored the Baganda in native education, vocational training, and other skills-training programs necessary to function in British colonial society. Nilotic northerners, on the other hand, were regarded as less sophisticated and were hired as laborers and soldiers by the colonial administration. As in many other colonized territories, the division of local people was therefore based on colonists' essentialized notions of ethnic groups. This developed into a significant split in the post-independence era (Cheney 2007: 4).

Sverker Finnstrom notes further how this division expressed itself along ethnic, regional and social lines: "In Uganda it became a colonial truism that a soldier is a northerner, a civil servant a southerner, and a merchant an Asian" (Finnstrom 2008: 64). After independence in 1962, Milton Obote, who was from the north (specifically Langoland), was elected Prime Minister and appointed ministers from around the country. Many northerners at that time remained in the military out of loyalty. However, tension between Obote's role and the role of the Buganda King,

Edward Muteesa II, as the ceremonial president would lead to political conflict when Obote changed the constitution to make himself president. Obote in 1966 “abrogated the constitution and created his own, which granted him sole executive powers and banned the federal statuses of all kingdoms within Uganda, precipitating massive violence between northern and southern ethnic groups” (Cheney 2007: 5).

A military coup in 1971 deposed Obote and brought General Idi Amin into power for eight years of nation-wide tyranny started under Obote’s presidency. Amin would be exiled in 1979 as a result of military resistance from banished Ugandans with the help of Tanzanian forces. His exile of course followed his “decision to expel all ethnic Indians in 1972, many of whom were descended from colonial immigrants [which] led to an effective breakdown of both industry and agriculture” (Cheney 2007: 5). Milton Obote from 1980-85 resumed power, but was challenged by General Yoweri Museveni who deemed his accession to power illegitimate (Finnstrom 2008: 68). The year 1981 marked “the most bloody period in postcolonial history: Obote’s soldiers started rounding up civilians, mostly young Baganda males, and killing them on the slightest suspicion of disloyalty” (Cheney 2007: 6). Leading the National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A), Museveni began a guerrilla war in central Uganda against Obote. During the conflict the Okello brothers, Brigadier Bazilio Olara Okello and General Tito Okello Lutwa, seized power for six months in 1985 after Obote’s soldiers, blaming him for their losses, removed him. Violating a treaty to end hostilities, Museveni soon captured the capital in 1986 from the Okello brothers. Museveni “restricted the space of action for political parties in favor of the nonparty ‘Movement’ system that he had introduced … by the time Uganda reverted to a constitutional system with political parties in 2005, the long established Movement had accumulated enormous military, numerical and other advantages over other parties” (Finnstrom 2008: 68).

The same year that Museveni came into power, 1986, a rebel movement in the north would grow into the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The initial movement was called the Holy Spirit Movement and was led by Alice Lakwena ("messenger" in Acholi) known also as Alice Abongowat Auma:

> Lakwena attempted … to resolve the internal crisis by asserting her legitimate authority over Acholi society against a common external enemy, the NRA. She began by mobilizing a discourse of spiritual cleansing within Acholiland, drawing upon a long standing alternative tradition of Acholi spiritualty (Allen and Vlassenroot 2010: 36).

After her defeat by the national army in 1986-7, Joseph Kony rose to fill the void left behind the failed rebellion as the leader of the LRA. It is important to note, however, that Museveni's acquisition of power spawned across the country other conflicts and rebel groups that claimed to be resisting the new government. (Finnstrom 2008: 69). The fact that Kony and the LRA in the north operated in opposition to the government for so long is very telling and illustrates how "neo-colonial forces have contributed to the continuous ethnification and increased political violence in Uganda" (67). The conflict in northern Uganda has been said to be a regional conflict with international implications because of the rebel group's move out of the north into neighboring Southern Sudan in the 1990s where they set up a base. In the early 2000's, the LRA began attacking people in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and Southern Sudan. With the crossing of international borders, the national origin of the conflict has often been neglected or glossed-over. The Holy Spirit Movement and subsequently the LRA's insurgency is national in origin, beginning first in Luwero, the central region of Uganda, the area in which Museveni, led his violent insurgency against Milton Obote. At that time, as noted earlier, northerners made up over one-third of the national army. In the collective memory of not only the people in Luwero, but of the people in central and southern Uganda, the Acholi

*were* the ones responsible for the atrocities and massacres that took place in that region when Museveni fought against Obote's forces. When Museveni eventually ousted Obote and took power in 1986, Luwero had been left devastated. Northerners abandoned the national army and fled to the north out of fear of retaliation. The branding of northerners, especially the Acholi, as prone to violence and inferior was thus incorporated into the national historical narrative through the real pain and suffering of Ugandans in the central and southern regions in the early and mid-1980s, although northerners in the army were also dying in high numbers during the Luwero conflict.

Museveni's forces followed the deserted soldiers to the north, fearing they would regroup and form a counter army. What resulted were reports of mass civilian terror including rape, killing and torture by government soldiers. Thus, at the time of Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement, the northern community had many grievances against Museveni's regime and held sympathy for early movements against the government. The national nature of the conflict in northern Uganda, however, is seldom acknowledged by Museveni's government, which persistently references the conflict as "the northern question." This top-down neglect, coupled with the fact that Joseph Kony himself is Acholi and his rebel insurgency for most of the 21-year period was carried out primarily in the north, disguised the fact that the conflict was local in nature. International monitoring of the conflict reveals that both the UPDF and LRA are responsible for violence, unrest, and human rights abuses during the war (Amnesty International 2007). In the early 1990s, after losing what little civilian support they had in the north, the LRA began abducting men, women and children, pillaging villages and homes, and stealing anyone and anything beneficial in guaranteeing the success of the rebel movement. The Acholi along with the Langi and Teso ethnic groups bore the brunt of the civil war as they are the predominant ethnic groups living within the region. According to reports by an advocacy and humanitarian

organization that works in central Africa, Resolve (formally Resolve Uganda), 38,000 children and 37,000 adults have been abducted in the course of the conflict (July 2011: web source). In addition to the war, the forced displacement of 90 percent of the Acholi population into Internally Displaced Persons camps by the Ugandan government interrupted or destroyed traditional forms of inhabitance and practices. At the height of the war, Resolve reported, 250 camps were in operation (July 2011: web source). Physical and sexual violence persisted in the camps, with the Ugandan People's Defense Force (UPDF) this time as the guilty party. On an infrastructural level, 21-years of insecurity have given way to devastating effects on the education, healthcare and governance systems, decreasing the quality of life drastically. Besides abducting and arming children and youth, the war became characterized by tactics of terror used by the LRA, one being to cut off the lips, ears and noses of individuals.  Entire villages were burned and looted and inhabitants massacred. The deplorable conditions of the camps led to the death of thousands each week, even under government and humanitarian watch.



Destroyed school and classroom on the road to Kitgum

**C. In a Time of No War**

*"It's so many years along the road we've been suffering … I am very happy that today, you know you have peace with a lot of struggle … and we came out of the camps one year back 2008 … But of course there are a lot of challenges" -USAID staff person*

An end to active violence by the LRA came in 2006 with a ceasefire agreement between the Ugandan government and the LRA, although, efforts for peace negotiations were initiated as far back as 1993, led by Betty Bigombe, then Minister for the Pacification of the North. The Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative was involved in the peace process as well, but for many different reasons, these talks never reached fruition. For instance, before the cease-fire in the summer of 2006 and after that time in 2008, peace talks were pursued between the government of Uganda and the LRA in Juba, Sudan. However, they failed due to lack of commitment on both sides. With top LRA commanders wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC), Joseph Kony named the ICC's 2005 warrant for his arrest as the reason why he would not participate. Resolve reported that, "the LRA's appointed negotiating team was plagued by infighting and concerns that it held the confidence of neither senior LRA commanders nor communities in northern Uganda. The Ugandan government's commitment to the peace process was undermined by threats to resume fighting made by President Museveni and allegations that it had violated the ceasefire agreement with the rebels" (Resolve July 2011: web source). Finally, with the LRA resuming attacks on civilians in neighboring countries in September of 2008, new efforts to resurrect the peace process were thwarted.

Today, northern Uganda is in a state of relative peace and is generating signs of long-term stability. The population, as well as local and international government and non-governmental agencies (NGOs) are actively engaged in peace-building, reconciliation, and transitional justice and reconstruction projects. Remaining LRA commanders are still wanted by the International

Criminal Court, but some senior and lower level commanders have been granted amnesty for returning from the bush—a decision that has received various forms of criticism from the civil society community of northern Uganda. The rebel army is reported to be segmented, but still terrorizing civilians and committing similar atrocities in the neighboring countries mentioned earlier. Over one million people have returned home, but several thousand remain in the camps, mostly the elderly and youth. They rebuild their livelihoods in the face of economic instability, land disputes, disease outbreaks, and lack of everyday resources. The difficult task of establishing a life outside of the camps and returning to a state of "normalcy" characterizes a large part of social conditions in northern Uganda. Looking at education, the two-decade conflict severely debilitated the educational infrastructure, resulting in wider disparities associated with access to education and the quality of schools in the north versus those in central or southern Uganda. Teachers and school administrators living in the region during the war were targets for murder, causing many to flee the north and seek refuge elsewhere. Furthermore, many of the schools in the rural region were destroyed by rebels and have not been re-built or have been poorly restored. The political environment of the north is one of estrangement from that of the south. Peace education has the potential to serve as a bridge between the past and present conditions, facilitating social and political change on a level that children and youth can access.

## Chapter 2: A State of Uncertainty: Children and Education in North Uganda

"*For all these years of conflict, education has been the only hope … Only through education can we reconstruct our lives" – an education official, Gulu*

### A. Between Vulnerability and Resiliency

Often youth and children, especially those under the age of 18, are relegated to the category of "victims" in conflict and disaster situations. In northern Uganda, the abduction and arming of children complicates this notion of passive victim. As aid workers, local and international, seek to emphasize vulnerability and dependency, they are met with the reality of these children's participation in the war after being forcibly recruited. This is relevant because this narrative is told and re-told until children are left with no agency over their lives. Most individuals that operate in the realm of international relief, development and aid generally emphasize the vulnerability of those in unfortunate and violent situations, especially children, but scholarship argues a different position: "Childhood scholars advise against treating … children as one universally vulnerable category, maintaining that conceptualizations of childhood and acceptable roles for children at different ages vary across time, space, and class" (Ensor and Gozdziak 2010: 3). Around the world children have and are still taking on what may seem like "adult" roles to Western observers. This is not to say that all roles children occupy are appropriate across societies, but it presents an alternative view to children solely as victims in need of protection. Used as a philosophical and literary concept, this view is often referred to as the Apollonian view, in which children are seen as innocent, vulnerable and in need of special care and protection from the world. On the other side, the Dionysian view portrays children as easily corrupted and in need of discipline. Both views miss the complicated identities of children and their ability to organize on their own. Looking at the conflict in northern Uganda, the Apollonian view of children has been that much more amplified by humanitarian groups seeking

to bring international attention to the conflict. Although the strategic advertisement of children as victims does lead to effective fundraising, it also leads to less effective programs on the ground where this image remains dominant. On a similar, but smaller scale the Dionysian view is projected onto older children, the youth, who are seen by Acholi elders as mischievous and deceptive, in need of control and guidance due to the war. Increasingly incorporated into ethnographic studies on children, each concept presents children as incomplete adults and passive recipients rather than agents in their own lives.

Jan Egeland, former United Nations Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, declared that the war in northern Uganda was "the world's worst forgotten humanitarian crisis" (BCC News 10 Nov 2003: web source). In many senses this simplified the conflict as solely humanitarian in scope rather than politically and historically motivated. After Jan Egeland's 2003 statement, northern Uganda was catapulted into the international spotlight. The number of non-governmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations increased as the reports on abduction and conditions of the internally displaced persons' camps became internationally known. The LRA began abducting children into its army in the early 1990s and in 1996 the government launched its "protected villages" policy that would force the northern Ugandan population into camps. The idea was not solely to protect the people from violence but to isolate the LRA from a community that allegedly supported them (Resolve July 2011: web source). The abductions, however, did not stop because of these camps. Instead, life became even more insecure as thousands of people were concentrated in one area when before they were spread across the rural areas. What resulted was the most amazing example of agency recorded during the long history of the war: children began commuting at night to the nearest towns to escape abduction. Jan Egeland made several other statements that have not been as widely circulated as the one quoted above. In particular

he points towards children, saying, "it is a moral outrage that the world is doing so little for the victims of the war, especially children" (BCC News, 10 Nov. 2010: web source). Abductions and "child-soldiering," young girls given as "brides" to commanders, and orphaned children became the face of this conflict after over fifteen years of international silence.

Current scholarship on children in difficult situations, however, suggests that relying solely on what disadvantages children is counterproductive to assessing their needs: "While discourses of trauma and victimhood continue to be dominant in certain circles, resilience, agency and vulnerability are increasingly recognized as interrelated factors" (Ensor and Gozdziak 2010: 5). Recognizing agency means also taking into consideration the diversity of children's experience from one culture to the next. The war in northern Uganda, after Egeland's statements, experienced an increase in NGOs working in the region. By 2005 an estimated 5,000 NGOs were operating in Gulu, the largest and most centralized town in the north. This overflow of assistance was almost non-existent in the 1990s when an estimated 66,000 children and young adults were abducted by the LRA (Resolve July 2011: web source). In what looked like a mass exodus from the rural areas and encampments, children would walk miles to the nearest town where they would sleep for the night. Towns provided a level of security because the LRA rarely came into the municipalities. Children, some very young, would start at sunset and walk with each other to sleep under building covers, inside compounds and in shops until dawn when they would walk back to the camps or their villages. This type of demonstration points more to the coexistence of children's vulnerability and their "social agency and active involvement in the construction and interpretation of their own lives and the lives of those around them" (Ensor and Gozdziak 2010: 6). However, instead of recognizing children's agency in commuting and the underlining implications of this—that the Ugandan government was failing to protect them—certain advocacy groups took advantage of this to sensationalize their causes, emphasizing the

children's susceptibility to harm. Even though their ability to cope with this violence and fear may have been weakened by internal displacement, northern Ugandan children were still able to assess their situation and find ways to survive during the war. Now, in the post-conflict era, peace education can serve as a tool to nurture that ability. Seeing children purely as a vulnerable population has permeated NGO and government programming. This is the narrative that today's peace education programs will either reproduce or transform. However, in order for these programs to avoid reflecting the dominant and problematic patterns addressed, an emphasis on youth's agency and resiliency is warranted. As will be discussed in later sections, most often bad behavior in school is attributed to exposure to war and is brought to the forefront of students' peace education experience and used to define them and their lives. Pushed aside are their stories of survival and hope during extremely fearful and difficult times and how they can continue to be agents for themselves and their community in the face of social, economic and political hardships.

**B. A Crisis in Itself: Education in Northern Uganda:**

According to a 2010 report issued by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), there are 526 functioning education centers out of 555 for the districts of northern Uganda. Fifty-seven parishes out of 287 lack operative educational facilities in the Acholi sub-region. Gulu specifically is reported as containing the best schools in Northern Uganda. It should be noted that more functional schools are often located closer to towns, which makes it less likely for rural schools to be capable of taking on projects, such as peace education. Also, rural children are less likely to attend school for a full day of classes if the school is located miles away. Primary school consists of seven years and is the equivalent of U.S. elementary and middle school. Secondary school or high school is divided over six years

with four dedicated to lower secondary and, if a student passes the national exam, two years of upper secondary in preparation for university.

If measured by numbers only, this would produce a positive picture of the state of the educational sector in northern Uganda, in part because it does not define what "functioning" means in a post-conflict environment. However, it would only take a visit to a primary or secondary education institution or the time to converse with those working within this sector to conclude that the state of education post-war is in need of urgent attention, assistance and investment: "For the West Nile region, teachers and educational leaders feel abandoned and are greatly distressed by the undeniable deterioration of staff, salaries and facilities as a whole. They speak bravely of development in public, but in private they say with profound sadness 'We have gone backwards.' The conclusion is harsh: 'Social development is dominated by the collapse of the health and education budgets of the central government'" (Finnstrom 2008: 102). The West Nile region is the north-western most point of Uganda, but these sentiments are similar to those collected in my fieldwork sites in other districts.

The north's situation, because of the two-decade insurgency, is lacking even more; with the loss of teachers, the quality of education plummeted. Although enrollment in schools across Uganda has tripled since 1986, it is still the case that few students complete primary school. Due to lack of accommodation and sporadic pay, teacher absenteeism is another challenge. This can especially be observed in the rural areas of Uganda and in the general teacher-student ratio of 1:100 or 1:200, which makes it harder still to provide quality education (Higgins 2009). To further add to the complications resulting from the war, many former abductees and those children whose education was disrupted by displacement in internally displaced camps are returning to school several years after they were to complete primary or secondary education. Many of these youth are in alternative "catch up" education programs such as those provided by

*Echo Bravo!*, a local grassroots organization affiliated with War Child Holland, in education centers around northern Uganda.

An entire generation has unintentionally been handed a fate of continued poverty and reduced literacy as there are not enough centers to take on this task. In addition, the majority of these youths cannot afford to pay for such adult education programs. As a result, many have settled for trade or vocational schools in hopes of generating income in the fast developing town of Gulu. Still others are not satisfied with their options. Kristen Cheney, Senior Lecturer of Children and Youth Studies for the International Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, recounts from her fieldwork in Uganda a young Acholi youth saying "he would like to go all the way through secondary school, which he believed was the highest level of education available. He would like to work in an office or run some kind of business. He was not interested in skill training. He said he would like to get a kiosk in which to sell a few small items, because he saw one near his house and he though it made a lot of money" (2007: 197). The central and south are producing youth who will have greater access to pursue fields in medicine, law, education, government, and business. The north, meanwhile, has only to offer its youth those skills required to be carpenters, mechanics, tailors and bricklayers. While these professions are no less reputable than others, an overwhelming base of workers for the same jobs in a few fields leads to sporadic employment and small wages. This is a key issue in other Global South regions and countries, such as India where educated youth un- and underemployment is wide-spread. In northern Uganda, it adds further urgency to the role that education has in preventing a relapse into conflict.

In August of 2011 I received a message from one of northern Uganda's most prominent peace-builders, Reverend Macleord Baker Ochola II, Retired Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Kitgum. He wrote:

> Recently Makerere University carried out a research on the intake of students to public universities for the last five years in Uganda. The result was very revealing and worrying, especially to the entire peoples [sic] of Norther [sic] Uganda. The result shows that there are high levels of disparities, inequalities, and regional imbalances in 'Access and Equity' to Higher Education in Uganda (personal correspondence, 17 Aug 2011).

He reported that in percentages the Central region of Uganda comprised 56% of those accessing post-secondary school. The Western region followed with 21%, Eastern Region 16% and Northern Region at only 07% (personal correspondence, 17 Aug 2011). Accompanying this information, Bishop Ochola expressed his concern over state neglect, writing, "my people … are deliberately being marginalized and denied education opportunities, by our own government of the day" (personal correspondence, 17 Aug 2011). In fact, Bishop Ochola's sentiments are similar in nature to those recorded in Sverker Finnstrom's ethnography:

> Perhaps the most important development is Gulu's new university, established in 2003. At the same time, many young people in the war-ravaged north with expectations of a better future regarding education and work, expressed an experience of being increasingly, betrayed, a feeling of being severed. For them, Gulu University stands there as proud evidence of modernity and developmental Uganda, but few have the means to go for higher studies (2008: 103).

Ochola's and Finnstrom's findings point toward a very salient reality that exposes the co-existence of war and post-war rumor and the truth of government ostracism and neglect.

Taking this into account, one may wonder why initiatives such as peace education have been pursued when the issues noted above in regards to providing opportunities in education would require all financial, material and human resources available. One might easily conclude that one cannot truly implement peace education if children and the wider community are experiencing this level of hardship and structural inequality. However, it is exactly these factors

that advocates rely on to encourage the incorporation of peace education into schools. Their task is arduous at best, but the post-war reconstruction phase may be the best time to pursue such innovative educational practices to address inequality and the unique reality that youth in northern Uganda are attempting to navigate.

### C. The Bishop and the Official: A Conversation on Universal Primary Education

*"Officials blame the community for not sending kids to school" –Bishop Ochola*

From war and life in internally displaced camps to life after the war, I recorded stories of despair and healing, of frustration and of hope. Ugandans had varying perspectives on such issues as land disputes, traditional reconciliation methods, justice, and how to put an end to the conflict. One can imagine, then, that the subject of education would invoke opposing opinions. In fact, in talking with two prominent leaders I was able to uncover another debate concerning a program initiated by the Ugandan government and celebrated by African and other international communities for its "success:" Universal Primary Education (UPE). Because of UPE, enrollment in Ugandan schools increased during the late 1990s. A part of the United Nation's Millennium development goals, UPE's focus is to provide free primary education to "ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling" (United Nations, March 2012: web source). Although there have been revisions to reflect the fact that the goal will not be met, there have been tremendous accomplishments such as the 3 percent increase in primary school enrollment between 2000 and 2008 in developing regions, putting the total at 89% (United Nations, March 2012: web source). UPE was introduced in Uganda in 1997 and increased school enrollment from 2 million to 7.8 million students (Mubatsi, March 2010: web source). Under the country's Poverty Eradication and Action Plan, the program was hailed as an absolute success.

But recently published reports have quieted the praise and divided stake-holders:

> Despite the Ugandan government's efforts to educate the majority of its citizens through such strategies as universal primary education (UPE), educational attainment remains greatly limited, and thus usually contributes to rather than diminishes class stratification in Uganda society. In the context of the county's prevalent "education for national development" mission, children are often caught in a double bind: while they are told that schooling is essential to their own future and that of the country, the challenges of quality and access keep them back from reaching those goals (Cheney 2007: 76).

Under UPE, for the first seven years, four children in a given family could utilize the program which created greater access to education for girls and children with disabilities. Parents, under these conditions, did not have to choose which child they could support, which was often the male abled-bodied child. In 2003, however Museveni would declare that all children were entitled to UPE (2007: 85). All of these strategic moves to improve education in Uganda were essentially irrelevant in the north during the 1990's and early 2000's because of insecurity and violence. Although, the first graduates of UPE came in 2004, the north did not experience that implementation of the program.

After several meetings with Francis Odoch, chief education officer in Gulu district, and Rt. Rev Macleord Baker Ochola II, founder of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, I began to piece together UPE's presence and significance in the northern community. These two leaders, occupying different professional roles, both looked to education as a source of hope. In 2001, Ochola and other religious leaders would found the Acholi Education Initiative in which I served as intern. Odoch talked about why children in the rural schools were performing more poorly than those in urban regions. He highlighted the difference between urban and rural curricula and the performance of the teachers, and parental involvement: "the biggest problem is that donors

wait for results before making contributions. They are performing poorly because there is not a strong foundation" (personal correspondence, March 2010, Gulu). He later added in an encouraging but serious tone that UPE was only supposed to help students "catch-up," but parental involvement was lacking. Parents were made culpable as he explained negligence, more than any other factor, hindered children's enrollment in school. According to Odoch, parents were "not concerned about their children's education," noting that parental support in the rural areas was less than it was in urban centers and "learning should continue at home … there should be a teacher-parent linkage" (personal correspondence, March 2010, Gulu). He attributed this to the fact that in urban areas more parents are literate, and thus can help their children with school work, than can those living in the countryside. However, the fact that active fighting ended in 2006 suggests northern Uganda is just beginning to see the implementation of UPE. Before 2006, most Acholi were confined to internally displaced person's camps where temporary schools were started. I was informed by Odoch that parents are not monitoring whether or not their children are in school, refuse to pay school fees, and show an overall lack of concern for their children's education. It would only be after my meeting with Bishop Ochola that I would not only begin to confirm but understand the official's reports.

Schooling itself will not satisfy the aspirations of both parents and students because of quality and poor access to meaningful work or higher education. Limited educational opportunities become not only dreams lost, but another form of political and social alienation when compared nationally. In rural Sierra Leone one can find a similar situation:

> Rural Sierra Leoneans have historically experienced violence in connection with the purportedly technical, ordinary procedures of state integration and control (taxes, elections, the census and so on), and hence continue to see these domains as highly contentious sources of social disruption and inequality. Thus,

> one would add education to the list of procedures of state integration, and reiterate that schooling, and in particular an inequality of the provision of schooling can be seen as a form of symbolic violence (Shepler 2003:65).

Often education is thought of as a solution to war or violence, hence peace education. However, education is not a neutral space, but as in Sierra Leone, serves as a form of violence symbolically through structural inequality. Because it is not always recognized, symbolic violence becomes the most persistent type of structural inequality and political and social alienation. Schools are sites where this type of violence is implanted into language and action on an unconscious level, legitimizing the current power relations that disenfranchise people and communities. Addressing structural violence will prove a challenge to peace education developers and should not be ignored.

In a quiet and cool building that provided a contrast to the mid-day heat and noise of Gulu town, I met Bishop Ochola at the Acholi Education Initiative's office. He had a very honest and frank conversation with me about his feelings on UPE. He considered it a dilemma because so many children were in school, but performance had not improved and northern children were still "lagging behind" their counterparts in central and southern Uganda. Bishop Ochola remarked that, "education is the responsibility of the community, but because of the war they cannot do that" (personal correspondence, March 2011, Gulu). Parents too were suffering from years of war like their children and Ochola pointed to that as a major cause of their unsupportive behavior. Recent reports suggest that the majority of parents


School assembly at Pece Primary School

do not take the time to inquire about their child's education or the financial allocation of their children's school fees (Mubatsi, March 2010: web source). But often it is because many do not know they have the right to do so. In the same report, 42 percent of parents said that they did not know it was a possible to know these things, and 41 percent reported that they were not interested (Mubatsi, March 2010: web source). There is negligence at all levels according to other accounts which highlight growing mistrust between parents and teachers (Cheney 2007: 89). UPE is proving to be a huge challenge for the Ugandan government because of the trends seen across schools in other African countries such as "corruption, abuse of power by teachers in schools who charge illegal fees, make students offer labour on teachers' projects, sexual harassment, embezzlement and systematic teacher absenteeism" (Mubatsi, March 2010: web source). The crisis in northern Uganda falls heavily on teachers as seen in other African countries such as Ghana, where teachers suffer mental stress and absenteeism as they look for alternative opportunities to supplement their salaries, which are meager and often times withheld for months. In my own time spent in the schools, I observed that far fewer primary school students were enrolled and present at school after the first holiday break prior to the second term, just as with the secondary schools where education was not "free." The promise of free education under UPE is an illusion to many Ugandan families, especially in the north. Although this situation is not uncommon across the Global South, context is needed to understand the difficulties to accessing quality education in a country allowing numerous peace education programs to operate.

In a second interview with the Francis Odoch, he revealed that primary schools students still had to pay some school fees and uniform fees. This is confirmed by a report issued by the Transparency International (TI) Africa Education Watch Programme that conducted research in Madagascar, Uganda, Ghana, Morocco, Senegal, Niger and Sierra Leone: "all of the countries

surveyed in the TI report receive external development support and by law must offer free primary education. But 40% of parents in Uganda report paying registration fees which the survey identifies as one of the corruption tendencies. The parents reported they were paying about Shs 5,400 on average" (Mubatsi, March 2010: web source. This and more are confirmed in Cheney's fieldwork:

> Students require uniforms, books, pens, and other school supplies. If one has several children and no salary, this amount quickly becomes an exorbitant financial burden. In Gulu where war and displacement had left residents absolutely impoverished, parents could not even afford basic uniforms costing as little as US$4 … children were constantly sent home or their reports withheld until their parents paid (2007: 85).

Bishop Ochola remarked that UPE was misleading and many parents sent their children to school and struggled to pay what they could not afford. The results were disheartening as "many children are forced to drop out of primary school, and even if they complete primary schooling, a rigorous exam system and exorbitant fees for secondary school prevent many children from continuing their education [and] though the system has failed them, this predicament often leaves children feeling like they are the ones who have failed" (ibid). Symbolic violence in this case has translated into notions of individual liberalism where success and failure hinges solely on one's actions. Despite the increase in the number of students enrolled in primary schools and numerous programs to improve education, the quality of education is still poor. Yet there were some positive reports on school financial management: "In Uganda, however, the study found that 77% of head teachers had received training in basic financial management and 53% of members of school management committees. Only 7% of schools were without any financial documentation, 76% of schools had incomplete financial documentation while 17% of schools were with complete financial documentation" (Mubatsi,

March 2010: web source). It still stands, though, that aside from transparency, quality is one of the most important investments that any government, NGO, or community based organizations can make and that any parent has the right to recommend—or rather, demand—it for their child or children. As for now, though, UPE and the Ugandan government continue to inspire Ugandan families with myths about the benefits of education while simultaneously depriving that sector of resources, which in the north adds to a list of grievances against a government that operates in a city many have never seen.

**D. Education in Africa and Colonizing Epistemology**

*"Few researchers of Africa, even in African universities, have questioned enough the theories, concepts and basic assumptions informed by the dominant epistemology. The tendency has been to conform to a world conceived without them" – Francis B Nyamnjoh*

The effect of colonialism on education in Africa is a silent conversation taking place among those organizations and stakeholders invested in increasing education for the children and youth of Africa. Acknowledging the powerful legacy of colonialism on African systems of knowledge leads one to consider the current manifestations of such education that "has tended to emphasize mimicry over creativity, and the idea that little worth learning about, even by Africans, can come from Africa" (Nyamnjoh 2012: 1). Critics of the contemporary structure of education in Africa point to colonialism as the means by which "African creativity, agency and value systems" have been devalued in place of European or Western conceptualizations and truths, "which takes the form of science as ideology and hegemony" (ibid). This can be seen on several fronts such as the emphasis on colonial languages (English, French, Portuguese) as the sole medium of learning, the blind acceptance of the way in which Africa has been defined and categorized by the West, an inability to question existing ideologies, and the favoring of

imported teaching mechanisms over local traditions. Francis Nyamnjoh, professor of anthropology at the University of Cape Town in South Africa, writes:

> The values acquired during colonial era … teach the superiority of the colonizer [and] set the tone for the imbibing of knowledge and continue to dominate education and life in postcolonial Africa. The result is that the knowledge needed for African development is rendered irrelevant by a limited and limiting set of values (2012: 2).

In his studies he documents the various ways African creative processes and endogenous alternatives have been diminished in the face of European and, more recently, American colonizing and neo-colonizing epistemologies. In my fieldwork I was often perplexed by courses that taught United States (U.S.) geography, often encountering students who asked me if I knew of the Tennessee Valley Authority. I was surprised by their question. They would explain to me how they learned about TVA in their U.S. course, having to choose between that or Europe. A stray detail in my daily experience, it was only after further investigation I found this to be a contribution to the uncritical internalization of colonial and colonizing yardsticks of what it meant to be educated or modern: that in order to be counted one must possess knowledge about the West and its history. The fact that knowledge of U.S. geography will be unlikely to improve the situation of youth and children in accessing higher education or negotiating sociopolitical futures remains uncontested. U.S. geography instead may serve as an unconscious tool that reinforces existing power relations and Western hegemony. However, strategically, this knowledge is useful under the current global hegemon that privileges knowledge familiar to the West. The key issue surrounding acquiring this type of knowledge is the wider pedagogical context in which it is imparted. Schools, although there are many more sites, are privileged locales, because of Western notions on learning. A “place where global discourses of power have intersected with local reactions and strategic deployments of power,” (Shepler 2003: 62) I acknowledge that

Ugandans or any people living in the Global South are not passive recipients of this type of education, but have in many cases reconfigured it to fit their needs.

Moreover, the colonial model of authoritarian organization remains a feature of education in Africa. This model leaves students with little freedom to participate in classrooms and teachers "little part in school processes other than as receivers of rules, instructions, and information" (Harber 2003: 80). Thus the link between educational disparities in Uganda today that Ochola and Finnstrom document are not contemporary manifestations but have been inherited from the colonial model of divide and conquer that are evident in Uganda's history. Nyamnjoh provides a general historical account of how education became a vehicle for colonizers to maintain power and how it is still being reproduced in the postcolonial era along ethnic and regional lines:

> that disparities arising from the lack of unified or uniform education offered by different bodies—colonial government and different and often warring missionary denominations within the colonies—set the stage for rising conflicting expectations and inequities in education attainment and across different ethnic groups and colonial demarcated regions by the colonial system would at independence manipulate postcolonial education policy, admission to schools and access to scholarships for further education to the advantage of people from their regions and ethnic groups (2012: 7).

For the ethnic groups that form the majority of people in northern Uganda, these are everyday realities in a country where notions of meritocracy and human rights are contradicted on the ground. This calls for the structural and historical situation to be a re-examined. However, one must be careful, while critiquing colonial legacies, not in the same breath to romanticize every aspect of Africa or African cultures as "the quintessence of human achievement." (Nyamnjoh 2012: 9). Much of pre-colonial education in Africa took place through "production learning" or

reproducing skills via observation and performance that created goods and materials that were immediately useful to society (Cheney 2007: 78). Homesteads acted as schools and extended family members and neighbors as teachers. For British colonizers, this was alarming. The lack of a formal educational structure meant that knowledge was not being passed on to children: "the knowledge that the British offered took a totally different form (literacy, taught by a specially trained person … The definition of education thus became formalized through a narrowing of the concept. As a result, even Africans came to believe that whites 'brought' education to Africa" (ibid). For peace education, this pattern of learning is mirrored; "peace" becomes a formal learning process that only "professional" or "white" persons can bring.

For children in Uganda, cultural heritage is a painful subject and, understandably, discussed mainly in reference to the war and what was lost. Specifically, the Acholi I spoke with were very concerned and sometimes distraught over the loss of cultural norms and traditions due to the longevity and brutality of the war. In classrooms that implemented the United Movement to End Child Soldiering/Stability, Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Uganda/Ministry of Education and Sports' peace education curriculum there was a tendency for students not to ask questions during peace education lessons. There was only one classroom. Those implementing UMECS/SPRING/MoES-sponsored curriculums maintained a classroom environment where dissent or questioning was not common, a feature of colonial education where pursuits of collective interest and engagement is lacking. Acholi culture takes a back seat to imported systems of learning that seek convergence and homogeneity instead of diversity and alternatives in learning material and teaching methods. Even more distressing is the fact that English is given precedence over African languages, such as Acholi, Langi or Iteso as the speech of the powerful, knowledgeable and educated. African epistemologies, in this case

Acholi cultural and social means of prompting knowledge, are only relevant when talking about what has been lost instead of what can be, however, I will discuss this further in later chapters.

In one classroom, where the teacher had received training through UMECS/SPRING/MoES, I was confronted with an interesting lesson on "peace." During the middle of a lesson on what peace was and what peace was not, a young student stood up and proceeded to exit the classroom. It was assumed he went to the restroom, but the teacher was not distracted and completed his thought before saying "now, what is wrong here?" He then began to ask the class why it was inappropriate for the student to leave the classroom during a lesson. "He breached peace! You much follow the school's rules to maintain peace and he did not. We would normally cane students, but that is not peaceful. Let us take a vote … how many of you would like him to stay … how many of you would like him to be punished?" The class was divided while raising their hands and some did not raise their hands at all. Luckily, those who wished for the student to be given a second chance were in the majority. The offending student came back shortly after that moment and the teacher began explaining how he had broken a school rule leaving the classroom without permission. The student did not speak, he sat quietly. With a smile on his face, the teacher explained that he had broken peace because of his actions, but was spared by his fellow classmates. After this uncomfortable incident, the teacher went on with the lesson. I found the entire scenario to be peculiar at best because of the way in which a trained peace education teacher defined peace and conflict saying, "If you deviate from these [practices] and you do something unexpected then you breach peace." The student created conflict by leaving the class and this was labeled as "bad" and anything that deviated from school rules or the status quo was conflict. I felt that this method left out a very important point in peace and conflict studies: that conflict is inevitable and that there are various forms and states of conflict that have to be mitigated rather that defined in black and white terms such as "good" and "bad." Cheney in

her work notes “along with ideologies of schooling come practices, symbols, and language that reinforce the construction of education citizens …teachers, subtly or forcefully, tried to mold children into ‘proper’ students, drawing from established norms of both schooled identity and ideal childhood” (2007: 92). In my research I refer to this phenomenon as “the production of the peaceful child.” The teacher’s emphasis on voting to decide on the fate of the child hinted much more towards lessons on obedience and conformity, even authoritarianism. How does this reproduce colonial legacies of blind obedience instead of conversations on law and peaceful means of keeping order? The young student broke the rules, but had he breached peace as well? Peace now becomes a very slippery slope in which any transgression can be considered a violation. On a macro-level, when are students given the opportunity to discuss how established rules and laws can be fallible and harmful? My field work highlights that this area is not covered in any of the peace education projects and the above example is much more representative of the larger empirical pattern. If managed properly, I suggest that peace education can provide a way to counteract colonial influence on African education by nurturing and inspiring young people to seek out alternative forms of acquiring knowledge in and outside of the classroom that are rooted in local understandings and practices. It is important to acknowledge these legacies as a start to understanding not only the potential success of peace education but also how to record its success or influence. Although beyond the scope of this study, efforts to indigenize education in Uganda or regions in Uganda require further research as indigenizing education can exacerbate the marginalization of already marginalized youth in the current globalization context.

## Chapter 3: Bridging Peace and Education

### A. Defining Peace Education as a Process and Philosophy

*"Peace education, peace itself, begins with the person, within the heart … and then when you are united, when you are together there's a kind of love you have for one another" - secondary school instructor*

Peace education is a broad term that describes a type of education centered on conflict resolution, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building skills training (Harris and Morrison 2003: 11). In Uganda, peace education involved other aspects such as how to deal with emotional stress in a positive manner, early childhood development via sharing and working in groups and interacting with others. According to The University of Peace—the United Nations-mandated graduate school of peace studies—peace education may be defined as "the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills and behaviors to live in harmony with oneself, with others and with the natural environment" (2012: web source). Ian Harris and Mary Morrison in the 2nd edition of their book on peace education give a more detailed description of peace education:

> Peace education is currently considered to be both a philosophy and a process involving skills, including listening, reflections, problem-solving, cooperation and conflict resolution. The process involves empowering people with the skills, attitudes and knowledge to create a safe world and build a sustainable environment. The philosophy teaches nonviolence, love, compassion and reverence for all life. Peace education confronts indirectly the forms of violence that dominate society by teaching about its causes and providing knowledge of alternatives. Peace education also seeks to transform the present human condition by, as noted educator Betty Reardon states, "changing social structures and patterns of thought that have created it." Peace education is taught in many

> different settings, form nursery schools to college and beyond. Community groups teach peace education to adults and to children (2003: 9).

Although Harris and Morrison's work focuses mostly on peace education in the United States, their work provides an important assessment of peace education and provides a model for the potential of this type of education throughout the world. As noted in their definition, peace education combines aspects of both negative and positive peace to discuss cultivating peace on an interpersonal and structural level. Defining peace is thus imperative to understand the prospects and limitations of peace education in its current form in northern Uganda. Another definition of peace education is offered by the World Bank: "a generic term used to describe a range of formal and informal educational activities undertaken to promote peace in schools and communities through the inculcation of skills, attitudes, and values that promote nonviolent approaches to managing conflict and promoting tolerance and respect for diversity" (Nations 2010: 60). There are many definitions of peace education that include more or less the same language, but few evaluations exist. This makes it difficult to assess the success or failure of peace education programs or to create an effective model for future programs. However, The World Bank does provide data on initiatives to integrate peace education into the school system in Sierra Leone. Their conclusions will provide contextual material to examine UMECS/ SPRING/MoES and Insight's peace education programs in the next chapter.

Peace education is a response to increased militarism and violence in contemporary society. For countries like Uganda, former European colonies in the Global South, histories of mass violence have become a cyclical part of the political process: "Uganda has risen from the dark night of postcolonial civil conflict to become a shining star among nation-states in Africa … the wars, however, had decimated the infrastructure and left hundreds of thousands of soldiers and

civilians dead" (Cheney 2007: 1). The fact is there is a collective familiarity to violence that places Ugandan children and young people of the last two decades in very important and powerful positions as the next leaders of the country, but also as agents of violence. Cheney elaborates: "because of this violent past, Ugandan childhood is constructed in everyday discourse as a primary space in which national prosperity will either be made or broken" (2007: 2). However, she notes very boldly how conceptions of childhood and the proper place of the child contradict the reality of their agency, changing identity and engagement with citizenship:

> Ugandan children are therefore becoming—at least discursively—primary vehicles for social change. Yet children's abilities to participate in the activities of citizenship are still constrained by often-contradictory adult notions of childhood, both local and international … children felt rather powerless over their circumstances. Not only are they subjected to the authoritarianism of the family and the educational system, but they are disempowered by poverty, political insecurity, and the AIDS epidemic. Children must therefore negotiate their places in Ugandan society among competing notions of what children should and should not be and do to enable themselves to participate actively in the country's development (2007: 3).

Cheney's work, however, is limited by her emphasis on children and youth in central and southern Uganda. She critically explores the construction of childhood in northern Uganda for war-affected children, but a deeper analysis of these children's relationship with the state and nation is warranted. Not only are children from the north navigating through contradictory notions of childhood, but with the added stigma of feeling like pariahs in their country of birth, their powerlessness is magnified on a group level.

For peace education to be an effective tool in preventing a relapse into violent insecurity, it is imperative to define peace: “Most people think they know what *peace* means. But in fact, different people often have very different understandings of this seemingly simple word … although most people would agree that some form of peace—whatever it means—is desirable” (Barash and Webel 2008: 5). In addition, peace should not be seen as the absolute ideal of human existence, but rather it should be acknowledged that “peaceful life can be infested with conflicts and frustrations, but in the peaceful order of things, problems are handled, strategies beyond mere survival are developed, life is continuously constituted and reconstituted” (Finnstrom 2008: 12). This encapsulates the distinction between positive and negative peace that is essential to more complete definitions of peace. Concepts of positive peace are commonly less embraced than the concept of negative peace. Negative peace indicates the absence of war and physical violence. Positive peace, however, denotes not only the absence of war, but the minimization or eradication of covert forms of violence specific to structures and institutions. Similarly, when taking about peace, one should discuss war and avoid pinpointing one or several causes, but acknowledge that there are many possible causes and angles. Examining war—its causes, prevention and alternatives—is important to the process of peace. Furthermore, warfare is linked to the emergence of social stratification and control of resources under complex political and social organization such as states, which is evident in Uganda’s colonial and post-colonial history. This brings one back to notions of positive peace, which, without proper instruction, reduces the usefulness of peace education for children, youth and their communities.

**B. The Need for Peace Education**

James Page notes that “peace education has been recognized as an important aspect of social education for the past three decades” (2004: 4). Indeed since the late 1980’s writers have been

amassing a body of critical literature on peace education and have most recently placed emphasis on peace education not only as conflict resolution but as human rights and democracy (ibid). There is documented international interest in peace education: “the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations (1945), the Constitution of UNESCO (1945) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1949) all contain statements undergirding the significance of peace education … the value of peace education has been affirmed in official documents of UNESCO, the United Nations General Assembly and the Hague Appeal for Peace” (Page 2004: 5). These documents show that there is an international commitment to peace education and an inherent value recognized in the notion, but there is “no well-developed philosophical rationale for peace education” (ibid). Because the definition of peace education emphasizes transforming structures and cognitive dissonance, peace education can be a very important aspect of reshaping the future for children and youth living in a post-conflict society. It should be considered an indispensable initiative to pursue if post-conflict reconstruction is to “ensure that education does not [continued to] contribute to the likelihood of a relapse into violence and actively builds social cohesion to help prevent it” (Sarbib 2005: 32). Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, author of “Philosophy of Peace Education in A Postmodern Era” confronts the need for peace education to be legitimized through philosophy saying “at times philosophical work is understood as unnecessary, artificial, or even dangerous for this educational cause” (2001: 315). His critique does two things: (1) points toward a way forward for research that can offer a philosophical rationale and justification to best support peace education, and (2) recognizes the hegemony of violence in our world and the urgency of making peace education a viable solution. The idea of peace education and its benefits may seem obvious, but it remains that establishing a philosophy would not deter support or resources, but strengthen the need for peace education.

**C. The Interconnection among Peace, Violence and Education**

"*To me, what I just know about peace education is a way of imparting knowledge into young people of these days who have never experienced peace in their life." – 17 year old student, senior 4*

There is an interconnection among peace, violence and education in schools; what affects one can have an incredible effect on the other. Ensuring that education "plays a role in reversing the damaging effects of conflict and building or rebuilding social cohesion requires a deep analysis of the way education impacts conflict" (Sarbib 2005: 2) and vice versa. For example, teacher development is said to be the first component of education that is effected by conflict because it is something that carries long-term repercussions. The return rate of teachers in northern Uganda is not known, but even with new teachers being produced through teacher training colleges, qualification levels (which are often low to begin with) continue to decrease (ibid). In addition, the population of educational instructors has significantly declined following the cease-fire. Those who were highly trained usually stayed in other parts of the country for greater economic and professional employment and opportunities. So there is a direct link between violence associated with war and education. However, education is seen as an everyday activity while conflict and war are seen as outliers to everyday life. Peace education, however, lies at the intersection of peace, violence and education, exposing how the three are related. Separating them may be easier for one to digest but "war is a total social phenomenon, affecting not just the combatants, but every person, thing, social structure, and ideal" (Shepler 2003: 65). The violence of war and conflict permeated education through not only physical violence and the abduction of children from schools, but through symbolic violence, such as gender discrimination and ethnocentrism. The latter, because of its unconscious domination over political, cultural and social customs and institutions, is the most powerful and most difficult to recognize and deconstruct.

Most teachers I spoke with attested to the fact that before peace education, students exhibited violent behavior towards their peers when disputes or misunderstandings arose. Students' behaviors were described as amoral in regards to respecting authority, school rules and property. Teachers expressed how peace education in the schools helped to curtail these things, which may describe more of their emotional and spiritual attachment to peace education as an idea rather than a direct relationship between it and the reduction of violence. Page and other scholars, including Gur-Ze'ev and Johan Galtung suggest that it is exactly this emotional and spiritual connection that simultaneously hinders the development of a systematic philosophy of peace education, but also points toward its need: "due to the fideistic [or reliance on faith rather than reason] nature of peace education, that is, those involved in peace education tend to be already convinced of its importance and see the reasons for peace education to be self-obvious. Yet is it precisely the fideistic nature of the commitment to peace education which underscores how important it is to articulate clear reason for such an educational endeavor" (Page 2008: 1). Just like any educational activity, a philosophy is necessary not for continued funding or state recognition, but rather for defense of its very usefulness. Schools carry the risk of erasing or distorting the collective memory of a society, as seen in the Rwandan genocide and the Holocaust. In these cases, the education sector was used to alter and reproduce history to misrepresent Jews and Tutsi-Hutu relations in a systematic manner and promote human extermination. So, while education can and has been used to contribute to violent conflict it can also be harnessed to a degree to promote new social relations and attitudes. Peace education is a tool that can help explore this interconnection as a continuum, flowing back and forth, becoming harder and harder to recognize.

**D. Cultures of Peace and Violence: Teaching Peace in the North**

*"We want to breed a culture of peace … starting from the children" – SPRING staff member*

Addressing the concept of "peace" among the Acholi is important to the discussion of bridging peace and education. When peace education is mentioned, in most cases, it is assumed that one is "teaching peace" to those who otherwise would not know what it is. When asked about my time in Uganda, it is often difficult for people to understand that I was not directly involved with implementing peace education. They anticipate that my research also involved me "teaching peace" to Ugandan children. The term peace education, generally, is problematic as it implies that if peace is not taught in these "developing" countries, they would forever be in conflict. The term suggests that "peace" is absent from countries like Uganda, rather than a world-wide scarcity. Thus, it is important to recognize the limitations of the term "peace education," as the deeper significance of peace is not always obvious. It is also important to recognize culture in the teaching of peace education. If one recognizes the profound effect of colonialism on African education, coupled with that of present-day structural adjustment programs, one must also acknowledge that "hope for the future of education in Africa depends on providing for the creative processes of cultural endogenization popular with ordinary Africans" (Nyamnjoh 2012: 20). This chapter addresses Acholi cultural traditions that exemplify peace education as a societal norm, rather than imported product of foreign (national and international) interest. However, it is also important to avoid essentialisms and generalizations that portray culture and meaning as static across time and space (Finnstrom 2008: 25). Culture is a dynamic process and the material and abstract importance it plays in the lives of people offer significant points of consideration for peace education.

I often heard Acholi people remark that their culture was a peaceful one that promoted harmony at all levels of civic and domestic life. Sverker Finnstrom recounts how the Acholi have been labeled as violent due to colonial stereotypes and heavy recruitment into the army: “still today it is common for people in Kampala and beyond to regard people from northern Uganda as backward and martial, and in the Ugandan context, sometimes the very epitome of primitiveness” (2008: 79). Even though the Acholi were not passive actors in this assignment or re-assignment of identity, the “simple truth was that northern peasants were put in uniform to crush the resistance of the southern peasantry” at the same time “a written vernacular and local textbooks on culture and history” ran parallel “to the recruitment of young Acholi men to the armed forces” (Finnstrom: 2008 81-82). Both these truths remain a strong and evolving narrative of ethnic stereotyping in Uganda. For the children and young people of northern Uganda, who were born and grew up in insecurity due to the LRA insurgency, these stereotypes have been reified through years of violence due to the LRA and UPDF. Many Acholi are adamant about their culture being peaceful in nature, which is a form of strategic essentialism itself: “I encountered some young men frustrated by the collective blame put upon the Acholi, who painstakingly collected data and statistics to challenge the image of Acholi as violent and militaristic” (Finnstrom 2008: 82). Similarly, I encountered the same response and was told of traditional methods of reconciliation as proof. Thus, what is troubling about peace education in its current state in Uganda is its emphasis on “creating a culture of peace” or more specifically as outlined by UMECS’ goal “to build a culture of peace and healing to prevent new wars” (*The Monitor*, December 2009: web source). How does one create or build a culture of peace within in a community that has been stereotyped as martial, but asserts peace as essential to its cultural heritage? What assumptions are being made by this type of language? Are they perhaps the same assumptions made by my acquaintances in the U.S.? Is peace education, in its current form, creating a “culture of knowledge dependency” in Uganda? The opposite of a

culture of peace then would be a “culture of violence,” which is projected on the northern region, with or without peace education, “as if agency of the perpetrator is inherently determined by his or her culture” (Finnstrom 2008: 223). In the next chapter, I propose ways peace education implementers can begin to shift the belief that violence and peace are solely based on one’s culture: “‘every culture is potentially all cultures and the special cultural features are changeable manifestations of a single human nature [existence]’” (Finnstrom 2008: 24).

As noted, children and youth occupy a unique position in northern Uganda because of their role in the war and now in the post-conflict era. They were and are portrayed as mindless child soldiers or as innocent darlings, and sometimes as both. Many Acholi consider children to have lost their way because of the war:

> The abducted children have not yet fully developed their capacity as moral and social persons. They are thus not held fully responsible for their acts. In the discourse of reconciliation, then, the children’s role as victims is more likely to be emphasized than their role as perpetrators. The absence of adult guidance is regarded as a fundamental problem. Hardly an expression of Acholi traditions and norms, according to Ladit Arweny, the absence of guidance is rather a threat of Acholi traditions, the Acholi people, and the future (Finnstrom 2008: 222).

They have not had the proper time or “adult” direction to develop as moral beings in the Acholi cultural context. The preservation of cultural traditions is important to the Acholi, and a curriculum that recognizes that will be better suited to serve student and teachers. It would be valuable to recognize that the community regards their youth as lacking cultural direction and that violence is infused with cultural meaning. To some, Kony is reportedly using children to destroy Acholi culture and reconstruct it according to his beliefs (Cheney 2007: 173). For example the belief in *cen* or “the spirits of people who died violently … or sometimes ‘ghostly

vengeance,' a kind of shadow existence rather than only a spirit or a soul separated from its body" holds strong in the Acholi community (Finnstrom 2008: 159). People can become exposed to these spirits by being near a site of murder where the victims were not properly buried or participating in an act of murder themselves. While many "born again" Christians will denounce these types of beliefs, many Acholi practice syncretism where *cen* is understood and feared. Many children who were abducted and forced to kill are said to be haunted by *cen* if their behavior is violent or depressive. Peace education does not have to teach the existence of *cen,* but educators should be equipped to help students understand how the belief in *cen* can cause conflict and pain in the lives of formally abducted children: "such bitter language implies that the returnees "have cen in their heads," something people fear will affect also the wider surroundings. 'We don't like you people who have stayed in the bush,' one young woman was told by her female age-mates" (Finnstrom 2008: 163). Peace education can be a bridge to help children deal with conflict by acknowledging the various conceptions of peace, reconciliation, healing, knowledge and justice among their ethnic group. In addition, it can help children be more accepting of children and youth in their community who have returned from captivity.

Conflict stemming from intergenerational tension is also a point of concern for the community. The war and subsequent displacement exacerbated the sense of loss related to cultural traditions by rearranging traditional roles across generations. These changes have resulted in identity crisis by upsetting generational and social hierarchies in Acholiland. The Holy Spirit Movement and LRA present an important point for when these relations worsened: "Lakwena effectively usurped Acholi elder authority by rendering Acholi pride through cleansing soldiers of atrocities they committed … [with Kony] elders complained that he was violating culturally sanctioned justifications for declaring war as well as rules of combat" that excluded women and children (Cheney 2007: 198). Both movements defied generational hierarchies to launch militant

campaigns. However, it is the return of abducted children, in particular, that has intensified existing social relation problems. Ex-combatants who escaped the LRA, find themselves caught between socially constructed Western and local expectations of childhood and adulthood: "families and communities often expect the returning adolescents to behave like adults while still having the authority to treat them like children" (Cheney 2007: 199). Child-rights education then is dispensed by many civil society organizations as a way to remedy the increasing incidents of domestic violence and neglect due to war, displacement and international intervention. Many children hold resentment against their parents or elders for failing to protect them from abduction while parents and community members express angst that children have since become disrespectful and disobedient. This is retold by peace educators who then recycle these sentiments when talking about children pre- and post-peace education. In particular a patron of one school's peace education club said, "most of the kids came from the bush, have been abducted and some lived in the camps so it was hard on the teachers …the kids have been reformed" (personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu). The fact that children have been at the center of the LRA insurgency and are regarded at the same time as the "pillars of tomorrow" in the Ugandan national anthem should offer reason for a culturally relevant peace education curriculum that takes into consideration the dynamic nature of intergenerational tension. For females who have been abducted, this is even more important as they return not only with the physical and mental scars of rape by LRA commanders, but with small children. It is even more difficult for these young women as they have to negotiate both roles of childhood and adulthood and bear the responsibility of providing for their children. More often than not these young women cannot afford both time and money to go back to school, thus missing the opportunity to receive peace education. Rapid changes to the intergenerational social structure of Acholiland are directly linked to children's participation in the war. As weapon-wielding fighters and sexual captives, they are considered a threatening generation to elders in Acholiland and the Ugandan

government (Cheney 2007: 201). The abduction of children had a tremendous affect not only on “what was” in regards to traditional customs but what “can be” for the future of northern Uganda and Uganda at-large. A child-inclusive model for peace education would facilitate community digestion and avoid adding to generational stratification. However, first peace education must be assessed on a theoretical level to examine how Western notions of childhood interact with local conceptions to uncover the complexity of the situation. The loss of tradition, family and community, therefore, cannot solely be attributed to a romanticizing of the past, but the “assertion of loss indicat[es] a deep cultural anxiety over the fate of intergenerational relationships” (Cheney 2007: 168 and 201).

## Chapter 4: Initiatives and Fieldwork

*"This is a relevant thing, at least to bring back life to show people that this is the way people live and not the other way that you have been used to the last 21 years" – staff member of USAID's SPRING program*

On December 2, 2009 *allAfrica.com*, an online multimedia news source for the continent of Africa, published an article titled "Uganda: Peace Education Introduced to Schools." Interested, I quickly printed the article to place in my folder of "things to read" before I was to leave for Uganda. At the time peace education was not the sole focus of my research, but I was intrigued by a statement made by director, Charles Onencan, of the United Movement to End Child Soldiers, who said, "while in secondary school, children have a lot of dreams but without peace, proper guidance and counseling, they never come to life" (Muboka, Dec. 2010: web source). Indeed, war and violent conflict make it difficult to engage in activities outside of basic survival, but given the hardships following cease-fire and now during the reconstruction process, Onencan's statement diverts attention away from other realities. The violence association with poverty, hunger, government neglect and loss of livelihoods also constrain children's dreams. This chapter highlights both Insight's and UMECS/SPRING/MoES' peace education pilot-projects, and analyzes the content of their curriculums. The former is more wide-spread and locally relevant and the latter is more international and human rights based, but comprehensive. I address the practicality of peace education in its current form, and the consequences of these two initiatives operating without knowledge of each other to provide a critical comparative perspective on how peace education has impacted students and teachers and what advantages and disadvantages these projects reveal based on my fieldwork. Although Harris and Morrison's definition of peace education is a core foundation of both programs, and they recognize the significance of peace, there is an obvious lack of distinction made between negative and positive peace. UMECS/SPRING/MoES' program, however, operated on a far less holistic

curriculum than did Insight Collaborative. A portion of Insight's curriculum was dedicated to discussions of other histories of extreme violence and peacebuilding efforts that occurred during and after violent conflict. In this regard, the curriculum was superbly distinct; it combined history with conflict resolution training, but lacked the necessary lessons on histories of violence in Uganda outside of the war in the north, which would be essential to children and youth striving to understand their own history and sociopolitical reality. While UMECS/SPRING/MoES' program was discontinued, Insight's is still being implemented in two schools in the Gulu Municipality and in an internally displaced person's camp.

### A. UMECS/SPRING/MoES Peace Education Pilot Project

"Because it is not good to be selfish of what is good." – 17 year old, senior 4 student on why people should share peace education[3]

When I started my research in Gulu, Kitgum and Amuru, UMECS/SPRING/MoES' peace education pilot project had been operational for two and a half months in a few secondary schools. In an effort to promote reconciliation and national healing, the Ugandan government wished to introduce peace education to these secondary schools in the north for one year before expanding it to the rest of the country. The schools included Lira Palwo in Pader, Pabbo Secondary School in Amuru, Kitgum Alliance High School in Kitgum, Sir Samuel Baker School in Gulu District, Gulu High School, Gulu College, and Unyama National Teachers College. The involvement of the teacher's college was a way to invest in the sustainability of peace education by training future teachers before they were assigned to their first school. What should be of concern, however, is the emphasis placed on the north as the experimental region which would be used to assess the success of the program, and to determine whether or not it should be

[3] This student was the president of her secondary school peace club

expanded to the rest of the country. Due to the war, the northern region may not yield the same results as other parts of the country as there would be different variables to account for, such as the infrastructure of the schools, the income level of the general population, the accessibility of the schools, the capability of schools to maintain the program, and student/teacher absenteeism. Also, the cultural component of the curriculum would have to be altered for each region or incorporate multiple illustrations and lessons on cultural pluralism and traditional ways of addressing conflicts and healing.

The article produced by *allAfrica.com* also reported that this initiative was bringing a sense of "enthusiasm" to the schools, which I personally encountered when I began to form relationships with the students and teachers. Many of them were eager to learn about peace education and retained high hopes that it could help them build a more peaceful society. On several occasions Ugandans would remark that just because the war was over did not mean peace had come to northern Uganda. They were still suffering. Disputes over land ownership, the tension between the younger and older Acholi and the lack of resources and job opportunities are all results of the war or have been exacerbated due to war. However, the war itself is a result of a longer history of violence, xenophobia, political oppression and exclusion in Uganda. Observing peace education then, one has to ask to what extent does this education reproduce complacency, authoritarianism and colonizing epistemologies? Conversely, how often are students and instructors re-appropriating the content of peace education programs to promote their own agency and understandings of peace and conflict? Since there is no one universal definition of peace education, one should also ask if peace education can offer an alternative model to promote the indigenizing of education through its connection with local experiences, rather than leaving this to the discretion of the instructor.

Exploring UMECS/SPRING/MoES' pilot project reveals that implementers are not only focused on peace education, but also guidance and counseling. The guidance and counseling portion is supported as a complementary element of peace education that trains teachers to act as advisors to students within the school to deal with issues such as fights, emotional distress and even cases of psychosocial trauma, broadening the traditional relationship between teachers and students. This is quite a burden for teachers, however, as only two teachers were trained per school. The greatest concern for instructors, thus, is lack of support from UMECS and SPRING staff members and the burden of acting as the only trained teachers in peace education and counseling. I was told by one instructor that, whenever there is a problem in the school, instead of sending the child to the principal or handling the incident other teachers send the child or children to him. This happened on such a frequent basis that peace educators reported working overtime, implying that some type of overtime pay was warranted. Teacher salaries are frequently late, and while many expressed that the curriculum was having a positive effect, they were discouraged by the lack of institutional support. The instructors' role is crucial because of their position as bridges between the curriculum and the student.

To begin, the UMECS/SPRING/MoES' project was initiated September 2009[4] and from there was introduced to key leaders, stakeholders and the designated schools. During late November and early December teachers who were recommended by their schools received training. There were slightly different accounts of how long the teachers were trained, but the majority of responses from instructors recall three weeks of training from November 30-December 21, 2009. The amount covered was described by one teacher as six-month's worth of material, although other teachers did not find the amount of material so cumbersome. The programs then

[4] In May 2008, a "Needs Assessment" was conducted by UMECS-Uganda in three secondary schools before the project launched

officially began the first and second school terms in 2010, which translates to the months of February through mid-April and then May through August. The project was to be measured and enhanced through follow-up visits and evaluations as the program neared completion. Following final evaluations, recommendations would be made as to whether the project should be mainstreamed. In UMECS/SPRING's "Peace Education Pilot Curriculum Working Document" they stated the goals of the program:

- To enhance behavioral change of learners through acquisition of skills and knowledge
- To avail the learners with an atmosphere of sustainable peace and development
- To promote the concepts of culture and cultural heritage
- To enable learners to appreciate the environment in which they live
- To help build a cadre of lifelong peace building practitioners
- To prevent future wars
- To encourage learners to compare and relate the issues and practice of peace to their own environment
- To teach students the concepts of fundamental human rights, peace and democracy
- To teach conflict mitigation, and conflict management
- To teach peace in relation to sustainable development (2010: 11).

This was produced after the conclusion of a two day session in January 2010 with the peace education curriculum development team consisting of Ugandan stakeholders: nine teachers, the dean of NTC-Unyama Teachers' College and UMECS staff members. The goals reflect much of what has been echoed by peace education researchers in the United States: "children who learn about nonviolence can promote positive peace, which is proactive and seeks to avoid violence and conflict, as opposed to peacekeeping and peacemaking which react to violent

situations trying to stop them" (Harris and Morrison 2003: 11). The goals outlined above address ways to promote positive peace, however, this was not always observable in classrooms.

In a program conducted by Makerere Institute of Adult and Continuing Education and organized and sponsored by UMECS-Uganda, eighty-eight secondary school teachers and NTC-Unyama lecturers were chosen to receive training in peace education and guidance and counseling. By the close of the three week training, teachers were issued certificates of qualification as peace educators, and guidance counselors. When asked about training, one teacher from Gulu College exclaimed "training was wonderful" and said that they addressed conflict resolution and management, alcohol and drug abuse, gender issues, how to maintain peace within the culture and they also looked at peaceful and conflict nations around the world. Due to the inconsistency of implementation I observed in my fieldwork, however, I came to the conclusion that the initial training of teachers, despite its comprehensiveness, was not sufficient to meet the goals of the program. For example, the photo to the left shows that peace education had been scheduled at this particular school as its own subject in between history and Christian Religious Education several days throughout the week. However, this varied from school to school. Whereas Kitgum Alliance scheduled peace education in the timeslot for teaching every Friday, Gulu College has a daily slot in the curriculum between customary subjects. Still other schools taught peace education across courses in which a theme associated with peace education would be introduced to students in each class they attended. In comparison, the World Bank's assessment in Sierra Leone found that "attempts at integration of peace education messages 'across the curriculum' have been less successful than programs that have a



dedication slot in the curriculum" (Sarbib 2005: 60). Two scenarios are suggested from this: (1) that training did not prepare instructors for implementation in their respective schools; (2) ways to implement peace education were discussed but teachers implemented the curriculum in ways specific to their school's capacity. Research conducted by the World Bank offers evidence that one method is more effective that the other, which is not to imply that peace education should be uniformly applied across countries. It does, however, highlight that oversight is lacking to assess the efficacy of various approaches within peace education programs within the same region.

Throughout interviews teachers were overwhelmingly positive about UMECS/SPRING/MoES' peace education pilot-project. After being asked his thoughts on the program, one peace education instructor at Gulu College exclaimed:

> "We have really gotten some positive results because initially students, they were really traumatized, they were not peaceful, they were a bit violent, they didn't respect their teachers, so we have tried through teaching, through music, dance and drama, through essay competition … so at the end of the day we try to at least make them understand what really peace is about" (personal correspondence, April 2010, Gulu).

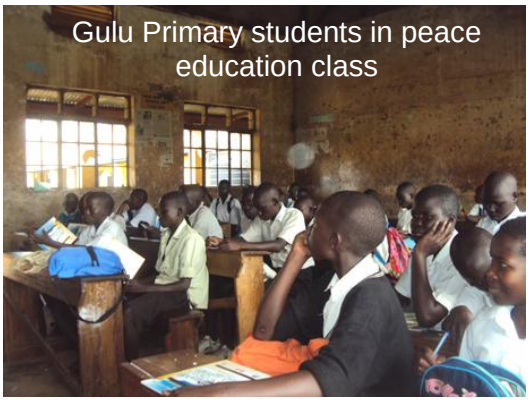
Although these sentiments are valuable expressions of the ways in which peace education has impacted the lives of students and teachers, selective telling is always a possibility because of the topic of my research study. I contemplated if some instructors would ever respond in more nuanced ways about a program dedicated to promoting "peace." Largely, the answer to the question is unfortunately no, but when asked about challenges they faced they responded more critically. Although still very supportive of UMECS/SPRING/MoES' peace education, they had much to share:

*Lack of resources*

Peace education materials were very limited. There are few if any supplemental materials to provide deeper understandings of peace and conflict resolution. Teachers relied on their training and the materials they received from it. A secondary school teacher disclosed to me that, “the literature for the books concerning peace education itself are [sic] lacking. They are using handouts from the [training] workshops and giving the students a simplified version. … [it is] difficult to get material related to peace education so they have to go search the internet for information about peace” (personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu).

*Lack of support in school*

In the majority of schools I found that a lack of peace education literature was coupled with teachers who were charged with teaching both peace education and their designated subjects. This left teachers feeling overburdened.



Gulu Primary students in peace education class

*Basic facilities*

Those who implemented the project during an allotted timeslot, and not across the curriculum, found it difficult to find classrooms for their students. Classroom space is a general problem in Ugandan schools, especially the first term, when overcrowding occurs.

*Funding*

Teachers expressed a need for funds to support their peace-related activities such as costumes for dance and drama, transportation for debating competitions and civic engagement fieldtrips, and supplies for art projects.

*Lack of support outside of school*

After expressing initial grievances regarding the items above and not receiving any response, some instructors reported feeling neglected by UMECS and SPRING staff. A few teachers, however, expressed that in the end it was up to them to make the program successful: *"*success of the program depends on how really the teachers are committed on the ground … it really depends on the teacher because if the teachers are relaxed then the program will definitely flop" (personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu). A child-centered focus leads to these types of incidences and therefore would be unsustainable, especially in the African context in which societies function more communally. Childhood in Uganda is viewed as a space of unbridled potential where "prosperity will either be made or broken" (Cheney 2007: 2), but the challenges recorded from teachers reveal that investing in the future of children cannot be done without looking at the present needs of the entire community. Peace education in Uganda, including the Insight program, which will be explored in the next section, focuses too heavily on children as the paramount vehicles for social change in relation to the importance of age-based hierarchy and power.[5]

The grievances expressed by teachers cannot be ignored as they bring attention to the need for peace education to take a child-inclusive rather than a child-centered approach. A child-centered approach is an individualistic strategy largely rooted in the Apollonian view that children are incomplete. This approach is less focused on family and even less on community. However, a child-inclusive model recognizes that childhood is socially, politically, economically and culturally constructed. This approach asserts that children are integral to the wider society. Accordingly, rather than catering solely to their needs, one would assess their place in the

[5] . It should be noted that in January 2010 UMECS/SPRING published "Baseline Survey Report on: School Based Peace Education and Guidance and Counseling in Secondary Schools in Northern Uganda," which recoded some of the same challenges that my research reaffirms in greater detail. Their report outlined these challenges as "major gaps," which can be viewed in the index: Ssenkumba 2010.

community to organize more effective and appropriate programming. The risk of alienating the community, including teachers, is greater if a child-centered approached is continued.

There are eleven themes highlighted in UMECS/SPRING/MoES' curriculum for peace education: peace, developing inner peace, conflict, violence, culture, human rights, vulnerable groups, gender, fundamental freedom and democracy, social justice, and environment and sustainable development. These themes were crafted from the input of a variety of stakeholders: teachers, the curriculum development team, SPRING and UMECS staff and assistance from the Ugandan National Curriculum Development Centre and Makerere University in central Uganda. Involving the National Curriculum Development Centre was a strategy to guarantee the sustainability of the project in terms of local involvement, according to SPRING's Director for Peace and Access (personal correspondence, June 2010, Gulu). In addition, it would insure that peace education would be designed to be a national course in schools. One teacher described how the themes from the curriculum are carried out: "In class students are presented with theoretical part and outside of class with the practical part. [We] have debate, charitable, music, dance and drama clubs. So the impact was really felt" (personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu). Not only were issues like conflict management, leadership, social ethics, personal integrity and peace maintenance taught in the classroom they were integrated in many of the extracurricular activities of the students, a strong point of the project. However, in many schools peace education had fallen apart before the end of the program and in practice these themes were not taught in the most suitable manner. Issues of negative peace upstaged that of positive peace creating a learning space that did not explore issues such as structural violence and inequality that order so much of life Uganda. Teachers did not have enough training to communicate these themes of peace education. However, what was striking was how well staff members of UMECS/SPRING could articulate the value of the peace education

curricula in relation to the teachers they trained. A SPRING staff member shared her thoughts on what was most important about the curriculum saying:

> but what I liked about it, is that it takes into account basic human rights as well …it does sort of the textbook elements of what are the themes of peace education, but then … it also encourages conversations about recent conflict and also localizes it. Like in northern Uganda there is lots of talk about the war and then in generally [sic] how you deal with peace on a daily basis … so it deals with war and also individual actions (personal correspondence. 2010, Gulu).

If basic human rights are addressed, then is the absence of some human rights in Uganda discussed? Far more emphasis is placed upon individual commitments toward peace-building than upon more abstract issues, such as violence perpetuated through institutions. Although monitoring every lesson and teaching method in each school site would be too costly, in the schools I was able to observe, I immediately noticed that teacher training in peace education was insufficient in relation to the reality of the school environment, much less the reality of the wider post-conflict environment.

Teachers, however, spoke very highly of the successes they experienced as a result of peace education. Examples of how it helped to decrease violence in schools were uniform responses across school sites. One teacher even explained how peace education gave him the tools to "deal with these students … not all, but most of these Sudanese, they are short tempered people … we guide them and also assist them when they are in problem [sic]" (personal correspondence, May 2010, Gulu). This was a startling response from a teacher who had been trained in peace education—an education that contained lessons on cultural differences and vulnerable groups. In this instance an ethnocentric view about other ethnic groups has been transplanted into lessons about peace and conflict, and has been validated through the use of peace education as a remedy for "innate" traits of a particular group. I was stunned by the

comment and by the lack of a consistent follow-up system that allowed teachers to both acquire additional teacher materials and deepen their understanding of how to more appropriately deal with student misbehavior without resorting to ethnocentrism (which also offends the Acholi). If cultural understandings of peace, reconciliation and justice are integrated into peace education, that education should first and foremost serve as a way to combat ethnic stereotyping and build self-esteem. It is reasonable to assume that a culturally sensitive model of conflict reduction and resolution, if engrained in a community, will empower its leaders and increase their capacity (proficiency and self-confidence) to minimize conflict in their own locales. Moreover, since the greatest collective resource in any community is its people, increasing the capacity of the people would also increase their proficiency to shape their future in the community where there are multiple ethnic groups (Yakubu 2003: 134).

In addition, the baseline survey report that was conducted by UMECS/SPRING highlighted that the structure of the education sector should be taken into consideration saying, “it was recommended that peace education should be flexible and relevant enough to enable students to build peaceful values, skills and competencies in peace-building. It is therefore imperative for teacher training programs to provide opportunities for collaborative and interactive learning so that they can make the peace values part of their own personality” (Peace 2010). However, teachers deviated from the curriculum in a way that was not always fitting, which was likely because there were few teaching guides and materials. In addition, this approach suggests that peace is not already a value among teachers and students and on a larger scale the Acholi people. So not only are the project’s themes and goals not communicated properly in the classroom, the UMECS/SPRING/MoES’ pilot curriculum working document makes a host of generalizations such as the above, which require reconsideration.

Another issue that should be addressed is the level of difficulty involved in implementing the program in schools with already overloaded course timetables. For some secondary students, they juggle around twelve subjects per term. UMECS/SPRING were aware of this when they conducted their initial assessment, but to date, with the program now discontinued for lack of funding, these issues have not been resolved. However, overcapacity is a familiar characteristic in post-colonial Uganda's school system. In interviews, students confirmed having heavy course loads, but believed that peace education was an indispensable addition to their education. What was interesting, though, is that although students valued peace education they did not want it to be a subject on their examinations because of the number of courses they were already taking. A minority of teachers, though, believed having peace education as part of final examinations would help bolster student interest in the subject. Peace education in northern Uganda, in its current form, has mainly been a tool of other's subjectivity. This can be attributed to the belief that conflict and peace are more often subjects of common knowledge than not, leading the two subjects to be discussed as extreme dichotomies. Peace, thus, is taught for its aesthetics rather than practicality "as something beautiful, aesthetically desirable, and valuable in itself" (Tomovska 2011: 82). For example a senior five student said this about peace education: *"*peace education to me, as I understand, is the way out. We can learn how to stay in a good relationship with each one … when I go back I talk to them about the benefits … so that we should stay in a very peaceful community" (personal correspondence. 2010, Gulu). This was a pattern across my data where peace was idealized in generalized ways for its aesthetics rather than its practical application because it is remains an abstract concept.

Moreover, if peace education is to be taught as a course then it brings up the question of if peace education should be made testable. However, with the lack of literature on operationalizing the success of peace education, how can one examine students? Who would evaluate peace education on exams and decided appropriate scores? For peace education to

become a transformative process for teachers and students, rather than just another subject to pass would suggest that it should not be examined. What can be made a priority is the evaluation and reevaluation of how peace is being used in the classroom. The importance of peace education, because of its scope, cannot be summed up in passing or failing an exam about peace. The exams, themselves, are organized more along Western cultural systems: "Despite an admission that 'the curricula both in primary and secondary schools at present do not cater for the social and economic needs of the country,' school success ultimately depends on exam performance … [that] reinforce knowledge of subjects more relevant to Western cultural systems" (Cheney 2007: 83). The rigor of exams, however, prevents children and young people from accessing higher levels of education. Peace education, given the current state of the examination process, would thus have greater impact outside of that system. It is evident that "teaching about war and peace requires a constant examination of thought patterns and behaviors, as well as an analysis of current events and a re-examination of curriculum. Peace and conflict issues impact people in many complex and subtle ways. Teachers need to continue to examine their classroom activities to ascertain how best to help students understand the impact of these issues upon their lives" (Harris and Morrison 2003: 109). Although an operational model in which to measure peace education's success is lacking, improvements can be made to curricula through the frequency with which project staff are redesigning the lessons with the aid of the peace educators to assess the usefulness of activities and learning materials. This reappraisal is a cyclical process that avoids "depending so much upon hit and miss judgment as a basis for curriculum development" (ibid).

Another problem with operationalizing the success of peace education, besides the lack of a flexible rubric, is assessing the relationship between cause and effect. Although many students, teachers, and administrators will talk favorably of peace education and its effects, the direct relationship between a decrease of violence in school and the introduction of peace education

should be explored. Generally students recall that before peace education, they felt as if they did not know how to relate to each other in a “peaceful” manner. A majority of student-participants told me that they were no longer violent and could deal peacefully with their fellow classmates and teachers because of peace education. Instructors reported that disagreements between students often erupted in aggression before the start of UMECS/ SPRING/MoES’ peace education pilot program. Due to the frequency with which this was reported, I grew concerned about this narrative and suspected teachers may be partaking in selective telling. The passionate and protective stance that both students and teachers took on peace education was such that I did not doubt that the program yielded immediate positive associations and effects. However, I noticed that the language of cause and effect could have been embellished, as various other policies and reforms in schools could have also played a role such as the UNITY or the Uganda Initiative for TDMS and PIASCY and REPLICA mentioned before (chapter one). According to the majority of participants, since the inception of the UMECS/SPRING/MoES peace education curriculum the cases of violence, aggression and misbehavior have decreased among the students and teacher-pupil relationships had improved. Students in particular emphasize a direct link between peace education and the way they process the environment around them and their own behavior:

> Yea, I like it so much because it has made me know how to control my emotions, maybe bad emotions like quarreling. It has also helped me to be friendly to one another so solving conflict that may take place among my fellow students – 16 year old, senior 3
>
> [It] helps me to develop … it developed my means to be of help in the community – 15 year old, senior 1 (personal correspondences, 2010, Gulu)

While traveling outside of Gulu to a secondary school that also received sponsorship from the organization Invisible Children, a peace education instructor confided in me his personal stake

in peace education saying, “I have gained … because when before I received this training I used to abuse drugs, like maybe taking alcohol but it has changed my lifestyle and nowadays I don’t take it … they said before you teach somebody, stop somebody from doing something, you have to also change your [life]style” (personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu). The quote is really a testament to the transformative qualities of peace education. However, the socio-political environment in Uganda is not improving, as seen with the 2011 presidential election where there was widespread corruption. In the aftermath of President Yoweri Museveni’s 2011 re-election, opposition candidates launched the “Walk to Work” campaign to protest the mismanagement of government funds and the rising price of oil and food. They experienced direct state repression, violence and arrest, and were forced to stop their campaign. Their grievances were results of global economic downturns and structural adjustment programs, but also economic misconduct by Museveni’s administration. Globalized structural inequality coupled with a violent and manipulative state is a reality for Ugandans on a nation-wide scale because of poverty and, until recently, a constitutional mandate that banned a multi-party system of governance. How then does peace education play a role in critically discussing, navigating and finding solutions to these issues? How does it keep producing students who engage in personal reflection as quoted above, and also give them the tools to critically work towards a better future for themselves and their community? The current model that is being offered by UMECS/SPRING/MoES’ peace education program is a quality foundation that can be built upon, but because of shortcomings in teacher training, the provision of material resources, and proper follow-up assessments, it falls short of offering students and teachers the resources to prepare more in-depth and nuanced peace and conflict lessons. It also does not offer ways for students to pursue these conversations and activities in a way that is not solely child-centered. With a willing and committed population, it was premature to implement a peace education program with such oversights in curricula. There was not one teacher or student who

did not favor expanding peace education throughout the country and many expressed sympathy for those living outside of northern Uganda because they “needed peace” too. Peace as an idea is valued in Uganda, which makes it difficult to assess these programs when students and teachers are reluctant to discuss their discontents with peace education. Civil society members and international organizations who invest in peace education never define what peace, but rather focus on the goals of peace education. One staff person with the Stability, Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Uganda (SPRING) program said, “to build sustainable peace, the critical need comes in investing in students. It is in secondary schools that children become men and women" (Muboka, Dec. 2010: web source). Not only does her statement fail to acknowledge that there is not a linear progression from childhood to adulthood, a cause of anxiety for former abductees, it also speaks to the attractiveness of taking about peace and peace education while also speaking generically about it. This shows the fertile ground peace education programs will have in northern Uganda, but one cannot plant seeds where there is promise of rain (or in this case institutional support) but none comes.

The UMECS/SPRING/MoES’ program officially ended August 31, 2010 after a year of implementation. A UMECS advisor, traveled to the six schools to reassure teachers that they were looking for another source of funding to continue the program. By the time I returned to Uganda in 2011, it had been more than a month since the advisor’s visit. I listened to the teachers from Gulu College as they described his visit. However, with no updates they were beginning to realize further support and resources were not going to come. It would be too quick to assume, though, that if a philosophy of peace education existed, this pilot-project would have continued. For the students and teachers involved, it correlated to loss of hope. Several instructors were determined, however, communicating that they would continue in whatever capacity they could. A few asked if I could assist them in finding peace education teaching materials and resources online. In the absence of peace education, small communities of

teachers and students are carving out ways to continue. This creates a challenge to the organizers of these programs, who must consider whether peace education should be institutionalized. Violence is a characteristic of the state and its institutions through means such as "the violence of poverty, hunger, social exclusion and humiliation" (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2003: 1). The willingness of students and teaches to carry on after the end of the project while also acknowledging that "structural violence is typically built into the very structure of social, cultural, and economic institutions" (Barash & Webel 2008: 8) gives reason to look at peace education outside of institutional control. The task is difficult as a community-centered model would have a greater chance of impact by strengthening mutual aid, consensus building and responsibility on the societal level, but the community lacks resources to sustain something of this magnitude.

**B. Insight Collaborative Peace Education Pilot Project:**

*"As teachers, you play a vital role in creating a positive future for tomorrow's leaders. You have the power to give your students the tools to think critically, face their country's history and promote peace in Uganda and the world" – Insight Collaborative*

The quote above is from "Insight Peace Education Project: Teacher Training Manual and Materials," a document that trained teachers use to plan their lessons. I met with Jennifer Howard, one of two program directors for the peace education project, at a small café on a humid day in Gulu town, wanting to know more about their program. Discovering Insight by chance, I realized the difficultly involved in keeping record of all of the peace education programs operating in northern Uganda as there were different initiatives being implemented in both secondary and primary schools. Just last year another peace education program conducted by Teachers Without Borders in partnership with the organization Foundation for

Integrated Rural Development (FIRD) was initiated in the district of Lira. Their workshop gathered fifty teachers in northern Uganda for the first training session January 17-21, 2011. I suspect there are more and similar initiatives taking place, but I doubt there is much collaboration, which is common among humanitarian, aid and relief agencies. In fact, Insight and UMECS/ SPRING/MoES were not aware of the other's projects until I began conducting my research. In addition, in November of 2011, the Rubaga and Lambert Airport Rotary Clubs were awarded a global grant to work in conjunction with the Great Lakes Center for Conflict Resolution for peace-building training in northern Uganda. Two-hundred teachers and 1,300 students at 10 high schools in the region were provided with training to start peace clubs to use music, drama, and other means as education for conflict prevention and resolution to the surrounding communities.The consolidation of resources or at least sharing of curricula could have tremendous positive impact on the reach of peace education and the assessment process. For one, Insight was in the process of meeting with the Ministry of Education and Sports in hopes of integrating peace education into the formal primary school curriculum. In hindsight, with the partnership that SPRING and UMECS already possessed with the Ministry of Education, it would have been a great benefit to both programs to collaborate, complementing each other as students moved from primary to secondary school. Jennifer Howard, when told about the secondary schools' peace education program, shared her enthusiasm with me about the possibilities of working with SPRING and UMECS in a more formal way.

Before meeting with Jennifer, I had sat in on a classroom at one of their primary school-sites and was intrigued by their peace education model. At the time, I was not aware of how my high school education in Memphis would be related to Insight's program. I was amazed to learn that Insight's curriculum was modeled after the organization Facing History and Ourselves' curriculum for high school students across the United States in cities such as Chicago, San Francisco, and Cleveland. Facing History operates numerous programs outside of the U.S. but

their focus remains centered on examining racism, prejudice and anti-Semitism to promote social responsibility, tolerance and democracy in classrooms and communities. In Memphis I was exposed to their curriculum during my junior and senior year of high school, so it came as a surprise when Jennifer asked "do you know about Facing History? You should go to their website and check them out …" (personal correspondence, June 2010, Gulu). After revealing that I was an alumna of their program, I began to understand why many of the lessons I witnessed in their classrooms were somewhat familiar to me; students in northern Uganda shared similar subject matter with adolescents in schools across America.

In June 2010, Insight's schools had just begun its third lesson unit on "conflict resolution and communication." She remarked, "we want to teach in the beginning of this unit that conflict is okay, it's inevitable and all that it means is an interaction or a communication with some disagreement" (personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu). I found her words to be quite different from what I was observing in the secondary school classrooms where "conflict" seemed to have a very restricted definition and was often talked about in negative terms with "conflict" being a functional term for an infinite amount of "bad" actions. Insight's pilot-project, compared to the UMECS/SPRING/MoES' project, was small in scale in regards to participating schools and staff size. However, in the months leading up to their launch, Insight was able to collaborate with the community in much of the same way as UMECS/SPRING/MoES. Their involvement in the local community proved to be a vital investment for the program. The two primary schools implementing Insight's curriculum were Picho Primary in Picho Internally Displaced Person's Camp and Police Primary in the Gulu Municipality.[6]

Insight selected these two schools because they wanted to evaluate the project while looking at its impact for a school located in the municipality and one located in the camps. Picho primary is

[6] Because of Police Primary's accessibility I was only able to conduct research there and not in Picho

the only primary school for the internally displaced camp of Picho. Even though active combat is over and a majority of the camps have been depopulated, there remain people who have nowhere to settle and the camps, for the past ten years, have served as home spaces. Picho was one of the larger camps, with about 25,000 individuals living within its borders at the height of the war. Today thirty percent of the population is still there. Police and Picho were ideal locations, Jennifer remarked, for Insight to realize their two main objectives: (1) give teachers improved teaching modules for more participatory learning and child-friendly classrooms and (2) engage students in lessons of conflict resolution and history for improved leadership and citizenship in the present and future (personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu). An emphasis on citizenship, however, would only be useful if lessons discussed the contradictions between Uganda's nation-building rhetoric and the wide-spread inequality and poverty that are so central to people's lived experience. In particular, for the children and young people in the north, an exploration of how they feel about their identity in the larger national setting is warranted. A 13 year old secondary school student in senior one, (under UMECS/SPRING/MoES' project) when asked if she thought peace education was important, replied: "yes, because if there is peace in northern Uganda then we will even study well and our government will also plan well for us" (personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu). She was quite vocal, more assertive then the other girls and in fact some boys. Her comment is revealing because of the way she perceives the government's involvement in her region. It is up to her and the people of her region to establish peace in order for the government to provide assistance.

However, many Acholi elders would question the government's ability to "plan well" for the north because of lack of security and protection provided for them during war. In addition, the murders, beatings, and rapes that took place by the Ugandan People's Defense Force have cause widespread mistrust between the people and the state. Simultaneously, however, nationalism is still a strong feature of northern Ugandans' political and cultural identity, and

schools are sites of indoctrination. Peace education seems to be geared to produce a child in line with ideas of citizenship and nationalism which anthropologist Kristen Cheney describes as contradictory to reality:

> Yet children's abilities to participate in the activities of citizenship are still constrained by often-contradictory adult notion of childhood, both local and international (James 1993, 72). Despite all the rhetoric about children's rights, it seemed to me that many children felt rather powerless over their circumstances. My observations of children I met over the course of my research revealed deep, personal commitments to national development but also the paradox of powerlessness that many children experience on a daily basis. Not only are they subjected to the authoritarianism of the family and the education system, but they are disempowered by poverty, political insecurity, and the AIDS epidemic (Cheney 2007: 3).

Peace education can help children navigate this sociopolitical environment in a way that encourages belonging without reinforcing nationalism and the notion that the only significance of the child is her or his economic contribution to the nation-state. Peace education, giving attention to structural inequality, which needs to be addressed, has the potential to empower and stimulate creativity so that the harshness of daily life does not amount solely to individual failure. This is needed now more than ever, as comments such as this from a peace education school teacher still abound: "though you have lost your parents, you're maybe positive there is still hope you are still useful to the nation, you are still useful to the country" (personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu). This is problematic because of the powerlessness that children and youth may feel in a nation that is continually encouraging them to build it up when in reality the opportunities for upward mobility are dismal. Being critically engaged with history and contemporary issues that shape life in Uganda can empower children in a more viable way than simply reproducing notions of citizenship. It can allow them to participate in engaged citizenship.

Officially beginning in June 2009, Insight's project is a competent foundation for this. Their preliminary needs assessment involved interviewing teachers and community members, and channeling that feedback into their peace education curriculum. From the assessment it was determined which age group would be targeted and which community members and organizations would be involved. The entire project was to be conducted in three phases: module and content development, teacher training, and classroom implementation. Aside from the assessment, the "module and content development" phase included creating and consulting a local advisory board that gave Insight staff a diverse representation of people from various community organizations. They trained with this counsel so they could serve as consultants and have continuous input on the development of the project. After all stakeholders were comfortable with the material, Insight initiated teacher training. Training took place over the course of five days in December 2009 to introduce teachers to the methods and literature they would need to be familiar with in order to instruct peace education courses. Howard stressed the importance of the project being "locally owned and locally appropriate" (personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu). In our interview session, she remarked, that Insight's staff was very aware that the project and its curriculum could be seen as "Western," but they wanted to take the necessary steps for it to be relevant to the northern Ugandan community and customize it for the region and its students. Insight's curriculum is much more inclusive than that of UMECS /SPRING/MoES and treaded the delicate line between providing locally relevant lessons, human rights education and respecting cultural norms surrounding talking about one's feelings: "openly discussing how one feels is not culturally sanctioned among the Acholi, who prefer to bear suffering stoically … creative activities like singing, drama, and drawing became useful strategies for drawing out children's emotions because they are effective, indirect modes of telling" (Cheney 2007: 190). One way of doing this was journal writing. One of the major requirements of the project was that students own journals. Each student was given a journal

and is asked to utilize it during each peace education class. These journals are not only geared to help students develop better writing skills, but also as a way to document their personal experiences and growth over time, encouraging them to think independently of their instructors and classmates, promoting emotional reflection. According to Insight's teacher training manual, the main goal of journaling is to "encourage dialogue, personal reflection, critical thinking, and historical understanding-habits that are essential to the development of thoughtful, participatory citizens for a diverse, peaceful society" (Dranginis 2010: 9).

By the time I began conducting research at Police primary, the teachers had completed their second teacher training session. Francis Opiyo, peace education instructor at Police, informed me that the training was for teachers, community members and staff to come together and review the first term and plan more for the second. The continuous practice of assessing and reassessing the curriculum and classroom practices was a principle feature of Insight's program. This is drastically different from the approach UMECS/SPRING/MoES applied, which made the teachers feel abandoned throughout the pilot process. The small size of Insight's staff and operating sites enabled them to form stronger relationships with the teachers according to Opiyo, who remarked that when problems arose he was able to meet with staff members, contacting them personally. In Picho and Police, the upper class students of primary six and seven were chosen to take part in this project. They were taken through six units of lessons: identity, communities, conflict resolution and communication, democracy to dictatorship and a case study equipped with visual guides for students. These units are designed to span the entire school year, from February into December. Upper primary students were chosen, because they were the most capable of communicating in English by primary six and seven. Lower-level students, however, would eventually be introduced to the curriculum as they move up grade levels. Implementation officially began in early February 2010 with the first school term as with UMECS/SPRING/MoES. Insight staff members who are currently maintaining the

project in Uganda are working with special assistance from a field liaison with experience working with FHAO's curriculum in Rwanda.



Police Primary peace education class

Although the curriculum was adopted from FHAO's U.S. high school curriculum, Insight simplified most of the material because of the age of primary school students, which is equivalent to U.S. elementary and middle school students. In addition, the component of "conflict resolution" was an addition because of the war. Peace education was designated for Tuesdays and Fridays with primary six meeting both days and primary seven on Fridays, as those students were simultaneously preparing for their Primary Learning Examination (the national exam that determines entry into secondary school). Lessons were scheduled from 4:00 PM-5:00 PM. When asked how often they were visited by staff, an instructor replied that they were present every week in the class. For the first term it was more frequent, with at least one staff person present for every class to monitor and facilitate. Jennifer confirmed that at the beginning there was some co-teaching by staff members, but it was only employed when teachers needed help. Just as in the UMECS/SPRING/MoES schools, other teachers would often refer students who were experiencing trouble to the peace education teachers for guidance. And in other cases, I was informed that students themselves, using their in-class lessons, would gather in twos or threes to identify problems among their peers and find a

solution without consulting teachers. As with my other fieldwork, I sought to find what challenges Insight-trained teachers faced. These are the key concerns they raised:

*Heavy Work Load*

In addition to peace education the instructors had to tend to their other duties which included teaching other subjects, grading exams, heading departments within the school and preparing minutes for school assemblies. One teacher's solution to this problem was more peace education training for other teachers in the school as a way of sharing responsibility over the project.

*Resistant Students*

Some students were just not very interested in learning about peace education, revealed one of the peace education instructors: "[They] responded negatively to a very minor extent because as human beings some people may wish not to have it. Because they may think that it is time wasting, but to a greater extent when we go into the class they do not even want us to leave the class" (personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu).

*Lack of Motivation*

It was reported that as a result of the first two challenges teachers wanted more support for their work in the form of encouragement. One teacher made it clear that they were not demanding anything, but eventually would like some sort of return for their extra work. I assumed the return they envisioned was monetary.

*Teacher to Student Ratio*

Students were still crowded in one of the largest classrooms at the school which, as discussed earlier, is common in Ugandan schools.

*Classroom Materials*

The only material request made was portable boards so that they would not be confined to small classrooms. Teachers then could take the class outside or split the number of students up among the two peace education teachers.

From the perspective of Insight staff members, follow-up was crucial in finding out the above problems and challenges. Having staff present throughout the week was a way in which Insight could make sure the curriculum was implemented in the most appropriate and useful way for the students. According to Howard, there are various "peculiar" conflicts in the school to which they would have been oblivious had they not spent countless days in the classroom: "so that's one of the biggest things about our program, the most important is to be there in the classes, after school; once a month we have meetings with our core-teachers just to check in. Just to say how is it going? What is working, what isn't? What can we do to be more helpful? And I think they really appreciate that" (personal correspondence, June 2010, Gulu).

From time spent in the classroom I observed some of the most exuberant teaching I had witnessed throughout my research. The way in which the students interacted with their instructors at this primary school differed from what I observed in the secondary schools. The students seemed eager to raise their hands and speak, answer questions and ask questions. Diverting from the colonial model, teachers encouraged interaction and participation throughout the lesson. The classroom was a positive space and saw a synergy developing between the students and instructors: one student's comment even prompted the instructor to exclaim, "you're brilliant!" The way teachers interacted with the students is called "contracting" and it is a process that involves open dialogue, freedom of speech, and taking responsibility for your ideas and comments in order to create a reflective and participatory classroom community (Dranginis

2020: 10). During contracting, teachers were guided to teach and encourage these practices among students in order to build a “child-friendly” classroom:

- Listen with respect. Try to understand what someone is saying before judging
- If someone says an idea or question that helps your learning, say “thank you”
- If someone says something that hurts or offends you, do not attack the person. Acknowledge that the comment hurt your feelings and explain why.
- If you don’t understand something, ask a question
- Think with your head and your heart
- Give others a chance to speak
- Do not interrupt others while they are speaking (ibid)

In addition, permanently used in the classroom was a tool known as the “Graffiti Wall,” where students would engage in conversation, questions and reflect on their own values and thoughts. Teachers would present students with a large sheet of paper that would be posted on the wall and after the teacher explained a lesson, students would freely write how they felt about it. Depending on the topic, the graffiti wall could be used for students to create rules for the classroom or share their opinions regarding a particular lesson. Negative remarks were discouraged, but students were told to take time to review their fellow students’ comments before dismissing them. If time permitted, the last step was to have a discussion about what was written. These small, yet very useful strategies were meant to support the curriculum in an effort to give shy students a way to engage in the material, make sure students give input on lessons, and as another way of emotional reflection.



A “child-friendly” Universal Declaration for Human Rights handbook is also given to the students when they received their journals. However, there are some

challenges to the rights-based messaging being taught to children as it promotes both agency and tension inside of local conceptions of childhood in Uganda. In talking with a 12 year old girl, she remarked to me that the class had changed her life and that peace to her meant being "free from discrimination" (personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu). Her use of the word discrimination showed that students were grasping some of the more difficult terminology in their lessons such as stereotype, confidentiality, prejudice and repression, but many of these are rooted in child-rights ideology. Anthropologist Kristen Cheney provides a detailed example elaborating how this can still fail to offer children protection:

> Sumayiya's friend, who was being physically abused by her father and stepmother … was coming to school with bruises and burn marks from having had scalding-hot water poured on her arm. The local chairman was notified and talked to the father. "She told me the chairman told her father, 'If you beat that child again, I will arrest you.'" The father then turned around and threatened the girl for talking about it publicly. Sumayiya worried that her friend would end up going to the streets if things did not change for her. "She used to tell me, 'For me I will go away from home because my father hates me.'" The girl had followed all the procedures the inspector had taught them about: do not stand for abuse, talk to an adult, report your situation to the authorities. But it only served to increase the tension at them between the abusive parent and child seeking protection (Cheney 2007: 71).

Despite the child-rights based education, which is included in peace education, the end results to situations such as these are not commonly positive and are a "direct result of the inherent paradox of child-rights discourse" (Cheney 2007: 72). Child-rights are based in universal ideas of human rights. However, human rights philosophy is different from human rights in practice. Globally, the idea of human rights, thus child-rights, must be "legislated, legally recognized, and codified before it can be taken seriously as part of the law of nations" (Goodale and Merry 2007: 6). This is a concern for the international community at-large, but the sense of powerlessness

among children and youth is rooted in the way childhood has been constructed in Uganda, although resiliency is a common label given to children in difficult situations. While the immediate future for children who wish to activate their rights in their local context remains bleak, it builds for the future of other generations: “increasing awareness of children’s rights enabled them to believe they could battle injustices toward children of the next generations: ‘When I am a Lawyer,’ Sumayiya told me resolutely, ‘I want to make laws to protect children’ (ibid). Peace education is another avenue for children and youth to navigate the personal and interpersonal issues that promote problem-solving for the immediate term, but also instills values that inspire children and youth to seek systemic change in social, political and cultural institutions that create such feelings of powerlessness.

Turning back to Insight’s curriculum, the first unit on identity is one that helps students understand their current positions within society. The war devastated many things including such identity-forming activities as one’s livelihood, cultural practices, traditional roles and education. Understanding who they are helps students build self-esteem, confidence and encourages self-improvement and reflection. To help students discover “how” they form their identity, teachers are asked to introduce a series of questions: “1. you as you see yourself + 2. you as others see you = 3. you as you are.” (Drangins 2020: 19). This is an alternative classroom model to remedy the “just a number” feeling students experienced being one of a hundred plus students reciting and memorizing what is taught to them. This unit in peace education, if employed with more of an emphasis on cultural traditions, would help to encourage appreciation for local conceptualizations of peace and reconciliation, and to encourage children to accept not only themselves, but other children who may bear greater physical and mental scars from the war.

Another unit, “Conflict Resolution and Communication,” is used to help build interpersonal cooperation skills. What is most interesting is the way in which conflict is being defined. This and the unit on the Holocaust are the most obvious factors separating the project from the UMECS/SPRING/MoES’ pilot project and other informal peace related initiatives that will be discussed in the next section. Insight’s conflict resolution section requires teachers to define conflict as a disagreement between two or more people or ideas, but more importantly an interaction or dialogue (Dranginis 2010: 30). According to Howard, children are taught that conflict is necessary for development and growth: “conflicts cannot be resolved without positive interaction, which is a form of communication. Every conflict has positive potential. They help us understand each other’s needs and wants” (ibid). This notion of conflict aligns with popular ideas of conflict by African scholars:

> Conflict is defined as “a process of interaction between two or more parties that seek to thwart, injure, or destroy their opponent because they perceive they have incompatible goal or interest.” Given the absence of state boundaries, pre-colonial conflicts in Africa afforded the losers the option of living under the norm of the larger group or moving into a different territory. Rarely did such conflict result in one party completely exterminating the other. Indeed, most social formations in Africa were confined within manageable land territories occupied by the same ethnic/linguistic group” (Uwazie 2003: 19).

Conflict thus is not presented as avoidable in one’s life. Subsequently, life after a major conflict, because of the western conceptions of childhood, is viewed and promoted as unusual: “the conditions for children in northern Uganda are not only seen as ‘abnormal’ by UNICEF and other children’s organizations, they are unacceptable to anyone who cares about children” (Cheney 2007: 189). This refers back to children being seen solely as victims and helpless in their situations. This rhetoric, however, is detrimental, since children, childhood, and even youth are not universal categories, and programs that

seek to aid children in difficult situations can exacerbate feelings of powerlessness through this approach. Recognizing conflict in less black and white terms helps children process their own involvement in the conflict.

During lessons, I witnessed the instructors role-play in front of the students as visualization. The instructors employed humor during one role-playing session to discuss minor conflicts that might occur at school and what students should do to resolve them. The students were then encouraged to also practice role playing in groups of ten. Assigned to different roles, students then acted out a scenario and discussed what happened, what could have been done differently, and solutions to the problem. In addition different units were first read in Acholi and then in English to enhance the student's ability to understand key concepts and points before or after activities. Howard expanded, saying role-playing is used "to teach youth in this particular case how to manage conflict, how to create opportunities out of conflict and how to address their history" (personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu). Through role-playing they have a chance to use the skills they have learned through lessons in a practical manner. Howard elobrated, saying, "because here of course there has been so much of it and kids have just grown up thinking that violence is the only way to react to conflict" (personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu). Howard's commentary is similar to the "culture of violence/peace" discourse that is so prevalent among humanitarian groups and various other agencies. This assumption that people living in northern Uganda, in particular Acholi people, have adopted violent ways to respond to disagreements is reductionist and rooted in ethnocentric thought. A more comprehensive analysis by all parties associated with peace education would evaluate not only what influence war has had on interpersonal interaction, but also the influence of structural hardships and violence, such as poverty. It is true that war can have a profound impact on social relationships, such as creating new forms of intergenerational conflicts; however, it would be an oversimplification to assume acts of violence or inappropriate behavior are a direct cause of

war. It is fathomable that other factors like not having money to pay for school fees, coming to school hungry, domestic violence, the loss of a relative, or sickness prompt children or youth to display aggressive or depressive behavior. Physical violence reproducing physical violence is a slippery slope when so many other issues are intensely affecting people's lives. Thus creating a "culture of peace" should not be a blanket explanation for the need for peace education.

The teaching of Holocaust history to northern Ugandan children proved to be most controversial. It also happens to be the most unusual component in the curriculum. It was debated whether to use it as a case study, but with support from the local advisory board, which highly approved of it, it was included. This plan was inspired by the fact that the curriculum has been taught and tested in Rwanda, Northern Ireland, and South Africa to rather positive results (personal correspondence, June 2010, Gulu). Learning about the Holocaust is geared toward giving students a chance to look at war and violence from a different time period and setting that involved another cultural and ethnic group. Students are no longer limited to drawing examples from their own stories of suffering, but given an opportunity to consider that mass violence can happen anywhere and to anyone. Teachers are trained to instruct this difficult topic in a sensitive matter to safeguard every learner's emotional capacity. Though I was not present during lessons on this unit, I was curious about the students' reaction to this horrific event in history. According to Opiyo they are learning in-depth about a very important part of history and it makes the students realize that they are "not the only ones" (personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu). The unit - inclusive of non-graphic pictures from the Holocaust (such as maps of camps) - helps pupils draw connections between what happened in northern Uganda and what happened in Europe. The students are never taught that the two are the same thing, but they are encouraged to think of how societies can recover, heal and sustain peace following great atrocities. For Insight Collaborative, directing war and violence away from northern Uganda to other areas of the world like Europe during the Holocaust is useful and innovative. Peace and

conflict in these classrooms are not seen as polar opposites, but conflict is represented as normal and present in times of peace. However, the curriculum does not provide a definition for war or warfare, violence or aggression just conflict, which is described as “disagreement between two or more people or ideas; interaction or dialogue” (Dranginis 2010: 31). Likewise research on conflict, aggression and warfare is problematic because of a lack of clear distinctions in the definition of warfare as opposed to other forms of aggression and violence. These pilot-projects are perpetuating these non-distinctions by not offering lessons or providing teachers with various definitions associated with conflict, violence, war and aggression.

The conclusion of the program, including the last unit of “Promoting Peace- Be the Change,” contains lessons advocating methods of peace and conflict resolution among the community, a similar goal of the UMECS/SPRING/MoES project. It is meant to take all the units and show students how to be agents of change in their local community: “from, you know, taking care of your sick elderly grandmother, to writing a letter to your local government about something you want to happen, to just showing children that there is an important part for them in their community” (personal correspondence from Insight staff person, 2012, Gulu). This is done by introducing students to the stories of Nobel Peace Prize winners while using examples from Acholi culture as references for creative civic engagement projects which take place at the end of the third term. One teacher confirmed that there were many things in Acholi culture that could be used to mold the character of children, and these traditional methods of reconciliation should be combined with new skills to deepen the impact of peace education in and outside the school. In an interview with Opiyo, he told me of how one student was able to solve troubles at home using lessons from his peace education class. This example differs from the one Cheney recorded during her time in Uganda where a young girl, despite her training on how to report abuse, was threatened by her father for doing just that. Opiyo told me of a young boy who, during the holiday break, confronted his step-mother about her mistreatment of him. He did this

in the presence of his father. Until that time the boy was afraid to speak up because his step-mother would deprive him of food during designated meal times. After this incident, Opiyo reported that the "young child experienced improvement" which he attributed to the skills the child learned in class. In comparison to UMECS/SPRING/MoES, Insight Collaborative's Peace Education Project is a admirable model and foundation for the type of self-assessing, transformative, relevant and sensitive curricula that should be required of all peace education programs.

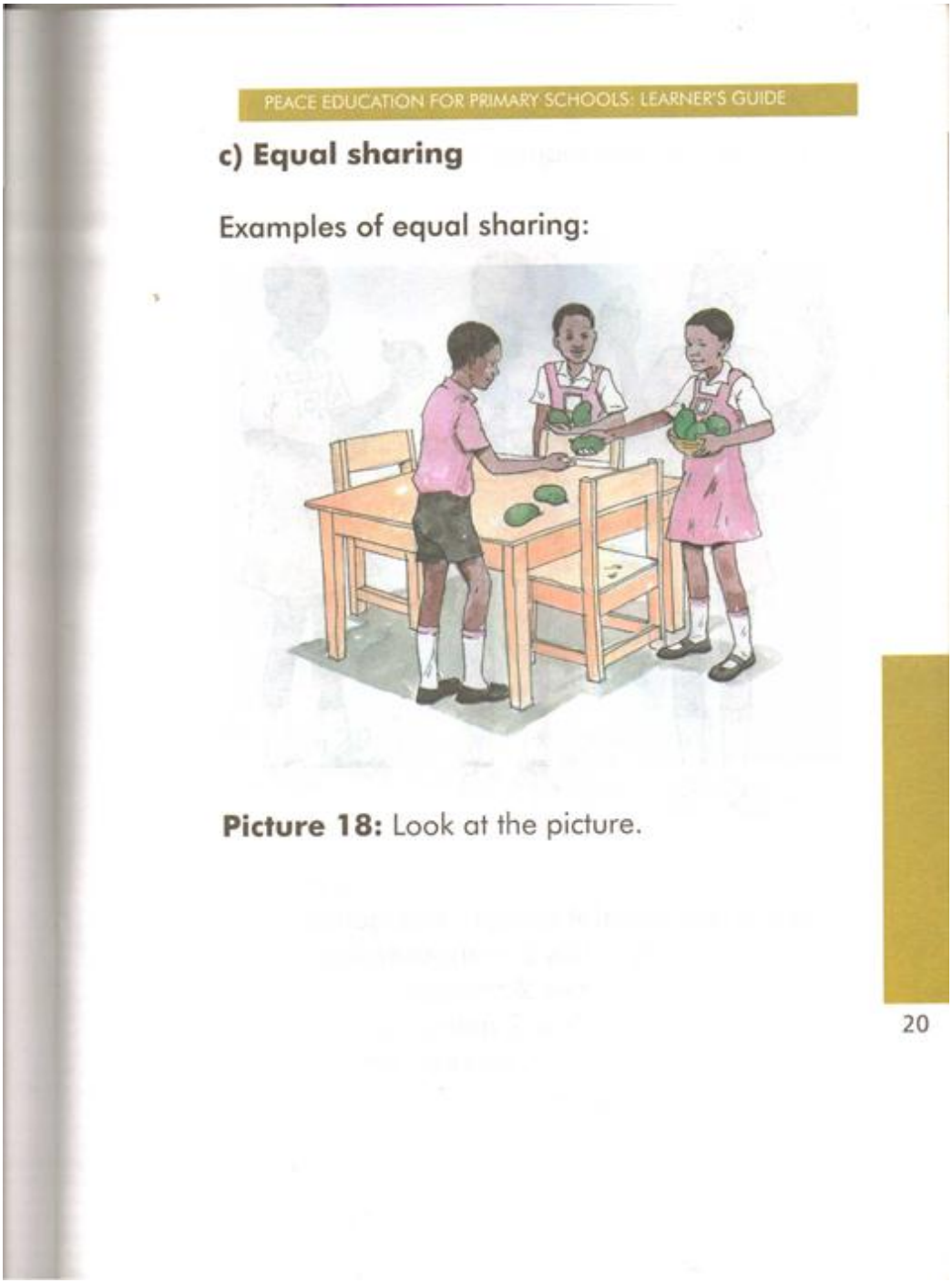
### C. Other Peace Education Initiatives and the Emergence of Peace Clubs

*"A lot of primary schools have something to do with peace education, but it is not really formal or clear" -SPRING staff member*

In this section I will briefly discuss the three other primary schools I had the opportunity to observe. Also, I will explore the emergence of peace clubs as activities that place peace education into practice. Liliyah, Gulu Public and Pece primary schools were not involved with Insight, but they also were not involved directly with UMECS/SPRING/MoES, as the latter program was only for secondary schools. They were engaged in peace club activities, however, and all teachers considered to be connected to their school's peace club claimed that the schools did have peace education. Classrooms were never available for me to directly observe peace education, but there were teachers who had received peace education certificates from the Ministry of Education and Sports under the Pincer Group's REPLICA program in conjunction with the Department of Special Education, Guidance and Counseling. In fact, the only "peace education" class I was able to observe seemed to have been organized after I inquired about coming to the school the following week to observe their peace education class. The Injury Control Center-Uganda, located at Makerere Medical School (in Kampala), facilitated the

teacher training from which these instructors had received certificates. Surprisingly, the United States Agency for International Development-Basic Education and Policy Support (USAID-BEPS) was involved as the primary donor for the program. Although formal teaching seemed to be absent, there existed actual peace education books for students and teaching guides for instructors. This was unexpected, as the secondary schools piloting the UMECS/SPRING/MoES' project did not have textbooks to guide them, a chief complaint by secondary school peace educators.

The Ministry of Education and REPLICA peace education curriculum for primary school students was presented in thirty learning centers in ten districts across not only northern but eastern Uganda as well. The Girls Education Movement known as GEM, I discovered later, was an implementer as well, which would explain greater female gender representation within the textbooks (see image below). The inability of students and teachers to describe details about their peace education program, however, was telling of its limited impact. From what I was able to gather, however, this project began in January of 2009, a full year before UMECS/SPRING/MoES and Insight's pilot-projects. According to one instructor, his peace education project is implemented by incorporating themes of peace education across the board into math, English, and science courses, teaching topics such as anger management and sharing, and conducting weekly assemblies and facilitating peace clubs. The peace education books cover nine areas: "making friends, sharing, kindness, happiness, things that are good to do, living with people who are different, living with people who have not treated us well, caring for those in difficult situations and controlling ourselves from bad actions" (Owor 2009: i).



PEACE EDUCATION FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS: LEARNER'S GUIDE

**c) Equal sharing**

Examples of equal sharing:

**Picture 18:** Look at the picture.

20

A volunteer for REPLICA revealed that the education was not compulsory as the books can be "used independently as a reader by primary school children or it can be used as curriculum support materials in various subjects" (personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu). When I asked an

primary school instructor what type of training she received she replied she had not received any except “on peace clubs … we have [also] had many trainers in different organizations … like for cultural heritage we had a workshop …the [peace education] workshops were not there, except in the whole general school peace is meant to be taught to the class, each and every teacher has to teach about peace” (personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu). She later explained that some NGOs came and chose teachers to participate in workshops where they would be issued a certificate at the end, but she did not indicate that she ever took part in those particular workshops. Generally the REPLICA program trains teachers for two to three days over six components, including peace education. The other components were leadership, governance, guidance and counseling, psycho-social support, and the arts. For teaching materials the instructors were encouraged to use pictures, newspaper articles, magazines and the Bible. However, it was not acknowledged where teachers should get these things and how they should employ them. The use of the Bible in particular is problematic as an appropriate teaching and learning resource as it prioritizes Christianity over other minority religious groups in Uganda. Teaching peace education from scripture could be harmful to promoting themes of religious diversity and pluralism. Students who are not Christian may feel alienated from the material if teachers possess discretion to not only read from biblical scripture, but interpret its meaning to students. The arrangement of one religion over the other for peace education instruction positions peace as something inherent only to Christianity and for a curriculum that promotes diversity, this can be counterintuitive.

The teacher’s account, of the type of training she received, is very troubling as well because the numerous investors noted above, who have their names printed in each peace education book, failed to provide support for these schools. On how peace education was incorporated in the school she said “sometimes it is put in a topic sometimes you put it in a crosscutting issue”

(personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu). By crosscutting issue she is referring to the fact that lessons, when instructed, are only taught to students in Primary 4 because it is considered a "transition class" where students learn English as their primary language in the classroom so they could teach both in Acholi and English. Follow-up by REPLICA staff was irregular, for a number of reasons, including lack of resources and funding to reach over 200 schools (including in the rural and distant villages in parts of the Acholi, Lango and Teso sub-regions). In addition, follow-up was not always completed for all schools. The first round of follow-up, revealed a REPLICA staff member, saw a lack of implementation, as they found the schools "the same way we left them in" in addition to teacher negligence and missing or fallen posters and materials that they donated to the schools:

> We had problems such that some schools are so remote and teachers really don't go to school a lot. They are always missing from school and then in some schools books are just kept in the storage and not being used. And peace clubs die natural deaths because no one takes concern to follow up or make weekly meetings. So there was a lack of follow-up by the teachers and the remoteness of the schools, poor storage facilities and so on. And lack of knowledge on how to incorporate this peace education into the curriculum and sometimes transfer of teachers affect the clubs. When there's no patron the clubs dies because no one follows up. But in other schools we found quite good and encouraging performance (personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu).

These visits took place over two and half months where REPLICA staff went consistently every week to ensure teachers were incorporating the program into the schools. They were seeing the dismal results of poor and sporadic teacher training and assessment of the state of schools across the regions. Still peace education carried with it an aesthetic appeal, so most challenges faced were suspended to promote the overall usefulness of peace education.

In one primary school, the head teacher remarked that the REPLICA program had been positive and the rate of violence had gone down among pupils in the school. He said that teachers were committed to educate children so that they could experience peace in their lifetime. However, at Police primary, where Insight's program is running simultaneously, the peace education component of REPLICA has been all but abandoned. Upon asking Opiyo if REPLICA was operating at Police, he gently said no and pointed over his shoulder to enormous stacks of unused upper and lower primary peace education books as well as teacher manuals. Because of Insight's hands-on model, Police primary considered it much more effective and would only integrate REPLICA's peace education books on an infrequent basis. The positive effects of peace education that teachers on all school levels should not be taken for granted, and more research is needed to determine the factors contributing to positive outcomes. The programs most associated with the Ministry of Education and Sports seemed to perpetuate models of complacency to systems of inequality and sociopolitical hardships, working only to educate students about personal and interpersonal forms of conflict and problem solving, such as sharing, instead of broader themes of social justice, socio-political change and violence created by structural factors as well as human beings. This is one reason outlining why some scholars say that one should not expect peace and educational initiatives to offer solutions to conflicts, especially where there is an unequal allocation of resources. For example, during the war, many farmlands and animals, especially cows, were confiscated, depreciating economic capital in northern Ugandan. A more complete model of peace education can begin to chip away at this pessimism in the face of governments who find it easy to support initiatives where there is little accountability and public scrutiny. Yet, one should still consider the ways in which teachers and students have circumvented the material to provide local understandings of peace and conflict. These understandings, from observations, have led to creative student projects and activities such as student-led peace drama clubs that discuss tough interpersonal and societal problems

through group performance and discussion. However, I was unable to observe if this was taking place in the classroom. My research was limited by my focus on different programs at one time and as an area of further research, I would suggests exploring one project and a couple of classrooms over a sustained period of time. The stories and experiences, while valuable for highlighting important issues, can be used as a stepping stone to more in-depth fieldwork and analysis.

It would be remiss if I did not return to the REPLICA peace education project. In particular, I would like to provide the following pages to discuss both encouraging and disconcerting content that is being disseminated through this peace education curriculum:

I can make friends by helping others.



**Picture 5:** Acan fell down.
Kato is helping her to get up.

**Picture Quiz:**

1. What can you do to help others at school?
2. What do you do to help people at home?

# LEARNING AREA 6: CONTROLLING OURSELVES FROM BAD HABITS.

## 1. Outline

Referenced from Learner's Guide pages 57-63

The general objectives are to enable the learner to:

1. Develop understanding of:
   - Causes of bad behaviour.
   - Ways of stopping bad actions.
2. Keep away from bad actions.

The specific objective and content are:

| Specific objectives | Content |
|---|---|
| The learner should be able to: | |
| a. give examples of bad behaviour. | a. examples of bad behaviour. |
| b. give causes of bad behaviour. | b. causes of bad behaviour. |
| c. suggest ways of stopping bad actions. | c. ways of stopping ourselves from bad actions. |



## 2. Key learning points.

**Sometimes what we do doesn't make other people happy. Examples include**

- Smoking and Alcohol.
- Stealing.
- Beating other people.
- Disobeying school rules.

**Causes of bad behaviour**

- Failure to control our anger.
- Following bad advice from friends.
- Wanting to have what others have.
- Disobeying rules.
- Lack of respect for other people.
- Failure to forgive

**What happens when we do bad things to other people?**

- People are not happy with us.
- We can not live in a community happily with others.
- Learning at school becomes difficult.
- We can spoil our future.
- We do not learn well at school.
- We are not liked by them.
- we cannot live well in a community
- We are punished
- We are lonely

**Ways of controlling ourselves**.

We can stop ourselves from bad actions by:

- Following school rules and regulations.
- Telling those who hurt us that we feel bad when you beat/abuse us.
- Talk to a friend about it.
- Report to school authority.
- Listening to elders.

# LEARNING AREA 11

# RECONCILIATION

***Reconciliation is the bringing back or restoring of friendly relations that have been broken because of a conflict.***

***Forgiveness is a situation when a person feels that he or she is no longer angry with another for being offended.***

At the beginning of this course, we learnt that conflict is a disagreement between persons or people. This leads to uncomfortable relationship between people who were once friends. Friends become enemies. In this chapter, we will learn about reconciliation or traditional ways of restoring relations. This is how enemies can become friends after a conflict.

## What is the relationship between forgiveness and reconciliation?

In learning area 5, we learnt that anger makes us want to hurt people who caused a conflict. When we hurt those people, they will want to revenge. In this case, reconciliation will not be possible. But if we forgive them, then reconciliation can be possible. We have to accept to lose something in order to gain peace.

True forgiveness should lead to reconciliation and restoration of broken relations. This leads to peace.

***Forgiveness*** → ***Reconciliation*** → ***Peace***



*Figure 21: A mother reconciles her children.*

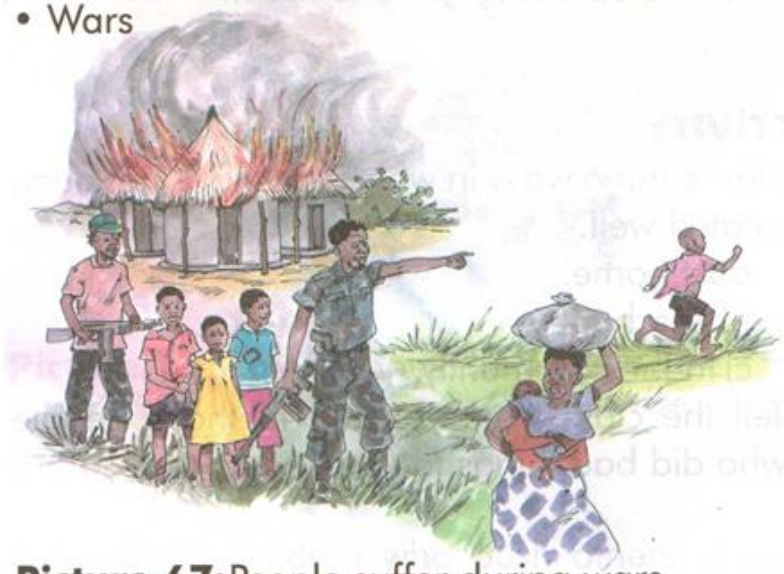
LEARNING AREA 9

## CARING FOR THOSE IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

Sometimes we find ourselves in difficult situations.
Difficult situations are when we have problems.

### a) Examples of difficult situations:

- Wars



**Picture 67:** People suffer during wars.



**Picture Quiz:**

Name some common problems people face during war.

# LEARNING AREA 6: SELF- CONTROL/ IMPULSE CONTROL

**Objectives**

By the end of this LA, the learner should be able to:

1. Explain the meaning of impulse urges with examples.
2. Explain the meaning of self-control.
3. Identify problems using body language.
4. Suggest ways of controlling impulse urges.
5. Construct self-control mottos for the class and school.



## Key learning points

**Definitions.**

- An impulse is a sudden wish /urge to do something without thinking about its suitability or results e.g. anger, passion, jealousy etc.
- Self-control is the ability to control one's feelings/ impulses which often lead to undesirable actions.

**Ways of controlling impulse urges are:**

- Self-knowledge (awareness of what one is, what he/she can do, his /her emotions and feelings and the reasons for them)
- Listening to music or singing.
- Changing thoughts from the cause of the emotion.
- Taking part in sporting activities like athletics, football etc.
- Being tolerant.
- By counselling.
- By accepting to be calmed down by others.
- Refraining from physical aggression such as hitting, kicking, fighting or pushing.
- By avoiding to act without thinking about the likely danger/outcome.

**Examples of self-control Mottos.**

- Don't lose your temper, nobody wants it.
- Self-control creates peace.



## Teaching / learning resources.

- Newspaper articles
- Bible
- Pictures
- Magazines.





## Procedure.

NB: Refer to LA 4 when conducting this lesson.

- Using demonstration, pictures, illustrations, explain what an impulse is. Let learners give examples of impulses.

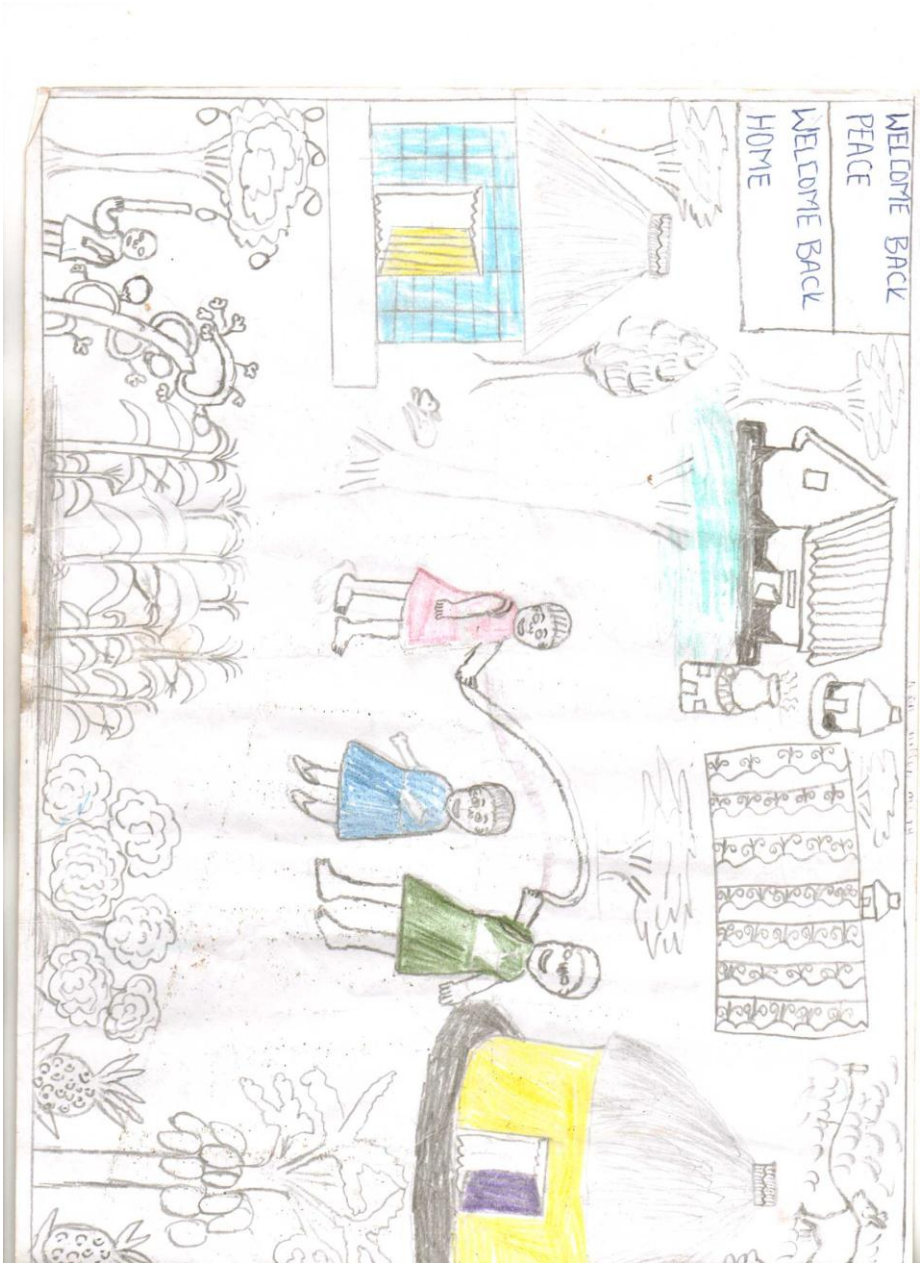
The first three photos have been taken from *Peace Education: Learner's Book Upper Primary, Peace Education: Learner's Book Lower Primary* and *Peace Education: Teacher's Guide Lower Primary.* The last two photos have been taken from *Peace Education: Learner's Book Lower Primary* as well and *Peace Education: Teacher's Guide Upper Primary*. The books for primary school children reveal that some of the content may be too simplified. While lessons involve themes of "friendliness" among students and promote children taking responsibility at home, asking "what can you do to help out at home," the content seems to repeat social norms children are already receiving through daily life and interactions with elders, adults and their peers. Is the goal of peace education then to reproduce social norms, or allow students to critically engage with their aspirations and troubles? This is not to say that there is no space for teaching caring and empathy, but peace education must go beyond "just a rational understanding of the problems faced by others" and question "the structures of violence that dominate everyday life … to create a peaceful disposition to counteract the omnipotent values of militarism" (Harris and Morrison 2003: 31). An emphasis on controlling bad behavior and reconciliation are understandable topics, however the lessons dealing specifically with caring for others in conflict situations divert attention away from "causes of war," a question central to Insight's curriculum, to how students deal with the problems faced during war (which is an important question, but not without the former). War is a "difficult situation" as the book describes, but it is not as natural as sickness which is discussed on the following page as a "difficult situation." Peace education should be used to reorder this naturalization of mass physical violence so children and youth can understand that war is not only a difficult situation to just deal with after it has begun, but must be actively managed to avoid growth.

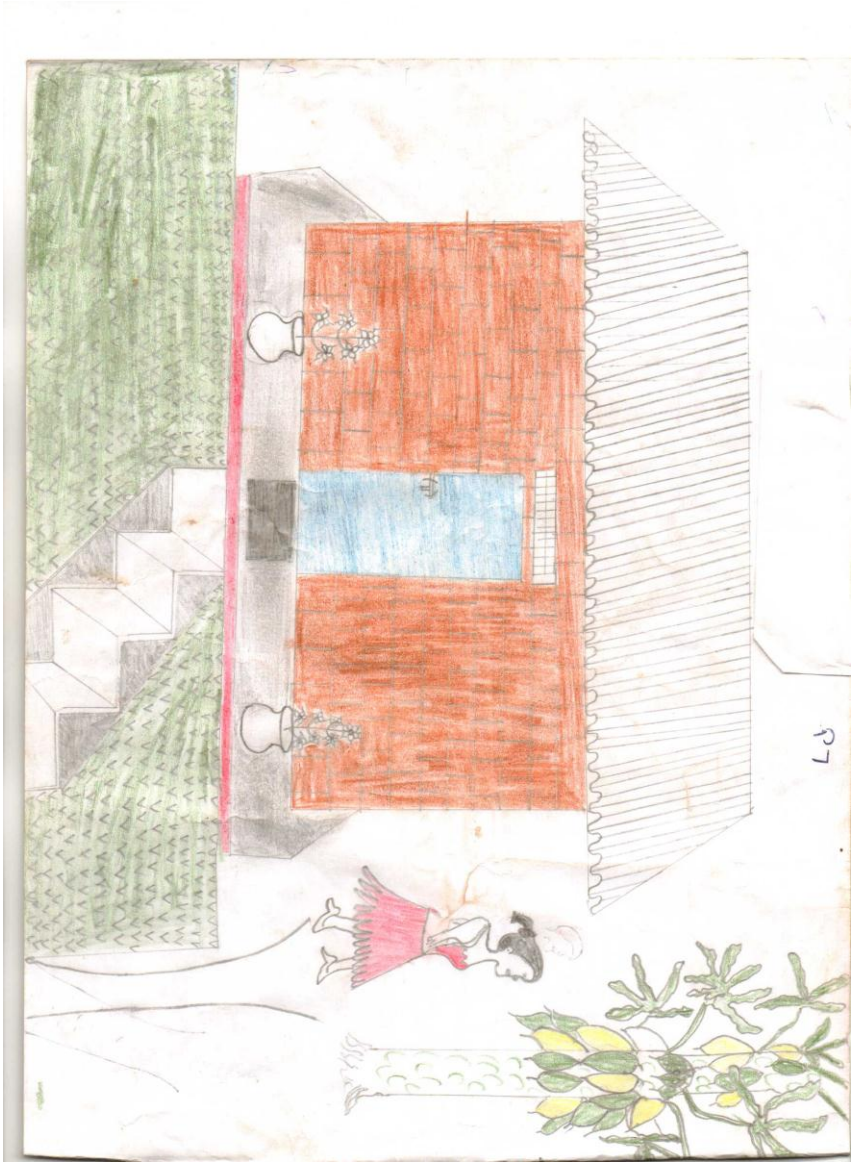
Lastly, peace clubs were present at every school I visited, no matter the program. This is largely a feature of societies coping with life after decades of war. Depending on the school, peace club activities took place during school, after school or both. The idea of peace clubs seemed to stem from the same reasoning for peace education, with the addition of allowing children and youth to maintain the group. Peace clubs, more often in the secondary schools, where supervision is not as necessary, constructed decentralized spaces where creativity reigned. Peace clubs facilitated activities such as sports, music, dance, drama, and debating, and used the arts as modes of expression. These clubs serve as important spaces where formal knowledge about peace education subsided and active engagement began. Students arranged plays and poetry readings at school assemblies, just as a drama club would. An older secondary school student remarked that he was hesitant to join his school's peace club because it was new and he thought it would be a waste of time, but eventually it proved to be beneficial, helping him, in his words, "develop morals."

Peace clubs have found a place in South Africa too, through the Human Rights Education Center (HREC). These peace clubs, according to founder Sarah Motha, focus on two key objectives: transformation and healing for a society that has suffered "multiple wounds due to exploitation, conflict, lack of education, colonialism and war [with] psychological and emotional scars related to these factors … not addressed in a systematic manner by our institutions" (Motha 2011). Students who participate in HREC's peace clubs meet regularly to reflect and sustain a dialogue on social issues while rotating various leadership roles. Similarly, Gulu High School's peace club met regularly even without their peace education instructor and started a peace club choir to perform during school assemblies. Various students occupied leadership roles in the club and served as spokespersons while general members recruited new students

to join. While these groups are still in their infancy and require more support, HREC's program provides an example of the potential of peace clubs to provide a "deeper analysis of social problems, and a consciousness of the law of cause and effect [where] there are no "experts" but a sharing of knowledge and skills, with ongoing reflection and action" (Motha 2011).

*Liliyah primary school students draw “peaceful times” as a part of their peace club activities:*





## Chapter 5: Reshaping the Future in a Post-Conflict Environment

*What does peace mean to you?*
*18 year old secondary student: really, freedom*

### A. Richard's Story

*Seeking and listening to student's voices are prerequisites to transformative education –Elavie Ndura-Ouedraogo*

Richard Opiyo was a youth I met in Uganda while volunteering for a music competition in northern Uganda. Co-founded in 2009 and coordinated by a University of Tennessee alumna and a Ugandan music artist, MFP is a group of artists who use the creative power of music to promote peace-building, address issues affecting the community, and build coalitions with artists in conflict areas in Africa. In 2010, MFP organized their first music competition that brought together local artists to compete for a chance to participate in a music exchange with the Freetong Players International in Sierra Leone. This was in conjunction with the Freetong Players' 25th anniversary celebration. As a volunteer in Gulu and Kitgum, I met Richard through his stage name: MC Star. He won second place in the competition, but the delegation could only support the first place contestant. Disappointed, he expressed his gratitude and promised to continue advocating for peace in his community. The next time I would see Richard came as a shock and I have become so interested in his story, I have decided to briefly retell it here.

On my second visit to a nearby primary school, the patron of the school's peace club urged me to speak with one of her students and informed me that this student was the leader of the school's peace club and would be eager to talk with me. I sat in a classroom, the floor worn and walls chipped, waiting for Richard. A



Gulu High School Peace Club meeting

couple of students ran to retrieve him as tons of students poured into the main yard for recess. Inside the classroom the patron was rehearsing songs with her students who were to compete in the national music, dance and drama competition. The children's singing was so relaxing that I was almost startled as a tall, gangly boy with a huge smile approached me. I quickly stood to shake his hand and introduce myself. He hinted that he knew me, but at the time I suspected that he had seen me around his school or Gulu town. However, I could not shake the feeling that I had met this young boy before. It was only after the interview that I made the connection that he was MC Star from the MFP music competition. I could not understand, however, how a primary school student was admitted to compete in a competition that was 18 years and up. Richard appeared shy, stating that he did not have a good command of the English language; however he became more vocal as our conversation continued.

I discovered that Richard was 17 but only in primary 7, the equivalent of seventh or eighth grade in the United States. For the competition, an exception had been made because he was almost 18. He had been at this particular primary school for about two years and joined the peace club almost immediately. Because of his age, his instructor said all the other children admired and respected him. With a big smile on his face, he bashfully admitted that most of the children in school were his friends, something he was proud of. During the holidays he returned to his village, to talk with his community about the lessons he learned through participating in the peace club. Richard said peace education was important to his life because it made him feel free, a common response among students I spoke with. After asking him what he aspired to do after primary school he replied, in a cheerful tone, that he had already started, that he was a musician, and his ultimate goal was to teach people all over the world the positive message of peace. He has an infectious personality, and we spent a few moments after our conversation talking about his experience in the competition. When Richard took leave to his next class, the patron quietly came to stand beside me. We stood for a few minutes watching Richard walk

across the school yard. She was proud of him and said that he had improved greatly in his studies. Turning to me, she disclosed in a flat tone that he had been abducted several years ago causing him to miss years of school, but she was not sure of how long.

Although I was shocked by this new information, I realized that Richard's story is an important example of the problems associated with characterizing children and youth, especially ex-combatants who are now returnees, as only vulnerable, in need of "saving" or traumatized and violent. This generalizing does not allow room for the Richards of the world to speak, be heard and change this essentialist narrative which can inform better programming and aid to children and youth. Although he faced many challenges with his mother working in the far north districts, sometimes as far as Sudan, leaving Richard to take care of his younger siblings, he also had support from his school. What he wanted most in the world, he expressed several times, was to give back to others not only in his community, but throughout the world. Before we said our goodbyes, the patron spoke in a somber, yet hopeful tone saying Richard was doing better and the only thing that was indeed helping was that he was receiving counseling at school. Richard's story warrants retelling, because it is not just his story, but the story of many children and youth in Uganda whose vulnerability is emphasized disproportionately to their agency. While Richard was able to utilize peace education through the peace club, reforms to the curriculum and implementation/facilitation strategies are necessary for a greater impact. In January of this year, MC Star was featured in a report by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in northern Uganda. In it, he was sitting, filming a music video in Unyama camp next to community members, including a woman who had been disabled by the war, using song to reshape not only his identity, but his future in post-conflict northern Uganda.

**B. The Production of the Peaceful Child**

*"It can't stop the conflict; it is within the people; it is put within the people" – northern Ugandan male*

In chapter two, I used the phrase "the production of the peaceful child" to discuss how current practices of peace education, in northern Ugandan schools, reproduce colonial legacies of blind obedience, conformity, and authoritarianism through lessons on citizenship and following rules. Returning to the incident where a student's punishment for "breaching peace" or leaving class without permission was decided on by a classroom vote, I am reminded of the potential limitations of peace education through schools. Formal education "will facilitate the children's social formation as well as delay their immediate need for employment. However, formal education will not satisfy the child's need for informal education about moral and social values and responsibilities" (Hansen 2005: 97). Peace education cannot take the place of culturally specific knowledge outside of classrooms, although school-based and community-based learning do not operate completely outside each other. It also cannot exist just to reiterate them. Voting, an ideal associated with democracy and belonging, in this case legitimized the authority of the instructor to the detriment of the student. Having the other students participate in this "lesson" highlighted majority-rule thinking and potential tyranny of the majority rather than genuine dialogue on law, order and consensus-building to solve problems. Thus the production of the peaceful child may be more about making obedient citizens out of children and youth. Although this is not directly stated, it is implied through such language as "when there is peace: there is order, people obey rules and laws, people's lives are free from troubles, there is development … we keep peace by respecting the laws" (Ocan and Bbosa 2009: 4).

These lessons on peace education taken from the upper primary learner's book betray the reality of state violence and unequal development and resources that incentivize illegitimate

means of surviving. If violence exists on the micro-level, then it can exist on the macro-level and a curriculum that acknowledges these facts can be transformative. This is not advocating that children or youth disavow the state or government, but that they be provided with a safe space to discuss how long-term stability, positive and negative peace can be realized by learning to see how patterns of conflict in everyday life and relationships can be related to problems in the patterns of governance and power. Understanding these concepts and how they relate to one's reality is more important than promoting ideas of obedience, which do not stop conflict from occurring.

In addition, post-war violence can become normalized and hegemonic, as seen with the rising rates of domestic violence and petty crime. However, it is important not to attribute this to a group's culture by peddling generic phrases such as "creating a culture of peace" in northern Uganda. Peace is both a cultural and political process. Advocating a "politics of peace," to most would seem strange, but somehow a "culture of peace" is acceptable because it makes it possible to idealize peace on a personal level without drawing attention to structures that not only make it difficult to build peace, but actively prevent it. When asked if peace education could prevent a relapse into conflict, one secondary school peace educator replied, "you know, when we create a culture of peace especially from this generation, the young ones we believe are going to avoid any future occurrence of similar atrocities because they will develop knowing what is supposed to be done as far as peace is concerned, they will know how to prevent violence, they will know how to mediate, they will know how to resolve conflict, so we believe this generation is so lucky that they are going to utilize what is being taught" (personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu). His perspective is more in line with the dominant narrative of Western humanitarian organizations that emphasize negative peace, or the belief that an absence of violence is equivalent to peace, which differs from the comprehensive, positive approach that would make way for long-lasting peace. If peace were simply about creating a

culture, violent uprisings in Uganda would have been less numerous as peace, according to Acholi people, is not absent from their cultural heritage. Both the Holy Spirit Movement and Lord's Resistance Army defied cultural customs and observances to launch their rebel movements because of fear of government violence and marginalization. To avoid reinforcing the Western monopoly on knowledge, peace education in northern Uganda should incorporate or increase knowledge of Acholi traditions in the classroom. For example, the ceremony of *Mato Oput* is described as a traditional reconciliation ceremony between families or clans that aim to achieve forgiveness, justice, and healing while, ultimately, reconciling parties and reestablishing relationships broken due to a killing. Belonging to a network of rituals, *Mato Oput* is a ceremony acknowledged by most Acholi as a viable solution to post-war recovery. It is encountering revitalization difficulties and problems of applicability towards mass atrocities committed during war, but it serves as a reminder of local means of seeking justice and healing. It would benefit children, especially those who were not exposed to the tradition due to the war, to learn of its significance to their cultural history, especially as they encounter ethnic stereotypes. In addition,


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the tradition of storytelling by fireside or *Wang'oo* was used to pass along cultural norms to young people and allowed the storyteller to manipulate myths to "mediate a sense of direction in the present, or a sense of a future, despite the fact that war makes the surroundings seriously bad" (Finnstrom 2008: 51). Coupled with a more holistic understanding of peace and how conflict develops and ways in which it can be resolved, children and young people can begin the creative process of recognizing how politics, history and culture interact to inform the choices they make and the environment they must navigate.

Furthermore, in the post-conflict era, fear of marginalization still remain and express themselves along both ethnic and political lines. The fact is that loss of educational and economic opportunity in Acholiland is a feature of government neglect, and if not properly addressed is a prerequisite to uprisings that can quickly turn violent. A *New York Times* article in 2004 described a similar situation in Sierra Leone and Liberia where "despite millions invested to demobilize child soldiers in Sierra Leone and Liberia, economic prospects remain dim for young men across the region" (Hansen 2005: 98). Similarly in northern Uganda, young girls and boys are receiving assistance from NGOs or local civil society and community-based programs, but the economic situation continues to decline at the same time as peace education is instructing them to obey the rule of law. The "peaceful child," thus, in this context is not one who is critical of the systems that require peace education in the first place.

**C. Assessing Projects for Peace**

*"According to me, peace education is giving knowledge to the people in how to be free from wars. And creating friends and relationships among each other" –17 year old, senior 2*

This section will outline key similarities and differences between the two main peace education projects discussed in this thesis. Both the Insight Collaborative pilot-project and UMECS/SPRING/MoES centered on conflict resolution, social-behavioral symptoms of conflict, and training individuals to resolve inter-personal disputes through techniques of negotiation and (peer) mediation. Learning to manage anger, and improve communication through skills such as listening, turn-taking, identifying needs, and separating facts from emotions, constitute the main elements of these programs. Participants are also encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and to brainstorm together on compromises. However, it is important to note that peace goes beyond these activities and behaviors, which are products of individual choice and agency.

Being realistic when discussing the role of peace education can help determine the prospects of such initiatives as well as expand the reach of this type of education to address structural, historical and political conditions that simultaneously limit individual choice and agency. Initially, both peace education pilot-projects operated parallel to each other and were similar in approach. However, the teaching methods and follow-up visits were extremely different. Jennifer, an Insight director, believed that the UMECS/SPRING/MoES program would be a great complement to theirs as students moved from primary to secondary school. The director of SPRING, Madison, also indicted her interest in collaborating with other peace education organizations and programs. For Insight Collaborative, short-term goals included expanding to a few new schools because of increased interest among other primary schools. Their long-term plans are similar to UMECS/SPRING/MoES' in that they hope to work with the Ugandan curriculum development center to standardize their peace education curriculum so that country-wide expansion would be a possible in a couple of years. However, Insight is closer to achieving this status because they are still operating while UMECS/SPRING/MoES were forced to stop due to funding.

UMECS/SPRING/UMECS and Insight were similar in many regards, but there are some significant differences. For instance, both projects promoted ideas on human and child rights, equality, conflict resolution (how to deal with small disagreements and conflicts) and non-violence. However, civic engagement varied school to school and took shape through different mediums such as peace club activities or community projects. At Kitgum Alliance Secondary School a special group of students were chosen to be "peace counselors." They were designated by the school to go to each classroom on the days peace education was implemented and say a few words to their classmates about peace. If other students had problems they could seek these "peace counselors" for assistance. In addition, these students

were responsible for spreading messages of peace in the community. Both curricula contained themes of “soft peace” by promoting care, love and showing respect toward others while concepts of positive peace were not as prominent. Each program had a goal of reaching the wider community through students, but through child-centered approaches. However, education, formal and informal, is tied to power, identity and knowledge. Traditionally in Africa, the maintenance of knowledge was the task of elders. Peace education empowers children to be the “ambassadors of peace” and teach their communities about peace without taking into account traditional roles for children and working towards a model that considers all societal members.

For example, in Sierra Leone Koranic schools, apprenticeships and secret society initiations are all part of knowledge production (Uwazie 2003: 62). In Acholiland, as noted, there is the *Wang’oo,* or traditional storytelling by the fire, where elders imparted socio-cultural knowledge and norms to the younger generation. It was discontinued because the danger associated with lighting fires at night with rebels in the area. This is important to note because of my recommendations for peace education as a source of cultural understanding. Therefore, in addition to commissioning children and youth to teach cultural knowledge as a part of community peace education, a simultaneous effort to offer peace education as a child-inclusive community program should be considered. This entails making sure student know that schools are only one site of learning and that their community and culture is a resource for understanding how peace education lessons in the classroom are made manifest outside of that setting. Although preliminary planning did involve the community through consultation of local stakeholders and advisors, workshops should be organized for interested elders, for youth and children who cannot access schools and for parents to make sure that peace education is community-centered—that the knowledge is there for the community as well. This would be an

enormous undertaking, but these initial steps sets the stage for a more meaningful, sustained and inclusive peace education project.

Formal and informal counseling took place in both primary and secondary schools, but the intellectual rigor of the programs differed even though two-thirds of their curricula promoted the same ideals. For example, one secondary school student when asked about what he was learning in his peace education course remarked “it is all the same” indicating feelings of monotony (personal correspondence, 2010, Gulu). Most students when asked to identify some of the challenges they faced responded that they did not know (some reported that there was nothing difficult about the curriculum), but could more easily say what they liked about peace education and why it was important. Teachers were more supported through the Insight project while teachers associated with UMECS/SPRING/MoES felt abandoned as staff members were not always aware of other programming and problems happening in the school. Types of resources and materials ranged as well. Insight provided peace education books, teacher guides, journals for the students and a “child-friendly” declaration of human rights handbook, while UMECS/SPRING/MoES’ teachers were concerned about the lack of teaching materials they had at their disposal. UMECS/SPRING/MoES’ pilot project was more state supported, but Insight displayed better organization and engagement between the students and curriculum.

Each initiative has strong points and areas that require assessment and evaluation. The similarities between the programs suggest that collaboration would have been valuable in ensuring the continuation of peace education from primary to secondary school. Insight’s project was an unintended discovery for my research and although they did not have an established presence in northern Uganda like USAID’s SPRING program, the curriculum was more challenging and based on a rigorous analysis of the political and cultural conditions of peace

and violence globally. However, both are still facing challenges and problems concerning implementation due to structural and institutional barriers within the Ugandan education sector. The World Bank's published report, *Reshaping the Future: Education and Postconflict Reconstruction*, suggested that "simultaneous and complementary efforts from above (government efforts) and from below (grassroots social movements) must emerge in order to institutionalize" peace education (Sarbib 2005: 47). On the other hand, scholarship on peace offers a different approach, which suggests that peace is more effective when it is not institutionalized. What can be extracted from this thought is that because the projects face structural and institutional barriers, a community-centered model should be considered as foundational for peace education. Yet at the same time, making the curriculum available to the Ministry of Education and Sports would ensure that peace education is facilitated in other schools. The problem lies, thus, in the state's ability to be an effective implementer of peace when it is itself an exacter of violence. How much of the curricula would resemble nation-building ideology rather than critical participation? More importantly, would the Ugandan government be willing to allow a more inclusive and comprehensive interpretation of history that encourages dialogue on state violence, colonialism, war, national reconciliation and other contemporary issues? These are questions that remain to be answered, but also constitute areas of further research.

**D. The Future of Peace Education in (Northern) Uganda**

Through my evaluation of peace education in Uganda, I recognize two things: (1) that peace education has the ability to give children and youth the tools to navigate a post-conflict environment and (2) that schools themselves are social spaces that reproduce larger systems of inequality, but also positive social norms. Thus, peace education may give young people the tools to identify and negotiate with these systems but will those tools also help them work

toward transforming these systems? Because gaining knowledge through the privileged site of the classroom is highly valued, schools and other educational institutions have a responsibility to pursue peace education. The future of peace education in northern Uganda, and Uganda as a whole, is difficult to predict because of the number of peace education programs being implemented and phased out. Many work separately from each other although many of the goals and much of the content of the programs is similar. An ideal direction for peace education would be the creation of an umbrella organization to monitor projects implemented by various organizations where these groups can share curricular ideas, strategies and what is and is not working. These would be partnered with community-created and -based systems of conflict resolution that would complement the school-based curricula (Yakubu 2003: 133). Thus, it is important to be community-centered while using "the state as a mediating institution in conflict situations and as a provider of economic opportunity for the survival of citizens" (Uwazie 2003: 19). Although both projects were specifically designed for the north as a result of the LRA insurgency, the Ugandan government has an opportunity to recognize more assertively the potential of peace education in an effort to promote national reconciliation. For 21 years, the north experienced war four to six hours away by road from the relative peace and stability of central and southern Uganda. Unconsciously, it has been assumed that the north "needs" peace education more than the rest of the country. This holds some truth because of the recent cease-fire, but it should not be used to further illustrate a divide between the north and the south that is rooted in ethnic stereotyping. In all of Uganda (and across the world), peace education is needed for building a common present and shared future, but this will go unrealized without simultaneous efforts to introduce peace education throughout the country. Moreover, without proper support, well-meaning initiatives will have little positive impact, as they are crowding an already overcrowded curriculum and they risk discontinuation once funding is stopped.

There are about 39 million primary-aged school children living in situations affected by conflict (United 2009). In Africa specifically, countries such as Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria, peace programs similar to those in Ugandan schools have been developed for communities. The post-conflict environment is perhaps the most ideal time to implement initiatives such as peace education. It provides an opportunity to reinvent social spaces even among the constraints of reconstruction. The post-conflict setting offers a chance for policy reform and systemic change as well as rapid development, which is all taking place in northern Uganda. Specifically, with the curricula, a more complete lesson plan that presents war and peace as a continuum would help students to recognize different types of violence and conflict. It is important to recall that peace is not just the absence of war or "even the absence of interstate violence. It refers to a social condition in which exploitation is *minimized* or *eliminated*, and in which there is neither overt violence nor the more subtle phenomenon of underlying *structural violence"* (Webel and Baresh 2008: 6). Peace education can benefit from this idea because it problematizes the way in which society views peace and war for more effective peace-building and peacekeeping efforts. Anthropologist Sverker Finnstrom recounts that direct violence "that targets individuals in everyday life goes hand in hand with indirect violence without obvious actors or persons who commit the violent acts" (2008: 145). Everyday violence such as starvation, disease and limited access to healthcare and education that "marginalize humans with even great frequency are usually invisible or misrecognized" (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2003: 2). The task of peace education is as complicated as the conflict itself, and "these complexities should help us problematize our present approaches and should encourage us to keep searching for new, pedagogical, context-sensitive strategies to better cope with the multiple and varied problems confronted by educators in conflict and post-conflict societies around the world" (Beckerman 2009: 91). The northern Ugandan community's expectations for change and improvement are high. UMECS/SPRING/MoES and Insight are working to

implement peace education under very extraordinary circumstance following a protracted conflict. Yet as this analysis suggests, there are examples and lessons to be learned from the first year of piloting that can help promote peace education as critical to the wider reconstruction of northern Uganda. The potential for these programs to have international implications is great because what is learned here will add to the growing evidence that peace education is worthwhile and beneficial.

The war between the Lord's Resistance Army and the Uganda's People's Defense Force under the leadership of President Museveni has caused widespread and profound devastation. The educational system was debilitated, and for over a decade formal education was conducted in overcrowded internally displaced persons camps as children became the targets of abduction and teachers the targets of murder by the LRA. There are major difficulties even following the ceasefire and the government's introduction of the Universal Primary Education program and numerous "catch-up" and vocational programs. Investors in and implementers of peace education come with a range of assumptions centered on peace education as the hope for an *entire generation that has been brought up in the atmosphere of war, violence, and poverty*, an idea that is reiterated by various stakeholders and peace educators themselves. Local, state and foreign investors see opportunity in introducing peace education to schools in hopes that it will counter the violence to which youth as well as adults have been exposed and prevent a relapse into conflict. Furthermore, the purpose of peace education in northern Uganda is centered on the idea that this form of education can create a "culture of peace" starting in the schools and radiating throughout the community. Although I have problematized the use of this phrase, I remain hopeful that peace education can situate itself alongside other peace movements so "that they might serve as midwives for this newer world" (Baresh and Webel 2008: 54). Currently, however, as argued in this thesis, the program content of these projects encourages a "culture of complacency" in the face of extreme structural violence and inequality,

with the exception of Insight's program, which explores some of these issues. Clearly the only way to observe if the encouragement of complacency leads to its creation would be to observe peace education over a longer time frame. Therefore, further research is needed to examine how these projects are lived through those who have been exposed to them. Richard's story provides a telling example of what can be realized and how students and teachers benefit from and improve these imperfect projects. However, the first step in helping other students harness peace education in similar ways is a reexamination of education and colonizing epistemologies to address how education itself is a place of struggle over "power, identities, nationalities, trajectories, and resources" (Shepler 2003: 62). These structural constraints may be alleviated, but they will not disappear. Thus, peace education can facilitate more creative ways for students, teachers, and community members to make agentive movements to navigate this environment and reshape their futures. Lastly, promoting agency should continue be a part of the curriculums, acknowledging that vulnerability and resiliency co-exist. Programs seeking to acknowledge this facilitate children and youth's "active involvement in the construction and interpretation of their own lives and the lives of those around them" (Ensor and Gozdziak 2010: 6). This can be improved through careful observation of peace education programs past and present and implementing a child-inclusive but community-centered model. It is hoped that this thesis has shed some light on northern Uganda's engagement of these vital questions in this critical reconstructive phase of its existence.



Peace club students with the author

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## Guide for Interviews

Teachers and Administrators of Schools with Peace Education Curriculums

1. What is your name/position/background as an instructor
2. What is your training in peace education? Date(s) of training?
3. How long have you been incorporating peace education into the curriculum? What was the date of implementation at your school?
4. What have been some results of this integration? Negatives/positives aspects?
5. Do you think peace education should be present in all schools? Why?
6. How do you record what you are teaching t? Is it being documented at all?
7. How has peace education affected your relationship with your students? Negatively/positively or has it remained the same?
8. What activities do the students involve themselves in that are peace-related?
9. Has teaching peace education affected the student's performance academically?
10. How is peace education preventing violence?
11. How is it helping to promote reconciliation?
12. How is it helping to build a "culture of peace?"
13. Do you teach child and human rights? Other lessons?
14. What is being done to promote sustainable peace?
15. Do you think teaching peace education can prevent a return to conflict?
16. Personally, what have you gained from teaching peace?
17. How is this affecting the community? Does the peace education contain any community components?
18. What is lacking or what do you need to continue to teach peace in and outside of the class?
19. Is it possible to observe some of your activities? If so, when?

Patterns to look for in interview

1. Should the community initiate peace?
2. Is the government simultaneous working or partnering with grassroots social movements to promote peace and provide tangible solutions?

Secondary Schools Students Participating in Peace Education Curriculum

1. Name/age/year in school
2. What is peace education to you? What is peace to you?
3. Do you like that peace education is a part of the curriculum?
4. What type of things do you learn?
5. What type of activities do you participate in?
6. Has it helped you in any way?
7. Does taking time out of your day for peace education worthwhile?
8. How has this program (curriculum) affected or impacted your life?

9. Do you think peace education needs to be integrated in all schools? Why?
10. How is it preventing violence?
11. How is it building peace?
12. What is being done to promote sustainable peace?
13. Do you think it will help to avoid a return to conflict? How?
14. Do you think you will take back what you have learned to your community? What do types of things will you take back with you?
15. What do you want for your future? What do you aspire to be?

Primary School Students Participating in Peace Clubs

1. Name/age/year in school
2. Are you in a peace club? Why or why not?
3. Do you like the peace club? Why?
4. What is peace to you? What does it mean?
5. What does your teacher teach you?
6. What do you do in your peace clubs?
7. Has it helped you? Improved your relationship and friendships?
8. Why do you need peace?
9. What do you want to be when you grow up?