

**EDUCATION, DISABILITY AND ARMED CONFLICT:  
A THEORY OF AFRICANISING EDUCATION IN UGANDA**

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## ABSTRACT

Education in conflict settings is a new field of inquiry and there is a paucity of research about this topic as regards the education of children with disabilities. This qualitative study set out to gain insight into how children with disabilities are educated in the conflict setting of Uganda and how it could be improved.

This study used a critical, constructivist and grounded research style to generate data. It was critical because its aims and questions focused on addressing the injustices experienced by children with disabilities. It was constructivist as both the participants and myself co-constructed knowledge. It also had some grounded theory features such as emergence and iteration in its methods and tools. For instance, it had three distinct but interrelated stages. The first stage involved an exploratory study which used online methods to gather data from 27 participants who had lived or worked in Uganda. The second stage was an experiential study in two sites in Uganda which used observation and interview methods to collect data from 35 participants. The third and final stage synthesised significant codes and memos constructed from the exploratory and experiential stages into a theory of education.

There were four main findings in this study. First, it revealed the nature and extent of the challenges faced by all children living in conflict settings: forced displacement, dehumanisation, rampant poverty and weakened leadership. Second, it discovered that disabled people experienced rejection in their communities and invisibility in the provision of services such as education. Whilst these practices prevailed in non-conflict situations, they were intensified in conflict settings and were counter to the African beliefs on what it meant to be human and live in a community. Third, education in Uganda was likened to disabled people and considered 'creeping' or 'crippled' because of demotivated teachers, disengaged parents, ailing infrastructure and decreasing quality. Fourth and last, participants had visions of educational change which involved modifying it and transforming it into an education that develops conscience in children, reinforces hope and widens opportunities.

This research made the following original contributions: generating original data, conceptualising Africanised interviews, and constructing a theory of Africanising education. According to my knowledge I could claim originality to this study in that by 2012, no other study had generated original data on the interfaces between education, disability and conflict in Northern Uganda using a critical, constructivist, and grounded research style. In addition, this research style led to the emergence of Africanised interviews: interviews embedded in the customs and practices of the African people. Importantly, this study led to the construction of a theory which contained critical knowledge on how Africanisation could be thought of and brought about in the setting. Africanisation was understood as the process of using African philosophies such as 'ubuntu' and communalism to transform the 'creeping' education system, reform the colonial curriculum, renew teacher professionalism, mend communities, and re-humanise the relationships between disabled and non-disabled people. Africanisation also entailed decolonising scholarship and this involved quoting African scholars and exposing their philosophies which had been marginalised by Western scholars.

**Keywords:** Africanisation, Africanised interviews, Armed conflict, Colonisation, Disability, Education, Grounded theory, Neo-colonialism, Ubuntu, Uganda

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to the Rusoke generations before and after me for their commitment to education.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

**ACPF:** African Child Policy Forum

**BERA:** British Educational Research Association

**CPA:** Concerned Parents Association

**CSOPNU:** Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Northern Uganda

**DFID:** Department for International Development.

**EFA:** Education for All

**GUSCO:** Gulu Support the Children Organisation

**HURIFO:** Human Rights Focus

**ICRC:** International Committee of the Red Cross

**IDMC:** Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

**INEE:** Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies

**MDG:** Millennium Development Goal

**NGO:** Non-governmental organisation

**OCHA:** Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

**OECD:** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**SMC:** School Management Committees

**SNV:** Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers

(Netherlands Development Organisation)

**UBOS:** Uganda Bureau of Statistics

**UN:** United Nations

**UNESCO:** United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation

**UNHCR:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

**UNICEF:** United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

**UoE:** University of Exeter

**UPE:** Universal Primary Education

**WHO:** World Health Organisation

**WRC:** Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children

## DEFINITIONS

**Acholi:** A tribe in Northern Uganda

**Acholiland:** Region in Northern Uganda inhabited by Acholi people

**Armed conflict:** Conflict, war

**Bantu:** Rutooro word meaning human beings

**Batooro:** A tribe in Western Uganda

**Education:** Formal and informal learning

**Child:** Someone below the age of 18, an unmarried person in Acholi culture

**Conflict:** War, armed conflict

**Government:** State, nation

**Gulu:** A district in Northern Uganda mainly inhabited by the Acholi people

**Humanitarian worker:** an aid worker, a person who works for an NGO

**Kyenjojo:** A district in Western Uganda mainly inhabited by the Batooro people

**Northern Uganda:** A region in Uganda severely affected by iterative conflict

**Parent:** Father, mother, carer, guardian, relative of a child

**Professional:** Teacher, social worker, humanitarian worker

**Ubuntu:** Humanness

**Umntu:** A human being

**Universal education:** Free education

## **CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Many countries in the world experience armed conflict and its impact on education is hidden, neglected and unreported (United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2011). However, education is a right in all circumstances including conflict settings where it is perceived as a fourth pillar of humanitarian aid alongside healthcare, nutrition and shelter (UNESCO, 1990, 2000, 2010). Surprisingly, little is known in literature about the nature of education in conflicts, who receives it, and why some groups of children miss out.

In this study, I investigate the nature of education for children with disabilities in the conflict setting of Uganda. In this chapter, I start by describing the motivation and rationale for this study. I then offer insight into the settings where I conducted the field study. After this, I summarise the critical, grounded and constructivist research style I used to generate data. I end by outlining the contents of other chapters.

### **1.1 Motivation for the study**

The motivation to embark on this study was linked to my experience of living in conflict settings, my intellectual curiosity and my profession as a teacher in England.

I was born in Uganda in the mid-seventies. Since that time, I witnessed various conflicts plague my country of origin. For instance, since independence from the British colonial government in 1962, Uganda experienced approximately fourteen major conflicts that led to loss of lives, destruction of infrastructure and forced displacement (Dowden, 2014; Najjuma, 2011; Nannyonjo, 2005; Wright, 2007).

I remember the night rebels attacked our village in 1985. As our village was bombarded, property destroyed and the school turned into a military barracks; we were displaced to neighbouring villages. This conflict did not only disrupt life in my village but also affected my education. For instance, I missed one year of primary education and attended four different schools to complete the seven years of primary education.

My experience of disrupted education is not isolated but replicated in various parts of the world where there is conflict. Reflecting on this experience, I have imagined how similar or different the experiences of children living in Syria, Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan might be. As imagination could not wholly capture it, I spent a large part of my doctoral life reflecting on education in conflict settings.

One night in September 2011, as I searched literature on education in conflict settings, I came across a website of Save the Children organisation. On this website, there was a story of Sarah: a girl from the then conflict affected Southern Sudan. When Sarah came into contact with the aid worker in 2005, she said, 'when I was younger all we knew was war - that was our education'. This comment triggered in me questions and bewilderment emanating from my curiosity, ethical beliefs and profession.

Based on my curiosity, I asked the questions: What did Sarah learn about war? Were there other forms of education apart from war? What does education look like in conflict settings? Based on my ethical stance, I asked the questions: How can war be relevant education? What is the educational experience of vulnerable children especially those with disabilities? Based on my experience as a teacher in England where disabled children accessed education like other children, I frequently compared their experience with that of children living in conflict

settings. Though it could be argued that the settings were different, it is this disconnectedness of experience and the search for answers that acted as an impetus for this study.

## **1.2 Rationale for the study**

Before the field study in Uganda, I conducted a literature review so as to locate my research in the wider academic debate, refine its rationale and generate guiding questions. When I searched literature, I found limited theory and research on the interface between education, disability and conflict. I however conceptualised a rationale and arrived at research questions based on the following insights.

The first insight was that conflict led to the displacement of populations and this affected education provision. This insight was based on evidence from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in conflict settings. For example, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR, 2010) estimated that 43.3 million people were displaced globally at the end of 2009. A year earlier, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2009) had estimated that 18 million children were displaced globally and about 50 percent of people who fled their homes were children. The same year, a survey by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC, 2009) on displaced people in Afghanistan cited not getting education as one of the top fears participants had. This was the case in Northern Uganda: one of the settings where I was to conduct the field study where over 90 per cent of the population was displaced during the twenty-three years of conflict, 60 per cent of schools were not functioning, and over 250,000 children received no education (Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Northern Uganda [CSOPNU], 2006; Nannyonjo, 2005; UNICEF, 2005).



The second insight was that all children had a right to education even in conflict settings. This right was enshrined in international conventions, protected by humanitarian law, and supported by frameworks such as Education for All (EFA) (UNESCO, 1990, 2000). Though it was widely asserted that primary education was compulsory, free and available to all children (United Nations [UN], 1948, 1989; UNESCO, 1990, 2000); governments, NGOs and UN agencies responding to conflicts relegated it to the development phase. However, Rhoades (2010) reminded us that the international community was obliged to include education in its emergency framework when governments failed to provide it for displaced children. At the time of this study, the field of education in conflict was being recognised as the ‘fourth pillar’ of humanitarian response alongside healthcare, nutrition and shelter (Barakat, Hardman, Connolly, Sundaram, & Zyck, 2010; Midtunn, 2000; UNESCO, 2010). However, there were challenges to education in conflict: the prolonged nature of displacement, lack of resources, unreliable political will, discriminatory policies, curriculum content and quality (Dryden-Peterson, 2011; Rhoades, 2010). This implied that although education was a right and a pillar of humanitarian response, access to it eluded many children living in conflict settings and little was known about this.

The third insight was that disabled children experienced invisibility, marginalisation, exclusion and discrimination in emergencies such as conflicts (Reilly, 2010; Trani, Kett, Bakhshi, & Bailey, 2011; UNESCO, 2010; World Vision, 2007). For example, in Dadaab refugee camp, disabled children were sometimes tied up, had stones thrown at them and were subjected to verbal abuse (Reilly, 2010). In Darfur, disabled children were excluded not only from formal education but also from informal structures such as child-friendly spaces (Trani et al., 2011). In Uganda, the curriculum was not matched to the needs of disabled children and

most were invisible in classrooms (Nannyonjo, 2005). This evidence suggested that the right to education enshrined in treaties such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was ignored.

The fourth insight was that, although studies had been done on education and conflicts, none focused on the education of disabled children in settings such as Northern Uganda. This meant disabled children were not only excluded from education but also marginalised in research and invisible in academic scholarship. These insights were central to the aims of this study.

### **1.3 Research aims and questions**

The insights above formed the basis for the overall aim of my study which was to investigate the education of disabled children in an armed conflict setting and how it could be improved. This aim was advanced through three subsidiary aims:

- a) Understanding the interface between education, disability and conflict
- b) Examining education provision in each stage of armed conflict
- c) Developing a theory or framework to improve education in a conflict setting.

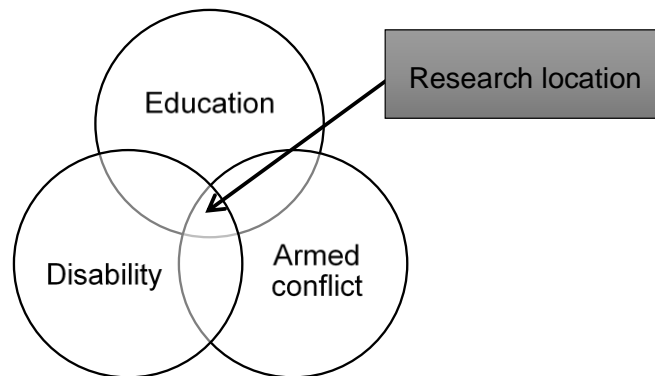
These aims were to be achieved using the following guiding research questions:

1. What does 'education' and 'disability' mean in an armed conflict setting?
2. What is the nature of education at each stage of armed conflict?
3. What is the purpose of education in each stage of armed conflict?
4. Which issues are associated with the education of children with disabilities?
5. How can a model for educating children with disabilities be visualised in a post-conflict setting?

## 1.4 Uganda as the setting for the study

For this study to be successful, the research questions were to be investigated in a setting where education, disability and conflict intersected as shown below.

Figure 1: Research location



At the time of my research in 2012, there were possible locations such as Afghanistan, Syria and Libya. These settings were not chosen because they were in open conflict, I did not have any contacts there, and it would have been logistically demanding. However, Uganda was chosen because it was convenient for I had existing family ties, and it had a history of iterative conflict.

Uganda is a landlocked country in East Africa with a population of 34.1 million (Uganda Bureau of Statistics [UBOS], 2012). It became a protectorate in 1894 when the British colonialists put together various ethnic groups. The forced assimilation of these ethnic groups with different histories, languages and livelihoods led to the disintegration of kingdoms and fuelled unrest in Uganda (Kelly & Odama, 2011). For instance, since independence Uganda has experienced various conflicts between ethnic groups, political parties, religious groups and rebel movements to the extent that conflict has been considered a

legacy of colonialism (Bird, Higgins, & Mckay, 2011; Kelly & Odama, 2011; Lang & Murangira, 2009; Tomasevski, 1999; Wambungu & Adem, 2008).

In addition, British colonialists, missionaries and subsequent governments in Uganda played ethnic groups against each other in pursuit of their political and economic aims and this entrenched divisions, conflict and marginalisation especially of Northern Uganda (Bird et al., 2010; Bird et al., 2011; Wambungu & Adem, 2008). For instance, resistance to Christianity in Buganda kingdom led to the massacre of converts under the orders of King Mwanga between 1885 and 1887. There were also armed conflicts of religious nature such as Mengo war in 1892 between followers of the Catholic and Protestant churches (Edel, 1965; Hanson, 2010; Ssekamwa, 1997). In my opinion, the rift between the two denominations fostered separation and influenced multiparty politics to the extent that if one was Catholic one belonged to the Democratic Party (DP) and if Protestant to the Uganda People's Congress (UPC).

Multiparty politics was a key factor in the turbulent history of Uganda to the extent that since independence in 1962, Uganda has had over twelve different presidents (Bird et al., 2011; Kelly & Odama, 2011; Lang & Murangira, 2009; Wambungu & Adem, 2008). At the time of this study, Yoweri Museveni was president who had been in power since 1986. During his presidency, conflict and ethnic divisions have continued in various parts of the country with Northern Uganda severely being affected by a long drawn conflict under the leadership of Joseph Kony (Bird et al., 2011; Dowden, 2014; Kelly & Odama, 2011).

Northern Uganda experienced iterative conflict caused by various factors including ethnic divisions, forced assimilation, poor living conditions, poor governance and the feeling of being economically and politically marginalised

(Baines, Stover & Marieke, 2006; Bird et al., 2011; Kelly & Odama, 2011; Wambugu & Adem, 2008). It is believed that at the height of conflict, over 90 percent of the population was forced to leave ancestral villages for overcrowded protected villages (Branch, 2013; Kelly & Odama, 2011; WRC, 2005). During his visit, the UN Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland described Northern Uganda as 'the biggest neglected humanitarian crisis in the world' (Baines et al., 2006, p. 13).

Jan Egeland's observation might have been based on the effects of conflict such as mass killings, abductions, sexual abuse, torture, mutilations, trauma, depression, exacerbation of disability and displacement into protected villages (Allen & Schomerus, 2006; Bragin, 2004; Dowden, 2014; IDMC, 2011; Lang & Murangira, 2009; Pham et al., 2007; UNHCR, 2012). Also, his observations might have been based on the effects of conflict on children: disrupted education, forced labour and night commuting: a phenomena where children engaged in large scale commuting every night from protected villages to areas of relative safety in urban centres (Baines et al., 2006; Bird et al., 2011; CSOPNU, 2006; Wambugu & Adem, 2008).

At the time of this study, Northern Uganda was transitioning from 'a region in crisis to one focused on rebuilding and recovering' (Kelly & Odama, 2011, p. 2). However, recovery including the rebuilding of educational infrastructure was slow and some evidence indicated that policy makers were not making education a priority in this region (Bird et al., 2011; Kelly & Odama, 2011; Lang & Murangira, 2009). Taking this into consideration and curious to understand the interface between education, disability and conflict, Gulu district in Northern Uganda was chosen as the most suitable setting for my study.

## **1.5 Approach to the study**

Generating data, answering the research questions and meeting the research aims necessitated a particular strategy. My research strategy was informed by three key assumptions. First, given the research aims and questions related to the state of disabled children who were excluded; it was critical. Second, given the methods and tools used to collect and analyse data were not pre-determined; it had elements of grounded theory. Third, given both participants and myself were involved in knowledge construction; it was constructivist. Effectively, my research style was grounded, critical and constructivist, and these assumptions are discussed in Section 3.2.3.

Within this style, a unique design emerged which involved the construction of data in three interrelated stages each linked to a subsidiary aim listed in Section 1.3. The initial exploratory stage used online methods to scope views on education and disability in conflict settings from participants who had worked or lived in Uganda. The intermediary experiential stage used interview and observation methods to examine the nature of education in two districts in Uganda: Gulu in the North which had experienced protracted conflict for over twenty-three years, and Kyenjojo in the West which had experienced relative peace. The final theorising stage analysed and synthesised data into a theory of education in a conflict setting. A detailed explanation of my research strategy is contained in Chapter 3.

## **1.6 Significance and originality of the study**

This study was significant in that understanding education in the conflict setting of Uganda was vital in order to improve it. Once the key issues were known, the

government could design relevant policies and implement them. This study had potential to inform theory in the broader area of education in conflict and in doing so acted as a road map to improving education in other conflict settings. It also had the potential to unveil gaps in theory, policy and practice. Finally, according to my knowledge I could claim originality to this study in that by 2012 no other study had investigated the interfaces between education, disability and conflict in Northern Uganda using a critical, grounded and constructivist research style.

Though my study primarily focused on Uganda, it made the following original contributions to knowledge and practice. First, while collecting data in Uganda, European style individualised interviews were initially used. However, individualised interviews were transformed into group, family and community interviews. I conceptualised these as Africanised interviews because they were embedded in the customs and practices of the people. For instance, they were conducted in a relaxed manner where privacy was not an issue and often ended in community celebrations rather than reminiscing the horrors of protracted conflict. Second, literature had indicated that researchers especially from the global North hardly made any reference to theories and scholars from the global South (Meekosha, 2011; Mji, Gcaza, Swartz, MacLachlan & Hutton, 2011). This assumed knowledge constructed in Northern continents like Europe was superior and that constructed in Southern continents like Africa was inferior. Meekosha (2011) conceptualised this as scholarly colonialism. In conducting this study and quoting African scholars in my thesis, I exposed some of their theories and philosophies that had been marginalised in academic scholarship and in doing so contributed to scholarly decolonisation. For instance, I illustrated how the philosophies of ubuntu (humanness) and communalism could be applied to disability in an African context (see Section 5.3). Third, this study led to the

construction of a theory of Africanising education. The details of these original contributions are presented in Chapter 6.

### **1.7 Structure of the thesis**

This thesis is composed of 6 chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction. It charts progression from my motivation to undertake this study through a brief review of literature, research aims and towards the articulation of a research strategy.

Chapter 2 is a review of literature that places my study in extant literature and leads to the generation of initial research aims and guiding questions.

Chapter 3 is the research approach. It discusses the evolution of a critical, grounded and constructivist research style used and offers a reflection on research authenticity.

Chapter 4 uses four categories to present findings from the exploratory and experiential studies conducted in Uganda. The first category examines the reality of living in zones of conflict. The second category explores how disability is conceptualised and the challenges of being disabled in conflict settings. The third category gives an account of the nature of education. The fourth category captures the visions participants had of education after conflict.

Chapter 5 offers a discussion of the findings. Data constructed in the exploratory and experiential stages is informed by relevant literature to arrive at significant theoretical codes. In this theorising stage, a case is made for the Africanisation of education in armed conflict settings.

Chapter 6 summarises the research journey travelled to arrive at original contributions to knowledge and poses questions for future research.



## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE**

As part of my research strategy, I have conducted a review of relevant literature. This has revealed that my study is surrounded by issues that intersect at three main levels: theory, policy and practice. I have used these meeting points to present it. Below is an outline of the issues, how they relate to my research aims and the conflict setting where this study takes place.

### **2.1 The interface between education, disability and armed conflict**

Literature has revealed theoretical issues in the conceptualisations of education, disability and conflict. In relation to education, there is no agreed definition on education that takes place in conflict settings. Commonly referred to as education in conflict, education that takes place in areas where there is war is located in the broader field of education in emergencies which is an under-researched, under-theorised, and a practice-oriented field that lacks critical reflection (Inter Agency Network for Education in Emergencies [INEE], 2010; Kagawa, 2005; Talbot, 2005; Tomlinson & Benefield, 2005; Winthrop & Kirk, 2008). The most quoted definition of education in emergencies is provided by Sinclair (2001) who understands it as 'schooling and other organized studies, together with "normalising" structured activities, arranged for and with children, young people and adults whose lives have been disrupted by conflict and major natural disasters' (p. 4). In this definition, Sinclair places education in conflict alongside education provided for people affected by natural disasters. This definition assumes conflict is always an emergency and neglects the presence of protracted conflict. It also assumes that education normalises and does not disrupt people's lives.

In a related development, Smith (2005) uses the context to conceptualise education in conflict. He distinguishes between education provided in relatively peaceful environments; during times of violent conflict; as part of reconstruction following conflict; and as part of longer term peace and reconciliation processes. This understanding assumes education and educational activities are different and change at various stages of conflict. However, there is hardly any research that supports the uniqueness of education in conflict and how the curriculum is matched to each stage.

What the above definitions suggest is that any understanding of education in conflict needs to take into account the context. However, literature shows that defining armed conflict is contentious and a variety of conceptualisations exist including those that discern stages of conflict, those that distinguish between international and national conflicts, and the ones that use the number of battle-related deaths (Byrne, 1996; Maill, Ramsbotham, & Woodhouse, 2005; Marshall & Gurr, 2005). For example, Byrne (1996) outlines stages such as run-up to conflict or pre-conflict, conflict itself, peace process or conflict resolution, reconstruction and reintegration or post-conflict. Brahm (2003) describes these stages differently but the common ones are: no conflict, latent conflict, emergence, escalation, stalemate, de-escalation, settlement or resolution, post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation. Seitz (2004) distinguishes non-conflict, internal trouble, armed conflict, peace process and post-conflict stages.

As visible in these conceptualisations of conflict, there are similarities that can be contested such as the inclusion of non-conflict and post-conflict as stages of conflict. Also, underlying the staged approach to defining conflict is the assumption that conflict follows a linear path: an assumption contested by

Cockburn and Zarkov (2002) who argue that conflict does not start and end at clearly defined moments but is part of a continuum. This is supported by Obura (2003) who argues that there is no accepted definition of any stage of conflict as the time it occupies is indeterminable and the entry and exit points into any stage are unpredictable. Collier et al. (2003) too contend that the idea of a unidirectional transition from one stage of conflict to another has been challenged by research which shows that the risk of war is higher during the first five years after conflict than it is in similar countries. Like education, the contested nature of armed conflict calls for an understanding of conflict in a particular research context.

In addition to conceptual issues related to education and conflict is the understanding that disability is a relative, ambiguous, multidimensional and complex term. In his study, Schulze (2010) identifies over fifty definitions from various parts of the world giving examples from India where disability comprises of blindness, low-vision, leprosy, hearing impairment, loco motor disability, mental retardation and mental illness; Canada where disability refers to mental or physical disabilities and includes disfigurement, dependence on alcohol or a drugs; England where disability implies physical or mental impairment that has long-term and substantial effect on one's ability to continue with normal daily activities. In some of these definitions like in India where disability is constructed as a biological phenomenon and a divergence from the 'normal' human person, there is hardly any consideration that society or conflict could 'disable' human beings who are considered 'normal'.

Some scholars consider normality a construct imposed on reality where there is only difference and assert that the conceptualisation of normality requires abnormality as they are binary opposites (Davis, 1997; Oliver, 1996). Models of

normality like biological, sociological and statistical are advanced in literature. For instance, the statistical model which is based on standard deviation defines normality in terms of the 'normal zone' which accounts for 68 percent of all data in the normal distribution curve (Wilkinson & Robertson, 2006). In this model, abnormality is associated with low statistical frequency and persons with disabilities are thought to deviate from the statistical norm (Davis, 1997). This means human persons who have a normal body shape and exhibit normal behaviour are 'normal' and those with deviant bodies and who exhibit deviant behaviour are abnormal or disabled. Disability is, thus, understood as deviance and unnatural (Johnstone, 1998). This understanding suggests that like disability, normality is a relativistic concept that ignores diversity.

Mirroring models and discourses of normality, models and discourses of disability are prevalent in literature such as religious, medical, social, rehabilitation, affirmative, ecological and biopsychosocial (Clapton & Fitzgerald, 2004; Fulcher, 1989; Johnstone, 1998; Oliver, 1996; Reindal, 2009; Thomas, 2004). Though it would be ideal to examine some of these models now, the literature where they are discussed is not directly relevant to disability in conflict settings. Effectively, this highlights a gap in both research and theory on how disability is understood and how models of disability, if any, are operative in conflict settings.

To conclude, the examination of literature on the conceptualisation of education, disability and conflict reveals gaps in understanding not only when these concepts are viewed separately but also when attempts are made to link them. In addition to my motivation to understand education, this realisation leads me to investigate the staged nature of conflicts and how disability is constructed.

Another theoretical issue revealed in literature is the assumed relationship between education and conflict (Bird, 2007; Brock, 2010; Bull, 1989; Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Paulson, 2008; Sharkey, 2008; Ostby & Urdal, 2010). This relationship is conceptualised as the 'education paradox' (Bird, 2007, p. 3). The education paradox is visible in education having socially constructive effects such as transforming society by challenging prejudices and inequalities at the heart of the conflict, and having destructive effects such as reproducing conditions which underlie conflict hence exacerbating and perpetuating violence (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Harber & Sakade, 2009; UNESCO, 2011). For instance, 'too little education, unequal access to education, and the wrong type of education can make societies more prone to armed conflict' (UNESCO, 2011, p. 16). In light of this, some scholars suggest education has positive and negative faces.

On one hand, the positive face of education is evident in its role of protecting children during conflict, imparting skills such as tolerance and respect, and education being an ingredient in peacebuilding especially after conflict (Cunningham, 2010; UNESCO, 2011). This was the case in Eritrea, Afghanistan and Liberia where refugee students indicated that schooling facilitated a return to normalcy, was a mechanism for socialisation, provided a nurturing environment and was an instrument for coping and hoping (Winthrop & Kirk, 2008). However, there has hardly been any research from Northern Uganda on the extent to which education exhibited a positive face.

On the other hand, the negative face of education is manifested in using the curriculum as a weapon for oppression, war, discrimination, violence as was the case under the apartheid regime in South Africa; to promote jihad against the Russians during the 1980s in Afghanistan; and to perpetuate intolerant and

militant ideologies in Mozambique, Rwanda and Israel (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Mamdani, 2001; Thyne, 2006). Also, there have been places like Germany in 1930s and Burundi in 1990s where governments intentionally manipulated education systems, curricula, textbooks and policies to consolidate their power (O'Malley, 2007). This evidence supports the view that 'in many conflicts around the world, education is part of the problem, not the solution' (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000, p. 33). In my opinion, the assumption that education has only positive and negative faces neglects the complexity surrounding its purpose in conflict settings.

Several purposes of education in conflict settings are identifiable in literature including relief, development, wellbeing and liberation. Some scholars have noted tension among education providers as some consider the purpose of education to be relief and others development (Bird, 2005; Burde, 2005; Pigozzi, 1999; UNESCO, 2010). This tension has partly been attributed to the values and beliefs held by organisations that provide, fund and monitor education in conflict settings. Take for example the relief discourse which is based on the belief that the primary role of education is protection. This argument is supported by organisations such as World Vision who believe education can save children's lives through disseminating messages that mitigate harm and protect against violence and exploitation (World Vision, 2008).

Another aspect of this discourse is that schooling or education restores normalcy for it gives children a routine in a chaotic conflict environment (Bragin, 2004; Buckland, 2005; Machel, 1996; Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003; Sinclair, 2001). However, schools are sometimes zones of violence as corporal punishments are used, sexual harassment is experienced and socialisation into gangs may take

place there (Harber, 2002, 2009; UNESCO, 2011). Evidently, the argument that schooling leads to normalcy neglects what happens when children go to school as has been the case in Pakistan where schools have been targeted, children and their teachers killed. In my opinion, it also ignores daily activities such as religious routines that could also restore normalcy (Winthrop & Kirk, 2008).

In addition, the relief discourse is challenged by evidence which shows that education contributes to conflict (Bush & Saltalerra, 2000; Fawcett, 2005; Nicolai, 2005; Obura, 2003; Shields & Rappleye, 2008; UNESCO, 2011). For example, Rwanda used a discriminative quota system in education based on social grouping and this led to targeting education infrastructure during the conflict (Obura, 2003). Effectively, though there is a need to recognise the protective purpose of education in conflict settings, it is not always possible.

The relief purpose of education is further challenged by those who embrace the view that 'any emergency education programme must be a development programme and not merely a stop-gap measure' (Pigozzi, 1999, p. 3). This has been theorised as the development discourse (Bensalah, 2002; Burde, 2005; Pigozzi, 1999). However, notions of development and their undergirding theories such as human capital theory are contestable. Robeyns (2006) argues that the human capital theory is highly economic given that the only benefit from education is increased productivity. In my view, the development discourse assumes that whoever receives education automatically contributes to economic growth. As I will argue, this is not always the case as some children such as those with disabilities might not be productive in this way. Effectively, to articulate the purpose of education for disabled children, some scholars have subscribed to the

wellbeing argument (African Child Policy Forum [ACPF], 2008; Cuypers & Haji, 2008; Winthrop & Kirk, 2008).

Given conflict affects various aspects of a child's development including physical, mental and emotional (Kagawa, 2005); Cuypers and Haji (2008) conceive the overarching goal of education to be maximising wellbeing and this entails doing 'our best to ensure that our children enjoy lives that are good in themselves' (p. 72). In their study on how Eritrean, Afghan and Liberian refugee students conceptualised their wellbeing in relation to their school experience, Winthrop and Kirk (2008) discovered four ways: 'a return to normalcy, a mechanism for socialization, the provision of a nurturing environment, and as an instrument for coping and hoping' (p. 640). Though African societies are traditionally regarded as 'sentinels of human wellbeing and security' (ACPF, 2008, p. 1), there is hardly any literature that links wellbeing, disability, education and conflict in Africa.

To conclude, an examination of literature on the relationship between education and conflict highlights issues and research gaps related to the conceptualisation of education, the paradox of education and the purpose of education in conflict. These issues require investigation and gaps need to be addressed by future research.

## **2.2 Policy on education and disability in armed conflict**

The policy literature reviewed suggests that the international community committed itself to universal education since the universal declaration of human rights in 1948. This commitment is reiterated in UN declarations such as: the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989); World Declaration on Education for All (UNESCO, 1990); the Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO,



2000); and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006). There are other non-binding policy documents that reaffirm the commitment to Education for All such as the 1990 Jomtien Declaration, the 2000 World Education Forum Framework for Action Promoting Education for All, and the 2000 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

These documents specify that all children should have access to education. For instance, article 28 (a) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that state parties shall 'make primary education compulsory and available free to all' (UN, 1998). According to McCowan (2010), a scrutiny of this article reveals a restriction of the right to education to elementary level and a vague conceptualisation of education. When article 28 (a) is applied to children in conflict settings, questions emerge. Is school the best setting for all children? Does schooling fulfil children's needs in armed conflicts? What is the purpose and content of education in conflict? Attempts to answer these questions have revealed tension between Education for All and inclusive education (Miles & Singal, 2010; Trani et al., 2011).

This position has been re-echoed in literature from practitioners, governments, NGOs, UN agencies and education networks (INEE, 2010; Molteno, Ogadhoh, Cain, & Crumpton, 2000). While some practitioners argue that inclusive education is too difficult, others assert that it is possible (Pinnock & Hodgkin, 2010). An attempt to clarify this is made by scholars such as Miles and Singal (2010) who contend that inclusive education highlights issues of social justice and promulgate broader values than education as a means to an end or a means to acquiring skills and employment.

However, by the year 2000 slow progress towards universal education was visible and this influenced the second MDG on universal primary education (UPE) by 2015 with inclusive education as one of the key strategies to address marginalisation and exclusion (Delamonica, Mehrotra, & Vandemoortele, 2004; Peters, 2009; UNESCO, 2011). Although an additional 52 million children were enrolled in primary schools worldwide from 1999 to 2008 with enrolment ratios rising by one-third in sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2011), approximately 58 million children were out of school in 2012 (UNESCO, 2015). This evidence suggests that there is need for accelerated progress in education as it is critical in the achievement of the wider MDGs in areas such as poverty reduction, child survival and maternal health (UNESCO, 2011).

Scholars like Trani et al. (2011) argue that Education for All which emphasises basic primary education has marginalised education for disabled children in conflict settings. A wealth of evidence reveals that children with disabilities experienced invisibility, marginalisation, exclusion and discrimination not only in emergency situations but also in educational settings (Bensalah, 2002; Bush & Sartarelli, 2000; Reilly, 2010; Trani et al., 2011; UNESCO, 2010, 2015; World Vision, 2007). This was visible in Dadaab camp where disabled children were subjected to physical and verbal abuse (Reilly, 2010). This was also evident in Darfur where disabled children were excluded not only from formal education but also from informal structures such as child-friendly spaces which were meant to be places of safety, recreation, socialisation and education (Trani et al., 2011). UNESCO (2011) warns that continued marginalisation of children with disabilities is likely to lead to missing the goal of education for all. In effect, these policy contradictions inherent in literature between Education for All and inclusive

education have prompted me to investigate issues surrounding education provision for disabled children in armed conflicts.

### **2.3 The practice of education before, during and after armed conflict**

The final revelation from literature is that various practice issues affect education in conflict settings including conflict itself which is a major barrier to education (UNESCO, 2011, 2015). Though education provision legally falls to governments, evidence indicates that education in conflict settings is also provided by civil society organisations, rebel movements, criminal networks and NGOs (Boyden & Ryder, 1996; Obura, 2003; Sommers, 2002; UNESCO, 2011). This spectrum of providers leads one to infer the varied nature of education in conflicts and indicates that teachers are not the only professionals involved but there are also humanitarian workers, civil leaders, army officials and rebels. This has implications for education programming and curriculum.

Boyden and Ryder (1996) suggest that the 'most effective education programmes are those based on curricula derived from the situation of the children and relevant to their everyday concerns' (p. 31). Smith (2005) notes that the stage approach is widely used in programming education in conflict settings. Based on these perspectives, I have used the main stages of conflict as understood by Byrne (1996), Brahm (2003) and Seitz (2004) to map out education provision. Figure 2 summarises my findings from literature at various stages of conflict.

Figure 2: Educational programming

Stage of armed conflict	Dominant curriculum	S i l e n t  c u r r i c u l u m
Pre-conflict	Ordinary	
Conflict/emergency	Emergency	
Recovery	Peace	
Post-conflict/Reconstruction	None	

Figure 2 shows that education programming in conflict settings takes place in four stages. The pre-conflict stage is dominated by the ordinary curriculum usually designed by governments in power. In most African countries, this curriculum is inherited from colonialists, focuses on literacy and numeracy, uses foreign textbooks and has a centralised examination system (Kelly & Odama, 2011). As it is colonial, the ordinary curriculum might not incorporate conflict prevention.

The conflict stage is dominated by the emergency curriculum which is apparently based on the protective purpose of education and uses one size fits all resources such as refugee education packages as in Rwanda and Dadaab (Obura, 2003) and is standardised by the INEE (2010). However, Nicolai and Triplehorn (2003) reported that schools in Chechnya were bombarded during class hours and similarly schools were scenes of atrocities in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide. To mitigate this happening again, the INEE released 'Protecting education in countries affected by conflict resource pack' (INEE, 2012) which spells out how education can be protected and sustained.

The recovery stage is dominated by peace education which promotes knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about changes in behaviour that will enable conflict prevention, conflict resolution and create conditions conducive to peace (Fountain, 1999; Harber & Sakade, 2009). Though peace education has been endorsed by various organisations as the gold standard of education in conflicts, it has been challenged by scholars who consider it to be based on 'a flawed understanding of human psychology' (Boyden & Ryder, 1996, p. 4). There is, however, need for research evidence to support this assertion.

The last stage is post-conflict. From the literature reviewed, it has not been possible to discern a dominant curriculum and evidence has pointed towards varied curricula. For instance, Stabback (2004) reported that in Bosnia and Herzegovina, three parallel curricula representing the heritage of each of its peoples- Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs- emerged during and after the conflict. In her doctoral thesis, Winthrop (2009) reported tension between two policymakers: one arguing for rapid restoration of a pre-conflict formal curriculum and the other arguing for expressive activities aimed at psychosocial support. This difference of position signals the uncertain nature of the curriculum in post-conflict settings that needs to be investigated.

As indicated in Figure 2, traversing all stages of conflict is the silent curriculum. This has been defined as 'all the things that are learnt during schooling in addition to the official curriculum' (Meighan & Siraj-Blatchford, 2003, p. 65). The silent curriculum is unnoticeably linked to the informal education which might be suppressed by colonial education in the public domain. This silent curriculum might also have positive and negative faces depending on the stage of conflict

and might be delivered by various actors present in the setting. Given that it is hidden, there is hardly any research on the silent curriculum in conflict settings.

## **2.4 Statement of the problem**

The review of literature in this chapter has highlighted theoretical issues linked to the conceptualisations of education, disability and conflict; and the unsettled relationship between education and conflict conceptualised as the paradox of education. It has captured policy tensions between Education for All and inclusive education, and practice issues related to education at various stages of conflict. It has also identified the lack research on the education of disabled children in conflict settings which I perceive to be unfair. In my opinion, the theoretical, policy and practice issues that remain unresolved have stalled the progress of education. It is against this background that I have arrived at the research aims and questions in an endeavour to address this gap in the field of education in conflict.

## **2.5 Research aims and questions**

The focus of my study is to investigate the education of children with disabilities in an armed conflict setting and how it could be improved. This aim is advanced through the following subsidiary aims:

- a) Understanding the interfaces between education, disability and armed conflict
- b) Examining education provision for children with disabilities in each stage
- c) Developing a theory or framework to improve education in a conflict setting.

These aims are to be achieved using the following guiding research questions:

1. What does 'education' and 'disability' mean in an armed conflict setting?
2. What is the nature of education at each stage of armed conflict?
3. What is the purpose of education in each stage of armed conflict?
4. Which issues are associated with the education of children with disabilities?
5. How can a model for educating children with disabilities be visualised in a post-conflict setting?

These research questions are to be investigated in a specific setting where education, disability and armed conflict intersect. For this purpose, Uganda has been selected as a convenient location (see Sections 1.4 and 3.4.2).

## **2.6 Chapter summary**

In this chapter, I have offered a review of relevant literature and highlighted issues that lie at the intersections between education and disability in conflict settings. I have discussed the theoretical difficulties at the heart of this study such as understanding the concepts of education, disability and conflict; then the paradox of education and the contested purpose of education. I have outlined policy contradictions inherent in literature such as those between Education for All and inclusive education. I have reflected on practice issues and mapped out the perceived struggle by practitioners to link education to stages of conflict. This review of literature has allowed me to arrive at questions that are to guide this study. In the next chapter, I trace the steps taken to construct an appropriate research approach.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH APPROACH

Meeting the research aims and answering the questions necessitated an appropriate approach. Before arriving at this approach, I referred to a range of research methodology textbooks including Denzil and Lincoln (2005), Cohen et al. (2007), Crotty (2009), and Creswell (2013). The use of terms such as ‘research approach’, ‘research design’ and ‘research strategy’ was confusing. The discrepancies in their usage meant I had to be clear about how I used them in my study. In this endeavour, I used ‘research approach’ as a broader term to refer to the aspects of my methodology and methods that I employed while investigating the research questions.

This chapter describes these aspects which are summarised in Figure 3 below so that the reader is able to make judgements about the quality of my findings, thoroughness of my analysis and reasonableness of my conclusions.

Figure 3: Research approach



As displayed in Figure 3, my research approach comprised of five aspects.

### 3.1 Research aims and questions

The first aspect of my approach was arriving at research aims and questions. These were derived from the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Throughout the study, the research aims and questions influenced the choice of my research strategy, specific design, methods and authenticity.



## **3.2 Research strategy**

This was the second aspect of my approach. I understood research strategy as a plan of action that I was to take to study phenomenon and it needed to be appropriate to facilitate the effective answering of my questions (Creswell, 2009; Robson, 2002; Silverman, 2005). In literature, I came across a variety of strategies including phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, case study and narrative research (Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2013; Crotty, 2009; Somekh & Lewin, 2011). Upon reading about these strategies, I discovered narrative research dealt with life stories; phenomenology described the nature of experienced phenomenon; grounded theory focused on generating theory; ethnography offered a holistic view on the workings of cultural groups; and case study involved an in-depth study of cases (Creswell, 2013).

In light of my research aims and questions, I thought of using case study as it offered in-depth, purposive, situational and thick descriptions (Stake, 2000). This meant I would collect rich data on education in conflict settings. However, upon reflection, I realised that case study would only allow me to achieve the first and second subsidiary aims: (i) understand the interfaces between education, disability and conflict; and (ii) examine education provision for disabled children in each stage of conflict. This meant it would be problematic to achieve the third aim which was developing a framework for education in conflict settings. This limitation led me to consider grounded theory.

### **3.2.1 Deciding on a grounded theory strategy**

In reading about grounded theory, I discovered that it was developed in answer to criticism by positivists that qualitative or interpretive research was unscientific,

unsystematic, unreliable and only useful as a pre-study to quantitative or scientific research (Charmaz, 2000; Creswell, 2013; Dey, 1999; Hallberg, 2006; Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006). In their seminal work titled 'The discovery of grounded theory', Glaser and Strauss defended qualitative research as a field of inquiry in its own right (Hallberg, 2006). Reading more literature on grounded theory revealed varied strategies like classic Glaserian, evolved Straussian and constructivist Charmazian strategies (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2013; Dey, 1999; Draucker et al., 2007; Hallberg, 2006; McCann & Clark, 2003; Mills et al., 2006; Stern, 1994).

Also referred to as traditional or orthodox grounded theory, classic Glaserian strategy was based on the seminal work of Glaser and Strauss where they explained how theory could be discovered through systematically generating data and sequentially analysing it (Cooney, 2010; Glaser, 2001, 2004). It assumed that 'We do not know what we are looking for when we start. Everything emerges. We do not preconceive anything. The research problem emerges, concepts emerge, the relevant literature emerges, and finally the theory emerges' (Glaser, 2001, p. 176). This meant most aspects of research emerged as the study progressed. It implied that I was to ignore existing literature and start my study with no or few preconceptions.

In addition, classic Glaserian strategy was underpinned by assumptions such as the neutrality of the researcher, the search for objectivity, and the discovery of unchanging reality and theory (Charmaz, 2000, 2006; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Hallberg, 2006; McCann & Clark, 2003). Given I had preconceptions from my personal experience and literature, I could not start my research *tabula rasa*

(Robson, 2002). I thus decided not to adopt this strategy but consider evolved Straussian strategy.

Also referred to as reformulated or modified grounded theory, evolved Straussian strategy was based on the writings of Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin. In their first book 'Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques', they did not believe in the pre-existence of theory to be discovered as suggested by Glaser. Instead, they affirmed that 'reality cannot actually be known, but is always interpreted' (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 22). They claimed that doing analysis was making interpretations and the initial review of literature enhanced theoretical sensitivity rather than contaminate data (Hallberg, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This was a key departure from Glaser for Strauss and Corbin focused on verifying data with the aim of developing rather than discovering theory (Cooney, 2010; Stern, 1994). Though I admired the aspects of developing theory and using literature to enhance theoretical sensitivity, I did not take the evolved Straussian strategy as it lacked the social justice dimension which was a key feature of my study.

From this review of literature, it became evident that neither classic nor evolved grounded theory strategies would allow me to effectively answer my research questions and achieve my aims. This realisation led me to consider Katy Charmaz' constructivist strategy which assumed that 'We are part of the world we study and the data we collect. We construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices' (Charmaz, 2006, p. 10).

By this assumption, constructivist grounded theory rejected the discovery, development and verification of theory in Glaserian and Straussian strategies

respectively. Instead, it advocated for the construction of theory and this implied there was no fixed truth as knowledge was provisional, contextualised, and socially constructed (Bogdan & Knopp, 2003; Charmaz, 2006; Hallberg, 2006; Woods, 1999). The assumptions inherent in the constructivist strategy reshaped the interaction between researchers and participants as they co-constructed data and co-produced meaning (Mills et al., 2006). As constructivist grounded theory adopted some of the classic and evolved grounded theory tools as guidelines (Charmaz, 2005), it was adaptable to my research needs. I therefore used a constructivist strategy as a template to design an appropriate style for my study.

### **3.2.2 Locating my research style in the paradigmatic debate**

Considering my research questions and how to effectively answer them prompted a reflection on my beliefs about the nature of knowledge and the phenomena I was researching. In literature, these beliefs were conceptualised as philosophical assumptions and one way of understanding them was using the word 'paradigm'. Derived from Thomas Kuhn, a 'paradigm' meant a set of philosophical assumptions about the researched phenomena, how it could be understood and the purpose of research (Creswell, 2009; Crotty, 2009; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Hammersley, 2012; Willis, 2007). In this study, 'paradigm' meant a 'basic belief system or worldview' that guided me as a researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105).

In methodological literature, paradigms were broken down into ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology (Creswell, 2013; Crotty, 2009; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Ontology related to beliefs about the nature of phenomena and epistemology to how phenomena could be known (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Though some scholars believed that it was conceptually impossible to separate

ontology and epistemology for how phenomena was known was constrained by what phenomena was, others argued that ontology and epistemology were not tightly linked (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Effectively, ontology and epistemology were treated separately in the research style I constructed. Then, methodology related to assumptions about methods and axiology to the purpose of research and its underpinning values (Creswell, 2013). My beliefs on ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology served as the foci around which I located my study in the wider paradigmatic debate.

The methodological literature I reviewed indicated that in the wider paradigmatic debate, attempts were made to discern paradigms in education research. Some scholars used methodology to distinguish between quantitative and qualitative as two competing paradigms; and others discerned scientific and interpretive paradigms using the distinction between ontology and epistemology (Brannen, 1992; Bryman, 1988; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Hammersley, 2012). Other scholars conceptualised scientific, interpretive, critical and constructivism or constructionism as paradigms in their own right (Creswell, 2013; Crotty, 2009; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Popkewitz, 1984). More so, mixed methods was also portrayed as a new paradigm (Creswell, 2013; Hammersley, 2012; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

As the above exposition testifies, there was no agreement on the nature of paradigms and the labels given were not used consistently. This led to recurrent disputes among scholars referred to as 'paradigm wars' (Gage, 1989; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). In effect, the four paradigms described below were some of the constructions that represented sophisticated views prevalent in education research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). My aim in

describing them is not to offer a comprehensive review but to enable the reader to understand how I positioned my research style in the paradigmatic debate.

Also referred to as positivist or quantitative, researchers in the scientific paradigm argued that reality existed independently of the research process (Creswell, 2013; Crotty, 2009; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). They took an objectivist position in which knowledge and values were real in the researched phenomena and if one went about it in the right way using appropriate methods they could discover objective truth (Crotty, 2009). They used methods like randomised control trials, experimentation and statistical modelling to eliminate subjective factors from the research process (Creswell, 2013; Hammersley, 2012; Somekh & Lewin, 2011).

Critics of the scientific paradigm argued that it failed to: (i) take into account the distinctive character of human social life which involved meanings and values; (ii) recognise the role of the researcher in constructing phenomena; and (iii) it was dehumanising as it encouraged treating people in numerical terms (Hammersley, 2012; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). In relation to my research, I found this paradigm restrictive as its value free and detached nature would not fully aid in researching my questions and achieving my aims linked to social justice. I then considered locating my study within the interpretive paradigm.

Also referred to as naturalistic or qualitative, researchers in the interpretive paradigm assumed a fundamental difference between the nature of phenomena investigated by natural sciences and those studied by educational researchers (Creswell, 2013; Crotty, 2009; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). They argued that we could not understand human action and institutions without grasping how researchers interpreted phenomena and what their perceptions, beliefs and attitudes were (Hamersley, 2012). In contrast to the scientific paradigm which relied on an

objectivist epistemology, the interpretive paradigm was mainly underpinned by subjectivist epistemology that assumed 'meaning does not come out of an interplay between subject and object but is imposed on the object by the subject' (Crotty, 2009, p. 9). Though it was believed that inter-subjectivity was another epistemology that informed the interpretive paradigm (Crotty, 2009; Hammersley, 2012), I have deliberately not included it in this paradigm but placed it in the constructivist paradigm due to its ability to socially construct knowledge.

The interpretive paradigm employed strategies like narrative research, phenomenological research, classic and evolved grounded theory, ethnography, and case study (Creswell, 2013; Somekh & Lewin, 2011). As noted earlier, I was tempted to use case study because it recognised complexity in the natural world and dynamism in social reality (Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 1998; Lomborg & Kirkevold, 2003). However, after discovering its weaknesses such as regarding the researcher as a spectator in the research process rather than a genuine traveller with participants (Cohen et al., 2007; Crotty, 2009; Hammersley, 2012); I considered critical and constructivism paradigms as sites to position my research style.

The critical paradigm or critical theory originated from the Frankfurt School where research was tied to ethical issues, political concerns and mainly focused on how social institutions including education systems generated injustices and legitimised inequalities. Scholars within this paradigm argued that research needed to transform society and the priority of researchers was not just to understand the world but change it by addressing injustices and inequalities through participatory and emancipatory research (Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2013; Leonardo, 2004).

Critics of critical theory argued that it was biased as it had prior assumptions on the researched phenomena, was preoccupied with research which had political consequences and operated within a narrative that reduced differences to inequality (Creswell, 2013; Hamersley, 2012). Despite these criticisms, critical theory was relevant to my study as it was concerned with the issues I was researching. Given that critical theory would allow me to investigate structures that excluded disabled children in conflict setting, I integrated some of its aspects in my style.

The final paradigm I wish to comment on is constructivism or constructionism. Within literature, constructivism was the most heterogeneous paradigm and was considered a strategy within interpretive paradigm thus resurrecting the paradigm wars (Crotty, 2009, Hammersley, 2012; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). For the purpose of this study, I treated constructivism as a separate paradigm which took the view that social phenomena could only be understood by describing the processes by which they were produced in given contexts over time (Burr, 2003).

Constructivism was informed by an inter-subjectivist epistemology that assumed reality was not permanent and knowledge was not objective but socially constructed by those involved in the research process (Creswell, 1998; Mills et al., 2006; Robson, 2002). It challenged the objectivist epistemology prevalent in the scientific paradigm and advocated for the co-construction of knowledge and phenomena (Crotty, 2009; Gergen, 1999). Constructivism called for democratic participation in research and invited researchers to consider research as a co-production of knowledge between themselves and participants. In constructivism, it was not possible to arrive at objectivity as each researcher or participant encountered the world from a constructed perspective and none viewed the world

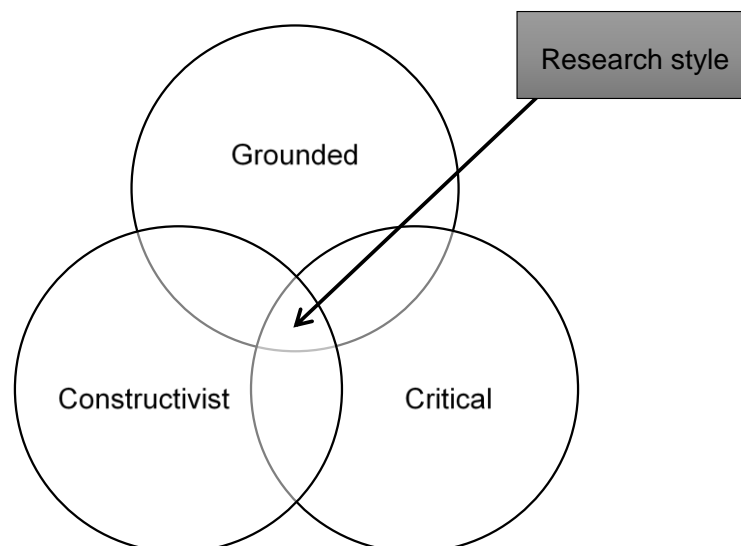


from no position at all (Burr, 2003). This constructivist epistemology and ontology were relevant to my study and were used to inform the Charmazian strategy I was using as a template to arrive at my style.

### 3.2.3 Taking a critical, grounded and constructivist style

As discussed, none of the paradigms gave me all the tools necessary to conduct my study. Given paradigms were loosely defined and overlapped (Lincoln & Guba, 1994), it was possible to construct a research style which allowed me to effectively find answers to my questions and achieve my aims. My style was based on the assumption that knowledge was constructed using grounded theory methods for critical purposes. This assumption was broken down into three assumptions: critical, grounded, and constructivist. The relationships between them are demonstrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4: A critical, grounded and constructivist style



My research style was critical and this was in response to the phenomena I was researching. Some research had indicated that the majority of disabled children were excluded from educational activities in conflict settings and the few who

accessed education were marginalised (Reilly, 2010; Trani et al., 2011; UNESCO, 2010; World Vision, 2007). Other literature had shown that the poor quality of education received by disabled people was inseparable from their inferior status in society (Barnes & Sheldon, 2007). Based on my concern for social justice, I considered this unfair and embarked on this study with the aim of constructing knowledge that could contribute to improving education for disabled children. This was the critical aspect of my style for any research that confronted social injustice and worked towards fairness and equality was critical (Charmaz, 2005; Klincheloe & McLaren, 2005).

Some scholars might argue that my research style was not critical as it did not use participatory and emancipatory methods, it was done to disabled people and in doing so perpetuated unequal power relationships already experienced by oppressed people (Barnes & Sheldon, 2007; Oliver, 1992). Taking this into consideration, I thought of using participatory and emancipatory methods. However, upon reflection, I realised their limitations. First, I was not living in the conflict setting and this limited my time to effectively use the methods to generate ample data. Second, emancipatory and participatory research emerged and flourished in the individualistic Western world where disabled people and their organisations had the capacity to control the research process (Barnes & Sheldon, 2007). This was not consistent with the communitarian practices of the African people. Third, disabled people taking control of research in Uganda was not going to be feasible as most of them had never accessed formal education, lacked basic needs and their priorities in life were different from those in the Western world. Finally, given I was to import the idea of emancipatory and participatory research from the Western world, it could easily be interpreted as perpetuating scholarly colonialism already experienced by scholars in Africa

(Meekosha, 2011). Effectively, my research style was critical from a different perspective. For instance, it challenged scholarly colonialism and was open to research methods constructed in the setting such as Africanised interviews which were embedded in the customs of the African people (see Sections 1.6 and 6.2.3).

This critical research style was combined with grounded theory so as to sharpen the scope of my study (Charmaz, 2005). As none of the grounded theory strategies reviewed in Section 3.2.1 fitted the phenomena I was researching, I selected three features which were relevant: emergence, evolution and iteration.

First, the design in this study was emergent. According to its founders, emergence was at the core of grounded theory (Glaser, 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This was confirmed by Glaser (2001) who indicated that in grounded theory everything emerged including the research problem, literature and theory. This was the case in my study where the research questions emerged from literature, methodology emerged from literature, and some methods and tools emerged from the settings. Also, focused codes emerged from data and concepts emerged from both data and literature.

Second, though the place of literature in grounded theory studies was contentious, it evolved as my study progressed. In Glaserian, Straussian and Charmazian strategies, literature review was to happen after data collection to avoid importing pre-conceived ideas and contaminating data (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Other scholars like Morse (2001) suggested that literature needed to be 'bracketed' and only used for comparison with emerging categories. However, Coffey et al. (1996) argued that a researcher who was not aware of relevant literature was in danger of

reinventing the wheel. Taking this into consideration, literature was neither bracketed nor happened after data collection but evolved and was used as a dialogue partner throughout the study. In other words, there were conversations between research participants, data, literature and me the researcher.

Third, this study aimed at constructing theory and this was done iteratively. Though the word 'theory' was difficult to define as it referred to different things including evolving explanations, predictions, craft knowledge and personal reflection (Cooper, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Thomas & James, 2006); theory was understood as a conceptual framework on how education for disabled children could be improved. The type of theory constructed was substantive: localised theory linked to the setting rather than formal theory which would apply to circumstances beyond the setting (Denscombe, 2007). So, iteration in this study involved going forwards and backwards in the construction of data, its analysis and discussion during the construction of theory.

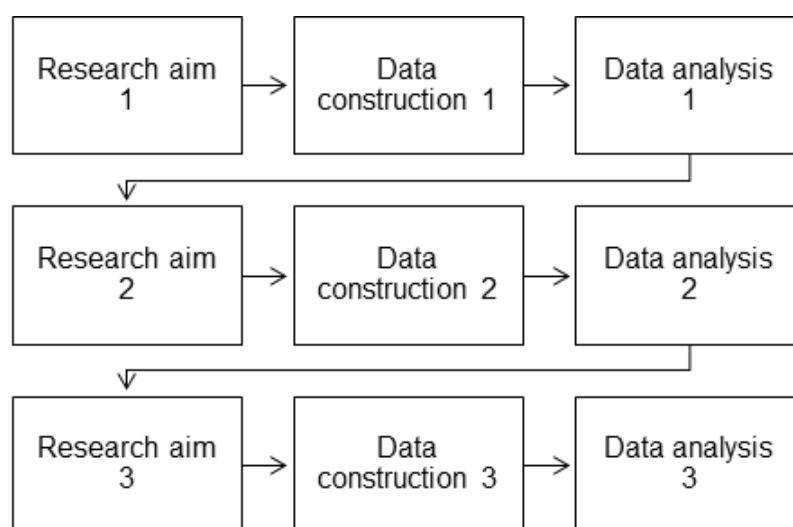
Finally, my research style was constructivist because it had constructivism or constructionism as its underpinning epistemology. In his work, Crotty (2009) described three epistemologies: subjectivism, objectivism and constructionism. Subjectivism maintained that meaning was imposed by people's minds, what was perceived was real and there was no reality independent of the perceiver. Contrary to subjectivism, objectivism held the view that meaningful reality existed independently of consciousness, objects and experience which had intrinsic meaning within them; and objective truth was discoverable if one went about it in the right way.

By contrast, constructivism rejected the existence of objective truth waiting to be discovered. It conceded that truth and meaning were constructed based on personal experience, co-constructed by the researcher and participants, and could change over time (Crotty, 2009; Gergen, 1999; Mills et al., 2006; Robson, 2002). Embracing this constructivist and inter-subjectivist epistemology was a straight forward decision for me as it was compatible with the critical stance and grounded theory features I had embedded in my research style. To conclude, my study was underpinned by critical, grounded and constructivist assumptions which were vital in constructing my research design.

### 3.3 Specific research design

This was the third aspect of my approach. Research design was understood as how my aims and questions were transformed into a research project (Robson, 2002). As opposed to fixed designs which specified steps before data collection (Robson, 2002), the design of this study emerged. This is visible in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Emergent research design

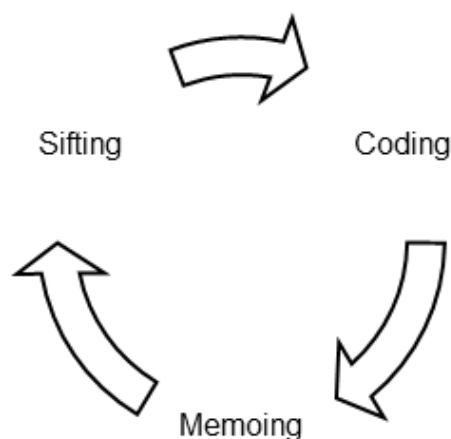


In this design, the three subsidiary aims led to three stages of data construction and three levels of analysis.

In some literature, data was understood as what the researcher saw or heard which was collected or recorded, and as evidence that supported the research findings (Holliday, 2002; Lempert, 2007). However, Glaser (2001) suggested that 'All is data' (p. 145). This meant data was varied. Taking this into consideration, I understood data as all the evidence used to answer my questions and achieve my aims. As elaborated in the next aspect of my approach (see Section 3.4), data included questionnaires, literature, photographs and interviews. Once data was constructed, it was analysed.

Data analysis was 'the process of making sense of, sifting, organizing, cataloguing, selecting determining themes - processing data' (Holliday, 2002, p. 99). In my design, there were three levels of analysis which were often concurrent with data construction and vice versa. In each level, analysis involved cycles of sifting, coding and memoing as captured in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Data analysis cycle



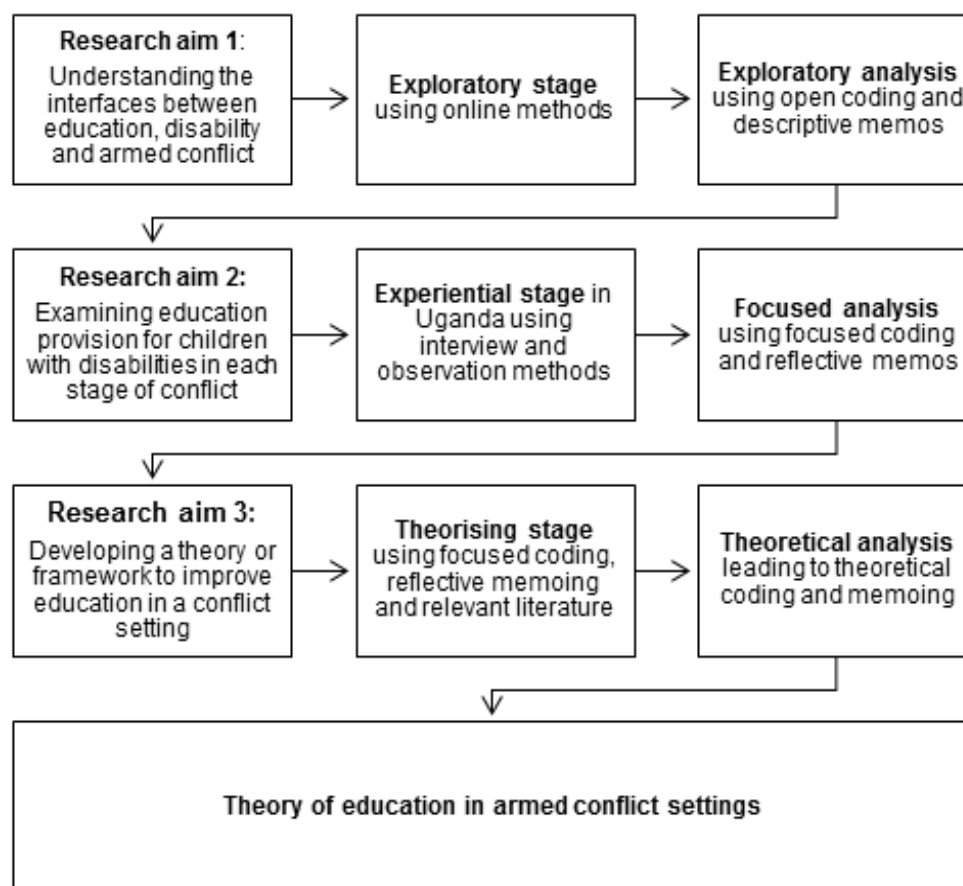
While sifting entailed preparing data, coding involved breaking, naming, interpreting, categorising, summarising and putting data together in new ways (Bryman, 1988; Charmaz, 2006; Holton, 2007; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). During this process, open, focused and theoretical codes were used (Charmaz, 2006).

Open coding was the first analytic step and involved 'actively naming data' (Charmaz, 2006, p. 47). This was followed by focused coding which looked for patterns and theoretical coding that articulated relationships in data (Corbin, 1990; Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Charmaz, 2006). Examples of focused codes such as 'dehumanisation by conflict' and 'a curriculum that touches conscience' are in Chapter 4; and theoretical codes such as 'broken communities' and 'Africanising education' in Chapter 5.

In addition to coding, memoing was used. Memoing was not just a method of making notes but a process of interacting with data and thinking about it, developing ideas and clarifying them, directing the coding process and exploring relationships between codes (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Throughout this study, various descriptive, reflective and theoretical memos were written to develop ideas, identify gaps and summarise my thinking.

Figure 7 on the next page shows how research aims, codes and memos interacted at various stages. It shows that the first research aim led to the exploratory stage where data was constructed using online methods, analysed using open coding and preserved using descriptive memos. In this stage, codes and memos acted as bases for the second research aim investigated during the experiential stage where data was constructed using interviews and observation, analysed using focused coding and captured in reflective memos. This data formed the basis for the final theorising stage where relationships were sought between relevant focused codes and reflective memos. This led to theoretical codes and memos which were used to construct the integrating concept in which a theory of education was presented.

Figure 7: Data analysis mapping



Given that my research style involved iteration, data from the exploratory stage was re-analysed during the experiential stage and integrated in the findings (see Chapter 4). Then, research findings were interpreted in new light using literature to form the theory of education in conflict settings. I now expand on the methods I used in each stage.

### 3.4 Research methods

This penultimate aspect of my approach relates to the ‘specific research techniques’ (Silverman, 2005, p. 99) used to sample, construct and analyse data. It also reveals how techniques were adapted at various stages of the study to fit my research style.



### **3.4.1 Research methods during the exploratory stage**

In this initial stage, I wished to gain insight into the interfaces between education and disability in conflict settings. This involved sampling data, constructing it using online methods and analysing it using coding and memoing.

#### **3.4.1.1 Sampling**

Marshall and Rossman (2010) suggested that settings, events, actors and artifacts could be sampled. In this exploratory stage, I used convenience and purposeful sampling to select participants based on their potential knowledge, their experience of living in the setting and their willingness to participate in my study (Glaser, 2001; Morse, 2007). I therefore selected participants who had worked, studied, researched, and lived in the conflict setting of Uganda.

Sampling started in April 2012 and four techniques were used. First, I made an online search on the INEE database for potential participants in the thematic area of inclusive education and with geographical expertise in Uganda. I identified and sent out 48 requests by email inviting them to participate in my study. The email contained a standard letter introducing me as a doctoral researcher, the focus of my research and a request to participate (see Appendix A). Second, I used Google search engine to identify people and organisations working in the fields of education, disability and children rights in Uganda. Using this technique, I located the database compiled by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in January 2011 that contained details of organisations and individuals working in Uganda. Third, I used my Yahoo email address book to identify contacts in England and Uganda. Fourth, some of the participants I contacted recommended 8 potential participants. By the end of sampling, I had sent 103 invitations of which 43 showed interest and 27 participated.

### 3.4.1.2 Online methods

In relation to how data was constructed, online methods such as web searches, emails and questionnaire were used during the exploratory stage. Web searches were used to locate contacts and relevant documents. Emails were used to invite participants, sustain communication, send and receive questionnaires. The online questionnaire was the main method to construct data in this stage. It was sent to 43 participants who showed interest. However, those who received it might not have been the only ones to see it. For example, one recipient confirmed asking her secretary to complete the questionnaire on her behalf. This introduced in the issue of the ownership of response as it was not always clear that it was the recipient of the questionnaire who completed it. Effectively, authenticity was one of the issues and therefore a limitation as reported in Chapter 6.

The questionnaire was available only in English and this meant those who did not know English were excluded. It was available in three formats: Microsoft word, Microsoft pdf and online at <http://kwiksurveys.com> website. There were three ways of returning it: email, post and saving it on the kwiksurveys.com website. The gradual sending out of online questionnaires started in June 2012. To allow participants respond at a time convenient to them, there was no return by date. However, towards the end of July 2012, I sent an email reminding anyone who wished to participate but had not completed the questionnaire to do so. By the end of July 2012, I had received 27 responses.

The overview in Table 1 gives the total number of participants. Children do not feature in this exploratory stage as they were not invited to participate due to ethical issues that I will discuss later. In addition, two disabled people of Ugandan origin living in England and Belgium were invited but it was not clear if one of them was among the unidentified participants (see Appendix B).

Table 1: Overview of online participants

<b>Total number of participants</b>	27
<b>Online method used</b>	6 completed an email questionnaire 21 completed a website questionnaire 0 completed a pdf questionnaire
<b>Gender breakdown</b>	14 males 9 females 4 withheld
<b>Sectors represented</b>	Education, international non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations, finance, public sector, social care, human rights, research consultancy and unidentified
<b>Profiles</b>	Lecturer, Professor, Assistant lecturer, Lecturer of economics of education, Teacher , Disabled Teacher, Professional teacher, Researcher in education, Research consultant, Researcher, Human rights researcher, Student, Consultant social worker, Health care assistant, Psychological wellbeing practitioner, Social worker, Education specialist, International education consultant, Technical Advisor Education, Senior risk consultant, Programme Assistant, Public Relations Officer, Journalist and unidentified

The online questionnaire was accompanied by a letter introducing me as a doctoral researcher (see Appendix C), an information sheet about my study (see Appendix D) and a consent form (see Appendix E). The questionnaire comprised of five sections (see Appendix F). To reflect the emergent nature of this study, the questionnaire was modified depending on data generated in previous responses. Questionnaires were gradually sent out to allow the integration of new questions and modification of old ones. This demonstrated the grounded and constructivist nature of my research style.

There were several advantages of using online methods. First, they allowed me to reach a large number of participants from Africa, North America and Europe. Second, they saved time for transcribing data as responses were emailed or logged on the website (Creswell, 2013). Third, they reduced the cost of travel as I accessed information from participants who had worked in various conflict settings without going there. Fourth, I physically distanced myself from some settings and eliminated suspicion that might have alienated some participants (Liamputtong, 2007). Fifth, they allowed participants time to respond without being restricted by a deadline. Sixth, online methods were non-intrusive with less possibility to disrupt normality for participants (Denscombe, 2002). However, the use of questionnaires had limitations about the authenticity of who completed them and the inability to involve children but this was mitigated by interview methods. In essence, online methods fitted my grounded, critical and constructivist style.

### 3.4.1.3 Exploratory analysis

Once data was collected, it was analysed. As explained in the design (see Figure 6), analysis entailed sifting, coding and memoing. Sifting was the first step which involved preparing data and putting it together for coding as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Raw data from online questionnaire

ID	Text Answers (21)	View
12947917	VERY LIMITED EQUIPMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY LEARNING, POOR HOUSING/ SCHOOL FACILITY CONSTRUCTIONS THAT DO NOT CATER FOR THE DISABLED, DISABLED CHILDREN OFTEN DROP OUT OF SCHOOL DUE TO STIGMA, ETC	<a href="#">View</a>
12955164	I don't know enough about this to answer well.	<a href="#">View</a>
12961472	I already answered this question.	<a href="#">View</a>
12963813	-it is available to few handicapped children. -Many are not accepted in learning arena but the government has built schools for them especially the deaf. -Few can access it given the stigma they suffer and the fact that they are very few Special Needs schools.	<a href="#">View</a>
12978152	There are quite few facilities for education for children with disability and is quite expensive, for instance, the school for blind. Acceptability of such education varies from people to people, some they don't see the need to take the children with disability to school as when they finish they will go back to square one as no jobs or places to accommodate them. Again there is stigma regarding disability. As I mentioned earlier this is expensive education hence, its access is for few who can afford it, otherwise public schools are not well prepared to be able to cater for the needs of children with disability.	<a href="#">View</a>
12979303	Schools are offering this education, but there is need for more awareness creation to increase access	<a href="#">View</a>
12980961	I'm not familiar with this.	<a href="#">View</a>
12994074	Don't Know	<a href="#">View</a>
12996429	Partially available and partially accessible	<a href="#">View</a>
13000998	it is available and acceptable and accessible because schools admit students without basing on their abilities, but due to beliefs and backgrounds of some children, some do not have access to them because they are believed to be different, i guess.	<a href="#">View</a>
13011878	I am not aware that the GOG has the resources or the will to address the special and high cost needs of disabled children, without strong persuasion and support from the international community. I'm not sure that an external AID driven response is a sustainable, or the best way to go?	<a href="#">View</a>
13017329	Not sure	<a href="#">View</a>
13018607	To me it both to a greater and lesser extent. To a lesser extent, this is because most schools lack enough teachers who can manage children with disabilities. Most schools are not accessible especially facilities like toilets, dormitories, laboratories and libraries. Government has not considered the recruitment of teachers with skills in special needs education and they are just posted to any school whether there are children with disabilities or not and you find schools where children with disabilities are no teacher for them. To a greater extent the government provides subvention grant to schools having children with disabilities although it's not enough. To a greater extent, the education of children with disabilities has created awareness and changed negative attitudes towards them among the community because they are no longer hiding them.	<a href="#">View</a>
13033999	Not sure	<a href="#">View</a>
13066523	available: there are special schools in urban areas throughout the country; many mainstream primary schools also include children with different impairments, but often without the support they need to achieve their optimal potential acceptable; curricula are not changed to address the needs of children with disabilities, which may not be creating equal opportunities, especially not for children with mental disabilities. If assistive devices are in place (which is often not the case) children with visual or hearing impairments could function without too many adaptations, but often it is not the case. accessible: physical accessibility should be there according to the government's Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards for all education institutes, but the realities are different. Curriculum accessibility is often also not there for children with disabilities	<a href="#">View</a>
13066606	TO A LESS EXTENT THERE ARE AVAILABLE , ACCEPTABLE AND ACCESSIBLE MOST OF THEM ARE LIMITED IN KAMPALA.	<a href="#">View</a>

Column 2 of this table shows a portion of sifted data given by participants in column 1 in response to the question: To what extent is education for children with disabilities available, acceptable and accessible in Uganda? Once data was sifted, it was coded. Figure 8 on the next page shows open codes constructed from data in Table 2 using colour coding and preserved in a OneNote file.

Figure 8: An example of initial coding

## To what extent is education for children with disabilities available, acceptable and accessible in Uganda?

Available/ In special schools in urban areas

Acceptable

Accessible/ no physical and curriculum accessibility/ why?

Enablers/ teacher training

Barriers/ curricula/ teacher support/ lack of assistive technologies/ specialist teachers

Education for children with disabilities is available and an acceptable part of Uganda's education system. Teachers are trained to handle children with disabilities. It is accessible in a few schools of people with learning disabilities. But it is not fully accessible, perhaps because stigma surrounding having a disability. Once a child is disabled, many parents don't even think of taking him/her to school.

TO A LESS EXTENT THERE ARE AVAILABLE, ACCEPTABLE AND ACCESSIBLE MOST OF THEM ARE LIMITED IN KAMPALA.

available: there are special schools in urban areas throughout the country; many mainstream primary schools also include children with different impairments, but often without the support they need to achieve their optimal potential acceptable; curricula are

In this exploratory stage, open coding facilitated the construction of provisional codes such as 'available' and 'accessible' which allowed me to see the direction in which to take the study and arrive at new codes to further the inquiry in subsequent stages (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978, 2004; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As the study progressed to the experiential stage, some codes were changed to reflect emerging data. As my research style involved iteration, all data collected in this exploratory stage was re-analysed during the experiential stage and reported in Chapter 4.

In addition to coding, descriptive and reflective memos related to codes were written during the analysis. Writing memos was not just a method of making notes but a process of interacting with data, thinking about it, developing ideas, directing the coding process, and exploring relationships and connections (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This occurred in the experiential research stage.

### **3.4.2 Research methods during the experiential stage**

In this intermediary stage, I wished to experience education provision for disabled children living in the conflict setting of Uganda. Like the exploratory stage, this stage involved sampling, constructing data and analysing it.

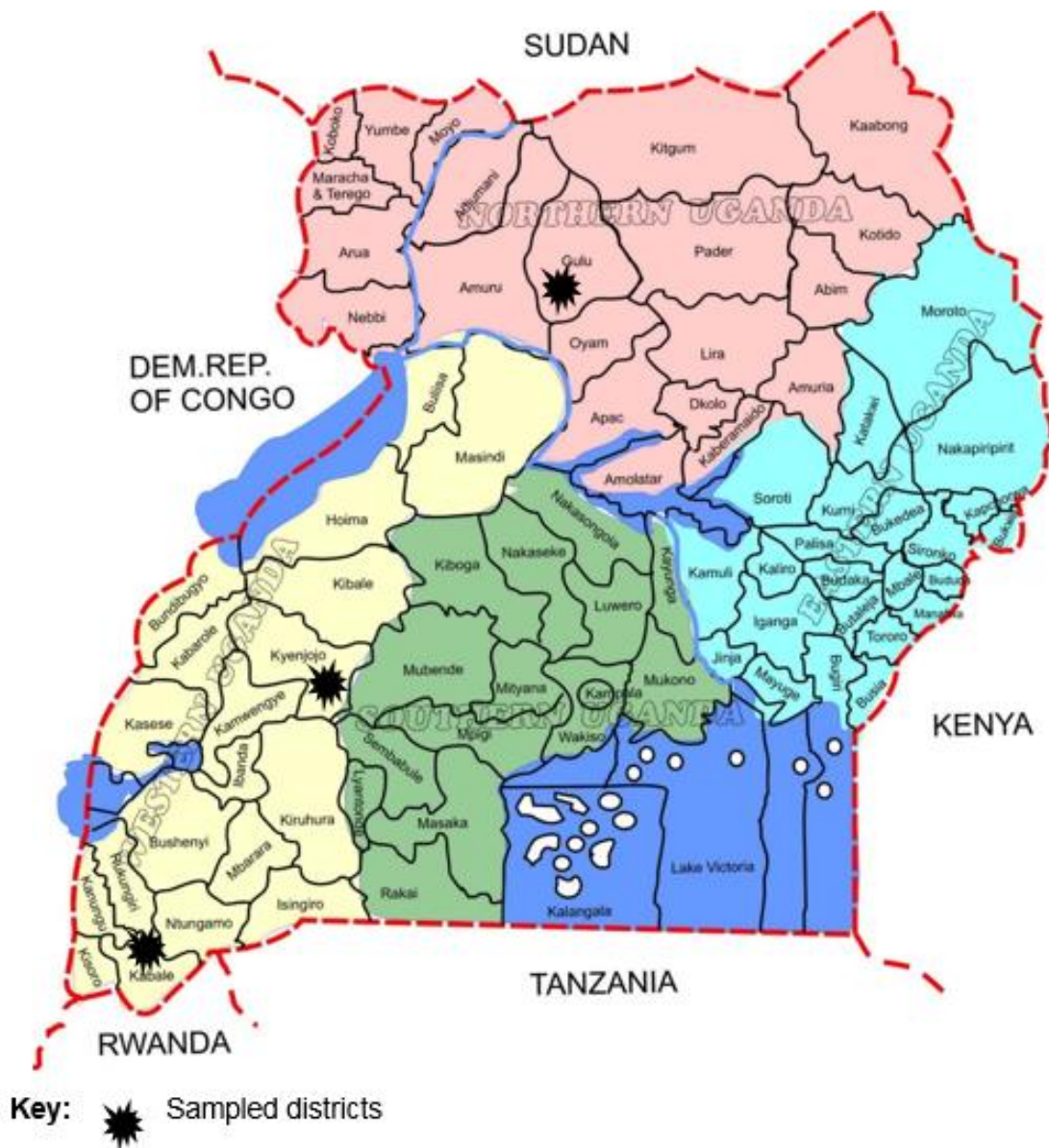
#### **3.4.2.1 Sampling**

Purposeful sampling was used while choosing the setting and the following aspects were taken into consideration: a history and stage of conflict, a range of educational activities and a variety of research participants. After considering these aspects, rather than conduct research about the whole of Uganda, small settings which were logistically manageable were selected (Holliday, 2002). Taking into consideration the second subsidiary aim of my study which was to examine education provision in each stage of conflict, I initially selected three settings to reflect each stage.

The first setting was Kyenjojo in Western Uganda selected because it was convenient: it is where my parents lived, had experienced relative peace and in my opinion could be classed as pre-conflict. The second setting was Kabale also in Western Uganda which was purposefully selected because it was receiving refugees from neighbouring Congo and could be classed as in the emergency stage. The third setting was Gulu which was also purposefully selected because it was in Northern Uganda which, after twenty-three years of conflict, was transitioning from 'a region in crisis to one focused on rebuilding and recovering' (Kelly & Odama, 2011, p. 2).

When I started establishing contacts in these settings, Kabale was ruled out for safety reasons and was no longer convenient for me as a researcher (Burgess, 1984). Given my aim for the study was to improve education in a conflict setting, Gulu became the primary research setting rather than Kyenjojo. This meant I was to construct data on how education was provided in Gulu at various stages of conflict and data from Kyenjojo was to be used for triangulation. The black stars on the map below show the districts that were sampled.

Figure 9: Map of Uganda



(Map Adapted from Traynor, 2010)



This map shows Uganda is divided into four regions: Northern, Western, Eastern and Southern regions. Three districts in two regions were sampled: Gulu in Northern Uganda, and Kabale and Kyenjojo in Western Uganda.

After the settings, participants were purposefully sampled. Sampling started in June 2012 and involved selecting participants because of their knowledge of the districts I was to conduct my study (Burgess, 1984). Participants were selected depending on whether they were: (i) living in the settings; (ii) had observed, experienced or worked in conflict settings; and (iii) had disabilities or were connected to disabled people. In addition, given I had been informed by a humanitarian worker that people in Gulu were 'interview tired' (FB), I attempted to minimise tiredness by allowing participants who participated in my interviews to recommend potential participants.

Often the first participants accompanied me to the next interview, stayed during the interview and concluded the session with sharing food and drinks as per their custom. In this way interviews became Africanised: they were communal events embedded in the lives of people in a relaxed atmosphere rather than individualised sessions to reminisce the horrors of protracted conflict that would increase tiredness (also see Sections 1.6 and 6.2.3). Given interview participants were often selected by fellow participants as the study progressed, they were given some control of the research process. This reflected the critical and constructivist style of my research. Table 3 on the next page shows all the participants sampled during the experiential stage in the two settings in Uganda (see Appendix G for details).

Table 3: Sampling of participants for experiential stage

Sector	Contacted	Showed interest	Participated
Education	18	18	18
International Non-governmental organisations	3	1	0
Civil society organisations	2	2	1
Leadership	7	7	6
Public sector	5	1	1
Community	9	9	8
Research and consultancy	1	1	1
Total	45	39	35

This table gives the total number of participants. The last row shows that 35 of the 45 people contacted participated. This translated to a high degree of participation of approximately 78 percent. However, the highest number of people contacted and did not participate were public sector workers. While one showed interest when contacted by email, I could not access him in Uganda due to security and bureaucratic reasons. Other public sector workers might have feared to release privileged information because they were 'frightened of being overheard talking politics' of education (Dowden, 2014, p. 44). After public sector

workers were humanitarian workers. Only one who showed interest advised me not to visit her in Kabale due to security reasons. Being too busy and preoccupied with field work were the main reasons given. Some humanitarian workers scheduled interview appointments but did not attend them. This meant with or without appointments, they were unwilling to participate in my study and questions are raised in Chapter 5.

In relation to choosing research guides, none was needed in Kyenjojo because it was my home district. However, given the last time I visited Kyenjojo was in 2010 and there had been changes, my mother advised me about where people lived and the roles they had. In Gulu, I needed a research guide and getting one was a challenge. Before leaving England, I was in contact with a leader of a local NGO who had promised to meet me at the bus station in Gulu, arrange accommodation and be my guide. After my field study in Kyenjojo, I telephoned her to confirm my travel arrangements. However, upon arrival in Gulu at around 1500 hours, she was not at the bus station. When I telephoned her again, she picked me up and drove me around Gulu town in search for accommodation. We visited approximately eleven hotels which were fully booked and at about 1800 hours we arrived at one that had two vacant rooms. I checked into the hotel and my guide left promising she was returning at 2100 hours so that we plan my field study in Gulu. This was the last time I saw her.

After waiting for the research guide and failing to access her on her mobile phone, I discussed my situation with the receptionist at the hotel the next day. One of their staff who was off duty was called to assist me. He was in his early twenties and had completed secondary school in 2010. Due to lack of fees, he was working till he got money to pay for university. As he was proficient in both English

and Acholi, and had lived in Gulu during the conflict, I chose him as my guide and translator. We agreed a fixed pay which he was to use for university fees.

#### **3.4.2.2 Interview methods**

During the experiential stage, interview methods were used to develop the codes constructed in the exploratory stage and to generate new ones. Although methods such as telephone and group interviews were possible, I went to Uganda with the aim of conducting individualised European style interviews using interview guide questions (see Appendix H). This was for two main reasons. First, I thought individualised interviews were the best in maintaining the privacy of participants as documented in the British Educational Research Association guidelines (BERA, 2011). Second, I felt that for confidentiality reasons and to minimise danger in cases where sensitive information was shared, individualised interviews were more secure than group interviews. However, while in Uganda whenever I conducted individualised interviews, other people such as leaders, parents, neighbours and children joined in and took part.

In effect, the individualised European style interviews were not only transformed into joint interviews which were suited for cross-cultural research where people would not normally talk alone with the researcher (Liamputtong, 2007), but also family and community interviews. I conceptualised these as Africanised interviews because they were localised in the villages, emerged from the villages, were culturally constructed by the villagers and reflected the importance of the community. As I conducted Africanised interviews, I noticed participants who sat in a circular format felt more comfortable to express their views, complement each other and celebrate life as a community. These aspects were absent in the European style interviews. In essence, Africanised interviews which were a

product of the grounded, critical and constructivist style I had taken were more appropriate than the European style interviews I had intended. For more information see Sections 1.6 and 6.2.3.

By the end of the four weeks of the field study, thirty-five people from Gulu, Kyenjojo and one from Kampala had participated as visible in Table 4.

Table 4: Overview of field participants

Total number of participants	35
Interview method used	29 face to face 6 interview guide questionnaire
Gender breakdown	20 males 15 females
Sectors represented	Education, civil society organisation, leadership, public sector, community and research consultancy
Profiles of participants	Guide/ translator, College Tutors, Teacher trainees, Social worker, Headteachers, Teachers, Disabled Teacher, Teacher of children with hearing impairment, Leaders, Parents and children with disabilities

Table 4 shows disabled people such as children, a teacher and a leader were among the participants. This was partly to overcome the non-participation of disabled people during the exploratory stage.

During interviews, efforts were made to talk to disabled children in the presence of their parents. Whenever this happened, parents intervened saying their children were unable to understand. This practice not only testified that participants had power over the direction of the interview process but also manifested cultural factors such as children had no voice in public and only spoke through their parents. Consequently, disabled children were interviewed through their parents who were proxies. As proxies parents had access to certain kinds of information (Liamputtong, 2007). For this reason, only questions of fact rather than opinion were asked. During interviews, attention was paid to disabled children; and signs such as nodding and shaking of the head were interpreted as agreeing or disagreeing as per their culture.

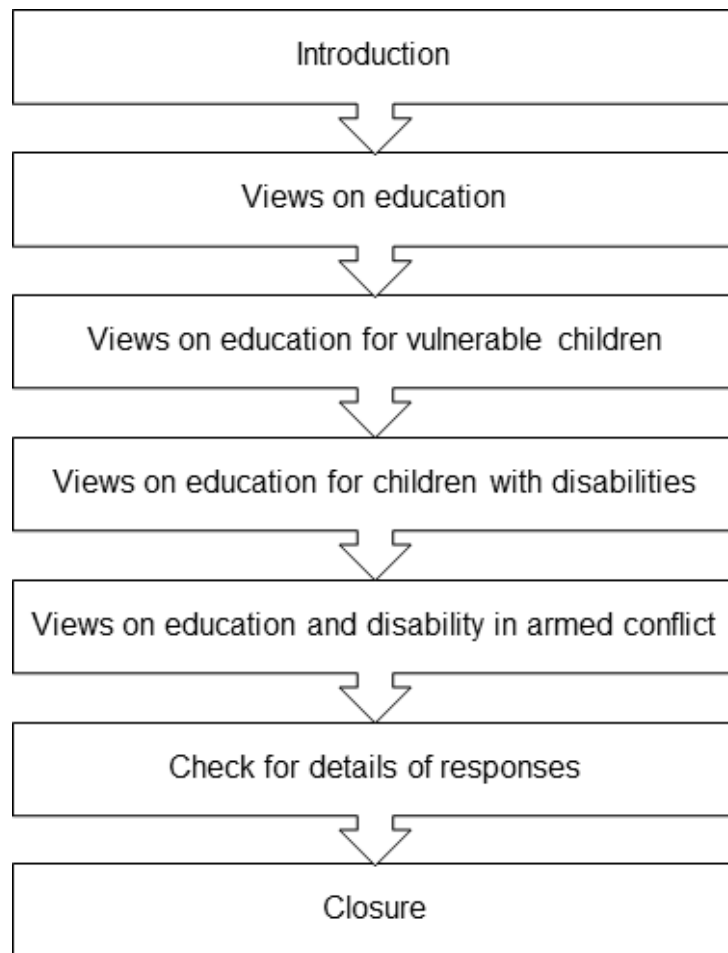
In this study, interviews were construed as 'conversations with a purpose' (Burgess, 1984, p. 102). They were more inclusive than online questionnaires as they were conducted in English, Rutooro and Acholi languages. They were conducted at the participants' location and at a time convenient to them. All interviews were digitally recorded with permission from participants and this enabled me to focus and facilitated easy storage of rich data for analysis afterwards. While preparing data, recordings of interviews were listened to and transcribed. Interviews conducted in Rutooro in Kyenjojo were translated by me as it was my mother tongue. Those conducted in Acholi in Gulu were contemporaneously translated into English by my research guide.

Participants who did not wish to engage in interviews were given the opportunity to take an interview guide questionnaire (see Appendix I). Given that my style was grounded and constructivist, questions for interviews and interview guides were not piloted but modified basing them on codes that emerged during the research process. There were benefits of conducting interviews: entering into the perspective of participants, generating data through direct verbal interaction, understanding the meaning of what was said, giving participants voice in the research process and above all creating space where knowledge was co-constructed (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Kvale, 1996; Mills et al., 2006; Patton, 2002). In essence, the flexibility of interview methods allowed the co-construction of knowledge.

#### **3.4.2.3 Observation methods**

While interview methods were used as the primary method in Kyenjojo and Gulu, I also used observation methods. Observation was the act of noticing a phenomenon (Angrosino, 2007). As opposed to being a nonparticipant observer where I was to watch phenomena and take notes, I took on the role of participant observer (Creswell, 2013). I lived in the settings for four weeks, participated in people's activities, ate their food, used the same means of transport, and others. As I could not participate in everything and observe everything, my role as a participant observer had a focus. I used observation guide sheets to record what was observed. An example of an observation guide is provided in Appendix J and an overview is given on the next page.

Figure 10: Overview of observation guide



As my inquiry was emergent and constructivist, other aspects were added to the guide as the study progressed. By the end of the study, I had observed the physical setting and noticed the effects of war on it. I also observed communities and how services such as education were delivered.

Photographs were used to capture observed phenomena as writing down everything was impossible (Creswell, 2013). To minimise the outsider-insider distance in Gulu, my research guide took some of the photographs. In other cases, I took photographs to capture moments and places that seemed significant for my study. By the end of the field study I had taken 83 photographs in Gulu and 71 in Kyenjojo. Photographs were visual diaries of observed phenomena including people, roads and classrooms. They were analogous to interview guide



responses and audio recordings. While taking photographs I was sensitive so as to avoid compromising my ability to maintain rapport and being suspected a spy thus not remaining in the field (Prosser & Schwartz, 1998). Using photographs to record data strengthened my study and challenged quantitative researchers who saw observation as unreliable in collecting data (Silverman, 2005).

#### **3.4.2.4 Focused analysis**

As data was constructed, it was preserved in the form of notes, photographs and audio recordings. As explained in the design, the process of data analysis involved sifting, interpreting, coding and memoing. During the experiential stage, sifting involved preparing interview, observation and photographic data. Data constructed using interviews was transcribed and preserved in word documents. Observation data from photographs and observation guide sheets was prepared and stored using OneNote and Nvivo. These documents were revisited several times to get a sense of the whole database (Creswell, 2013) and then analysed as exemplified in Appendix K.

Like in the exploratory stage, data was initially analysed using open coding. 'In vivo' type of open coding which used participant's own words in the naming of codes was applied (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The use of in vivo coding gave a voice to participants in the research as they preserved the meanings of their views and actions during the coding process (Charmaz, 2006). Other in vivo codes were extracted from literature which was used as a dialogue partner and others were constructed by me as a researcher.




Open coding was followed by focused coding which used the 'most significant or frequent initial codes to sort, synthesize, integrate, and organize large amounts

of data' (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46). Focused codes were more 'directed, selective, and conceptual' and they synthesised and explained larger segments of data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57). Appendix L shows how I developed the focused code 'education in conflict'. To facilitate easy reporting of data, focused codes were clustered into categories during the write up stage. For instance, the focused code 'education in conflict' became part of the category 'visions of education in conflict' (see Chapter 4).

Having constructed open and focused codes, descriptive and reflective memos were written. Descriptive memos were about narrating what was seen about a particular code. On the next page is an example of three descriptive memos about classrooms in conflict settings based on observed data stored using photographs (see Table 5).

It is worth noting that descriptive memos were written as ideas emerged in my head without taking into consideration spelling, punctuation and grammar. For example, the following errors are visible in row one of the memo in Table 5: 'even insects have', 'As they are no lockable doors', 'caretaker nor glasses', and 'one of shepherds'. As visible in Table 9, such errors were corrected during data preparation, analysis and writing up stages.

Table 5: Descriptive memos

	<p>This photograph was taken in Kyenjojo. It shows a standard size classroom constructed to accommodate about 30 children. Though it is less than 15 years, it looks old, dirty and even insects have constructed an anthill. As they are no lockable doors and there is neither a caretaker nor glasses in the windows frames, anyone can access it anytime. An informal conversation with one of shepherds who was grazing in the school compound revealed that the desks had been abandoned so as to fit in more children during lessons.</p>
	<p>This photograph was taken in Gulu. It shows two temporary classrooms constructed within the environs of a former protected village after conflict. The classrooms are mostly made out of straw. This means when it rains, both teachers and children have nowhere to escape but be rained on.</p>
	<p>This picture was taken in a primary school compound in the outskirts of Gulu town. It shows mango trees casting their shadows on the ground. During an interview with a teacher who worked in this school, he revealed that during and after conflict children were learning 'under the trees' due to shortage of classrooms.</p>

Given that not every descriptive memo was going to be relevant in the final theorising stage, reflective memos which were opportunities to reflect on the 'links between my ideas and the stories that gave rise to them' were written (Charmaz, 2006, p. 76). This is where I had conversations with myself about data, formulated ideas, played with them, reconfigured them, expanded them and used them to

initiate conversations with others (Lempert, 2007). In reflective memos, literature was used as a dialogue partner.

In addition, I used photographic elicitation which entailed using photographs to trigger memories; a sense of being there; and make links with literature (Prosser & Schwartz, 1998). Apart from Photograph 15 which was a found photograph from a website (Prosser & Schwartz, 1998), all other photographs used in this thesis were from the field study in Uganda. Effectively, reflective memos which documented emerging concepts influenced by data, photographs, literature and professional knowledge were later used during the theorising stage.

### **3.4.3 Research methods during the theorising stage**

Theorising was the final stage of my study. In this stage, my key concern was ensuring data collected in the exploratory and experiential stages and reported in Chapter 4 was appropriately interpreted and discussed. This happened in Chapter 5 where I listened to what all data including relevant literature was telling me on how education could be improved in the conflict setting. It is also in this stage that some of the focused codes and categories were transformed into 'building blocks of theory' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 101).

#### **3.4.3.1 Sampling**

As the theory was to use a portion of data, it was essential that a clear procedure was in place on how relevant codes, categories and memos were selected. In this endeavour, purposive sampling was used and involved selecting, sorting and prioritising codes and memos till the theory was complete (Morse, 2007). Also, constant comparison which entailed comparing and contrasting data helped in refining codes and integrating them into the final concept (Denscombe, 2007).

### **3.4.3.2 Theoretical analysis**

Once focused codes and reflective memos were sampled, theoretical coding which was a sophisticated level of coding that specified relationships between focused codes started (Charmaz, 2006). Theoretical coding moved analysis into a theoretical direction and without it data would 'culminate into mundane descriptions' (Charmaz, 2005, p. 511). Effectively, theoretical coding re-examined the relationships between the focused codes in Chapter 4, generated theoretical codes in Chapter 5 and led to the integrating concept in which a substantive theory was presented (see Section 5.5).

As open codes in the exploratory stage fractured data and focused codes in the experiential stage clustered it according to their similarity, theoretical codes knitted data together in Chapter 5 and told a coherent analytic story in an imaginative way (Charmaz, 2006). This story provided a framework that explained how phenomena was experienced in the setting and how it could be improved. It is worth noting that theoretical analysis was a complex process as it necessitated reflective and rigorous coding that used frameworks that were constructed from the data and that were challenged until they were considered robust. My supervisors supported this process through checking codes to ensure inter-rater consistency.

### **3.5 Research authenticity**

Given data construction and analysis were not always neutral (Charmaz, 2005, p. 510), I devised ways to minimise bias. In this final aspect of my approach, I reflect on how issues related to ethics, positionality and quality were negotiated during the research process to facilitate authenticity.

### **3.5.1 Negotiating ethical issues**

Some of the ethical issues identified in literature included access, informed consent, unintended consequences, unexpected disclosures and privacy (BERA, 2011; Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2013; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). One way of dealing with such issues was following research ethics contained in procedural ethics and microethics (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). While procedural ethics involved seeking approval from relevant ethics committees, microethics dealt with everyday dilemmas and concerns in research (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). These two approaches to research ethics were adopted in this study.

With regard to procedural ethics, principles and guidelines were provided by the key organisations linked to my research: the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011), Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST, 2010) and the University of Exeter Ethics Committee. In broad terms, the guidelines advised me to conduct research to the highest ethical standards as 'a matter of professional integrity' (Denscombe, 2002, p. 175). For instance, BERA (2011) emphasised I conduct my study within an ethic of respect for the person, knowledge, democratic values, quality, academic freedom; and I had responsibilities to participants, researchers, professionals, policy makers and to the general public (BERA, 2011). Effectively, while conducting this study, I abided by these ethical principles.

With regards to microethics, Guillemin and Gillam (2004) suggested that when faced with everyday research dilemmas, reflexivity was needed to avert the possibility of wrongdoing. Microethics thus required me to be attentive, intelligent and responsible throughout the research process.

Keeping these two approaches to research ethics in mind, my first step was to identify when these issues were likely to occur. According to Creswell (2013), ethical issues could 'occur prior to conducting the study, at the beginning of the study, during data collection, in data analysis, in reporting data, and in publishing a study' (p. 57). This suggested ethical issues could occur anywhere and anytime during the research process. This realisation invited me to conceptualise research ethics as a process rather than an event at the beginning of my study. In this stream of thought, I was able to follow a model which comprised three interrelated stages: ethical issues before, during and after data construction.

Ethical issues before embarking on this study mainly related to procedural issues such as seeking approval from the University of Exeter (UoE) and from the Uganda National Council of Science and Technology (UNCST): a body which oversaw research in Uganda. Ethical applications were submitted to both research councils in May 2012. One of the issues from the UoE Ethics Committee was why I had chosen to research in a conflict setting given the risk this posed to my life. In response to this, a risk assessment was done following the UoE procedure and upon successful completion, research approval was given (see Appendices M) and travel insurance was obtained. In relation to ethical approval from the UNCST, upon arrival in Uganda, I went to the UNCST headquarters to chase up my research approval letter. I was told that the letter was not ready. I was given a verbal approval and advised to show my university letter (see Appendix N). While in the field sites, I followed this advice and one local councillor in Gulu signed my university letter as visible in Appendix N. Towards the end of my field study, a letter of ethical approval from the UNCST was granted (see Appendix O).

Scholars identify micro ethical issues likely to emerge during data construction to be: access to settings and participants, respecting cultural values, confidentiality, privacy, assessing risk, and giving incentives and gifts (Burgess, 1984; Creswell, 2013). In relation to risk, past researchers working in sensitive settings confronted dangers such as physical molestation, sexual harassment, questioning by the police, legal suits and emotional distress (Liamputtong, 2007). This meant researching in a conflict setting posed risks to me as a researcher. For instance, as noted in Section 3.4.2.1 one of the issues that occurred related to choosing a research guide. In this situation minimising risk involved being reflective, consulting the staff at the hotel I was staying, and choosing a research guide who was an insider. Also, there was a clear obligation on me as a researcher to stay within the law and respect the norms of the society where I conducted my study (Denscombe, 2002). It is within this conviction that Africanised interviews replaced European style interviews in Uganda (see Sections 3.4.2.2 and 6.2.3).

Ethical issues after data construction related to the 'unfinished business' (Burr, 1996, p. 174) of the field study that included: the ongoing feelings of concern for the participants, the disappearance of the first research guide, and the relationship with my family during data analysis and thesis writing up stage. Sometimes I found it hard to strike a balance between work, study and family life. In regard to my wife and children, I spent holidays and evenings reading literature, analysing data and writing drafts. This affected the quality of our family life. However, these issues were negotiated as they arose through compromise, prioritising and reflectivity.



### **3.5.2 Negotiating positionality issues**

As a researcher using a critical, grounded and constructivist style, I did not enter the field *tabula rasa* but with pre-conceived ideas from my professional, cultural and academic backgrounds as explained in the introductory chapter (McCann & Clark, 2003). This was conceptualised as positionality based on the assumption that it was impossible to take myself out of the research process (Wellington et al., 2005). In effect, positionality referred to how my identity as an educator, insider and researcher influenced the research process.

As an educator, I was profoundly concerned with how the education of disabled children in conflict settings could be improved and this was a social justice issue. So, a concern for social justice was a permanent feature of my critical research style. As I could not strip myself of the values that led me to this study, it was inevitable that they shaped this research (Denscombe, 2002). I however entered the research with a spirit of openness and a willingness to have my values challenged and be re-constructed during the process.

As a researcher, I was profoundly concerned with achieving my research aims using the grounded, critical and constructivist style. This concern affected the data I gathered, the methods I used and the theory I constructed. As a novice researcher, I had to tolerate confusion, learn and unlearn ways of collecting and analysing data, be lost before finding my way while searching and reviewing literature, trust data rather than myself and be open to expert guidance from my academic supervisors.

This research was affected by my positionality as an insider and outsider researcher. As an insider, I was profoundly concerned by how my identity affected

this study given that I had direct links with the settings (Robson, 2002). I had grown up in Uganda, experienced conflict and had existing ties. This privileged position allowed me easy access to participants. I was also able to negotiate some of the ethical issues discussed above which would have been resolved differently had I not had any insider knowledge. This meant as an insider, I was operating from a position of privilege as I did not have to negotiate a new environment and this could have led to bias.

However, while in Gulu, I felt I was an outsider especially when I was challenged by the cultural practices of the Acholi. As an outsider, 'instead of being blinded by the obvious,' I saw things 'with fresh eyes' (Denscombe, 2002, p. 169). It is worth realising that my identities as insider and outsider while in Uganda were neither straightforward nor mutually exclusive but could be seen as a continuum (Mercer, 2007). In effect, I often moved along this continuum for I was neither a distant outsider nor complete insider and this might have affected the quality of this research.

### **3.5.3 Negotiating quality issues**

Glaser and Strauss (1967) indicated that judging the quality of a theory was to be based on the 'detailed elements of the actual strategies used for collecting, coding, analyzing and presenting data, and on the way people read the theory' (p. 224). This implied judging the quality of my study depended on how I constructed my research style and applied its methods. For example, three different languages were used and translations from Rutooro and Acholi to English might have led to loss of data as some words in those languages had no equivalents in the English lexicon.

In addition, there were issues related to my identity as insider and outsider, using interviewing methods and my research style that affected the quality of this study (see Section 6.2.2). Some of these issues were dealt with by triangulating data while in the setting and when analysing it. This meant the grounded, critical and constructivist style I used did not aim at a perfect research as it was affected by factors such as imperfect research tools and methods (Denscombe, 2002). However, it is possible for one to judge the credibility of this research which did not depend on validity and reliability as in the scientific paradigm but on trustworthiness. I believe conditions for trustworthiness were met when I was able to show that I was careful, open, honest, thorough and reflective throughout the research process and in this thesis (Mills et al., 2006; Robson, 2002).

### **3.6 Chapter summary**

In this chapter I have described my research approach which entailed using a critical, grounded and constructivist style. This style used online, interview and observation methods to construct data on education, disability and conflict. A unique design of this study was the generation of data in three interrelated stages each linked to a primary research aim. As data was constructed, techniques such as coding and memoing were used to analyse it and efforts were made to maximise authenticity. To conclude, the best analogy to describe my research process is that of a journey which is grounded, critical and constructivist.

## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Two of the subsidiary aims of my study were to: (i) understand the interface between education and disability in conflict settings, and (ii) examine education provision in the conflict setting of Northern Uganda. These aims were investigated in the exploratory and experiential stages. This chapter reports the findings using four categories that were used to cluster focused codes constructed during the analysis. Table 6 outlines how the research questions used to investigate the aims were linked to the categories.

Table 6: Guiding research questions and categories

Guiding research question	Category
What does 'education' and 'disability' mean in an armed conflict setting?	Living in zones of conflict
	Being disabled in conflict
Which issues are associated with the education of children with disabilities?	'Creeping education' in conflict
What is the nature of education at each stage of armed conflict?  What is the purpose of education in each stage of armed conflict?  How can a model for educating children with disabilities be visualised in a post-conflict setting?	Visions of education in conflict

In the sections below, I present each category by its focused codes. As this study is qualitative, photographs from observations are used; and direct quotations and extracts from questionnaires are prioritised over the frequency of responses for they allow participants to speak for themselves.

#### **4.1 Living in zones of conflict**

This first category constructed the reality of living in conflict settings. It was composed of four focused codes: ‘displacement from ancestral villages’, ‘living in rampant poverty’, ‘dehumanisation by conflict’, and ‘weakened leadership’.

##### **4.1.1 ‘Displacement from ancestral villages’**

During the field study, two districts were visited: Kyenjojo in Western Uganda and Gulu in Northern Uganda. Observation data indicated that most people lived in villages. I visited six villages in total. In Kyenjojo, I visited Nyabubale, Butiiti and Nyondo. These villages were in the radius of 10 miles from Kyenjojo town. They were accessible by dusty roads and narrow footpaths like the one shown in Photograph 1.

Photograph 1: Footpath in Nyabubale



I used this footpath in Nyabubale to go to a home where a physically disabled person lived. During the interview in the presence of his grandchild, he told me that he did not have a wheelchair and he crawled on this footpath to get to the main road where he had a shop in which he sold his agricultural produce (CKA). Given the state of the footpath, even if he had a wheelchair, it would have been difficult to use it.

Villages in Kyenjojo had simple buildings mainly constructed from mud, wooden poles and roofed with corrugated iron sheets. Some buildings were grass thatched as people could not afford to buy iron sheets. Extended families lived closer to each other as children tended to build on their ancestral land. Each of the villages visited had a small trading centre usually composed of two rows of shops, churches and sometimes a public building. A public building usually housed administrative offices, a school and in one village a dispensary. Most public buildings and churches were built of brick and mortar constructed in colonial times. As exemplified in Photograph 2, public buildings and churches looked old and were not adequately maintained.

Photograph 2: Roman Catholic chapel in Butiiti



In Kyenjojo district, Christianity was widely practiced and was meaningful to the people. During the field study, I observed most people going to church on Sunday. The church service brought people together. In two villages, a leader and parent talked about children being given clothes by a Catholic priest so that they could attend church services and the disabled being carried to churches (GKA, JMY). In Nyabubale, I met a physically disabled child who had never been to school but was carried to church every Sunday by her grandmother (ADY). To demonstrate her religious literacy, she sung verses of the song 'Jesus loves me' in English. For this child and her relatives, religion was more important than schooling.

While in Gulu district, I visited three villages: Laroo, Unyama and Cho Pee which were in the radius of 7 miles from Gulu town. Similar to Kyenjojo, villages in Gulu were accessed by dusty roads and footpaths. Motorcycles, bicycles and walking were the main means of transport. Most houses were huts made out of mud, trees and grass thatched as shown in Photograph 3 taken in Unyama village.

Photograph 3: Huts in Unyama village





The professionals and parents I met in Gulu told me that during conflict, Unyama was a 'protected village' or displaced persons camp like Cho Pee (JAO, MAM, ROT, 2PA). Unyama housed over 30,000 people and as can be seen from Photograph 3, people lived in crowded huts. At the time of the field study, Unyama had approximately 1,000 residents for most people were resettling in their ancestral villages or had died. Unlike Kyenjojo, there were no churches or visible symbols of organised religion in the villages I visited in Gulu. This was probably due to the strong practice of African traditional religions.

Parents, professionals and leaders in Gulu talked about their experience of displacement during conflict as they searched for safety. They reported being forced to leave their ancestral villages by the Ugandan government forces and being taken to the artificial villages referred to as protected villages (MAM, POG, 2PA, 7TT). Research by Human Rights Focus (HURIFO) described forced displacement at the height of conflict in Northern Uganda in 1990s thus:

The Army went rounding up people and marching them to the trading centres not allowing them to carry any luggage and claiming that government would provide for them. In some areas mortar-bombs were looped into the villages while in others the helicopter gunship went round dropping bombs. Due to the hardships the displaced persons found in the camps, many of them risked their lives to return home to get building materials and food, and in the process some were killed and others injured and/ or abducted (HURIFO, 2002, p. 17).

This research captured the inhumane way people left their ancestral villages: uprooted and dispossessed. This was different from Kyenjojo where displacement during the 1981-1986 war was short lived and involved a minority of people who took refuge in schools, churches and public buildings.

Parents, professionals and leaders in Gulu told me that the living conditions in protected villages were not good as villages were overcrowded and lacked basic facilities such as water and toilets (MAM, POG, 2PA, 7TT). They also revealed



that living in protected villages meant having no access to land and this had led to widespread famine and overreliance on humanitarian organisations for food. Also, protected villages were often attacked by rebels and people were abducted and sometimes killed. This meant people were not protected in protected villages.

The experience of disabled people in protected villages was described as one of suffering characterised by discrimination, abuse and insecurity (JAO, MAM, ROT). For some people, the living conditions in protected villages triggered further displacement from one protected village to another. For most people in Gulu, displacement became a routine as expressed by the inspector of schools that 'there was a lot of running anytime whether at night, day or morning. There were times people would just run' (ROT). However, 'running' was not always an option for some people especially the elderly and physically disabled who could not easily displace themselves whenever rebels attacked (JAO, ROT). Also, parents and professionals already living in places where protected villages were set up told me that their freedom of movement was taken away (ROT, TUT, 2PA). This meant they were like captives on their own land.

In both Gulu and Kyenjojo, displacement did not stop when the guns had stopped. In Kyenjojo, the few people displaced by the war had returned to their ancestral homes (JMY, MMI). However, the setting was not secure as there was conflict approximately 50 miles away near the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo. People were thus worried about possible abduction and refugees which had the potential to cause further displacement. In this endeavour, some safety messages were given. For example, several placards were displayed in a school compound in Butiiti and one read 'Avoid moving alone' (see Photograph 4).

Photograph 4: Safety placard



To me, this message suggested people were wary of their safety. In contrast to the war torn villages in Gulu, rampant poverty in Kyenjojo had led to many young people escaping to towns in search of a 'bright future' and was the major cause of displacement not war (ADY, JMY).

The nature and scale of displacement in Gulu was different from Kyenjojo because of protracted displacement. Some parents and professionals told me that various groups of people were being displaced at the end of open conflict (JAO, MAM, POG, ROT, SWR). They included people who had originally been forced out of their ancestral villages and were returning. Also, there were people born in protected villages that did not know where their ancestral villages were and thus followed the exodus without a predetermined endpoint. Some people abducted by rebels were returning from captivity and those born in captivity were arriving in the district for the first time.

In relation to how teachers experienced the return, the inspector of schools said that 'it came at a time when teachers were overwhelmed. They didn't know how to deal with learners because at that time we were having children returning from captivity, children born in captivity, traumatised children coming from families, and that wasn't normal' (ROT). This suggests the return was an overwhelming experience. During the field study, it was not possible to establish the exact timeframe of the return. However, the return for the majority of people could be estimated between 2006 when the peace agreement was signed by the warring parties and 2012 when I conducted the field study: a time when about 247 protected camps had been closed and about 30,000 people were still living in four remaining camps and reception centres (Nielson, 2012).

Some parents and teachers who had lived in Gulu during the conflict period reported that upon arrival, children were taken to a boarding school for returnees (JAO, 7TT). While in Gulu, I visited this returnee school run by the Ugandan government. From afar, it looked like a brand new school but as I approached it resembled a military barracks fenced with barbed wire and patrolled by armed guards. After negotiation with the guards at the entrance, my research guide and I were allowed in, warned not to take photographs and escorted to the main office. After spending almost an hour waiting on the verandah, we were told that we could not meet the person in charge as he was too busy. Meanwhile, I observed children in the compound some with bodily deformations and others naked and wandering in the compound. From this visit, I was unable to ascertain details on when this returnee school opened, its admission criteria and what happened when children reached adulthood or were fully rehabilitated.

#### 4.1.2 'Dehumanisation by armed conflict'

This was the second focused code in this category. Parents, professionals and researchers revealed that conflict had led to a dehumanised existence (MAM, NAR, ROT, 2PA, 7TT). This feeling was more prevalent in Gulu than Kyenjojo. In Gulu I met parents, local leaders and professionals who had survived war and retold its impact on their community. I was told accounts of psychological damage due to the heinous acts such as being forced to rape and kill relatives, acquired disability due to injuries such as mutilations, and the high number of orphans and widows left in the region after conflict (IC, KB, MAM, ROT, 2PA, 7TT).

Of the many people who died during war, few were buried. In the three villages visited, it was only in Cho Pee where I saw graves. Some of these memorials are captured in Photograph 5.

Photograph 5: Graves in Cho Pee village



As visible in Photograph 5, there are few graves compared to the many people who died in this protected village. Also, considering the price of cement in Uganda, the graves seem to be more expensive than the traditional huts in the

background. It is poignant that families who could not afford decent homes spent more money on burying the dead. This could be an indicator of the respect people gave to the dead.

However, most parents and professionals in Gulu talked about the dead being abandoned during conflict. Conversations with my research guide and a social worker revealed that most people who died were never buried (JAM, SWR). For the Acholi people, not having a decent funeral was not normal. A study by Boas & Hatloy (2005) on internally displaced persons in Northern Uganda highlighted the importance of burying Acholi people in their ancestral land. They reported:

Land must be protected because it is material life, but also spiritual well-being. It is the essence of identity. It is heritage – the connection with the past through the burial of the dead, but also the future by maintaining it for the coming generations. People live in the camps, but they also die there. In accordance with Acholi tradition, the dead are therefore to be buried in the land that belongs to their family and clan. The dead and the issue of putting them to rest in the soil belonging to the lineage are important in Acholi culture. Land is survival (i.e. the living), land is the future (i.e. the generations to follow) and land is the past (i.e. the dead). These elements must stay connected to each other if harmony and tranquillity are to be preserved. People are supposed to be buried on their lineage soil, but for many families this is not an option anymore. In many of the camps, one of the saddest sights are the graves surrounding the huts. Within them are the dead that the family has not been able to transport to their place of origin. For many Acholis this is an important issue, and most of those who have had to place their dead to rest in the camps complain about this (Boas & Hatloy, 2005, p. 20).

Taking this evidence into consideration and given the effects of war reported by participants such as loss of ancestral land (JAO, MAM), most people who died during conflict will neither be buried beside their ancestors nor reburied in their ancestral villages. In Acholi imagination this signified a disconnection with ancestors who were considered living and part of the community. Effectively, conflict did not only affect the living but also the dead and exacerbated the erosion of Acholi traditions.



At the time of this study, parents, teachers and local leaders stressed that people in Gulu were more concerned with resettlement than education (JMY, NAR, ROT). For some people resettlement involved regaining ancestral land, reconstructing homes and re-establishing links with relatives and friends. For others, food security was their main concern. While in Gulu, I observed people on the way to work in the fields with their hoes and machetes. I was also told by parents that they no longer relied on humanitarian organisations as they grew their own crops (2PA). Photograph 6 taken on the way to an interview shows millet and maize: main food crops in Gulu.

Photograph 6: Food crops in Gulu



However, an education professional and parent reported that in some villages, resettlement was stalled by insecurity related to land, food and the fear of further conflict (JAO, ROT). For the people who were physically and emotionally damaged by war, resettlement entailed rehabilitating their lives, reconstructing

their broken families and some NGOs facilitated this process. For instance in Gulu, organisations such as World Vision, Every Child Ministries and AVSI supported people in protected villages (MAM, POG, 7TT).

Parents, leaders and professionals mentioned that humanitarian organisations present in protected villages participated in education, counselling, rehabilitation and medical care (GKA, JAO, JMY, MAM, MMI, POG, 2PA, 7TT). They however stressed that humanitarian presence was patchy and their support did not always reach all who needed it. In one case, a parent narrated how she struggled to get a wheelchair for her disabled child and how she was let down by a humanitarian organisation (MAM). This showed that not all organisations were effective in delivering services. Then, teachers indicated that civil organisations were formed in response to war and they included: Concerned Parents Association (CPA) by parents of abducted children and Gulu Support the Children Organisation (GUSCO) which promoted the welfare of children affected by war (7TT). At the time of this study, many organisations in Gulu had scaled down their support and some parents were worried about how they were to survive in the midst of poverty (JAO, 2PA). However in Kyenjojo, SNV and UNICEF worked to improve the conditions of disaffected children (JMY, MMI).

#### **4.1.3 'Living in rampant poverty'**

The condition of people living in conflict settings was characterised by 'rampant poverty': an expression used by a local councillor in Kyenjojo. He commented:

We as parents we need help such as daily utensils, clothes, scholastic materials, etc. For example Fr X used to bring them clothes so that they are able to go to church well dressed. But now with rampant poverty, it is very hard for us parents. There is no income at all in our parish. You find in our trading centre someone has a shop and he sells tomatoes and onions. When you calculate how much he is getting out of it you wonder how that person manages to live (JMY).

This parent described how people in villages struggled to survive. Individual poverty was evident in people's inability to afford basic necessities such as food and clothing. Church charity seemed geared towards increasing attendance rather than enabling people to get out of poverty.

Some observation data suggested that living in rampant poverty contributed to the deterioration of traditional values. This was visible in the photographs taken in Kyenjojo where some placards warned people against exchanging sex for gifts.

Photograph 7: Sex for gifts placard



On a similar note, travelling by bus to Gulu made me realise how poorer it was compared to Kyenjojo. Most houses were circular huts even in Gulu town centre. I saw naked children and others wearing torn clothes. Photograph 8 shows some of the children seen loitering in Cho Pee village.



Photograph 8: Children in Cho Pee village



Added to individual poverty, professionals, parents and leaders talked about state poverty which was evident in the government's inability to offer quality services in healthcare, education, water and security to its citizens (CKA, GKA, JAO, MAM, MMI, 2PA, 7TT). For instance, the photographs in Table 7 on the next page show the lack of clean water in Kyenjojo and Gulu, and people travelled far to draw unclean water from the wells.

Table 7: Sources of water in Gulu

	<p>This photograph was taken in Kyenjojo. It shows a gravity flow source of clean water. However, at the time of the study it was not working as the pipes which linked to the water source had been tampered with.</p>
	<p>This photograph was taken in the outskirts of Gulu town. On the left side, it shows a man carrying a 5 litre jerry can of water in his right hand. On the right side, it depicts a girl carrying a 20 litre jerry can on her head.</p>

My research guide told me that the lack of clean water was leading to disease and that most villages lacked basic health services. This correlated with the observation data in that of the six villages visited, only one had a dispensary where a nurse was the most qualified professional there. Parents told me that some children were unable to have treatment for common diseases such as malaria or immunisation against polio due to lack of drugs (ADY, CKA, MAM, MMI). This meant people were suffering from diseases which needed simple treatment or vaccination.

For some parents and teachers, lack of medical care was the main cause of disability (CKA, MAM, MMI). For example, a parent in Gulu narrated:

When he was just two weeks he got sick of malaria. He started getting paralysed. After he acquired that malaria he was taken to Lacor hospital. The hospital tried their best until the malaria got down by itself he got paralysed. He started getting that abnormality as you can see the physical appearance (MAM).

In this case a boy acquired a physical disability because he had not received appropriate medical care in the form of anti-malarial medication.

In Kyenjojo, cases were described by a headteacher where people sold their possessions to pay for medical care (MMI). This meant people used their meagre resources to pay for services the government could not provide in its dysfunctional health service. According to observation data, this was exacerbated by the prevalence of HIV/ AIDS and safety messages were displayed in schools as shown below.

Photograph 9: AIDS placard



In both Kyenjojo and Gulu, people tried to overcome poverty through small scale farming. While some children in Kyenjojo refused to work in farms, those in Gulu were often used as a labour force. The inspector of schools commented:

What they are focusing at is production of food and that is why even if we tell them that they should allow children to go to school on a daily basis they tell children that 'if you eat education then you go to school but if you know that you don't eat education then you have to stay with me and do the work that I want'. So, these are the kind of things that we are still battling (ROT).

This meant during recovery food security was more important than education. It could be concluded that in the villages visited, individual poverty was aggravated by conflict and the government's inability to provide quality services in healthcare and education.

#### **4.1.4 'Weakened leadership'**

In the settings visited, researchers, local leaders and parents talked about the lack of leadership structures especially at political and traditional levels and where they existed, they were very weak (JAO, JMY, NAR). In relation to political leadership which started at village level with local councillors up to national level with members of parliament, local leaders revealed that the few leaders who existed often lacked expertise in issues facing them (JAO, JMY). For instance, on my way to interview professionals in Kyenjojo town, I observed a situation where a murderer had broken out of his police cell, run into a nearby shop where he picked up a machete and was threatening to harm people. The response of the police officers was to shoot in the air.

I took Photograph 10 on the next page before hiding in a barber shop. It depicts people who watched how the police dealt with the incident which put an end to the interviews I was going to conduct in this town.

Photograph 10: Murderer escapes in Kyenjojo



In a related finding, a local councillor in Kyenjojo confessed lacking expertise in dealing with children who were under the influence of drugs in his village (JMY). In Gulu, the local council secretary admitted she did not know how to write or speak in English which was Uganda's national language and requested to be interviewed in Acholi: her local language (JAO). This implied that in her zone, information was being preserved in oral form and this suggested lack of written evidence to influence policy at district and national levels.

In relation to traditional leadership, both settings had cultural leaders. Kyenjojo belonged to Tooro kingdom which had cultural ministers charged with different affairs. However, at village level there was no evidence to suggest that traditional leadership had impact. In Gulu, parents and professionals admitted that war and displacement had led to the disintegration of traditional systems of governance which relied on men as elders as most of them had died.

In addition, a researcher I met in Kampala stressed that there were many women in Acholiland who had no rights and this had weakened both family and leadership structures (NAR). He talked about his research and stressed:

One of the things I found was that because of displacement that unit the family is disintegrated. It is a crucial factor in protecting the right of the child to education, family. Because that being the case the overall framework is having the problem the family unit at household level is struggling. That being the cause at that level, because the overall framework is having problem then the family unit is struggling. How then do we provide for children with disabilities? (NAR).

This meant the demise of elders had resulted not only in the destruction of the family structure but the breakdown of traditional governance including the justice system. As women had no right to inheritance, they could not reclaim land: the only asset left after conflict. In Gulu, I met widows who remained in protected villages because they had nowhere to go and they talked about land wrangles returnees experienced in ancestral villages (JAO, MAM). It could be assumed that these widows would have returned if their husbands were alive or if they had power to reclaim land.

## **4.2 Being disabled in conflict**

This category comprised of three focused codes related to disabled people: 'normal at home abnormal in the community', 'visible in the community invisible in provision', and 'acceptance versus rejection'. I start with the code that captured the key finding that the environment determined how disabled people were conceptualised in the settings.

### **4.2.1 'Normal at home abnormal in the community'**

Both online and field participants constructed disabled people based on their impairments. For instance parents (ADY, KJR, MAM, 2PA), teachers (CKA, MMI,



7TT) and leaders (GKA, JAO, JMY, ROT) understood 'disabled people' as those who had long-term physical, mental, visual and auditory impairments. Online participants used words such as 'impairments,' 'limitations' and 'disabilities' synonymously. For instance, a post-doctoral researcher defined disability as 'impediment hindering normal performance'. A healthcare assistant considered it as 'being different from normal people' (TM). A college student defined it as 'anything that limits a person's achievement' (JN). A risk consultant perceived it as the 'inability to undertake activities performed by normal people' (PP). Finally, a college tutor defined disability as 'having a deformity' (PNA).

This evidence showed 'disabled people' were defined in contradistinction to 'normal people' as they had restricted ability to perform certain actions. Effectively, being disabled was analogous to being abnormal. Terms such as 'mentally retarded,' 'handicapped,' 'lame,' 'crippled' and 'dumb' were used to refer to disabled people (FD, GS, JN, 7TT). Though considered derogatory in England, these terms were used without the intention to cause offence.

However in their home environment, disabled people were considered normal and treated like others. In rare cases, they were perceived better than others. For example in Kyenjojo, a grandmother asked her child to sing and then commented: 'You can see she is very clever the rest are stupid. If you happen to come and you do not find me leave my message with her' (ADY). In the eyes of this grandmother, her grandchild was normal and useful. This was similar to the perception disabled people had of themselves. For example in Kyenjojo, a middle aged man who was physically impaired described himself as a farmer and treasurer for disabled people (CKA). Similarly, a girl aged approximately nine years who had never been to school perceived herself as a singer (ADY). A boy

of about fifteen years who had dropped out of nursery school aspired to be a doctor in Gulu (MAM). A middle aged man who acquired physical impairment during conflict worked as district inspector of schools (ROT). This evidence suggested that some disabled people were useful in their communities and had aspirations.

In cases where disabled people were considered normal and useful, they were cared for. However, it was a daily struggle often born by poor parents and carers who lacked support from their communities and government. For example, a local councillor in Kyenjojo talked about a parent who used a wheelbarrow to transport his physically impaired child to school due to lack of a wheelchair (JMY). A woman in Gulu who had lost her husband during conflict recounted how she relocated to a different protected village to overcome the physical abuse inflicted on her son by her neighbour because he was disabled (MAM).

Caring for disabled people was also hard when poverty and disease intersected in their lives. In Kyenjojo a headteacher said, 'You find that even a child has made the family very poor especially diseases that are incurable. Parent has spent all his money on that child since birth especially epilepsy. It is a disease which can really disorganise a family' (MMI). In this case, parents had sold their belongings to pay for medical care. This meant caring for disabled people in absence of acceptable medical care paid for by the government exacerbated individual poverty in which families were trapped in.

In a related development, a grandparent in Kyenjojo who lacked support was worried about future care for her disabled grandchild. In my encounter with her, she came across as struggling to cope and feeling powerless when she could not provide care at the right time. Referring to her grandchild she said: 'She wants



me up at midnight that she wants to use the pit latrine. By the time I reach she has soiled the bed' (ADY). However, some relatives embraced the negative attitude towards disabled people prevalent in their communities and abandoned or isolated disabled people (7TT). Some parents and professionals in Kyenjojo reported cases where disabled people were abandoned by their parents when they could not go through the burden of caring for them (ADY, CKA, MMI). For example, a girl abandoned by her parents was living with her grandmother (ADY). A man with physical impairment in Photograph 11 lived with his grandchild in an isolated house on the back of a farm which I accessed through a footpath after jumping barbed wires.

Photograph 11: Farming in Kyenjojo



Taken in his garden, this photograph depicted him holding a hoe and I observed him crawl diagonally as he tilled the land.

In Gulu, parents and professionals narrated how most disabled people were abandoned by their relatives in times of conflict and forced displacement (POG, ROT, 7TT). An elderly woman who witnessed conflict narrated:

You know during that time they were being left home. Some were being left and killed because they do not have any effort to run and follow others. Unless the relatives thought of them and collected them. You know in 1997 there were 5 who were killed. In 2010 three in my village were killed. That is the only number I know (JAO).

This revealed that while some disabled people were abandoned, others were killed or starved. This meant they were invisible in the provision of services.

#### **4.2.2 'Visible in the community invisible in provision'**

Professionals, leaders and parents in Kyenjojo and Gulu admitted that disabled people were visible in their communities but invisible in the provision of services (ADY, CKA, GKA, JMY, MMI, NAR, POG, 2PA, 7TT). Those who were physically impaired were more visible for physical impairment was often conflated with disability. In effect, mental, visual and auditory disability was often invisible and only visible after close observation. For instance, a headteacher in Kyenjojo diagnosed mental impairment by the number of times a child repeated a form (MMI). A teacher in Gulu identified auditory impairment by shouting at children several times and observing their reaction (POG). These findings signalled absence of standard methods to assess impairment in the conflict setting.

In a related finding, online and field participants described how their disability had originated not only from congenital factors but was also acquired through disease, domestic violence, poverty and war. In both Kyenjojo and Gulu, I met disabled people and their relatives who had acquired disability. This was the case of the treasurer of disabled people in Kyenjojo who testified, 'When I was born, I used to walk even go to the well fetch water. I caught polio when I was about 4 years

old' (CKA). In this excerpt, the treasurer linked his disability to disease. He compared his early life with his current state to prove how he acquired disability. Also, domestic violence inflicted on women especially during pregnancy was cited in Kyenjojo as causing disability by education professionals (ASN, GKE). Another example was the child photographed below whose mother believed he became disabled as a result of the malaria he suffered when he was three months old (MAM).

Photograph 12: Disabled child in Gulu



In addition to disease, war was considered by professionals, parents and leaders as the common cause of disablement in Gulu. Added to war and disease was poverty which caused and exacerbated disability. For example in Kyenjojo, a headteacher talked about a girl whose leg became swollen and was physically disabled because her parents could not afford a medical procedure due to poverty (MMI). In Gulu, the inspector of schools revealed that 'children in difficult circumstances' were classed as disabled. He said:

The majority of these are children coming from poor socio-economic backgrounds which actually make up the biggest population of this district. They are having parents who are not concerned. They are having parents who are not supporting them. These are children especially girls who are sometimes forced to get married when they are still young. So, those are the categories and we put them under difficult circumstances. These are the categories of learners with disabilities we have... Yes we do categorise children in difficult circumstances as disabled (ROT).

In this excerpt, categorising children from poor socio-economic backgrounds as disabled made a correlation between poverty and disability. It implicated society in causing disability as some people were victims of rape, neglect and forced marriage. Though uniquely reported by the inspector of schools, it was not easy to verify the extent of its usage in other settings.

While attempts were made to explain the causes of acquired disabilities, participants often lacked explanations for congenital disabilities. This was evident in the gestures and statements they made. Pointing to her daughter's leg in Gulu a parent explained, 'She was born like that. She is about 3 years old. We took her to Lacor hospital, then, to the clinic they did not find anything. I don't know the cause' (JAO). Scratching his head in the courtyard of his hut in Gulu a parent replied, 'it is really hard to tell the cause of disability' (2PA). Relaxing in his living room in Kyenjojo a cultural minister asserted, 'people know polio can be caused but the issue of deaf and blind they don't know' (GKA). This evidence captured the uncertainty that surrounded disability and participants' inability to arrive at meaningful explanations.

In the midst of uncertainty, some participants resorted to cultural and religious explanations where disability was perceived as a curse. In the online questionnaire, only a disabled tutor from Uganda talked about disability as a curse and punishment from God (PNA). She could, however, not explain why

God cursed and why unborn babies were punished with disability. A specific question was added to the questionnaire but it attracted few responses. During the field study, I noticed that any attempt to sustain a discourse on disability and God resulted in silence. Scared that themselves or their offspring could be cursed and become disabled, some parents, local leaders and teachers opted for silence (GKA, KJR). This was based on the traditional belief that talking about disability caused disability. It was, therefore, not possible to explore in depth the relationship between being disabled and cursed.

Given the attitudes and perceptions people had, disabled people were often invisible in the provision of services such as healthcare, education and in community development projects. Many online and field participants indicated that disabled people were suffering and attributed this to uncaring communities and the Ugandan government. Parents and professionals who lived in Gulu during conflict talked about the difficulties of caring for disabled people during displacement and in congested protected villages (ADY, CKA, JMY, MAM, POG, ROT, 2PA). This sometimes resulted in disabled people going missing, being neglected and even dying.

Also, most of the disabled people met in Kyenjojo and Gulu lived in 'rampant poverty' like their non-disabled peers. When funding existed to start development projects, they were often locked out by bureaucracy. For instance, expressing his frustration, the treasurer of disabled people in Kyenjojo said that the 'government doesn't care about disabled. They had proposed starter packages (entandikwa) but you must form a group. A lot of bureaucracy and each person who puts a stamp have to be bribed or paid to put a stamp. Groups break easily and thus not able to access funds' (CKA). In this excerpt, the treasurer listed the hurdles

himself and his disabled colleagues went through to access funding. As it was hard to access funding, disabled people lived and died in poverty in Uganda.

#### **4.2.3 'Acceptance versus rejection'**

This was the last focused code in this category. Both online and field participants disclosed that disabled people experienced stigma and this led to their rejection in communities. Stigma was often linked to the negative attitude community members had and was expressed in derogatory terms and labels given to disabled people such as 'stupid', 'imbecile', 'dumb', 'mentally retarded', 'mad' and 'idiots'. Using such terms was psychologically damaging as explained by the inspector of schools:

You know we have a tendency of people not to call you by your name. They would give you a nickname, and a nickname given to you is associated with what you are and I think that is not good for a child. Me I am grown up and I have overcome my disability, and I can talk about my disability but a growing child may not (ROT).

This suggests that labelling was a form of bullying. In addition, some parents told me their children were physically abused because of their disability. Through an interpreter a mother in Gulu narrated:

At times she would go to the garden only to find the neighbour has beaten her kid seriously until one day she decided to fight with the neighbour. The police was involved and she decided to move to another area where the place was not congested. After that place she moved here. People would despise her with her child (MAM).

In this case, people despised both the parent and her child. This parent never disowned her disabled child but relocated to another protected village.

However, professionals and disabled people themselves talked of cases where disabled people were disowned, abandoned, isolated, and lived dehumanised existences (CKA, ROT, 7TT). For instance in Gulu, a teacher said:

Children with disabilities are there in the villages. When you are lame you are cursed. You find some parents very early in the morning they pick that child and hide it in the bush when they go to work. They do not want people to see the child. That child is a curse. Sometimes they build a house in the bush for the child and keep taking them some food there. One time we followed one of the parents. We brought the child from the hut we gave her back to the mother. The mother refused. We took the child to the headteacher and slowly the child was accepted in the school (7TT).

This narrative revealed the perceptions some non-disabled people had towards disabled people. Being cursed was both a personal and family tragedy that affected relationships. As disabled people were socially dislocated from their villages which represented human habitats and taken to the bush which represented animal habitat, they were cut off from human communities. The fact that teachers followed up this child and reintegrated her into the community showed how rejection, stigma and acceptance were linked to the level of education. As most people living in villages had low levels of education, the rate at which they rejected disabled people was higher. Given the short period I spent in the settings, it was not possible to test this in town settings where levels of education were higher than in villages.

In a related finding, NGOs worked towards changing society's attitude to disabled people. Online and field participants listed UNICEF, Dutch Aid, Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), National Union of Disabled Persons in Uganda (NUDIPU), and Uganda Society for Disabled Children (USDC) as being active in Uganda. Some online participants asserted that due to the disability sensitisation people were receiving from these organisations, the mentality towards disabled people was changing and disability was no longer hidden or condemned in some settings (FB, HK, KB, PNA, TM). However, this was not evident in the villages I visited. Stigma and negative attitudes existed and parents, researchers,

professionals and local leaders wished to see the Ugandan government committed to building an inclusive society.

### **4.3 Creeping education in conflict**

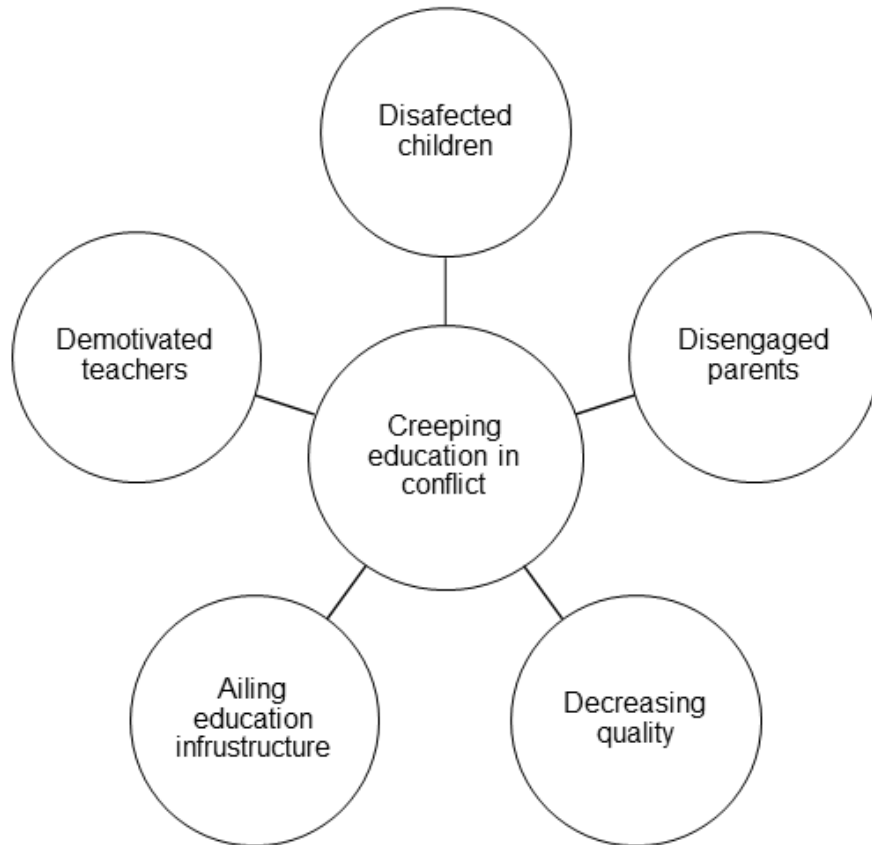
This third category describes how education in Uganda was perceived as 'creeping'. As a terminology, 'creeping' was used by a teacher from Kyenjojo while commenting on teachers' remuneration in an interview guide. He wrote:

The main comments I would like to make to educationalist[s] is that education for both emblem [transliterated from the Rutooro word "engabu" which means "shield" thus children who are not disabled and can defend the country] and disabled children will remain creeping because of the poor pay/ living way for teachers (RKA).

The term 'creeping' is used in this category because it comes from the Rutooro verb 'kulemasibwa' which means 'inability'. From this verb is the noun 'obulema' which means 'disability' and 'abalema' which means 'disabled people'. So, in associating 'creeping' to education, this teacher drew parallels between disabled people and creeping education. This implied education was 'crippled', 'retarded', and 'abnormal'. Also, as my study was critical, I used 'creeping' to give voice to participants and capture how they experienced education with its features shown in Figure 11 on the next page.



Figure 11: Focused codes of creeping education



It should be noted that relationships exist between the focused codes of creeping education in Figure 11. For the purposes of this chapter, I present each code separately making brief links where necessary and reserving comprehensive explanations to Chapter 5.

#### **4.3.1 'Disaffected children'**

Both online and field participants revealed that many children in Uganda were educationally disaffected because of poverty, disease, conflict and their own culture. Poverty was a major cause of disaffection in all the villages visited. Many children had parents who could not afford basic necessities such as food, clothing, medical care and appropriate shelter. Even in the context of free education, most parents could not afford supplementary costs such as uniform, books, meals and contributions to teachers' salaries. Parents and professionals

stressed that failure to pay supplementary costs resulted in children being withdrawn or excluded from school (JMY, KJR, MAM, MMI, ROT, 2PA, 7TT).

Once out of school, children loitered in villages as shown in Photograph 8. With nothing to do, some children engaged in crime and this resulted in further disaffection. However, a minority of parents paid the supplementary costs of education on time and others took their children to fee paying schools. In Kyenjojo, this was possible for some parents after selling their possessions such as cows and crops (JMY, MMI).

In addition to poverty, some children and their parents suffered from diseases such as malaria and HIV/ AIDS. In Kyenjojo, a headteacher used the term 'HIV infected and affected children' to refer to children who carried the HIV virus and whose parents had died of it (CBA). Parents and professionals recognised that the death of parents did not only make children orphans but also resulted in child carers. Other children lived with relatives and this was the case of a headteacher I met in Kyenjojo whose niece lived with her and for whom she paid all the costs of education (MMI).

Poverty and disease were not the only causes of disaffection but conflict as well. Parents, leaders and professionals observed that conflict resulted in being orphaned and most children lived with their widowed mothers who struggled to pay for education (JAO, JMY, NAR, KJR, MAM, ROT, 2PA). Using an interpreter, a parent in Gulu said:

Now mostly the orphans always face problems in school. You know there is UPE but still you have to pay parent teachers association fees. Parents cannot afford to pay the little fees even with universal primary education. This is as a result of the war. According to him this war has affected men: a lot of men died and women now cannot provide for the kids mostly in education (2PA).

In addition to being orphaned, some children were abducted and taken into captivity. While in captivity, some Ugandan participants confirmed that children missed education as per the national curriculum and learnt how to fight, rape, mutilate and kill their relatives under duress from their captors (KB, MMI, RN).

Teachers and parents used 'returnees' to refer to children who escaped from captivity and they too were disaffected (JAO, MMI, ROT, 7TT). A headteacher commented:

Leave alone Northern Uganda even this area I have seen two boys who were once rebels. They were taken they were trained and they became soldiers. They escaped and they are back. They managed to escape home. They come to school they are not interested they are always loitering here. In this case the government should help. They are the people who are even taking marijuana. The government should come and help. Even in Northern Uganda. You remember the Aboke girls they were captured, they were married prematurely, they were raped. They need a lot of counselling, a lot of guidance [paused] a lot of rehabilitation (MMI).

This headteacher revealed the condition of returnees as damaged by war, disinterested in education and disaffected in their communities. There was hardly any structure to facilitate their reintegration and some coped by taking drugs. However, a mother of a disabled child in Gulu said that some returnees and those born in captivity were taken to 'returnee centres' upon arrival (JAO).

Children who were not abducted were displaced several times, witnessed the horrors of war and were not immune to disaffection. Professionals observed that most children who came to school had emotional and behaviour difficulties, found it difficult to cope with school and needed specialist intervention other than counselling and guidance (POG, ROT, 7TT). A tutor in Gulu gave the example:

Like I went to see a lesson in physics. Two girls started a fight which is very rare in my area. One girl was stronger and banged the other one's head on the floor. For that child, it goes to more than guidance and counselling; for this girl is your sister. That one is lacking and needs to be brought up in the new curriculum (7TT).

Added to the disaffection caused by conflict were cultural attitudes to disability, gender, pastoralism and marriage. For example, a teacher said children cared for by their step parents often missed education due to polygamous practices (RKA). An education advisor wrote about children from pastoralist communities such as Acholi who were disaffected because they spent more time searching for pasture rather than schooling (EH). However, in the villages I visited in Gulu, there was no evidence of pastoralist children probably because most animals were stolen or died during conflict.

In relation to gender, online participants highlighted that girls had traditionally been denied education because of cultural attitudes such as being regarded as family assets and forced into marriage (FD, GS, RN). Poverty also contributed to disaffection as some girls who had enrolled in UPE schools were absent during their menstrual times due to lack of sanitary pads (GS). To ameliorate the situation in Kyenjojo, UNICEF funded the Girls Education Movement programme that helped them start money generating projects, return to school and complete their education (MMI). In Gulu, professionals claimed that prolonged conflict had aggravated the disaffection of girls especially those who were raped, abducted and married prematurely by their captors. In the villages visited, I saw girls carrying children who were possibly young mothers or young carers. However, I was not able to investigate their individual circumstances.

Whether in Kyenjojo or Gulu, parents and professionals conceded that the chances of being disabled and attending school were minimal. Most of the disabled children I met had never attended school. Some professionals like the inspector of schools said that parents considered money spent on disabled children as wasted. He said, 'parents are saying they do not have money and

sometimes because they still have negative attitude. They say why should I waste money on a deaf child or on a blind child? They have hope on others who are having no disability' (ROT).

In most cases, disabled children were last in line to receive education. Disabled children who made it to school were often invisible in the teaching and learning process. Parents complained that disabled children were rarely catered for in the school environment including classrooms, toilets and play areas which were not adapted to their needs (ADY, CKA, JAO, JMY, MAM, MMI, POG, 2PA, 7TT). Education programme assistants disclosed that teachers did not always take disabled children into consideration while teaching and most were 'just there' (SK and JM). To paraphrase a parent of a disabled child, they were often treated like other children but they were not like others (JAO). This meant that while in overcrowded classrooms, disabled children were educationally starved. They were also nicknamed and bullied because of their disability and most dropped out of school (KB, MAM, SK and JM).

On a different note, the experience of disaffection made some children regard education as useless. Parents and professionals talked about children who refused to go to school and engaged in crime (JMY, MMI, 7TT). In Kyenjojo, a headteacher gave the example of children who used money for scholastic materials to buy alcohol and get drunk (MMI). In dismay, a local councillor commented: 'They are taken up by disco, marijuana. I was called last night in the trading centre to deal with a group of children who had taken drugs. I looked at them I even feared them' (JMY). In Gulu, some children preferred fishing over schooling as shown in this excerpt from teachers:

School refusers prefer to fish than going to school. They start fishing when they are young. When they go to school they say they are not making any money but they make money when they go fishing. When they grow up they burden the community. If they are to continue fishing they need papers: fishing licence, etc. They start to change their lifestyle they become thieves (7TT).

This excerpt shows that some children who refused education resorted to crime.

As there was weakened leadership in villages, it was not easy to counter the criminal lifestyles children had chosen. However, in Kyenjojo I saw messages like the ones in Table 8 displayed in the school compound to sensitise children.

Table 8: Sensitising messages

	<p>This placard was located near a classroom verandah. It reveals some of the activities disaffected children engaged in. It also warns parents who came to school and passers-by to avoid drugs and alcohol.</p>
	<p>This placard was located near the exit from school. It targeted children who were at risk of dropping out of school and encouraged them to stay.</p>
	<p>This message was located in the play area. It acted as a constant reminder to children not to become absentees but to return to school every day.</p>

### 4.3.2 'Disengaged parents'

Data from online and field participants showed factors such as poverty, disease, conflict and cultural attitudes caused parents to disengage from education.

In relation to poverty, most of the parents I met considered themselves poor. In Kyenjojo, a parent lamented the extent of poverty thus:

We as parents [...] who educate their children are those who have cows, tea but people like me who have no tea, no cows my children will stay without education. They are the children you will find in Kampala [the capital city] doing odd jobs like carrying luggage, etc. If you do not have any income stream your child cannot study (JMY).

This parent linked poverty to educational disaffection and riches to a bright future.

In addition, educational professionals noticed that poor parents had become addicted to charity and found it hard to pay for anything including the supplementary costs of education. As failure to pay the costs resulted in expulsion from school, tension was created between parents and teachers.

Whilst parents blamed teachers for being greedy, teachers blamed parents for being uncooperative and disinterested in education (ASN, JAO, MMI, ROT, 7TT).

A culture of blame amongst professionals also existed as evident in Kyenjojo where headteachers blamed each other for lack of collaboration in improving education. A headteacher said:

What I have found here is pathetic. I recently moved to this school in this district. First of all in order for education to be streamlined well all the three stakeholders have to work together: teachers, parents and students. Here the parents here are aloof. They are not taking part in the education of their children (MMI).

This excerpt not only revealed the professional isolation that existed amongst teachers and schools but also the attitude of parents.

In a related finding, parents were not only materially poor but also suffered from education and information poverty. For instance, most parents I met in Gulu could not speak English, Uganda's official language. In Kyenjojo, some parents who had received some primary education could hardly sustain a conversation in English. Others told me they lacked information on where to educate their children and were neither aware of their entitlements nor those of their children (ADY, JAO, MAM, 2PA).

Added to poverty were the effects of conflict such as displacement and resettlement. During this time, some professionals in Gulu told me education was not a priority as parents prioritised food security and consequently asked children to stay at home and work in the fields (ROT, 7TT). According to the inspector of schools, children who resisted were told and retold, 'If you eat education then you go to school but if you know that you don't eat education then you have to stay with me and do the work that I want' (ROT).

There was no evidence to suggest that children who were forced to work in the fields blamed their parents for missing out formal education. This could be attributed to the belief that formal education was useless or to the cultural practice of helping out in the fields. Also, most parents especially in Gulu were widows and widowers due to conflict. There were more widows than widowers given that men were often captured, forced to fight and consequently killed. Many widows were unprepared for family life for some had been raped, forced into early marriage, become pregnant against their will, and lacked parenting skills.



### 4.3.3 'Demotivated teachers'

In the context of poverty, disease, conflict and broken relationships amongst themselves and with parents; most teachers were demotivated, absent from school and some attributed this to poor pay and trauma. In Gulu, the teachers and tutors I met said they were traumatised and were working with traumatised children (POG, ROT, 7TT). Some considered themselves disempowered by the experience of war and were unable to cope with the diversity of learners. They hoped to be trained on how to teach in conflict settings and wished to see teachers who specialised in working in conflict settings. In Kyenjojo, observation data suggested that some teachers were traumatised not by war but by disease especially HIV/ AIDS as they too were infected and affected by it.

The trauma and demotivation experienced by teachers were worsened by the large classes they taught (ADY, CKA, GKI, JAO, POG, ROT, 7TT). Teachers felt they were overworked as each could be in charge of over 113 children. For example, a teacher in Gulu commented:

We are 8 teachers for 902 students including the headteacher. You find a teacher is supposed to teach all the class all the subjects of which it is very hard for these children to catch up so that their education improves. If at all we were two per class it would be better. The directive is 1:5 for children with disabilities (POG).

This teacher explains how large class size worsened the situation for disabled children. Effectively, some teachers wished to see more teachers recruited and humanitarian workers hoped for reform in teacher training so that teachers were able to interpret the curriculum correctly and meet the needs of diverse learners (ROT, SK and JM). They also wished to see specialist teachers trained in braille and sign language so that they could teach disabled children.

In addition, online and field participants complained about the pay teachers were receiving. Some argued that teachers were not receiving a living wage and this had resulted in loss of motivation to teach, caused strikes and led to charging illegal fees (ADY, JMY, RKA). For example, a college student remarked that 'some teachers do not even bother to turn up for lessons or when they do they are usually drunk or in a hurry to find their businesses they do alongside teaching since they are not well paid' (JN). In this excerpt, this student explained how the loss of motivation resulted in absenteeism. However, the main causes of absenteeism in Gulu were the fear of abduction during conflict and the challenges of resettlement afterwards. The inspector of schools said that during resettlement teacher absenteeism was between 15-25 percent as teachers too focused on farming and rebuilding their lives (ROT).

Some educational professionals interpreted the poor pay given to teachers as being undervalued. This was evident in the confession made by a headteacher in Kyenjojo that 'teachers are a necessary evil' and the government needed to motivate them by increasing their salary (CBA). This was also the feeling parents and a trainee teacher had by advocating for better teacher's pay so that they were motivated, good role models, committed to teaching and not prone to striking. Frequent strikes were a concern and a local leader and trainee teacher commented that some parents bribed teachers to teach during strikes (JMY, KJR). These and other factors led to the ailing education infrastructure in Uganda.

#### **4.3.4 'Ailing education infrastructure'**

Almost all online participants testified that the introduction of UPE in Uganda had increased enrolment especially for children who had traditionally been excluded. They pointed out that increased enrolment had not been matched with increased

infrastructure. Most complained about the scarcity of classrooms, inadequacy of teaching resources, shortage of teachers, limited funding, weak leadership and long distances to schools; factors which led to the ailing education infrastructure.




In the villages I visited, parents and leaders decried the long distances children walked to school. One gave the example of children in Kyenjojo who walked 3 to 8 miles before reaching their schools (JMY). This meant return journeys were between 6 to 16 miles. In addition, disabled children lacked means of transport from home to school. Like their pupils, teachers lived far, often trekked long distances and only a few could afford to cycle to school. Added to the long distances in Gulu were hazards encountered on the way: abduction, ambush and heavy rains that caused flooding and landslides (FB, POG). A teacher noted:

Umm during those days education was not all that organised because many parents preferred their children to stay near them. Because if you sent a child to go to school which is about 5 km you know those schools in the villages were not near. Those schools were not near and when fighting started during school hours it was difficult for parents to care for those your children. Instead parents preferred those children to stay at home. For which making the decision to go to school during those days hard. Teachers and parents were all facing the effect of war (POG).

This meant going to school depended on the security situation and sometimes children and teachers were abducted from schools. To remedy the situation, most online and field participants desired to see more schools built in villages where children lived. However, a parent reported that in one village in Gulu, a school which had been rebuilt was burnt during the reprise of armed conflict (JAO).

Observation data further suggested that children who went to schools often learnt in dilapidated and unsafe spaces. Whether old or new, most classrooms lacked windows, doors, looked unsafe and children had no access to clean water. The photographs in Table 9 show the spaces where children crowded to learn.

Table 9: Classrooms in conflict



	<p>This photograph was taken in Kyenjojo. It shows a standard size classroom constructed to accommodate about 30 children. Though it is less than 15 years, it looks old, dirty and insects have even constructed an anthill. As there are no lockable doors and there is neither a caretaker nor glass in the window frames, anyone can access it anytime. A conversation with one of the shepherds in the school compound revealed that the desks had been abandoned so as to fit in more children during lessons.</p>
	<p>This photograph was taken in Gulu. It shows two temporary classrooms constructed within the environs of a former protected village after conflict. The classrooms are mostly made out of straw. This means when it rains, both teachers and children have nowhere to escape but be rained on.</p>
	<p>This photograph was taken in a primary school compound in the outskirts of Gulu town. It shows mango trees casting their shadows on the ground. During an interview with a teacher who worked in this school, he revealed that during and after conflict children were learning 'under the trees' due to shortage of classrooms.</p>

While overcrowding in Kyenjojo led to the removal of desks from classrooms, tree shades were used in Gulu. A teacher who experienced conflict revealed, 'You know very many people were in the camp. Children were studying under the trees. Sometimes they would go to school once a week. You would find 200 children with just one teacher' (POG).

As noted earlier, this meant some children were invisible in the learning process due to the high pupil to teacher ratio and the situation of the few physically disabled children who went to school was worsened by the seating arrangements. In addition, many professionals indicated that the majority of teachers were not trained to teach disabled children and those who were trained, were deployed to any school without matching their skills to the needs of disabled children. They wished to see specialist teachers trained and existing teachers re-trained to teach diverse learners in conflict settings.

Added to these challenges was a shortage of resources. Table 10 shows all the resources of a primary school with over 600 children in Kyenjojo.

Table 10: Teaching and learning resources

	<p>This photograph was taken in a primary school in Kyenjojo. It shows a classroom (blackboard on the background) that was being used as a store where the learning resources were kept. In this classroom we can see a few textbooks on the tables, hoes probably used for agriculture, drums for music and counters on top of cupboards for mathematics.</p>
	<p>This photograph was taken in the same school as the previous one. It shows the back of the classroom. There are textbooks and possibly posters in the top of the right hand shelf.</p>

The resources in Table 10 were the equivalent of a primary school library in England. Some of the textbooks were donations from Europe and America. Only few parents and professionals noticed improved infrastructure in education which they attributed to NGOs, businesses and faith groups that owned schools with better facilities (ADY, SK and JM).

Most online and field participants decried the limited educational funding and attributed issues facing education such as shortage of teachers, resources, and weak leadership to it. For instance, due to lack of funding the government funded inspections in primary schools only (ROT). This meant unlicensed, unregulated and unmonitored secondary schools existed and operated outside the radar of the ministry of education. Also, participants wrote about the corruption that existed (EM, FK, GN, KB, NM, PP) and cases were given where money allocated to schools was embezzled (JN). Other professionals talked about financial irregularities where school funds were disbursed late by the central government and how this made planning difficult. Both online and field participants argued that for education to move from its ailing state, there was a need to eradicate corruption (EM, FK, GN, JN, KB, NM, PP, TR); increase funding (JK, MMI, PNA, ROT, 7TT); and twin schools with richer ones worldwide (NM).

Though the Ugandan government was applauded mostly by humanitarian workers as competent in developing policies on automatic promotion, universal education, disability equality and special needs education (FB, FD, EH, EM, HK, KB, SK and JM); evidence showed inconsistencies in their implementation. For example in Kyenjojo, the national policy on automatic promotion was not being followed (MMI). This confirmed the observation made by a humanitarian worker that 'policies in Uganda are beautiful but remain unimplemented' (EM).

Other online participants attributed the gap between policy formulation and implementation to weak leadership, irregular monitoring and frequent political interference in schools as universal education was considered a tool used by politicians to achieve their aims (EH, EM, HK, JN, PK, SK and JM). For example, a professor who argued that universal education was used for 'political cover' insisted:

Because universal primary education is a Millennium Development Goal, political leaders gain legitimacy in the international community for implementing it. This can then be traded upon for foreign investment. Furthermore, it is a good tactic for gaining political support and legitimacy among the nation's people/ electorate (PK).

Other humanitarian workers noticed the lack of educational planning and gave the example of how universal education was introduced without thinking about infrastructure and this put pressure on existing schools (EM, FB, JK, TM, TR).

At a school level, educational professionals noticed weak leadership expressed in the imbalance of power between school management committees (SMC), school leaders and parents. In Kyenjojo, weak leadership was visible in the lack of collaboration between schools leaders, teachers and parents (MMI). In Gulu, the situation was described by the inspector of schools thus:

You will find most schools run without school improvement plans. They are supposed to upraise the performance of Headteachers. Our school management committees [equivalent of governing bodies in the UK] have very low education background. You will find a teacher with diploma, a teacher with a degree, bachelor but you are having a school management committee who has not even reached P7 or even O level ! [Ordinary level equivalent to GCSE] How much can a person do? At the end if they do not play their role effectively the whole thing [blame] goes on the child. It is the child because if the Headteacher is not doing enough to supervise the teacher and the management committee is not doing enough to supervise the Headteacher definitely you will see low achievement in the learner (ROT).

In this excerpt, leaders were perceived as unchallenged due to their academic superiority and SMCs as ineffective in holding headteachers to accountability.

The above evidence was supported by a newspaper article in Uganda's daily 'The Monitor' that reported how the absence of the school management financial committee in a returnee school in Gulu led to the embezzlement of over UGX 500 million equivalent of £125,000 and this had resulted in unpaid salaries, tuition fees for returnees, abandoning the agreed accelerated programmes and a drop in enrollment from 600 to 300 pupils (Owich & Makumba, 2013). This meant effective educational leadership was vital in combating financial mismanagement that characterised Uganda's public sector and was slowing down the recovery process for returnees.

#### **4.3.5 'Decreasing quality'**

Some online and field participants noted the decreasing quality of education and attributed it to increased enrolment, automatic promotion policy, poverty, limited funding, lack of resources, teacher recruitment and the adverse effects of conflict such as the destruction of schools (ADY, GKA, JAO, KJR, MMI, 2PA, 7TT).

In relation to increased enrolment in schools, most online and field participants noted that it led to large class sizes and this had resulted in lowered standards. Then, the policy of automatic promotion was perceived by most teachers as exacerbating the quality of education (JAO, POG, ROT, 7TT). A teacher in Gulu said that 'from P1 up to P7 some people do not know even how to write their names. Some children stay in P7 for like three years and then drop out of school. The parents are the ones who are for automatic promotion because they say the government has said my child should not repeat a form' (7TT). This meant children were not making progress and repeating was a waste of their time. To improve quality, Kyenjojo district had abandoned automatic promotion policy (MMI).



Some professionals attributed the poor quality of education in Gulu to the disruption caused by conflict as some schools were closed, displaced and destroyed. Now that conflict was over, improving the quality of education was 'the next battle' (POG). On a different note, both online and field participants highlighted that the poor quality of education was endured by poor children and the rich accessed better quality education in private schools.

In an online questionnaire, a student remarked that because of its quality, universal education had been nicknamed 'bona badome': a Luganda word meaning 'let them become illiterate'. She explained, 'It is accepted by the poor citizens and [who] see the president as a hero for providing the free education. But in reality it is not at any good standards and it is commonly known as "bona badome" meaning let all of them become illiterate rather than becoming literate' (JN).

In all the villages I visited, parents considered children who stayed in universal education schools which offered poor quality education as heading towards 'uncertain futures' characterised by poorly paid jobs (JMY, POG). A teacher pointed out that universal education was producing children who were job seekers not makers (RKA). Other parents avoided poor quality education and paid for it in private schools (MIM, TR, SK and JM). However, a support worker and college student considered the benefits of universal education to be increased voters in national elections and keeping children away from crime (JN, RN). Despite the 'creeping' nature of education described in this category, both research participants and observation data indicated that education was valued by many people. As visible in Photograph 13, a placard displayed in a school compound in Kyenjojo read 'Education is a priority'.

Photograph 13: Education is a priority placard



The belief that education was a priority was implicit for participants who desired it to be improved as presented in the next category.

#### **4.4 Visions of education in conflict**

In describing the process of improvement, participants had visions of educational change. These are articulated in this final category composed of four focused codes: 'education in conflict', 'schools that reinforce hope and opportunities', 'a curriculum that touches the conscience' and a 'renewed teacher professionalism'.

##### **4.4.1 'Education in conflict'**

The title of this code was used by the inspector of schools while commenting on the nature of education during conflict in Gulu. He said:

For sure if you were here at that time definitely it came at a time when teachers were overwhelmed they didn't know how to deal with learners because at that time we were having children returning from captivity children born in captivity traumatised children coming from families and that wasn't normal. These were teachers trained to handle ordinary children. It would be good for a government to modify the curriculum to suit the needs of the learner. You are teaching a child and someone stands and goes and fights or even abuses you as a teacher! So, surely we needed education in conflict (ROT).

Based on this excerpt, I interpreted 'education in conflict' to mean education that was relevant at various stages of conflict and was different from that offered to children.

Online and field participants indicated that whether in times of peace or conflict, and whether in ordinary, special or integrated schools; education in Uganda disregarded children's traditional, familial and political milieus. For instance, a lecturer who had worked in Uganda wrote that the education system was based on the 'British model from the 1960s' (PK). A programme advisor noted that education was 'irrelevant to the actual present-day experiences of the child' (FB).

She went on to suggest that:

The school instead of helping them [children] to discover their own abilities and potentialities shows a clear disregard for the cultural and traditional background of the students and their family situation, and pays no attention to the motivational aspects of the learning process. It still is strongly influenced by the British education system as it was introduced during colonialism (FB).

This meant education was colonially oriented. This was also evident in her revelation that the teaching methods were catechetical and involved children rehearsing and cramming information to pass examinations (FB). This implied they were similar to the ones used by missionaries to inculcate Christian values during colonialism.

Even during conflict in Gulu, parents and teachers told me children continued to learn mathematics, science, social studies and English as per the national

curriculum (JAO, JMY, POG, ROT, 2PA, 7TT). This meant education was neither differentiated according to the stage of conflict nor related to the nature of children. In addition, the few textbooks used in schools originated mainly from Europe and America (see Table 11). According to one teacher, using foreign textbooks had led to a mismatch between the information contained in them and the African context in which children lived (ASN). Effectively, the education children received was not only irrelevant to the conflict situation they lived in but also to their lives as Africans.

Most online and field participants believed that increasing knowledge especially in the skills of numeracy and literacy was the main purpose of education. However, in Kyenjojo and Gulu parents and educational professionals reported that children were leaving primary school after seven years 'half-baked' and unable to read or write (GKE). This testified that education was not achieving its main purpose and children came out of schools with partial knowledge. As already noted, some parents in Gulu prevented their children going to school because farming was more relevant especially during the resettlement period (ROT). This questioned the usefulness of increasing knowledge in literacy and numeracy as the aim of education in conflict settings. It could be postulated that during resettlement, parents would be willing to send their children to school if they received knowledge that improved farming.

In a related finding, it was believed that the knowledge gained from UPE prepared children for 'a lucrative future' (FB) and this was often associated with having a good career upon completion (CKA, KJR, MAM). This meant a future oriented education disregarded the nature of war, poverty, disease, suffering and death in which children lived. However, according to my knowledge of the setting, only a

few children who succeeded in education gained better jobs and the rest were job seekers and languished in poverty.

Some educational professionals told me that some children who dropped out of education or completed universal education refused to help parents with farming and resorted to drinking (MMI, ROT). This was similar to the finding by Ekaju (2011) that 'UPE is elitist and therefore estranges the people from their communities, while excluding adults who never had experience in formal education, in their quest for lifelong learning' (p. 52). This meant education alienated children from their traditional practices such as farming and respecting the elders. According to my experience, in the cultural milieus where this study took place persistent disobedience was heavily punished and sometimes came with disownment. This suggested children who received education and undervalued local knowledge were likely to be culturally alienated and this resulted in being cut off from the community. So, in both Gulu and Kyenjojo some children who left universal education were neither prepared for a career nor for life in their cultural milieu. Instead, formal education perpetuated social disobedience, cultural disintegration and broken communities.

Some teachers and parents perceived the education that solely focused on acquiring knowledge as inaccessible to disabled children (CBA, MMI, RKA). For instance, a headteacher in Kyenjojo remarked that 'our education system only caters for the academic. Once the child has failed the academic they think they cannot do anything' (MMI). This headteacher testified that the education system was academically oriented and excluded children with low ability. Some professionals challenged this and argued that the fact that disabled children went to school like other children was equalising (EM, KJR). However, this

disregarded the invisibility disabled children experienced in teaching and learning whilst at school (ADY, CKA, JAO, MMI, POG, 2PA, 7TT).

On a different note, some online and field participants indicated that some disabled people had succeeded in their studies but experienced difficulties finding employment due discrimination (KB, PNA, ROT). However, a businessman, a teacher and an inspector of schools who were physically disabled had got jobs and they reported this had improved their self-image (CKA, PNA, ROT). There was no evidence to indicate if people with other disabilities were employed as all of the three people above were physically disabled. However, there was a desire to use education to equalise opportunities between the disabled and non-disabled people as a trainee teacher remarked that 'if the disabled are not brought back to the society they will fear that the normal will make them lose another leg' (KJR). Other participants considered universal education equalising in so far as it reduced poverty by bridging the gap between the rich and the poor people, and between the rich South and poor North of Uganda (EM, GKE, JMY). It was, however, not easy to verify this claim during the field study.

In a related finding, online and field participants wished that relevant education in conflict settings had protection, normalcy and coping as purposes and not just improving knowledge. For instance, when asked about the purpose of education in conflict settings, a headteacher commented:

Last time it was here you heard how our boys were burnt in Kichwamba. In the mountains near the Democratic Republic of Congo how people are suffering. War can be all over the country. The child needs to know if something happens what should do, who will help me, where will I run to. These children need to have the skills to have prior knowledge because anything can happen anytime. They need to be educated beforehand and have the skills before war (MMI).

In this excerpt, the headteacher suggested that children needed skills on how to

be safe before, during and after war. Also, a parent in Gulu wished education facilitated communication between civilians and rebels and this involved learning Swahili: a language used mainly by the rebels and the army in Uganda (JAO). This meant education in conflict was to protect children before, during and after conflict.

Other online and field participants believed that education for normalcy was to be the purpose of education in conflict settings. For instance, online participants suggested that education needed to foster communal healing, security, normalisation of lives and contain psychosocial counselling (EL, FD, HK, PK). Some field participants linked normalcy to making the minds of children upright, rehabilitation from trauma and reintegration into their communities (CBA, JAO, MMI). This finding assumed normalcy was going back to pre-conflict conditions.

However, the education advisor challenged education for normalcy and conceived the purpose of education to be coping with the situation (EH). I interpreted this to mean accepting the conflict situation and finding the best way to live in it given that life was to be different during and after conflict. In Gulu, this would entail offering an education that helped children understand their situation, discover the causes of conflict and working out solutions to avert future conflicts.

In relation to how education could be maintained in the future, the reprisal of conflict was considered a threat and participants were divided on this. While some did not consider education a priority and could be suspended until conflict was over (CKA, JMY, RKA); others thought education could continue only if there was tight security and teachers and parents worked together (GKE, KJR, ROT, 2PA). Others considered education in conflict hard because few children would make it to schools and wished to see the government learn from the past and prepare for

future conflict situations (POG, ROT). Then, a teacher wished to see policies developed by the international community to protect and sustain education in conflict settings (CBA). Some parents believed there would be no education because of insecurity and doubted if NGOs would be there to support them (JAO, 2PA).

#### **4.4.2 'Schools that reinforce hope and opportunities'**

The title of this focused code was a response given by a healthcare worker (TM) in answer to the question on the purpose of education in conflict settings. His response was probably based on the assumption that children had lost hope: an assumption that was later confirmed by most participants in Gulu. I used this in vivo code to put together data on how participants described schools at the time of this study and imagined schools in future conflict settings.

Online and field participants confirmed that most children were being educated in ordinary schools, some in integrated schools and a few in special schools. In relation to education for disabled children, participants talked about the few boarding special schools that catered for the blind, deaf and returnee children mainly run by charities and businesses (ADY, CKA, EH, GKA, GKI, GKE, JAO, POG, 2PA, 7TT, SK and JM). Like ordinary schools, most special schools were far from villages where children lived as they were located in towns and they lacked equipment, specialist teachers and charged high fees unaffordable to poor parents. For instance, parents and teachers in Kyenjojo told me that the nearest special school was about 40 miles away and they hoped for a boarding special school to be built in their district (ADY, CKA, GKA, GKE, GKI). This meant future schools were to be near where children lived. Unique to Gulu was a returnee school described by the local council secretary in the following words: 'There is a



centre for returnee children it's like a school. They teach them. At least they help them to bring their minds back before they join school. It's like a rehabilitation centre' (JAO).

Online and field participants were divided on the place of special and ordinary schools in the education of disabled children and there seemed to be a silent discourse. On one hand, some parents, teachers and other workers supported special schools and argued that ordinary schools marginalised disabled children, lacked specialist teachers and were sites of exclusion (GKI, JAO, MAM, POG, 7TT). For instance, a parent of a disabled child was cautious about taking her child to an ordinary school and through an interpreter commented: 'She is really not sure if she will take him to school as the schools are exclusive of these kinds of people. The toilets are dirty, the rooms, the seating arrangements are not really favourable for these children. It's really better for him not to be in school' (MAM). For this parent, it was better for her child to stay at home than go to an ordinary school where she was segregated.

On the other hand, some parents and teachers considered ordinary schools as spaces where disabled children were normalised and educating them there was equalising opportunities (ADY, CBA, EL, FD, HK, JAO, PK, 7TT). In other words, educating disabled children in ordinary schools showed they were equal to their non-disabled peers, received the same education and were not discriminated against like in special schools. In my opinion, this discourse was based on the belief that disabled children went to school not because it made a difference but because it demonstrated to the rest of the society that they were equal to their non-disabled peers. However, ordinary schools were seen by others as not fit for

disabled children as they lacked resources and teachers to support them (ADY, EM, GS, TM, SK and JM).

Some professionals insisted that special schools were not normal and were detrimental to children's wellbeing (FB, ROT, 7TT). For instance, a teacher in Gulu told me that children who attended a boarding special school 'hated children who are ok' when they went back to their villages during school holidays (7TT). In his own words, the inspector of schools remarked that 'it is very stigmatising separating them. You know putting them in an ordinary school sensitises others that these are children born in an ordinary setting and are meant to learn in an ordinary setting' (ROT). In her response to the online questionnaire, a humanitarian worker wrote: 'Special needs schools are looked at as "special" schools and sending ones child to these schools is not that well accepted, more an option one takes when there is no other option or no hope for "normal" education' (FB). In these excerpts, special schools were seen to encourage hatred, perpetuate stigma, foster isolation and exclusion. However, some parents saw special schools as a last resort for severely disabled children (2PA).

In a related finding, some parents and professionals talked about integrated schools which were midway between ordinary and special schools (CKA, GKA, JAO, MMI, POG, ROT, 2PA, 7TT, SK and JM). The inspector of schools commented:

Instead of special school we normally go for an integrated system where like for example now we have the units set within an ordinary school that is much better than separating children on their own. It is very stigmatising for you to separate them because if you separate them and then later on you want them to join the community it puts them at a disadvantage (ROT).

In this excerpt, integrated schools were like ordinary schools but had 'units' or centres where provision for disabled children took place. Integrated schools were

considered more accommodating than special or ordinary schools. Integration meant being in the same location. As one specialist teacher testified that in the integrated school where he worked, disabled children were taught separately in Years 1 to 6 using a different pedagogy but followed the same curriculum as their non-disabled peers (POG). He added that when disabled children reached Year 7, they were mixed with their non-disabled peers because they sat the same primary leaving examination (POG).

In Gulu, professionals and parents told me that during conflict, many schools were destroyed and learning centres were created in protected villages (GKA, JAO, POG, ROT, 7TT). The inspector of schools described a learning centre thus:

At that time about 90 percent of all the schools were destroyed. And what used to happen was that where there is a camp we would set a learning centre and a learning centre would comprise of many schools (4-7 schools together) that would be a learning centre. Then we would give education as per national curriculum (ROT).

This excerpt revealed that protracted conflict had transformed schools from ordinary, special and integrated schools to learning centres. However, teachers and parents who had lived and worked in protected villages told me that education in learning centres was as per the national curriculum delivered by teachers who were sometimes helped by humanitarian workers (JAO, MAM, ROT, 7TT). They further revealed that with the ceasefire, children were urged to return to their former schools but most of them had been destroyed (JAO, MAM, ROT, 7TT). This was also confirmed by observation data partly captured in Table 9 which showed the temporary spaces where children returned to learn after conflict. These were not the schools that would give hope and opportunities to children wounded by war as hoped by the healthcare worker reported at the beginning of this focused code (TM).

The view that future schools would give hope and opportunities was shared by other professionals and parents who, after the many years of conflict, wished for transformed schools. In Kyenjojo, a grandparent dreamt of a school where teachers had 'parental love' (ADY). In Gulu, a teacher wished that a nursery was the first place where disabled children who missed out of education were to have a better start in life and he commented:

To me if there is need for a school it should be a nursery school for children with disabilities because at the moment we don't have a nursery school which help these children with disability whether being blind, deafness, or the mental retardation. We don't have any nursery school for these children with disability. We start enrolling them when they are 6-7 years. Nursery school is very important. One way is it allows a child to learn to socialise. They are not used to other people. Their parents send the others to nursery those with disabilities stay at home until primary 1 (POG).

In this except, future schools were to be spaces of inclusion where children who had been marginalised and excluded before and during conflict would belong.

In Gulu a teacher had the following vision of an inclusive school after conflict:

I was thinking of the future school where there is inclusive education. At the moment the inclusive we talk of is not practised. It is the inclusive where children with disabilities are together with the normal. A school with different wings a wing for visual impaired. Then there is a section for the dumb. Another corner for the crippled. The normal ones they have their own teachers learning English. When it comes to play time there is a common playground where they all meet and there are teachers guiding them. The normal inclusive school should be made wider with teachers catering for different needs. Things that are in the special schools are there. Where it needs total referral i.e. the totally impaired those who are imbecile who are difficult to teach because of mental problems are taken to a referral centre (7TT).

For this teacher, inclusion entailed providing spaces where varied education depending on ability or disability was possible. Inclusion was by location while learning and play by proximity. In my opinion this would not be a wholly inclusive school as children he termed 'imbeciles' would be excluded and taken to a referral centre. This suggested 'imbeciles' were 'ineducable'. This view was not shared

by all teachers as one conceived inclusive schools as ordinary schools where both disabled and non-disabled children were in the same location and followed the same curriculum (CBA). This confirmed the view that there was 'no good understanding of inclusion' in Uganda (FB). Though there was no clarity on inclusive education, some of its benefits were socialisation, sensitisation, recognising disabled children as human and creating inclusive communities (POG, ROT).

There were other features of a future school expressed by participants. Some hoped that future schools were built near where children lived and alleviated dangers originating from extreme weather and conflict experienced on the way to and from school (FB, JMY, POG). Others considered future schools as zones of peace where everyone felt safe given children and teachers experienced destruction, abductions and death in schools during conflict (JMY, MMI). However, these aspirations for future schools were limited by funding to the extent that some online participants judged the Government of Uganda lacking the capacity to educate its citizens and recommended it resorted to foreign aid (FD, FK, JK, NM, PNA, SK and JM). To conclude, most participants wished to see schools after conflict offer hope not despair and this necessitated reforming the outdated curriculum.

#### **4.2.3 'A curriculum that touches the conscience'**

The title of this focused code was an expression used by the dean of studies in Gulu while commenting on how the curriculum could be improved (7TT). I used this expression to organise the three main views on the curriculum in conflict settings participants had: 'unchanged', 'modified' and 'localised curriculum'.

In relation to the 'unchanged curriculum', some parents and teachers wished to see a continuation of the current ordinary curriculum for all children including those with disabilities. This meant the continuation of the curriculum that they perceived as academically oriented and had increasing knowledge as its purpose even in times of conflict (FB, JAO, JMY, PK, POG, ROT, 2PA, 7TT). It could be assumed that participants who supported the unchanged curriculum did not see it as colonial and useless but 'academic' and useful.

In relation to the modified curriculum, teachers and leaders remarked that conflict had changed people and settings and wished to see a modified curriculum (CKA, GKA, JAO, KJR, ROT, 7TT). In an africanised interview, the rationale for the modification of the curriculum was based on the belief that there was a difference between children who lived during conflict and those who had not (7TT). Participants in Gulu wished to see French, Swahili, guidance, counselling and rehabilitation included to the modified curriculum (JAO, ROT, 7TT). Though it was made clear by participants that they needed guidance, counselling and rehabilitation to recover from conflict, Swahili to communicate with the enemy who were often rebels and the army, it was not evident why they needed French and I did not question them. It is possible that French was used by some of the NGOs when supplying aid. In Kyenjojo, participants wished modules on home economics and cultural norms added to the curriculum (CKA, GKA, KJR). This was in response to the declining knowledge of African culture with the dawn of universal education.

However, in an effort to modify the curriculum, other participants advocated for a shift from academic to practical subjects such as business, arts, crafts, sports and dance which they considered relevant to people who 'missed out education

during the years of violence' (EH). As visible in Photograph 14, the yearning for a practically oriented curriculum would give skills in carpentry, construction and farming which were vital during the resettlement period.

Photograph 14: Resettling in Cho Pee



Photograph 14 taken in the former protected village of Cho Pee depicts returnees re-establishing themselves after conflict. It shows a newly constructed hut surrounded by a garden of sweet potatoes and a gentleman mending a table: activities that needed practical knowledge. However, in Kyenjojo a headteacher indicated that vocational oriented education was considered inferior and only for children who were 'dull' (MMI). This might be the reason why a grandparent resisted taking her disabled grandchild to a vocational school as she considered her academic (ADY).

As an alternative to ordinary and modified curricula, some participants hoped for a localised curriculum: a curriculum tailored to the conflict settings and to the stages of conflict and insisted that people in living in conflict were consulted (HK, POG, ROT, 7TT). The dean of studies in Gulu articulated it thus:

There should be a curriculum that touches the conscience. Most of the people who went through the time of war their conscience is lacking. The inner voice is lacking. The curriculum that caters for the inner voice is lacking. The NCDC [National Curriculum Development Centre] prepared a curriculum for a normal a well grown up well brought up child socially emotionally spiritually but now the social element, spiritual element; moral element in the war conflict area is dead. We now need to bring it up from the children (7TT).

As discernible in the excerpt above, children living in conflict had lost their humanity and a curriculum that touched their conscience was needed for them to regain it. This was an original finding in this study.

In relation to the content of the curriculum in conflict, online and field participants had various suggestions. Some wanted the curriculum to be sensitive to past and future conflicts with components including how to avoid, prevent, manage, reduce and resolve conflict; breaking the cycles of violence through reconciliation, forgiveness, tolerance and non-violence; providing psychosocial support, education for human rights and the history of war in Uganda (EH, EM, KB, TM). In addition, a headteacher suggested that a curriculum after conflict was to sensitise children on how to be safe before, during and after conflict (MMI). A curriculum after conflict was also seen as that which empowered people and gave them confidence, self-esteem, a sense of belonging, ability to manage anger and lead to moral and spiritual recovery (CBA, GKI, JN, MMI, NM, TM).

In addition, a curriculum in conflict needed to be therapeutic as it would respond to the needs of children who had 'suffered many traumatic experiences such as being forced to kill their own parents and relatives' (KB). For many participants, this meant a curriculum that rehabilitated children through counselling, therapy and healing at individual and community levels (EL, FD, HK, JAO, MMI, PK, 7TT, SK and JM). Some parents and teachers saw these activities to be underpinned



by the normalcy purpose of education which was linked to making the minds of children upright (CBA, JAO).

However, some teachers and local leaders wished that a curriculum in conflict was not restricted only to the North but generalised to all settings in Uganda (GKI, JMY, MMI). Generalising a conflict curriculum was based on the argument by a headteacher that even in Kyenjojo where conflict was not protracted, there were returnee children who needed normalising education (MMI). This was supported by a local councillor who insisted that children needed a conflict curriculum because war had been in all places and affected all Ugandans (JMY).

As for the disabled children, varied views existed on whether they accessed the same or different curriculum. Some parents and teachers hoped for a different curriculum (JAO, POG, ROT). For example, the inspector of schools referred to his disability and saw the need for a holistic and disability friendly curriculum. He said:

Me I am grown up and I have overcome my disability and I can talk about my disability but a growing child may not. So definitely we would need a curriculum that is friendly to a child with disability and teachers must be trained to interpret the curriculum properly to suit the needs of children because the curriculum is about a child and the curriculum is not about mathematics, it is not about English, it is not about science, but it is about the whole child. So that is very important (ROT).

One teacher wished all disabled children accessed the same curriculum as they were also human beings (7TT). Education programme assistants argued for a specific curriculum that reduced vulnerability and discrimination (SK and JM). Some professionals and parents wanted a disability friendly curriculum that addressed specific needs of children (CKA, POG). Some teachers and parents argued that given the job market was the same there was no need for a different curriculum (JMY, POG, 2PA). A researcher hoped for a curriculum that matched

with the nature of post war problems faced by disabled children (KB). Some parents hoped for a special curriculum that depended on ability and disability (ADY, CKA, GKI). To conclude, the overriding desire was a transformed curriculum after conflict. For some participants, the difference lay in its power to touch the conscience of children who had been dehumanised by conflict.

#### **4.4.4 'Renewed teacher professionalism'**

This final focused code captured how participants wished to see teacher professionalism transformed to reflect the changed nature of teachers and the education setting during and after conflict.

In relation to the changed nature of teachers, some of the teachers I met in Gulu noticed that conflict had traumatised them (ROT, 7TT). One teacher commented that 'if there is need all teachers should be trained in counselling... Even teachers who are in the field pass through those trauma. How comes a trauma person helping a trauma person? That means a blind leading the blind' (7TT). This excerpt highlighted the traumatised state of teachers in the conflict setting. This teacher wondered how traumatised teachers were to teach traumatised children without effective training.

As noted in the previous codes, the education system in Uganda had not changed and some professionals and parents re-affirmed that teachers continued to use the colonial and catechetical methods to deliver the unchanged curriculum (FB, PK). As revealed by the inspector of schools below this teaching context had not changed to reflect the effects of armed conflict:

For sure if you were here at that time definitely it came at a time when teachers were overwhelmed. They didn't know how to deal with learners because at that time we were having children returning from captivity, children born in captivity, traumatised children coming from

families, and that wasn't normal. These were teachers trained to handle ordinary children. It would be good for a government to modify the curriculum to suit the needs of the learner. You are teaching a child and someone stands and goes and fights or even abuses you as a teacher, so surely we needed education in conflict (ROT).

In this excerpt, the inspector of schools indicated that the conflict setting teachers taught in was different from the one they were used to and implied the need to change teacher professionalism.

In relation to training, teachers wished to be trained to teach in conflict settings (MMI, ROT, 7TT). This longing was evident in the comment made by the inspector of schools who emphasised that 'teachers must be trained to interpret the curriculum properly to suit the needs of children because the curriculum is about a child and the curriculum is not about mathematics, it's not about English, it's not about science, but it's about the whole child' (ROT). This excerpt revealed that teacher training was to be broadened and tailored to the conflict setting and curriculum. To conclude, both online and field participants hoped for improved teacher professionalism after conflict.

#### **4.5 Chapter summary**

This chapter has presented the main findings using four categories. The first category 'living in zones of conflict' has revealed the challenges of life during and after conflict such as 'forced displacement', 'dehumanisation', 'rampant poverty' and 'weakened leadership'. The second category 'being disabled in conflict' has showed the tensions of being disabled such as 'normal versus abnormal', 'visible versus invisible', 'acceptance versus rejection' and how they affected the provision of services in conflict settings. The third category 'creeping education' has outlined the main features of creeping education: 'disaffected children', 'disengaged parents', 'demotivated teachers', 'ailing education infrastructure' and

'decreasing quality'. The fourth category 'visions of education in conflict' has revealed the need for education in conflict in schools that reinforced hope and opportunities using a curriculum that touched the consciences of children delivered by a renewed teacher professionalism. Though these categories were constructed separately during analysis, interrelations existed between them. In the next chapter, I build on these linkages to formulate theoretical codes which are building blocks for the substantive theory of education in conflict settings.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

This chapter theorises data by examining the main findings in light of relevant literature, constructing theoretical codes which are building blocks for the theory, and articulating the theory of Africanising education in Uganda.

### **5.1 Broken communities**

This study indicated that traditional communities were destroyed in Northern Uganda and various factors including forced displacement, neo-colonialism, rampant poverty and routine dislocation were given. In this theoretical code, I discuss how these factors intermingled to create broken communities.

This and other studies showed that the forced displacement of over 90 percent of the population in Northern Uganda led to the abandonment of ancestral villages for overcrowded protected villages (Branch, 2013; Kelly & Odama, 2011; WRC, 2005). Before conflict, people lived in ancestral villages composed of huts displayed in a circular form to facilitate communal living. However, during conflict, people were forced to abandon their villages for large protected villages.

Photograph 15 on the next page gives an example of a protected village where people were confined to live. Such congested settlements were also referred to as 'internment camps' (Branch, 2008, p. 153) and people became 'inmates' (HURIFO, 2008, p. 36).

Photograph 15: Protected village in Northern Uganda



(Photograph from Baroni, 2006)

In my opinion, the terms 'internment camps' and 'inmates' symbolise the disempowerment people endured. This was also evident in how they received aid:

In the name of efficiency, people were made to fill out cards, stand in line all day, maintain silence, and not get out of line at risk of a scolding, a blow from a stick or the loss of food. They were forced to obey whistles and barked commands, assemble immediately the trucks arrived and then disperse after receiving their allotment (Branch, 2008, p. 168).

This excerpt reveals the dehumanising conditions people lived in. People who chose what to eat while in their ancestral villages begged for food from humanitarian workers. People who were leaders at household, village and community levels were under the control of camp commanders and humanitarian workers. This evidence signalled the brokenness experienced by 'inmates' to the extent that life as a family, clan or tribe was unmanageable. Effectively, the movement from ancestral villages to internment camps was life changing.

In relation to the protection promised while leaving ancestral villages, this study showed that raids and abductions were common in protected villages. This was due to the fact that army barracks were located in the centres of protected villages which were the safest locations (Finnstrom, 2006). So, whenever there were raids, it was the people who protected the army and not the army protecting the people. Due to insecurity, some people escaped from protected villages back to ancestral villages and 'night commuters' fled to town centres (Bragin & Opiro, 2012; HURIFO, 2007; WCR, 2005). Though this symbolised the search for safety and resistance to oppression in camps, evidence from the Women's Commission for Refugee (WCR, 2005) revealed that night commuters were victims of sexual abuse along transit routes and in sleeping spaces. So, whether inside or outside protected villages safety was not guaranteed.

Key in sustaining life in protected villages were NGOs or humanitarian organisations who offered education, counselling, rehabilitation and medical care. This finding was supported by research which indicated that it would have been impossible for the Ugandan government to keep people in protected villages without the support and leadership from humanitarian organisations (Branch, 2008; Finnstrom, 2006). For instance, Branch (2008) argued that humanitarian organisations provided civil administration in camps, distributed aid only to camps approved by the government and launched a camp management strategy that parcelled war zones amongst themselves. This not only showed how traditional communities were partitioned in the guise of offering support but also suggested that humanitarian organisations contributed to the breakdown of traditional communities.

The finding that humanitarian organisations sustained life during conflict was further supported by evidence from Joshua Dysart. An American novelist who after conducting research in Northern Uganda, Joshua Dysart wrote a blog post revealing his opinion which was illustrative of public and media perceptions of NGOs. Dysart (2007) noticed that approximately 600 NGOs operated in Gulu and their presence was unsustainable. On his blog post he wrote:

...there seem to be three types of non-profits operating in the area. Ones who do good and necessary work, ones who come with well-meaning hearts but implement programs that do nothing to heal the cultural damage done to the Acholi way of life and in many cases perpetuate the welfare state mentality, and the ones called the "Invisible NGO's" by a journalist I met who is working for two months in the area. The invisible NGO's are organizations collecting grants and various government and private funds, yet have no locatable offices or evidence of applied services. These are the non-profit pirates, stealing money and goods the world has deemed belongs to the needy. The implications of too many NGO's in one area are staggering and a whole paper could be written on the philosophical problems of good intentions and the global response to crises (Dysart, 2007).

This post reveals that NGOs disregarded local traditions, furthered their own ideologies and in doing so contributed to the demise of traditional culture. This was corroborated by evidence which showed that traditional systems of leadership at family, village and tribe levels were hardly existent in protected villages as they were replaced by humanitarian workers and the army (Branch, 2008; Mabikke, 2011).

The breakdown of traditional leadership had implications to communities in Gulu. For example, participants talked about land wrangles that characterised the resettlement period and attributed them to weakened traditional leadership. Mabikke (2011) reminded us that unlike other regions where forms of land tenure introduced by British colonialists were being used, Northern Uganda had remained outside of British interference and local land rights continued to be



administered through culturally accepted norms of the Acholi people. He further noticed that:

Traditionally, the *Rwot Kweri* (chief of hoes) or the *Won Pachu* are responsible for allocating and verifying land boundaries for cultivation while clan leaders (*Rwodi Kaka*) carry out the dispute resolution system. These leaders are highly respected in the community are often seen as the “fountain of wisdom” regarding traditional customs relating to land. Some of these leaders are also believed to possess spiritual powers especially when performing the cleansing ceremony (Mabikke, 2011, p. 11).

This implies that without traditional leaders, the traditional system of land management broke down. It was not surprising that some of the widows I met in Gulu stayed in a former protected village. They attributed their failure to return to their ancestral villages to the death of their husbands who would have fought for land had they been alive.

Mabikke (2011) further revealed that the traditional leaders had been replaced by state sanctioned ‘land grabbers’. He noted:

These fears are worsened by the emergence of a group of elite Acholi (enjoying superior intellectual, social and economic status) and government authorities who were entrusted with the legal mandate to address land tenure issues in Northern Uganda. This class of people is commonly seen as state-orchestrated land grabbing agents who are very corrupt, untrustworthy and often having hidden interests in land. This powerful group (including army officers and politicians) has grabbed previously communal lands hence leaving the extremely vulnerable groups (women, children and youths, disabled and elderly) barely landless wanderers in their own homeland (Mabikke, 2011, p. 6).

In this excerpt, land grabbers resemble new colonialists. Unlike old colonialists who were from Britain, the new colonialists are Ugandans who enjoy superior intellectual and socio-economic status probably gained after embracing colonial education and they use their power to oppress people. Given land is the main asset left after conflict, it is unlikely that the people of Northern Uganda are going

to give up. It could be argued that their resistance to land grabbing is likely to escalate further conflict in Uganda.

It could be predicted that future conflict will trigger the return of humanitarian organisations and government troops to manage the situation thus creating a vicious cycle. In my opinion for this cycle to be broken, there is a need for strong local leadership with more power at village, communal, regional and national levels. Having more power will allow local leaders in broken communities to participate in policy especially that related to land: the only asset left after conflict.

In a related development, the fact that land grabbers and corrupt humanitarian organisations were allowed to operate in the region suggested that the government neglected the people of Northern Uganda (Dysart, 2007; Mabikke, 2011). The government entrusted the people to organisations that did not always care and provided poor quality services to them. This was the feeling a parent in Gulu had and the judgement she made after struggling for over a year to get a wheelchair for her disabled child from one of the humanitarian organisations (MAM). It is also possible that this parent was a victim of a rogue organisation (Dysart, 2007).

Given local people were able to judge the quality of the services as poor, they possibly compared it to the past forms of support they received related to care for the disabled, education, reconciliation, and counselling. Taking counselling as an example, humanitarian organisations might have used the Western style individualised approach as opposed to the familiar African communitarian approach. This could also be deduced from Senyonyi, Ochieng and Sells (2012) who found that counsellors in Uganda trained using Western style assessment tools which were outdated and unreliable; counselling was conducted in English

with many clients needing an interpreter; and individualised counselling excluded extended families and religious leaders. This implied that the approaches used by humanitarian organisations to heal people after war disregarded the culture and wisdom of the African people expressed in proverbs like 'If one person is sick, it is the whole village that is sick'. In the context of counselling, this proverb meant if one person needed counselling, it was the whole community to be counselled. This calls for adapting Western models of counselling to the social, economic and cultural context of Africa (Goss & Adebowale, 2014).

The practice of replacing African ways of knowing and being could be conceived as neo-colonialism which is linked to colonialism (Rao, 2000). In this study, colonialism is not about bad things people did in the invaded territories (Watson, 2013) but the 'the direct political, economic and educational control of one nation over another' (Altbach, 1971, p. 237). This study shows that aspects of colonialism still exist in Uganda and are advanced by international NGOs, churches, Uganda's membership to the Commonwealth, and they affect the provision of services such as education. In literature, scholars like Altbach (1971) refer to this 'continued post-colonial impact of advanced industrial countries on the educational systems and policies as well as the intellectual life of developing countries' as neo-colonialism (p. 237). He considers it as a 'planned policy of advanced nations to maintain their influence in developing countries, but it is also simply a continuation of past practices' (Altbach, 1971, p. 237). In this study, I consider colonialism and neo-colonialism to be linked and where separate, a distinction is made.

Kay and Nystrom (1971) indicate that neo-colonialism has been prevalent in Uganda right after independence and this study reinforced this assertion. For

instance, religion was a form of neo-colonialism as it was used to control and influence Ugandans. It is not surprising that in Kyenjojo, church charity such as giving free clothes to people by Catholic priests was geared towards increasing church attendance rather than eradicating poverty. In churches, 'neo-colonialists' whom I conceived to be those who perpetuated neo-colonial ideas were not concerned with the wellbeing of the local people.

Neo-colonialists were like the original colonialists who did not care and provided services like education in poor structures to the extent that they were 'sources of disservice to the community' (Mumford & Parker, 1937, p. 30). For instance, Christian missionaries in Uganda paved the way for colonialism and sustained it through education (Hansen, 1986; Tomasevski, 1999). Their education was geared towards conversion and producing educated Christians rather than educated Ugandans (Mumford & Parker, 1937; Ranger, 1965; Ssekamwa & Lugumba, 2001). As Ranger (1965) confirmed:

Practically all independent churches ran or tried to run schools, but in many cases this had little to do with educational concern. Just as it was hard to conceive of a school without a church so it was hard to conceive of a church without a school. A school was needed to complete the religious community; or to allow the new church to compete with the missions; or to help the new church to finance itself out of school fees (p. 79).

This meant the main purpose of their schools was not to educate Ugandans but achieve religious aims and mobilise finances for the missions. It could be argued that missionaries weakened opposition to colonialism as education helped in controlling 'indigenous populations for the benefit of the colonial power' (Harber & Sakade, 2009, p. 174). This could also be said of neo-colonialists today who use religion and education to spread their ideologies, wipe away African religions and in so doing break African communities.

However, during conflict in Gulu people were told by government officials that it was only humanitarian organisations that could resolve their problems (HURIFO, 2008). Given that people had become dependent on them, some participants told me that it was hard to survive after humanitarian organisations left. It was not possible to examine the role of humanitarian organisations during the field study as interviews and meetings were arranged but never attended. Interview questionnaires were left in the offices but none returned. The excuse I often heard was the busy schedule of humanitarian staff working tirelessly in the field.

On one hand the non-participation of most humanitarian organisations could be interpreted as fearing to be accountable for their corruption, failure to meet the needs of people during conflict and concealing their motive of tolerating a 'convenient war' in Northern Uganda (Dowden, 2014; Dysart, 2007). It could also be hiding their neo-colonial bodies for during his study on the daily interactions between foreign aid workers and South African villagers, Watson (2013) noticed that aid workers experienced themselves as separate from the villagers, resisted invitations to share the local culture and there was a 'strict division, hierarchy, and unidirectionality between an us-who-help and a them-who-receive-help' (Watson, 2013, p. 25). He suggested that 'evidence for development's neocolonial nature may be tangibly written directly onto the body conduct of aid workers' (Watson, 2013, p. 4). In the context of my study, this implied humanitarian workers might not have wished to expose themselves to me.

On the other hand, the provision of poor services by NGOs could symbolise the struggle to cope with the magnitude of conflict and ignorance of the needs of the local people. To dispel these interpretations, it is worth conducting a study on the role of NGOs and the government in averting and sustaining conflict in Uganda.

Rampant poverty was another feature of broken communities. Evidence in this study showed that people left their ancestral villages dispossessed of their assets. Though their ways of life had been disrupted by colonialism, land and cattle were still symbols of wealth and power (Dowden, 2014; HURIFO, 2008). With conflict and the routine dislocation that ensued, this wealth was taken away and people's way of life disrupted. For example, my research guide told me that cattle were traditionally used to pay off bride prices but after conflict, it had become hard for people to marry as families no longer afforded the dowry. Other evidence revealed that land which was the most important asset that united people, was becoming a source of disunity and a threat to future peace due to land wrangles. Effectively, the depletion of assets resulted in chronic poverty that was transmitted from generation to generation (Anderson, 2009; Bird et al., 2010; Bragin, 2012; Ekaju, 2011; Spitzer & Twikirize, 2013).

In addition to rampant poverty, routine dislocation characterised broken communities. This study revealed that forced dislocation occurred between ancestral villages, protected villages, resettlement spaces and rebel camps commonly referred to as 'the bush'. According to Annan et al. (2003) people in the bush lived in dehumanising conditions and experienced starvation to the extent of eating leaves. However, this finding was challenged by Verma (2012) who noticed that returnees were advised by government officials to only talk about their bad experiences. She recalled some returnees confiding to her that they lived more happily in the bush than in the returnee centre and described it as living in big houses, having enough to eat and possessing higher ranks (Verma, 2012). This revelation challenged narratives expressed in this and other studies that the bush was a place of suffering. It suggested that for some people life in the bush was comparable to that in protected villages or even better.

In Gulu, participants told me that the return from the bush and protected villages was an overwhelming experience characterised by mass displacement of 'returnees'. As a category, 'returnees' was contested in my data in that people born in protected villages and rebel camps were not returning but had become dislocated from their places of birth. According to my data, people were taken to returnee centres upon arrival to be rehabilitated from bush life. This finding was confirmed by other studies that showed returnees going through ritual cleansing ceremonies as a way of rehabilitation and reintegration into their communities (Annan et al., 2009; Harlacher, 2009; HURIFO, 2008). In his study, Harlacher (2009) talked about the Acholi belief that people who have been away from home for long contract bad spirits and required rituals such as 'stepping on the egg' to welcome and cleanse them (p. 175). He also documented rituals that were performed to reintegrate them: 'washing away the tears' for returnees who have been mourned because they were mistakenly believed to have died; and 'cleansing the spirit' ritual for returnees who have broken taboos and encountered vengeful spirits of unburied people (Harlacher, 2009, pp. 175-183).

It should be noted that not everyone returned to their ancestral villages due to landlessness, land wrangles, old age, disability, captivity and the desire to search for opportunities in other settings. This finding was reinforced by Joireman et al. (2012) who in their study on the placement of homes before, during and after conflict concluded that people did not necessarily return to their original locations. This was the case for the widows I met in a former protected village who had stayed. This was also the case for the abductees who were still under the control of rebels, for those who died during war and whose bodies had not returned to their ancestral lands.

According to the Acholi culture, the spirits of people who died and were not buried amongst their ancestors or had not received proper burials in their ancestral land wandered as harmful and vengeful spirits (Finnstrom, 2001; Harlacher, 2009; Neuner, Pfeiffer, Schauer-Kaiser, Odenwald, Elbert, & Ertl, 2012). In his narrative Finnström (2001) recollected his encounter with spirits at the scene of an ambush in Gulu:

Yet I felt uncomfortable walking among the remains of unburied men and women. I knew that the unburied should not be left in the bush, according to Acholi beliefs. A temporary burial is requested until relatives or others can gather and conduct a proper one. Temporarily, some grass could be placed on the body, a gesture accompanied by a verbal declaration of innocence –‘I was not the one who killed you’. This is expected to calm the spirit of the deceased, but could hardly have been accomplished at the scene of the ambush (p. 250).

My research reinforces existing studies on the importance of receiving a proper burial for Acholi people as being unburied soured the relationship between the living and the dead commonly referred to as ‘living dead’ in African societies. This signalled alienation of the living dead from the living. It suggested that conflict had not only broken the community of the living but also of the dead. It could be predicted that given many dead people remain without proper burials, some people will continue to attribute the ills that face them and their communities to this disregarded custom.

Also, before conflict, it could be assumed that cleansing rituals took place in ancestral villages. During and after conflict, there was inconsistency in the places where the rituals were performed due to insecurity, who performed the rituals due to the death of most elders, why the rituals were performed especially by young people and the possibility of them refusing to participate because they did not understand their significance. Returnees to centres run by humanitarian organisations with foreign personnel might not have been allowed to participate



in the rituals as they might not have understood their cultural significance. According to my experience of living in Uganda, humanitarian organisations with a Christian orientation were likely to refuse African traditional rituals preferring the Christian way of life. This implied some returnees were deprived of ancestral ways of healing and coping due to neo-colonial mentalities. To conclude, I found the communities in Uganda to be broken: broken by conflict, displacement, neo-colonialism, rampant poverty but with a strong desire for healing.

## **5.2 Conscience-less people**

This study also revealed that protracted conflict had become a way of life for many people to the extent that their behaviour was described as 'conscience-less'. This theoretical code uses data to discuss the extent to which children, the primary subject of this study, were conscience-less.

A significant finding in this study came from a teacher who originated from Southern Uganda and worked in Gulu during the years of conflict. During his stay, he noticed many people including children engaging in dehumanising actions such as killing and exhibiting unacceptable behaviour which were perceived by professionals to be evidence for the absence of conscience (7TT). As an insider researcher, conscience is a significant marker of being human in African societies and lacking it is often perceived as not being human. For example, the Batooro people of Kyenjojo refer to those who lack conscience as 'mahoiga' which means 'life-less leaves' that are no longer attached to the mother tree and could be blown to any direction. This presupposes lacking conscience is equivalent to lacking humanness: a quality missing in children due to armed conflict.

The above finding was reinforced by Klasen et al. (2010) who indicated that more than half of the 330 returnees who participated in their study had killed, a quarter had been raped, many had witnessed killings, and participated in lootings, abductions, and shootings. It is not surprising that Carol Bellamy, the former UNICEF Director, referred to Northern Uganda as 'the worst place on earth to be a child' (as cited in CSOPNU, 2007, p. 2). This means some children were cut off from the human community because they had engaged in dehumanising actions. Cleansing rituals were performed by healers and elders to reinstall humanness and reattach those lacking conscience to the community (Annan et al., 2009; Finnstrom, 2001; Harlacher, 2009; HURIFO, 2008; Neuner et al., 2012).

In a related development, participants discussed the issue that many children in Gulu were born during the twenty-three years of conflict outside their ancestral villages. While in Gulu, I heard about children who were born in protected villages and captivity. This suggested that children living at the time of my study had never lived in ancestral villages. Given they did not experience a pre-conflict environment, they lacked stability. However, the pre-conflict environment was significant for children for it is through its practices such as initiation rites they entered into adulthood.

Though there is hardly any literature on this, my personal knowledge confirms that adulthood in African cultures does not come with chronological age but cultural experience. For instance, among the Acholi and Batooro of Uganda one remains a child until they have gone through the major stages of life marked by ceremonies at birth, initiation and marriage. Given abducted people have not have gone through most of these ceremonies and some have broken taboos such as having children before marriage, they continue to be considered children.

The above finding was confirmed by Verma (2012) who observed that upon return from the bush, people were reclassified as children because they had not gone through the rites into adulthood and possibly to receive amnesty and immunity from prosecution. This suggested that during captivity, cultural practices stopped, people remained children and given they engaged in dehumanising actions, they lacked conscience and needed reintegration into the community. This meant the pre-conflict environment was significant for people born during conflict and they needed to be aware of it and value it.

One of the things that had changed after conflict was that conscience-less children lived in broken families and communities. Due to the death of their parents or being conceived as a result of rape, some children did not have nuclear families and were cared for by siblings, single parents, relatives and humanitarian workers. This suggested that the family unit which used to be composed of father, mother, children and relatives was transformed to include humanitarian workers.

Traditionally, families provided a stable environment for children to grow, acquire education, form their identities and inform their conscience. This was not the case for many children in Gulu as families were now weakened. This finding complemented Cheney's (2005) study in which a parent commented:

...families used to sit around the fire circle in the evening, where children would entertain elders with their antics, and elders would tell stories that helped children understand who they were and would morally guide them. Traditions such as this have broken down in the IDP camps where thousands of Acholi are forced to live (p. 32).

This comment accentuated the family as a locus for education where traditional wisdom was transmitted to the young and their identities formed. It also pointed to values that would have been transmitted to 'conscience-less' children. This leads to the discussion on the erosion of traditional practices and reversal of

values: unique features in children especially those returning from the bush.

This study revealed that children returning from the bush engaged in inhumane activities. This meant that during their time in the bush they lost values such as the respect for human life that were cherished in traditional societies. Cheney (2005) argued that when children went to the bush, their values were reversed due to bush education and the socialisation they received. For instance, in the bush rebel commanders called themselves teachers to earn respect and obedience (Cheney, 2005). This meant as they took on the role of teacher, rebel commanders fostered bush values such as killing, looting, hating and raping which were counter to those cherished in remnant communities.

In this study, there was no evidence to suggest returnee children possessed cherished values. On the contrary, it showed children returning to their communities dispossessed of their previous values and consciences. This finding was supported by studies which documented that returnee children were affected by the horrors experienced as victims, witnesses, and perpetrators of violence; and they introduced a dangerous dynamic into communities such as schools where they lacked basic academic skills, were discriminated because of their experiences in the bush and exhibited behavioural problems (Bragin & Opiro, 2012; Kelly & Odama, 2011; Spitzer & Twikirize, 2013). This meant some children struggled to adapt from life in the bush as 'commanders' to being reclassified as children who were expected to be submissive to teachers in the classroom. It is not surprising that some parents in Gulu regarded children as a threatened and threatening generation because they lacked significant markers of African childhood identity (Cheney, 2005). This invites an in-depth study on the significance of the values cherished in African communities affected by conflict.

### **5.3 Disability and ubuntu**

Another finding in this study related to the tensions between the conceptualisations of disability, dislocation of identity and the provision of services to people classed as 'disabled'. This code uses literature to visualise how the tensions could be resolved.

As documented in the findings, before conflict, disability was understood as having identifiable long-term impairment that hindered normal performance. This construction was mainly from professionals who categorised disability as physical, visual and auditory. Classifying disability in this way gave the impression that the categories excluded each other. It ignored the prevalence of comorbidity and questioned the usefulness of categorisation (Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007). It challenged the assumption that categorising disability naturally led to better provision for instance in schools without a system of categorisation there would be no special or additional education as we know it today (Norwich, 2007).

Given that disability was often conflated with physical disability which was visible, other forms such as mental disabilities were invisible and there were no accurate methods to diagnose them. This implied there were disabled people in the communities who were accepted as 'normal' because their impairments were undiagnosed and invisible. This assumed that when their impairments were diagnosed, people in the community became aware of them and excluded disabled people. Effectively, disabled people were rejected when their conditions were not fully comprehensible within cultural systems such as abnormality. Disabled people were accepted by the community when their conditions were considered part of the expected process of life such as lacking deformity.

Disability was seen as a personal problem that needed cure. In literature, this related to the medical model of disability where impairment was associated with disease, accident, trauma, genetic disorder and pathology (Bury, 2000; Gabel & Peters, 2004; Thomas, 2004). However, in the settings there was a strong belief that disability could be cured. According to my insider knowledge, disabled people were taken to witch doctors and traditional healers so that they could be cured from their impairments. During the field study, there was no evidence to suggest that impairment could be cured either by traditional means or medical procedures.

Questions about the causation of congenital disability were shrouded with silence and on a few occasions 'cursed' was cited as the cause. This was similar to a study in Binga district in Zimbabwe where:

One participant recounted his grandmother's story of the discovery of his blindness at birth, linked to the unexplained disappearance of the umbilical cord that by custom should be buried by female elders in designated sites within the ancestral home. Because his umbilical cord had not been buried according to tradition, he was perceived as an outcast having been deserted by his ancestral spirits, his blindness a sign of punishment of the wider family for undetermined social violations (Munsaka & Charnley 2013, p. 761).

This correlated to other studies conducted in Northern Uganda that indicated a relationship between the living and ancestral spirits (Finnstrom, 2001; Harlacher, 2009; Neuner et al., 2012).

This study and the research above signalled a difference between community understandings of disability as a curse and the understanding of disability by professionals who had embraced colonial education and adopted the Western language of disability. It revealed a difference between the Western models of disability and the African cultural model where disability was considered a curse and punishment from God. There was however no explanation as to why God cursed and why unborn babies were punished with disability.

According to my insider knowledge, some people in Uganda believe that disabled people possess divine powers and are not human. Unlike in Europe, this could explain the reluctance to identify and label some forms of disability and it seemed acceptable to leave them undiagnosed. However, there was no data to confirm that disabled people were divine or had godly powers in the settings. To conclude, these findings addressed the gaps in literature (see section 2.1) on how disability was understood and which models were operative in conflict settings.

Given that disability was understood in light of African cultural models, it was not as extensively colonised as education. However, some NGOs worked alone and with the government to Westernise the conceptualisations of disability. For instance, during and after conflict, a category of disability titled 'children living in difficult circumstances' was constructed in Gulu and used by professionals to arrange provision including education. This category encompassed children from poor socio-economic backgrounds, those who had irresponsible parents and the victims of early or forced marriage (ROT). This was in line with category C according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2000) which included students with needs that are a result of disadvantage.

On one hand, this classification was consistent with the social model where disability was a result of social barriers that restricted people with impairments and it was an oppressive social problem that needed to be changed (Finkelstein, 2001; Gabel and Peters, 2004; Thomas, 2004). On the other hand, 'children living in difficult circumstances' was a unique category as it altered the African cultural construction of disability and extended it to people with no impairment but were poor, orphaned, raped and victims of forced marriage. I conceptualised this as

identity dislocation as people who were previously not disabled were identified with this category and treated differently. Given the majority of children after war lived in difficult circumstances, it is questionable the extent to which this was a useful category in the provision of services.

Another finding was that some disabled children in Gulu were taken to live in the bush (see Section 4.2.3). This practice contradicted the pre-conflict beliefs in communal living and humanness: beliefs that were valued by the Acholi people as demonstrated by HURIFO (2008):

The human being, much as is an individual, is also considered part of the wider community. Communal sense of claim of ownership and responsibility attested to by many respondents is a very rich traditional value in enhancing social cohesion within communities and becomes a natural tool for social safety nets as well as a deterrent to potential conflicts. Individual actions, on the other hand, may affect the well-being of the entire community (pp. 35-36).

Effectively, within Acholi communities being human entails belonging to the community and living by its precepts.

Though the inseparable connection between the individual and community is widespread in African societies, it is difficult to articulate. Le Roux (2000) indicates that in the African worldview, a human being or 'umuntu' consists of the body, breath, energy, heart, spirit, brain, language and humanness as core elements of which humanness or ubuntu is the most important quality. Tutu (as cited in Waghid & Smeyers, 2012) explains:

*Ubuntu* is very difficult to render into a Western language. It speaks to the very essence of being human. When you want to give high praise to someone we say, 'Yu, u Nobuntu'; he or she has *Ubuntu*. This means that they are generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate. They share what they have. It also means that my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in theirs. We belong in a bundle of life. We say, 'a person is a person through other people' (...). I am human because I belong, I participate, and I share. A person with *Ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good; for he or she has a



proper self-assurance that comes with knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are (p. 11).

This suggests being human engenders interdependence, interconnectedness, being in relationship and not living an individualistic life. This correlates with scholars who argue that ubuntu is intrinsically linked to belonging to the community or communalism (Higgs, 2012; Letseka, 2013; Waghid & Smeyers, 2012).

In African culture, the community always come first as it defines the fabric of life (Higgs, 2012; Kenyatta, 1965; Mbiti, 1970; Venter, 2004). According to Mbiti (1970), the community defines the individual in that 'Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say, "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am' (p. 108). This means the community is the foundation for individuality and humanness. However, the community is not restricted to living human beings but includes the unborn, the dead and the gods sometimes represented in nature by rivers, mountains, animals (Venter, 2004). This suggests ubuntu should naturally lead to inclusive communities where people care for each other.

This study showed that before conflict, people in Northern Uganda lived in traditional communities permeated by ubuntu. During conflict, these communities were destroyed, cherished values lost and people were conscience-less. After conflict and in the midst of wrangles, the participants I met aspired to live in ubuntu communities where there was peace, harmony and reconciliation with each other and with their ancestors. They aspired to live in communities where they worked together rather than harm each other because of scarce resources

like land. Also, as I walked through a former protected village with round huts arranged in a circular form, I saw people seated in courtyards in circular forms discussing about the dividends from the money lending scheme they belonged to. I interpret the circular form of building and meeting as symbols of ubuntu and communalism.

However, some disabled people are not treated with ubuntu because they are considered not human. Evidence from Gulu and Kyenjojo reveals that they are isolated, excluded and sometimes made to live in the bush among animals. As they are cut off from the human community, they are no longer part of the human chain that links them with their ancestors above and their descendants below (Teffo, 1996). This contradicts the general consensus in Africa that being human is inseparable from belonging to the community (Venter, 2004). Following this interpretation, it could be argued that the disabled are not 'bantu' (human) because they do not have ubuntu (humanness) and it is acceptable to exclude them from the human (bantu) community as was the case in Uganda.

Though the above thinking could apply to disabled people with congenital impairments, it is not easily related to those who acquire disability. This means that by becoming disabled, the human being (ubuntu) loses their qualities such as ubuntu and their identity is transformed. This is however challenged by some of the disabled people I met who considered themselves human and aspired to be included and be productive in their communities. Also family members considered the disabled normal, cared for them and attempted to include them in communal life. This means they were treated with ubuntu and treated others with ubuntu. This shows that the disabled possessed ubuntu as some were 'caring, humble, thoughtful, considerate, understanding, wise, generous, hospitable, socially mature, socially sensitive, virtuous and blessed' (Le Roux, 2000, p. 43).

This leads to the questions: if the disabled possess ubuntu, why are they continually being treated without ubuntu? What needs to change in their communities for this to happen? These unanswered questions call for research on the relationship between disability and humanness in African contexts.

#### **5.4 Creeping education**

This study revealed that the education conscience-less children received in Uganda was 'creeping' like disabled people (see Section 4.3). Associating 'creeping' to education meant education was 'crippled', 'retarded', and 'abnormal'. In this conceptual code, I discuss the problematic nature of creeping education which included being a victim and perpetrator of conflict, playing a contradictory role in the processes of the prevention and perpetuation of poverty, and exacerbating existing inequalities.

This study showed education was a victim and perpetrator of conflict. As a victim of conflict in Gulu, schools were destroyed, children and their teachers were abducted and some were even killed while at school. As a perpetrator of conflict, had schools not been kept open, the chances of children and their teachers being abducted would have been lessened. In addition, according to my experience, the education system in Uganda was a perpetrator of conflict because it contributed to the success of rebels in recruiting people. This was based on the reasoning that teachers have a lot of authority which they exercise through punitive discipline procedures and a teacher-centred pedagogy. In my opinion, the routines of command and control used by teachers condition children to be submissive to authority. As teachers are replaced by rebel commanders in the bush (Cheney, 2005), abducted children are less likely to resist their authority, less likely to resist their oppression, and more likely to perpetuate conflict.

Other studies reported education perpetuating conflict because the school systems and textbooks used reinforced prejudice, intolerance and hatred (Allison, 2009; Kelly & Odama, 2011; UNESCO, 2011). This was not a finding in this study. On the contrary, participants believed keeping schools open and receiving education whilst most services had shut down sustained normalcy. The discourse that education restored normalcy showed the positive face of education. It was sustained by scholars who argued that during conflict the routine of going to school established normalcy, school was the most useful medicine for children, education was a portable asset and schools were safer environments (Bird et al., 2010; Bragin, 2012).

Though tenable, the normalcy discourse is fraught with assumptions. It ignores children who have known no other normalcy than war. It disregards children abducted from schools and to whom education is not a medicine but poison. It fails to acknowledge the uselessness of education as perceived in Gulu where it is not an asset for some children. These assumptions reveal the negative face of education. In essence, my study reinforces the portrayal of education as both a victim and perpetrator of conflict examined during the literature review.

This study also suggests that education is a victim of colonialism and perpetrator of neo-colonialism in Uganda. My data showed that the education system in Uganda was based on the 'British model from the 1960s' (PK) and the curriculum was 'irrelevant to the actual present-day experiences of the child' (FB). This finding reinforced a study by Kelly and Odama (2011) which revealed the remnants of colonialism in Northern Uganda to be: strictly following the colonial curriculum and examination system even when they were unproductive, silencing pupils' voices through teaching methods such as dictation for up to 80 minutes,

treating pupils in subservient ways and using out of date textbooks mainly from the UK and USA. Some of these remnants were mirrored in my personal experience in Uganda where I learnt Swiss geography, French history and remained ignorant of my own. In doing so, education perpetuated colonialism as indigenous kinds of knowledge were ignored.

Even at the height of conflict in protected villages, the teachers I met recalled teaching the prescribed national curriculum in learning centres which disregarded the political, social and conflict context children lived in. Bragin (2012) too noticed that at that time it was the mandate of the government and demand of parents to continue teaching children as per the curriculum and prepare them for examinations. It could be deduced that as children followed the colonial education, they neither mastered their African knowledge nor that of the colonisers. An example was given by Kelly and Odama (2011) where an education professional from Northern Uganda commented that 'we have become half British, and remained half Acholi. We are two halves and a whole of nothing' (pp. 12-13). Similar studies indicated that the aim of colonial education was to make colonialism permanent (Assie-Lumumba, 2012).

However, evidence from Uganda showed some children refusing colonial education. As there was barely any alternative, some used money meant for scholastic materials to buy alcohol, others looked for income generating activities such as fishing, and others engaged in crime. In light of this evidence, abducted children were forced to participate in bush education which provided them with employment as soldiers, increased their status through military ranks, provided safety skills, taught looting as a way of earning a living, and sustained their hope that one day they would win over the army. Effectively, in this context and to these

disaffected children, bush education seemed more relevant and useful than colonial education. This was probably among the reasons why returnee children were cautioned to say nothing good about life in the bush because it would attract more recruits to rebel movements (Verma, 2012).

It should be noted that there were contradictory views held by participants on the usefulness of colonial education. Whilst colonial education was judged irrelevant by some parents, professionals, leaders and children; it was considered a priority by others. For instance, many parents believed education was an asset and an investment that broke the cycle of poverty and led to a 'lucrative future' (FB). These beliefs overrode their concerns and the failings of colonial education to the extent that parents disregarded balancing the costs of education against its benefits. They neglected evidence which showed that many poor children came out of UPE schools 'half-baked' (GKE) and it is mainly children from rich families who came out of private schools ready for a lucrative future.

It should be noted that UPE alone is not enough to lead to a lucrative future in Uganda as it does not provide all the essential skills. In his study, Ekaju (2011) reports that the majority of pupils leave primary schools without the desired literacy and numeracy skills. Bird et al. (2010) insists that without secondary education it is hard for people in Northern Uganda to access the types of economic activities most likely to enable them move out of poverty. In other words, UPE alone is not enough investment unless it is supplemented by relevant post-primary education. This means parents are misled by the government to believe UPE alone is a poverty reduction strategy. Instead it keeps them poorer. It is not surprising that some participants believe UPE is used by politicians as a tactic to gain support, legitimacy and control (EM, JN, PK).

Another interesting finding in this study was that education played a contradictory role in the processes of the prevention and perpetuation of poverty. Education contributed to poverty because the common practice of selling assets to pay for education robbed parents of their limited assets. It could be predicted that the lack of assets to sell in the long run would result in children missing out of education and this would escalate illiteracy. Also, in a society that relied on farming and used children as a labour force, children going to school for an education which was irrelevant to farming decreased the labour force. Effectively, parents in Gulu challenged their children about their ability to 'eat education' (ROT). This suggested schooling had a negative impact on agricultural produce and financial returns. It could be concluded that in Gulu, education which was believed to eradicate poverty exacerbated inequality.

In addition, this study revealed the complex ways in which conflict exacerbated pre-existing inequalities. For instance, teachers remarked that conflict disrupted education in fundamental ways such as children were not able to complete the prescribed syllabus as in non-conflict settings. During conflict, poor children were left behind to experience poor quality education while richer children fled to safer zones where they accessed better quality education. This meant, poor children were more educationally disadvantaged than rich children. The situation was worse when education and inequality were linked to disabled children.

Data indicated that formal education structures contributed to the exclusion of disabled children. Given that education was regarded as an investment by many parents, the money spent on disabled children was seen as wasted (ROT). In effect, in the villages I visited education was not part of the daily life of most of the disabled children I met or heard about. Most disabled children were excluded

from it and those who accessed it were often invisible, marginalised, bullied and 'just there' (SK and JM). This could be linked to the study conducted in Western Uganda by Miles et al. (2011) who reported that teachers were reluctant to believe deaf children could be taught in mainstream primary schools and that lack of skills deterred teachers from teaching them.

These findings suggest that schools are not implementing the inclusive education policy endorsed by the Ministry of Education and Sports in Uganda (MOES, 2011). The gap between policies and their implementation is also noted by Lang and Murangira (2009) who recognise that since 1996 when UPE was introduced, the majority of disabled children have not benefited from it. The policy implementation gap could also be attributed to other factors revealed in this study: weak leadership, shortage of specialist teacher training, inaccessible facilities in schools and lack of conceptual clarity on inclusion. It could also be that inclusive education policies imported from the West are not relevant to conflict contexts in Africa (Lewis, 2008). Though this has been discussed as neo-colonialism, it was not easy to get more data and literature to illuminate it. This calls for research to explore the intersection of neo-colonialism and disability in Africa.

To remedy the situation, efforts are being made to educate disabled children in special schools and returnee centres. A national newspaper quotes the chairperson of the SMC talking about a returnee centre I visited in Gulu:

Some programmes have failed to kick-start, the blind and deaf children have not been catered for yet these are the categories of people meant to benefit from the school...Counselling and guidance, music therapy room, early childhood development and peace education have all broken down, yet they are vital to the children (Owich & Makumbi, 2013).

This evidence suggests that weak leadership and management are some of the factors that impair education. To conclude, discussing the nature of creeping



education has provided insights into the complex relationship between education and disability. In the section that follows, I use the literature to transform some of the conceptual codes discussed above into dimensions of the integrating concept that captures the theory of education that emerged from this study.

## **5.5 Theory of Africanising education**

This section integrates the conceptual codes discussed above and constructs the theory of education in conflict settings. It is composed of four interlinked dimensions which involve Africanising the creeping education, colonial curriculum, teacher professionalism and broken communities. For explanatory purposes, I present each dimension separately and where necessary make links.

### **5.5.1 Africanising creeping education**

Before exploring the significance of this dimension, it is worth summing up the state of education at the time of data collection in 2012. Data indicated that after conflict, some education structures were being reconstructed, the old colonial education system was being maintained and past practices sustained. For instance, schools were being rebuilt in the same locations using designs similar to those before conflict. In other words, there was reconstruction of old pre-conflict structures.

Data indicated that reconstructing education had its limitations. For instance, participants lamented the outdated curriculum and the irrelevant education system introduced during colonialism. This evidence was supported by researchers who argued that colonisation disrupted societies, destroyed African identity, replaced traditional education and haunted education (p'Bitek, 1973; Kay & Nystrom, 1971; Kelly & Odama, 2011; Mumford & Parker, 1937; Ssekamwa,

1997). A prototype of an Acholi person after embracing colonial education was described as:

Overdressed in his dark suit he walks out of the University gate, out into the world, materially comfortable, but culturally castrated, dead. A lost victim of the school system, he cannot dance the dance or play the music of his own people (p'Bitek, 1973, p. 13).

This suggests that as Ugandans accepted the values transmitted in colonial education, they saw the world through the eyes of colonialists. Also, Fanon's remark that 'colonialism so overwhelmed Africans that it caused self-alienation and loss of pride to the extent that Africans were psychologically destroyed' (Kay & Nystrom, 1971, p. 240) seemed to be true in children who experienced colonial education after conflict: traumatised, conscienceless, broken and lacking hope.

Other data indicated a desire to transform education. For some participants such as parents, this desire was limited to building ordinary, integrated and special schools near where children lived. For other participants such as teachers, there was a yearning for inclusive schools but there was no clarity about what inclusion meant. However, there was a unique desire from some parents for schools that reinforced hope and opportunities. I deemed this finding significant as it assumed conflict situations were opportunities to positively transform education not just rebuild what was before (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Seitz, 2004).

In literature, I came across scholars who called for an African renaissance in education which involved radically transforming education so that it was grounded in indigenous kinds of knowledge destroyed during colonialism and according to my study were being overlooked in the conflict setting (Assie-Lumumba, 2012; Higgs, 2012; Msila, 2009; Seepe, 2004). This literature was insightful on how colonial education in broken communities could be transformed

so that it became inclusive, reinforced hope and widened opportunities for conscience-less children.

Various definitions of Africanisation existed and this meant it was a contested term (Botha, 2007; Dick, 2014; Higgs, 2012; Horsthemke, 2004; Teffo, 2011). Among the definitions was one by Teffo (2011): 'Africanisation is about the "being" of an African person in the global village. It is about the thoughts, ideas, concepts and cultural norms and values that constitute his/ her being as a mode of existence' (p. 31). Using this definition, I interpreted Africanisation to mean using values, beliefs and ethics that are relevant to Africa to transform education, mend communities; re-humanise the relationships between disabled and non-disabled people; reform the curriculum; and develop conscience, hope and opportunities for children in Uganda.

Africanisation is neither about expelling Westerners from Africa nor is it abandoning what is not African. Africanisation is accommodating existing worldviews in Africa whilst refusing to be assimilated by the dominant Western identity (Teffo, 2011). This might involve including advances in science and technology which might not be African but relevant to its development. Africanisation must make the cherished African values dominant in society. Given there is hardly any body of knowledge on African values, there is a need for research on this. Once African values are known, it would be possible to start the process of Africanisation: defining African identity, affirming African culture and using African experiences as sources of knowledge to influence change (Botha, 2007; Dick, 2014; Higgs, 2012; Horsthemke, 2004; Teffo, 2011).

Africanisation is also challenging Western ideology as depicted by Hoppers (as cited in Higgs, 2012) in the following terms:

The African voice in education at the end of the twentieth century is the voice of the radical witness of the pain and inhumanity of history, the arrogance of modernisation and the conspiracy of silence in academic disciplines towards what is organic and alive in Africa. It is the voice of 'wounded healers' struggling against many odds to remember the past, engage with the present, and determine a future built on new foundations. It invokes the democratic ideal of the right of all to 'be', to 'exist', to grow and live without coercion, and from that to find a point of convergence with the numerous others. It exposes the established hegemony of Western thought, and beseeches it to feel a measure of shame and vulgarity at espousing modes of development that build on the silencing of all other views and perceptions of reality. It also seeks to make a contribution to the momentum for a return of humanism to the centre of the educational agenda, and dares educators to see the African child-learner not as a bundle of Pavlovian reflexes, but as human being culturally and cosmologically located in authentic value systems (p. 38).

In this except it is assumed that solutions to African problems are found in the experiences of the African people. Effectively, the African experiences of joy and sorrow, hope and despair, birth and death, peace and conflict, love and reconciliation are central in this process.

As there is no blueprint, questions could be asked as to where Africanisation is to start. There is limited written records on the cherished African values that could inform education. Also, the Africanisation of education is not simply replacing colonial with traditional education. In my opinion, Africanisation in Uganda must be a careful articulation of relevant education that takes into consideration its past experience of colonisation, its turbulent history of conflict, the lived experience of people, the challenges of globalisation, and indigenous knowledge systems.

Bitzer and Menkveld (2004) regard indigenous knowledge systems as having the potential to develop children in an 'African way' for they encompass technology, philosophy, social, economic, educational, legal and government systems embedded in the culture, history and civilisation of a people (Msila, 2009, p. 313).

In Uganda, indigenous knowledge systems might relate to the values embedded

in communities, divination, and local solutions to conflict. Capturing relevant kinds of knowledge requires research on what is valued by the people and needs to be included in the philosophy of education in Uganda.

Seminal research by Mulumba and Musaaazi (2012) conducted in Uganda identifies the English language through which colonial knowledge is transmitted as one of the challenges to development. In their study, they found that learners taught in English had a double task of understanding the English language in addition to understanding the curriculum; and this was not the case for learners taught in Luganda: one of the 60 local languages. In effect, Mulumba and Masaazi (2012) recommended a national language that could be used as a medium of instruction. This is the approach neighbouring Tanzania was taking by replacing English with Swahili as the language of instruction from primary to university level (Lugongo, 2015).

In addition, some scholars identify the indigenous kinds of knowledge such as ubuntu and communalism as central in an African educational discourse (Msila, 2009; Venter, 2004). For example, Msila (2009) believes 'communal aspects of African philosophy when infused in education can help create a community of learners who glean from one another in an unselfish manner' (p. 312). My study shows that an Africanised education system has the potential to equalise opportunities for all children especially those with disabilities. For instance, applying ubuntu in a school will allow children to see others as human and this might mitigate the exclusion experienced by disabled children. In addition, there are several benefits of a curriculum grounded in African kinds of knowledge. This is discussed in the next dimension.

### **5.5.2 Africanising the colonial curriculum**

In this study there have been debates on the curriculum in conflict settings. The debates have hinged on three main options: sustaining the current curriculum, modifying the curriculum, and a new conflict curriculum. In this dimension, I examine each option and suggest ways on how the curriculum could be reformed.

Some parents and professionals believed there was no need to change the curriculum but continue with the colonial and irrelevant curriculum. Describing the colonial curriculum in Uganda, educational officials wrote:

In Africa there is a marked division between the things taught in the home and the things taught at school; at home African things are taught, at school European things are taught. The African boy comes to school to learn European things, especially European languages; hence his urge to proceed with the learning of English rather than knowledge of handicrafts or indigenous industries (Mumford & Parker, 1937, p. 30).

According to data and my personal observation, this picture of the curriculum is the same today. It is expressed in the desire to learn European languages such as English and French, and the reluctance to learn local languages. In addition, other research reveals children following a colonial curriculum in schools and punished when they fail (Kay & Nystrom, 1971; Kelly & Odama, 2011; Mulumba & Musaazi, 2012; Tomasevski, 1999). For instance, a study on the medium of instruction in Uganda's education system by Mulumba and Musaazi (2012) indicated that children who fail to speak English and continue to speak their mother tongue suffer degrading punishments. To conclude, the unchanged curriculum is narrow because it ignores the African context which is permeated by influences from colonialism, neo-colonialism, globalisation, conflict and others.

In response to the effects of conflict and the declining knowledge of African cultures, other professionals, local leaders and parents suggested a modified curriculum that included languages, counselling, rehabilitation, home economics and cultural norms. According to my experience, this proposal is similar to how the curriculum has been modified in Uganda as a way of Africanising it. For example, in the English language curriculum, Africanisation has been construed as including some African writers to the syllabus. The extent to which this is Africanising is questionable given that African writers use English language and their works are directed to an audience which already has some knowledge of English. An alternative would be including African writers who write in African languages for an African audience. This however depends on what Uganda intends to carry forward in its Africanising project. As we live in a world where knowledge is frequently shared, it is likely that Uganda will include writers of other origins whose work is relevant to the African condition. This implies that in modifying the curriculum there will be continuity of some aspects from the colonial and neo-colonial curricula which are relevant to the prosperity of Africa.

As an alternative to the colonial or modified curriculum, some participants proposed a 'conflict curriculum'. They imagined it to be localised and tailored to the conflict setting, linked to stages of conflict and people living in conflicts were to be consulted. As reported in this study, the curriculum in conflict would help children avoid, prevent, manage, reduce, resolve and live with conflict. It would also develop values such as tolerance, hope, love, resilience, coping, confidence and belonging. Other participants wished for a curriculum that took into consideration the trauma children had gone through and included counselling, therapy and healing.

From these views it is evident that a conflict curriculum is different from the colonial and the modified curricula. Contrary to the colonial curriculum that mainly focuses on increasing knowledge, the conflict curriculum has multiple purposes: restoring normalcy, enhancing wellbeing, reinforcing hope and widening opportunities. The conflict curriculum is also different from the peace curriculum which assumes peace is static and focuses on re-establishing pre-conflict peace (Fountain, 1999; Najjuma, 2011; Owich & Makumbi, 2013). In essence, the discourse on the conflict curriculum admits that conflict brings many changes to the context and to children's identities such as losing their consciences and the likelihood that reverting to the pre-conflict state may not be possible. Subsequently this calls for the curriculum to be localised.

Like the colonial and modified curricula, the conflict curriculum has limitations. Given it is to be localised to conflict settings, it ignores factors such as colonialism and neo-colonialism and how they impact on education. It also ignores the fact that the whole of Uganda has been affected by conflict (Bird et al., 2011; Kelly & Odama, 2011; Lang & Murangira, 2009; Wambungu & Adem, 2008). This highlights the need to introduce it in the whole country. Consequently, for a curriculum in conflict to be inclusive, it needs to consider the nature of colonialism, neo-colonialism, globalisation and the history of conflict in Uganda.

In a related development, we cannot Africanise the curriculum and in effect Africanise education without traditional education which involves:

...a set of institutions through which the accumulated wisdom of past generations is transmitted to present and future generations. At a most primitive level, such wisdom may be little more than the skills requisite for agricultural production, animal husbandry, shelter construction, food processing, leisure activities, dispute processing and resolution, ritual observances, health care delivery and child socialization. More sophisticated societies will have, in addition, more complicated and elaborate wisdom regarding science and technology, structures of



governance, systems of myths, economic organization, and industrial production (Taiwo, 1993, p. 892).

In this excerpt, Taiwo assumes the nature of traditional education depends on the extent to which a society is sophisticated. The curriculum ranges from practical activities such as fine art, carving, gardening and child care to complex ideas contained in cultural norms, myths, religion and science. The goal of education is not just to increase knowledge but develop knowledge for life. Education is transmitted by parents and elders and there are no classrooms as teaching and learning are inherent in people's way of life through rituals, proverbs, singing and dancing (Taiwo, 1993; Ssekamwa, 1997).

This evidence suggests that in traditional education, learning is experiential and oriented to improving life. These components could be integrated in the Africanised curriculum. This is supported by data from Gulu which shows the need to incorporate skills such as farming, carpentry, construction and traditional ways of healing and coping in education. Critics might argue that Africanising education in this way will lower standards because indigenous kinds of knowledge and practices are not congruent with globalisation and modernisation (Msila, 2009). In my opinion, data in this and other studies already show that education standards in Uganda are lower for the majority of children (Ekaju, 2011; Kelly & Odama, 2011; Mulumba & Musaazi, 2012). This compromises the chances of Uganda competing in the global and modern economy. So, Africanising the curriculum and grounding it in indigenous knowledge systems might not make the standards worse than they already are. On the contrary, it is a starting point to transform education which is currently under the shackles of neo-colonialism.

Uganda is similar to South Africa where the national curriculum does not sufficiently address the context of children. Scholars such as Maile (2011) call for examining 'knowledge through African eyes' by introducing a home curriculum in South African schools but this has sparked controversy among scholars who consider an African curriculum as 'exclusionary, racial and intimidating' (p. 111). This suggests that the call to Africanise the curriculum in Uganda is likely to cause controversy. However, this should not limit efforts to construct a durable curriculum that is necessary in finding solutions to Ugandan problems.

In essence, the next step in Africanising the curriculum in settings affected by conflict, colonialism and neo-colonialism is conducting research on which African kinds of knowledge are to be part of the curriculum, and which elements of the colonial system such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics are worth keeping because they are critical to the advancement of the African society. There is also a need to research about which universal values and aspects of education are to be included in the Africanised curriculum.

On a final note, given that some children are conscience-less, this study calls for a curriculum that touches the conscience. As conscience is equated to humanness in Africa, these children lack human aspects such as ubuntu and this harms the community. Msila (2009) notes that 'communal aspects of African philosophy when infused in education can help create a community of learners who glean from one another in an unselfish manner' (p. 312). This means an education that touches the conscience would help children take care of their community so that the community may take care of them. In my opinion, this type of education will help children become Bantu and realise that their humanity does not end with their skin but extends to the community where it is nurtured.

### **5.5.3 Africanising teacher professionalism**

Education and the curriculum cannot be Africanised without the teacher. This dimension reflects on the images of the teacher and the desire to transform the teaching profession in Uganda. These images do not exclude each other and the demarcations given below are for explanatory purposes.

The first image that emerges from the findings is the demotivated teacher. In the settings, teachers are depicted as lacking motivation to teach mainly because of poor pay, large class size and the associated workload. Some demotivated teachers are described as resorting to strikes, charging illegal fees, setting up their own businesses, being bribed to teach, being chronically absent from school and among the few who turn up some are under the influence of alcohol. It is clear from participants that this image needs to change and some parents hope for motivated teachers who are happy, committed and role models in their communities. However, the vision of a motivated teacher does not fully take into consideration the teacher who is affected by conflict.

While not excluding the features of the demotivated teacher, the second image that emerges is the traumatised teacher. The traumatised teacher has witnessed war, lived in protected villages, lost relatives because of war, lost assets and is in the process of resettlement. The trauma experienced by the teacher does not only originate from war but also from disease especially HIV/ AIDS. The traumatised teacher is thus disempowered, unable to cope with traumatised learners and lacks continuous professional development. To replace the traumatised teacher, some participants hope for the conflict teacher: a teacher trained to teach children living in conflict settings using a conflict curriculum.

However, the image of the conflict teacher does not fully take into consideration the effects of colonialism on the teaching profession.

The final image is the neo-colonial teacher. This teacher is depicted as using methods such as dictation and rote learning: a colonial and missionary pedagogy they have learnt during their training. These methods are challenged by Lumumba and Musazi (2012) who reveal cramming and rote learning as major concerns in Uganda's education system. In addition, the neo-colonial teacher uses teaching resources imported from outside Africa and in so doing perpetuates neo-colonialism. To conclude, some participants call for reforming teacher training and this implies they are not happy with the demotivated, traumatised and neo-colonial teacher who is a product of current teacher training. However, participants neither articulate how teacher professionalism is to be reformed nor a vision of an alternative to the neo-colonial teacher.

In literature, I came across the image of the African teacher: an image relevant in Africanising education. For White (as cited in Assie-Lumumba, 2012):

The most common trait of indigenous education in Africa is the presence of many 'teachers'. Since learning occurs in a community setting, the child can have several teachers at any given stage of development. What the mother teaches is different from the lesson of the grandmother or uncle, which is turn different from the reinforcement provided by older siblings or members of the extended family (pp. 23-24).

This means in Africanised education, everyone is a teacher. The African teacher prepares all children for life and gives them skills needed to be useful in a changing society.

The image of the African teacher gives responsibility to all people in the community including elders, humanitarians and parents to teach. This is

supported by evidence from Hanson (2010) on how this model aided the quick transmission of Christianity:

Following the indigenous conception that everyone with knowledge has the capacity to share it, early Ugandan Christians who learned to read from missionaries immediately passed their skills on to others... Literacy spread rapidly to thousands of people through the practice of everyone teaching what they knew, and readers incorporated reading, Bible study, and letter writing into their daily lives (p. 159).

This excerpt shows everyone is a teacher in the community. The passion for learning and communal values such as sharing knowledge, helping each other learn and the involvement of all in teaching and learning made a difference to education. This was communalism in practice based on the understanding that 'whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual' (Mbiti, 1970, p. 108). Effectively, the image of the African teacher gives us a glimpse on how teacher professionalism could look like when grounded in African kinds of knowledge such as communalism. In essence, the image of the African teacher has the potential to transform teacher professionalism.

In a related development, this and other studies reveal that the inclusion of disabled children in ordinary schools is difficult due the dysfunctional nature of schools, lack of sufficient materials, shortage of specialist teachers, high pupil-teacher ratios and other factors (Kristensen, Omagar-Loican, Onen, & Okot, 2006; Lang & Murangira, 2009). Also, some severely disabled children are admitted to special schools according to their medical diagnosis without taking into consideration their special educational needs: this is construed as segregation and exclusion (Ekaju, 2011; Kristensen, Omagor-Loican, & Onen, 2003; Lang & Murangira, 2009). However, evidence from Tanzania suggests that traditionally everyone was taught together until missionaries started coaching

girls only for domestic life and offered them less education (Hanson, 2010). Given that the African teacher did not segregate children according to their gender in Tanzania, it could be assumed that they were also not separated by disability as impairment was not always diagnosed as in Uganda (see Section 4.22 and 5.3)

In essence, the image of the African teacher reinforces the belief in ubuntu where everyone is considered human and not excluded from education because of impairment. Given everybody within the community is a teacher, there is no requirement that all children are educated in schools. Due to the presence of many teachers, children could be taught in their communities. This was the case for one disabled child in Kyenjojo whose grandmother and the community cared for her, and took her to church where she received religious literacy. It could be assumed that this child had various teachers including her grandparents, relatives, siblings, neighbours and priests. These African teachers offered her religious literacy and probably education for life within the community. This finding suggests the need to Africanise communities so that they are able to Africanise the education system.

#### **5.5.4 Africanising broken communities**

This study shows that communities are broken at various levels: family, village, school, nation and this is attributed to iterative conflict, forced displacement, rampant poverty, weakened leadership, chronic corruption, disease and neo-colonialism. This final dimension reflects on the role of the community in Africanising education.

In literature, there are suggestions that ubuntu and education can enhance communalism and in my opinion mend communities (Venter, 2004; Waghid &

Smeyers, 2012). For instance, Venter (2004) suggests that 'education for community life is important from an African point of view – *communalism* and respect for the community take precedence. It involves sharing with and helping others. One is educated for the common good of the community' (p. 157). I consider this literature significant as it recognises that education needs to be at the service of the community. This means education is to enhance life in the community and in so doing enhance the individual. Specifically, in the conflict setting where this study took place, educated elites are to help the community resolve land wrangles and not embark on land grabbing (Mabikke, 2011).

In addition, Waghid and Smeyers (2012) argue that ubuntu could provide ways into how the challenges of conflict can be resolved and assist the central role of education. Given that both the community and the education system are identified as challenges in this study, I consider ubuntu central in improving them. In relation to mending communities, ubuntu could develop values such as humility, caring, consideration, understanding, wisdom, generosity and hospitality (Le Roux, 2000). Ubuntu could also counter the neo-colonial mentality articulated by Mike Muendane in the following words: 'In the West it is competition, in Africa it is co-operation. In the West, it is coercion and in Africa it is cohesion. In the West it is individualism and in Africa it is ubuntu, or collectivism' (Ross, 2008). According to my experience of living in the West, there are people who are also critical of individualism. In my opinion, they could also use ubuntu which is 'Africa's gift to the world' (Niekerk, 2013, p. 50) to counter individualism and enhance communalism.

Education can be transformed when African communal values such as co-operation, cohesion and collectivism are applied to it. Applying co-operation could

re-engage disinterested parents. Applying collectivism could resolve issues related to the financing of education. This was the case in Kyenjojo where UNICEF helped schools establish agricultural projects from which returns were used to pay for education.

Also, I personally experienced the value of collectivism and communitarianism while in Africa. During my stay in Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burkina Faso and Algeria as a student and Christian missionary; I noticed how important collectivism and communitarian were. I remember saying goodbye to people till I had visited the whole village. In African culture, saying goodbye is important for two main reasons. First, it is like paying last respects to some people especially the elderly as it is possibly the last time to see them. Second, saying goodbye is acknowledging that I am part of the community and the community has a responsibility towards me.

Whenever I went to say goodbye, community members gave me 'something for the journey' including money, foodstuffs and words of wisdom. In practical terms, by the time I finished saying goodbye, I would have enough money to pay off my fees for the whole term. In other words, paying for education was a collective effort. It is the whole community that educated me as the Rutooro saying goes 'when you educate a child you educate a village'. Upon return, community members gathered to share my success in education and ask questions about what life was like where I had been. This was ubuntu in practice. This was communalism in practice. This is how these values solved problems related to financing education revealed in this study. This invites African communities to look for African solutions to their problems (Teffo, 2011).



A similar scenario to mine is narrated in Tiberondwa (as cited in Hanson, 2010) on how communities took responsibility for village schools established between the 1880s and 1930s:

Local initiative and local responsibility characterized the schools: they were built of local materials with local volunteer labor, overseen by local church councils, and the Phelps-Stokes report noted that fees and financing through collections made at local churches. Communities supported the teacher by cultivating his food garden and offering him crops at harvest (pp. 159-160).

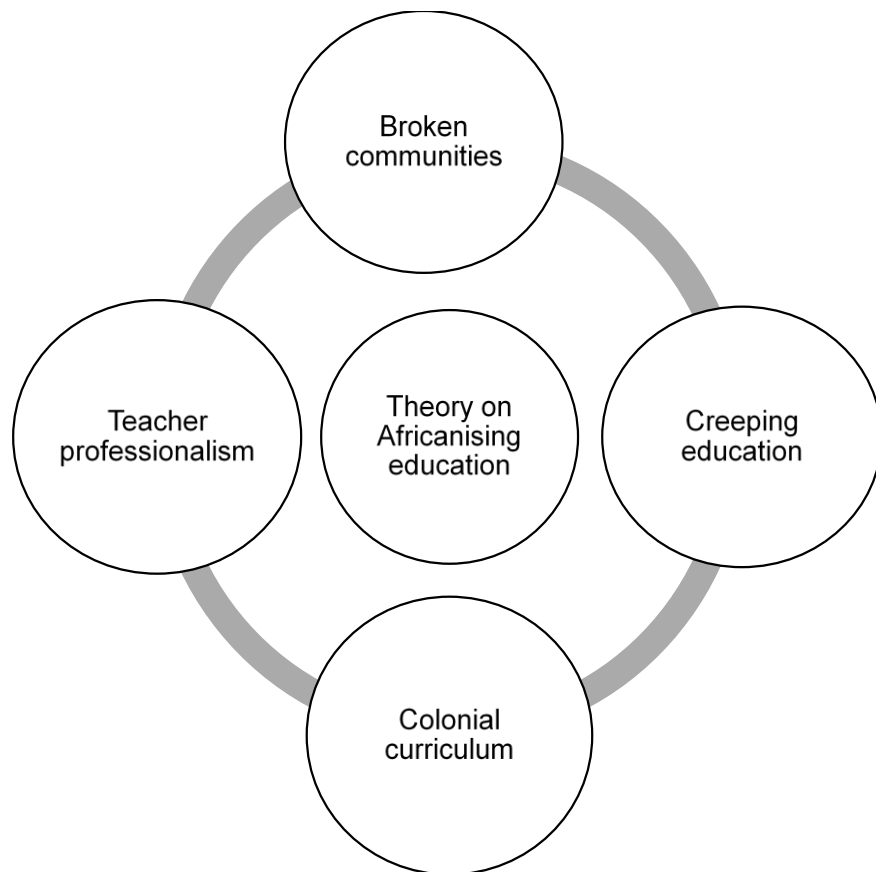
This excerpt emphasises the importance of communities in sustaining village schools at the dawn of colonial education. This is how most church building projects are being financed in Uganda. Much could be learnt from this model on how schools could be supported by communities today. Effectively, there is need to see education as a community action and not a foreign aid project.

## **5.6 Chapter summary**

In this chapter I have used the key findings to construct theoretical codes that have become building blocks for a theory of education in conflict settings. First, armed conflict and its associated features such as forced dislocation, rampant poverty, weak leadership and the demise of traditional values were some of the manifestations of the disintegrated society in which children lived and this has led to the code 'broken communities'. Second, conflict has fragmented humanity to the extent that those involved have committed inhumane actions and this is captured in the code 'conscience-less children'. Third, conflict has disabled human beings to the extent that many are judged disabled, abnormal, not human and this has prompted a reflection on the code 'disability and ubuntu'. Fourth, education in Uganda has been portrayed not only as a victim and perpetuator of conflict but also of colonialism, neo-colonialism, inequality and exclusion and this has led to the code 'creeping education'. Fifth and last, these theoretical codes

have acted as building blocks in the construction of the integrating concept 'Africanising education' which has become the critical, grounded and constructivist theory of education in conflict settings mapped out in Figure 12. The theory constructed was substantive: localised theory linked to the setting rather than formal theory which would apply to circumstances beyond the setting (Denscombe, 2007). It was understood as a conceptual framework on how education for disabled children could be improved in the conflict setting.

Figure 12: Africanising education



This concept is composed of four dimensions which are embraced by the large circle in Figure 12 to denote their interconnection. The dimensions are represented by smaller circles to denote their uniqueness. At the heart of this

theory is the assumption that for education to be improved, all the dimensions need to be Africanised. It also assumes that we cannot improve education for disabled children without improving education for all children. It has illustrated this by applying the inclusive philosophies of ubuntu and communalism and challenged the current practice in special and inclusive education that is based on models and policies imported from the West that widen the gap between 'us' and 'them'. Effectively, this study has achieved its third subsidiary aim which was to construct a theory on improving education in a conflict setting.

## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

This chapter concludes my thesis. It starts by reviewing the contribution to knowledge this study makes to the field of education in conflict. It then reflects on the strengths and limitations of the research style used. It ends by outlining the directions for future research and giving an overall conclusion.

### **6.1 Contribution to knowledge and implication for practice**

This study makes some original contributions to knowledge and they include: generating original data at the interfaces between education, disability and conflict; applying the African philosophies of ubuntu and communalism to disability and education; and proposing a theory of Africanising education in Uganda. I will briefly discuss each of the contributions below.

#### **6.1.1 Generating original data**

The data generated in this study is original for it adds details about the complexities of the experience of children living in the conflict affected country of Uganda. After the data is analysed, it is placed in an international context and suggestions are made about how education could be improved especially for disabled children and this is also an original contribution. One way of improving education for disabled children is understanding disability in light of ubuntu.

#### **6.1.2 Applying ubuntu to disability**

Upon noticing the scarcity of research on disability in conflict settings, I embarked on this study with the aim of shedding light on this under-researched area. As the study progressed, I realised the extent to which the colonisation of Africa had undermined traditional ways of supporting people with impairments and created

disability as a separate category (Devlieger, 2005; Meekosha, 2011). During the field study, I developed an awareness of how disabled people were excluded in villages that had traditionally been animated by values like ubuntu and communalism. During analysis, it became apparent that ubuntu was an essential aspect of life and its presence or absence was noticeable in the way people treated each other.

Though the philosophy of ubuntu is regarded as 'Africa's greatest gift to the world' (Niekerk, 2013, p. 50), it is hardly applied to disabled people. Only one study has been done by Lorenzo (2013) on disabled women in South Africa. This study questioned the practice of rehabilitation organisations that advocated for the independence of disabled people while forgetting the interdependence embedded in ubuntu and communalism that women regarded as a means to their development (Lorenzo, 2013). In using ubuntu as a lens to understand people categorised as disabled; in calling people to first see the human being rather than the impairment; and in suggesting how disabled people could be re-included in their communities and education; this study makes unique contributions to practice in Uganda. This invites countries developing inclusive practice to use ubuntu and the values embedded in communalism to inform their policies.

### **6.1.3 Africanising education**

Participants in this study brought to the fore how colonisation haunted education in Uganda. In the analysis of data, it was evident that African kinds of knowledge were undermined, philosophies ignored and values rejected during colonisation. In literature, it was clear that even before independence, there were calls for an African renaissance in education aimed at untying education from the shackles of colonialism. This was based on the assumption that solutions to African

problems were primarily rooted in the experience of the African people. In this endeavour, this study has suggested that education in Uganda needs to be Africanised. Africanised education delivered by the African teacher is more inclusive than the current neo-colonial education delivered by the demotivated, traumatised and neo-colonial teacher. In suggesting this way of improving education and teacher professionalism, this study makes another original contribution to practice.

Given the process of Africanising education is not merely replacing colonial with traditional education, this study recommends an articulation of relevant education that considers the past experience of colonisation, the turbulent history of conflict, the current lived experience of poverty and the values embedded in African philosophies. In general terms, this study calls for change in the philosophy of education so that it is inclusive. An Africanised philosophy of education entails using the inclusive philosophies ubuntu and communalism, adopting African languages and traditional knowledge systems, embedding the cherished African values, and adopting relevant international knowledge such as in science, mathematics and technology.

For illustration purposes, this study has applied the inclusive philosophies of ubuntu and communalism and challenged the current practice in special and inclusive education that is based on models and policies imported from the West that widen the gap between 'us' and 'them'. Like Mji et al. (2011), I have argued that ubuntu has the potential to challenge the constructs of 'us' and 'them' in education which are not only restricted to abled and disabled people but extended to the rich and poor, stayees and returnees, land owners and land grabbers, oppressors and oppressed. Specifically, this study calls for the usage of ubuntu

and communalism in the Africanisation of education so that it is inclusive of disabled children. This is an original contribution to the philosophy of education in Africa. In doing so, it has added another voice to scholars like Ciaffa (2008) who have called for the Africanisation of education as a way of decolonising it.

## **6.2 Strengths and limitations of the study**

The strengths of this study include: achieving the research aims; using a critical, grounded and constructivist research style; and Africanised interviews. However, as discussed below, each of these strengths has its limitations.

### **6.2.1 Achieving research aims**

This study has achieved its aim of investigating the education of disabled children in a conflict setting and how it could be improved. This has been done in several ways. First, it has generated original data presented in Chapter 4 which has shed light on the interfaces between education, disability and conflict. It has, however, not provided a definition of disability because of the cultural and contextual nature of disability.

Second, this study has attempted to understand educational provision in each stage of conflict. It has discovered that in the conflict setting where it took place, education was not differentiated according to stages. Instead, education was undifferentiated, colonial, outdated and 'creeping'. This finding has contradicted research which indicated that education was differentiated according to stages of conflict (Smith, 2005).

Third, this study has argued that for education to be improved, ubuntu and communalism need to be among the foundational philosophies. In this endeavour, it has constructed a theory of Africanising education. However, this

study is limited as it has not examined the cherished African values such as those related to resolving conflict and the division of labour that could be used to improve education.

### **6.2.2 Using a critical, grounded and constructivist research style**

This study has used a critical, grounded and constructivist research style to achieve the research aim. To my knowledge this is the first study to use this style in Northern Uganda. Below I evaluate the effectiveness of this research style.

Scholars, especially from Europe, consider research critical in so far as it addresses injustices through participatory and emancipatory methods (Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2013; Leonardo, 2004). Given that the African context I researched in was different from the European context, I did not use these methods. My research was critical from a different perspective. Firstly, it was based on the belief that any research that confronted social injustice and worked towards fairness was critical (Charmaz, 2005; Klincheloe & McLaren, 2005). I therefore ensured that my research had a critical aim and it was to examine how the education of disabled children who were marginalised in conflict settings could be improved.

Secondly, upon noticing the exclusion of disabled people, I involved disabled people in the research process. This was successful to the extent that some participants felt esteemed. For example, a disabled participant in Gulu commented, 'I am very happy now. You are the first person coming to me and to interview me on a PhD level. I have never had even someone on a Master level to interview me. I am happy for that' (ROT).



Thirdly, as there was no criteria on how research could be judged 'critical' in an African context, I constructed the criteria which involved applying the principles of social justice, decolonisation and Africanisation to my study. For instance, upon realising the scholarly colonialism experienced by African scholars (Meekosha, 2011), I incorporated knowledge constructed by African scholars into this thesis and this was an attempt to decolonise my approach. Then, after realising how disability and education were influenced by colonialism in the setting, I constructed a theory of Africanising education.

Given that my study adopted a critical style from the start, it could be interpreted as biased by classical grounded theorists (Glaser, 2001, 2004). This could be considered a limitation and not compatible with the grounded features of my style such as emergence. It should be remembered that my study was critical from an African perspective and this necessitated a different criteria to evaluate bias. A reflection on African ways of knowing exhibited during Africanised interviews revealed aspects such as reflexivity, iteration and the co-construction of knowledge which I applied to minimise bias.

My research style was also constructivist in its epistemology and focused on capturing the complexity of the tensions around the education of disabled children in conflict settings. The main benefit of this epistemology was that the truth and meaning that was socially constructed could change should new data emerge (Crotty, 2009; Gergen, 1999; Mills et al., 2006). This means the theory of education proposed in this thesis is not static but changeable and this makes it possible for it to continue to be relevant to the setting. For example, with scientific discoveries, new technologies, and future conflicts; communities are likely to change, new knowledge emerge, and these are likely to reconfigure this theory

of education. This belief is based on the conviction that as constructivists 'we construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices' (Charmaz, 2006, p. 10).

It should be noted that the constructivist epistemology I embraced could be considered subjectivist by those who take an objectivist epistemology (Hammersley, 2012; Somekh & Lewin, 2011). It is worth remembering that my constructivist style entailed co-constructing knowledge with my research participants and therefore not purely subjectivist. However, my approach was not wholly constructivist especially during the data analysis and thesis write up stages. This was expected as the primary objective of this study was not to conduct a collaborative research but meet the demands of a doctorate as an independent researcher.

This study had elements of grounded theory and they included: an emergent design, evolving literature and iterative process. Given emergence was at the core of grounded theory (Glaser, 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), it was a vital aspect of my style. As already noted, this was evident in the emergence of research aims and questions from my personal experience and literature. Also, sampling, research stages, codes, categories and even the research guide emerged from the hotel I was staying (see Section 3.4.2.1). Though flexibility was one of the benefits of this emergent design, there were occasions where I was unable to conduct interviews because I had not given advance notice to potential participants. In effect, the emergent design made it hard to plan in advance. Also, though some of the codes arose 'in vivo', others were drawn from existing literature after going through complex data analysis procedures. This was

possible through being reflective, coding rigorously using frameworks that were constructed from data and that were challenged until they were considered robust. My supervisors supported this process through checking codes to ensure inter-rater consistency.

The theory of education proposed in this thesis did not only emerge but was also constructed. This diverged from the belief that everything emerges in grounded theory studies (Glaser, 2001). This meant my study did not fit the classical Glaserian approach which would involve entering the field *tabula rasa* (Coffey et al., 1996; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Instead, it used literature to dialogue with data. Though this was beneficial, there were moments when there was no literature to dialogue with the data. This left gaps in my theory and called for future studies (see Section 6.3) to address them thus making my theory a 'work in progress'. As already argued, the flexible nature of theory was necessary for it to remain relevant to the setting. In essence, the critical, constructivist and grounded research style was effective in achieving my research aim.

### **6.2.3 Africanised interviews**

As interviews were being conducted in Uganda, a different style emerged. The European style interviews which I started with individual participants were transformed into family meetings and community events as people joined in and participated without being invited. I referred to this unique style as Africanised interviews because it integrated key aspects of African life such as communalism and ubuntu. For example, if you found people eating, cultivating or dancing you would join in without being asked and no one would request you leave.

Africanised interviews were located in people's everyday activities and were not private affairs between the researcher and participant in a closed off space. Africanised interviews were conducted in the spaces where participants were: huts, family courtyards, and farming fields. Some participants concluded interviews in a celebratory atmosphere. Celebrating events is central in African life and in Gulu this entails giving each other drinks and asking for some from me the visitor as per their custom. Most of the times, participants escorted me to my next interview advising me not to wander off the narrow footpaths for safety reasons. This showed their caring attitude: an essential attribute of ubuntu (Le Roux, 2000). In essence, Africanised interviews are a unique contribution this study makes to research methods.

However, the usage of Africanised interviews did not come without challenges. Firstly, there were constant interruptions as more people joined in and this affected the flow of the interview. Secondly, interviewees might have been influenced by the presence of others and this might have restricted what interviewees might have said on a one to one basis. Thirdly, in some settings such as the returnee school in Gulu, time was wasted because an appointment had not been made in advance. However, even where interviews appointments were made in advance such as in Kampala, public sector workers never attended them. I was however able to obtain ample data needed to answer my research questions and achieve my aims.

#### **6.2.4 Scholarly decolonisation**

The feeling of being voiceless and not listened to was not only felt in the setting but also in literature. Some scholars lamented the failure of researchers from the global North to make reference to theories and scholars from the global South

(Meekosha, 2011; Mji et al., 2011). This was linked to the belief that knowledge constructed in northern continents like Europe was superior to that originating from southern continents like Africa and this was conceptualised as scholarly colonialism (Meekosha, 2011). By conducting my field study in Uganda, in making reference to African scholars in this thesis, in applying African concepts such as ubuntu and communalism to disability and education and by exposing African scholars and their wisdom to my readers, this study contributed towards the decolonisation of scholarship in Africa.

### **6.3 Directions for future research**

Given that education and disability in conflict settings are under-researched, this study acts as a springboard for future researchers who could explore the:

- a) Values cherished in African communities and their relevance to education, disability and conflict
- b) Role and intentions of NGO in averting or sustaining conflict
- c) Intersection between neo-colonialism and disability in Africa
- d) Nature of bush education and the values that sustain it
- e) Indigenous kinds of knowledge relevant to Africanising education.

### **6.4 Overall Conclusion**

This qualitative study was motivated by my desire to explore the education of children with disabilities in conflict settings and how it could be improved. To achieve this aim, data was constructed using online, interview and observation methods; and sequentially analysed using coding and memoing.

The analysed data revealed various findings. Children in conflict settings lived in rampant poverty and were subjects of forced displacement. Due to conflict, most

children were dehumanised and conscience-less. In addition, conflict exacerbated disability to the extent that a new category titled 'children living in difficult circumstances' was used during the resettlement period in Northern Uganda. In relation to education, participants considered it 'creeping' because of demotivated teachers, disengaged parents, ailing infrastructure and decreasing quality. As open armed conflict was over, there was a desire to transform education so that it developed children's consciences, reinforced their hope and widened their opportunities.

A discussion of these findings revealed other issues at the interfaces between education, disability and conflict: rampant poverty, colonialism, neo-colonialism and African culture. In response to these issues, this study proposed a critical, grounded and constructivist theory of Africanising education. This theory assumed that in order to improve education, there was a need to Africanise the creeping education system, the colonial curriculum, the demotivated teacher and the broken communities.

In essence, this study has achieved its aim: investigating education in conflict settings and how it could be improved. It has shed light on disability in African societies and the forces of neo-colonialism in education. It has constructed the image of the African teacher and examined its relevance to teacher professionalism. It has allowed a reflection on the relationship between disability and humanness in Africa, and how ubuntu and communalism could reconfigure disability, inform the philosophy of education and transform the curriculum. It has suggested how future research could extend the theory of education: examining values cherished in African communities and their relevance to conflict; investigating the role of NGOs in averting or sustaining conflict; exploring the

intersection between neo-colonialism and disability in Africa; capturing the indigenous kinds of knowledge relevant to Africanising education; and getting a glimpse on bush education and the values that sustain it.

I conclude this thesis with the analogy of a journey to reflect on my doctoral experience. It has been a startling journey into the experiences of children in the conflict setting of Uganda. It has been a worthwhile intellectual journey into the traditions and philosophies that animate life in Africa. It has been a journey of hope into how education could be Africanised for children in Africa and beyond.

## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A: Letter of request for online participation**

My name is Patrick Businge and I am a doctoral student at the University of Exeter. I am currently carrying out research on how education in conflict-affected settings could be improved especially for children with disabilities. At the core of this research is gathering views from various people on the past, current and future education in Uganda.

I have written this letter in an effort to seek your acceptance to participate in this project by completing a questionnaire. This should take around 20 to 30 minutes of your time. All data collected in this project will be used to generate a model for educating children with disabilities in conflict-affected settings.



## Appendix B: Online participants

Participants by sector, role gender and method					
Sector	Role and gender (M/F)	Website questionnaire	Email questionnaire	Postal questionnaire	Total in numbers
Higher Education	Lecturer (M) Professor (M) Assistant lecturer (M) Lecturer of economics of education (M)	4	0	0	4
Further Education	Student	1	0	0	1
Secondary Education	Teacher (F) Disabled Teacher (F) Professional teacher (F)	3	0	0	3
Research	Researcher in education (F) Research consultant (F) Researcher (M) Human rights researcher (F)	3	1	0	4
Social care	Consultant social worker (M) Health care assistant (M) Psychological wellbeing practitioner (M) Social worker (M)	3	1	0	4
Banking	Senior risk consultant (M)	1		0	1
International NGOs	Education specialist (F) International education consultant (M) Technical Advisor Education (F)	2	1	0	3
Civil society organisations	Programme Assistant (M) Public Relations Officer (M)	1	1	0	2
Media	Journalist		1		
Unidentified	Not revealed	3	1	0	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>21</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>27</b>

## Appendix C: Letter of introduction



Graduate School of Education  
St. Luke's Campus, Heavitree Road, Exeter EX1 2LU, United Kingdom

27<sup>th</sup> June 2012

Dear Sir/ Madam,

**Re: Disability and Education in Conflict-affected and Fragile States (DECAFS) Project**

My name is Patrick Businge and I am a doctoral student at the University of Exeter. I am currently carrying out research on how education in conflict-affected settings could be improved especially for children with disabilities. At the core of this research is gathering views from various people on the past, current and future education in Uganda.

I have written this letter in an effort to seek your acceptance to participate in this project by completing a questionnaire. This should take around 20 to 30 minutes of your time. All data collected in this project will be used to generate a model for educating children with disabilities in conflict-affected settings.

I would appreciate if you could complete the [online questionnaire](#) or let me know if you would prefer to complete it by telephone. Alternatively you could complete the attached word or pdf version of the questionnaire and return it with the consent form by email or post to

Patrick Businge  
St Luke's Campus  
Heavitree Road  
Exeter EX1 2LU  
UK  
Email: [prb204@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:prb204@exeter.ac.uk)

Should you require more information, please do not hesitate contact me on +44 (0) 7887607514 or my supervisor Dr. Hannah Anglin-Jaffe at [H.A.Anglin-Jaffe@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:H.A.Anglin-Jaffe@exeter.ac.uk) .

Thank you in advance for your time, consideration, and acceptance to take part in this study.

Yours sincerely,

Approved by,

Patrick Businge  
Anglin-Jaffe

Dr. Hannah

## Appendix D: Participant information sheet for adults

### Disability and Education in Conflict-affected and Fragile States (DECAFS) Project

<p><b>What is this project about?</b></p> <p>This project collects data about the education of children in countries that have been affected by armed conflict. The information you give will be used to improve education in current and future armed conflict settings.</p> <p>This project is guided by the question: how could educational provision for children with disabilities in conflict-affected and fragile states be improved? The answer to this question is investigated using three sub-questions:</p> <p>i) What does literature say about education in countries that have been affected by armed conflict?</p> <p>ii) What does education look like in Northern Uganda?</p> <p>iii) Which model for educating children with disabilities emerges from data?</p>	<p><b>What will happen in this project?</b></p> <p>In this project humanitarian workers, teachers, support workers, children, carers, parents, leaders and researchers are being interviewed. The interviews are recorded. Children are observed and asked about their learning experiences in armed conflict situations.</p> <p>As a participant you will be asked about past, current and future educational provision in Northern Uganda. Questions will be about: the availability, acceptability, accessibility and adaptability of education. You will also be asked about how education for all children can be improved in countries affected by conflict.</p>
<p><b>Who will be carrying out this research project?</b></p> <p>This project is being carried out by me Patrick Businge. I am a doctoral student at the University of Exeter and a practising teacher in a secondary school in England. In the past, I have worked on pastoral and development projects in Uganda, Rwanda, Burkina Faso and Algeria. I am now interested in how we can improve the education of children with disabilities in countries affected by armed conflict.</p> <p>If you have any questions about this project please email me at <a href="mailto:prb204@exeter.ac.uk">prb204@exeter.ac.uk</a> or my Academic Supervisor Dr Hannah Anglin-Jaffe at <a href="mailto:h.a.anglin-jaffe@exeter.ac.uk">h.a.anglin-jaffe@exeter.ac.uk</a>.</p>	<p><b>How will my information be used?</b></p> <p>All the information you give is confidential. Your name will not be revealed and other details will also be changed in the reports. The names of the organisation you belong to may be used with your organisation's approval. The data will be kept safe until the project is over and then it will be destroyed. The findings of the research will be presented at conferences and published in academic journals. At any point in the research you may choose to withdraw from the project if you do not want to take part anymore.</p>



## Appendix E: Participant consent form for adults

### Disability and Education in Conflict-affected and Fragile States (DECAFS) Project

#### I understand that:

- I may choose not to take part in this project and if I decide to join, I may quit at any time
- there will be no fine if I decide to quit at any stage of this project
- I will be told if there is any information that requires me to decide whether to continue or quit
- I have the right to refuse any information about me to be made public
- any information I give is for the purposes of this research project and any related publications
- some of the information I give may be shared anonymously with the organisation I belong to
- with the agreement of my organisation, the researcher may refer to the group I belong to
- the researcher will make every effort to preserve my privacy
- all the information I give will be treated as confidential
- information which threatens national security or community safety is reported to authorities
- I will not be paid to participate in this project
- If I have any concerns about this project, I will contact Patrick Businge at [prb204@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:prb204@exeter.ac.uk) or at +44 (0) 7887607514
- If my concerns are not resolved, I will contact Patrick's supervisor Dr Hannah Anglin-Jaffe at [H.A.Anglin-Jaffe@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:H.A.Anglin-Jaffe@exeter.ac.uk)

#### My signature/ thumb print on this form means that I have:

- read and/ or heard about the research project
- been fully informed about the aims, procedures, possible benefits and risks of this project
- understood why I am being asked to participate in the study
- willingly accepted to participate in this study
- accepted to talk freely about myself and my thoughts and feelings about education
- been given the chance to ask questions before I sign or put my thumb print

.....

(Signature of participant)

.....

(Date)

.....

(Printed name of participant)

Thank you so much.

*One copy of this form will be kept by the organisation; a second copy will be kept by the researcher.*

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the researcher(s) and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without further agreement by the participant. Reports based on the data will be in anonymised form.

## Appendix F: Scoping questionnaire

### Disability and Education in Conflict-affected and Fragile States (DECAFS) Project

#### Section 1

#### About you

Your **name**:

Your **organisation**:

Your **occupation**:

A brief description of **your work**:

Years of **experience** in current role:

**Section 2**

**Your views on universal education in Uganda**

**What comes to your mind when you hear 'education'?**

**What do you consider to be the purpose of universal/ free education in Uganda?**

To what extent is universal education **available**, **acceptable** and **accessible** in Uganda?

What do you consider to be the **successes** of universal education in Uganda?

What do you consider to be the **challenges** of universal education in Uganda?

How could universal education be **improved** in Uganda?



### Section 3

#### Your views on education for children with disabilities in Uganda

What comes to your mind when you hear the word 'disability'?

What causes disability?

What do you consider to be the purpose of education for children with disabilities in Uganda?

To what extent is education for children with disabilities **available**, **acceptable** and **accessible** in Uganda?

What do you consider to be the **successes** of education for children with disabilities in Uganda?

What do you consider to be the **challenges** of educating children with disabilities in Uganda?

How could education for children with disabilities in Uganda be **improved**?

## Section 4

### Your views on education and disability in armed-conflict settings

What do you consider to be the **purpose** of education in settings that have been affected by **long-term armed-conflict**?

What should **education** in settings recovering from long-term armed conflict such as **Northern Uganda look like**?

What do you consider to be the **purpose** of education for **children with disabilities** in settings recovering from armed-conflict like **Northern Uganda**?

What should **education for children with disabilities** in settings recovering from long-term armed conflict such as **Northern Uganda** look like?

What **activities** should be considered '**educational**' for children with disabilities in settings recovering from long-term armed-conflict such as Northern Uganda?

In what ways could '**educational**' **activities** for children with disabilities be **maintained** in future **armed-conflict settings or wars**?

**Section 5**

**Your other contributions**

Which other **comments** would you like to make?

Would you like to be **updated** about the progress of this research project?

If yes, please write your preferred contact details below.

Would you like to be **contacted** to discuss some of the issues raised in this study?

*Thank you for accepting to take part in this study.*



## Appendix G: Participants for the experiential stage

Field study participants (n=35)				
Participant	Gender	Sector	Role	Setting
2PA	2 Male	Family	Parents	Gulu
JAO	2 Female 1 Male	Leadership/ Family	Secretary and parent of a disabled child, disabled child, husband	Gulu
7TT	3 Female 4 Male	Primary education	Primary school teachers in Northern Uganda	Gulu
TUT	1 Male	Further education	Tutor at a teacher training college	Gulu
MAM	1 Female 1 Male	Family	Parent of a disabled child, disabled child	Gulu
ROT	1 Male	Civil service	District inspector and in charge of special needs education	Gulu
POG	1 Male	Primary education	Specialist teacher of children with hearing impairment	Gulu
SWR	1 Female	Social care	Social worker in a community based organisation	Gulu
JAM	1 Male	Tourism	Guide	Gulu
NAR	1 Male	Research	Director of a research network	Kampala
ADY	3 Female	Family	Grandparent of a child with a disability, disabled child, neighbour	Kyenjojo
GKI	1 Female	Further education	College Tutor	Kyenjojo
MMI	1 Female	Primary education	Headteacher	Kyenjojo
ASN	1 Male	Primary education	Headteacher	Kyenjojo
GKE	1 Female	Primary education	Teacher	Kyenjojo
RKA	1 Male	Primary education	Teacher	Kyenjojo
CBA	1 Male	Primary education	Headteacher	Kyenjojo
KJR	1 Female	Further education	Teacher Trainee	Kyenjojo
GKA	1 Male	Leadership	Minister	Kyenjojo
JMY	1 Male	Leadership	Local councillor	Kyenjojo
CKA	1 Male	Leadership	Treasurer of persons with disabilities	Kyenjojo
SRE	1 Female	Family	Guide	Kyenjojo
MUM	1 Female	Family	Advisor	Kyenjojo

## Appendix H: Interview guide for adults



Graduate School of Education  
St. Luke's Campus, Heavitree Road, Exeter EX1 2LU, United Kingdom

### Introduction

- Thanks
- Project Information and signing the Consent Form
- Could you please tell me your name, role and organisation
- How long you have been living and/ or working with...

### Views on education

- Tell me about **education in your setting**...Is it available, acceptable, adaptable, accessible?
- What do you think about **the quality of education**? How would you describe 'quality education'? Do you think the quality of education has improved or declined? Why?
- What do you think about **the automatic promotion** of children to another year rather than repeating a year if they fail the exams?

### Views on education for vulnerable children

- Are there children you would consider **missing out on education** in your setting? Which ones?
- What about those who are **at-risk or vulnerable**? Which groups of children would you consider to be at risk or vulnerable?
- Is there any **support for vulnerable children** inside or outside educational settings? Which support? Who provides the support? Are there any organisations? Which organisations? What do they do for vulnerable children?

### Views on education for children with disabilities

- Are there children with disabilities in your setting? Which **types of disabilities** do they have? What do you think are the **causes of disabilities**? How do you come to know of these types of disabilities? What is the attitude of society/ religion/ culture towards disability?
- Are you happy with the **current education programme** for children with disabilities in your setting? Are there specific activities for children with disabilities? If yes, which ones and what is their aim? If no, why?
- Are there any educational activities you think can be **changed or added in the future** for children with disabilities? Some people think education for children with disabilities should empower/ enable/ equip/ liberate: what do you think?
- How could education in your setting **be improved**? What do you consider to be your priorities for children with disabilities in your setting? How can these be achieved?

- What are your thoughts about educating children with disabilities in **special schools/ ordinary schools/ other settings**? Any benefits or challenges? Who should fund education?
- I would like you to **dream of education in the future**. How should it look like in your setting? For all children/ for vulnerable children/ for children with disabilities?

### Views on disability and education in armed conflict settings

- Tell me about **disability during the conflict years/ before coming to the camp**? What was the attitude of people towards persons with disabilities? Were there organisations or schools dedicated to caring for children with disabilities?
- Tell me about **education during the conflict years / before coming to the camp**? Who was the main provider? Was it available/ accessible/ adaptable/ acceptable? What do you think was the aim of education for all children/ children with disabilities during that time? How was education organised? Who was paying for it? Who was teaching the children? What were children learning? How relevant was education to the needs of all children/ vulnerable children/ children with disabilities?
- What should **education for children in settings recovering from long-term armed conflict such as Northern Uganda look like**? Who should provide education? What should be the aim? What kind of activities? What kind of people should be involved in shaping the curriculum? What should be the role of parents or guardians in shaping this curriculum? What about other stakeholders? What do you think about a '**localised curriculum**' for settings emerging from armed conflicts? What should it include? At what point should it be implemented?
- What should **education for children with disabilities in settings recovering from long-term armed conflicts as Northern Uganda look like**? Where should children be educated? Who should **provide** it? What should be the **aim**? What kind of activities? What do you think about a '**specific curriculum**' for children with disabilities? What should it include? What kind of people should be involved in the education of children with disabilities? What should be the role of parents/ guardians/ teachers/ governors/ politicians/ church leaders NGOs etc? What do you think about different agencies working together to improve education?
- **If there was to be an armed conflict, how could education for children with disabilities be maintained or sustained?**

### Check details of responses

- Are there any **other comments** you would like to make?
- Is this an adequate summary of our conversation?

### Closure

- Of all that we have discussed today, which one is most important to you?

*Thank you for accepting to take part in this research.*

## Appendix I: Interview guide questionnaire

**Your name:**

**Your role** (teacher, Headteacher, parent):

**Your setting** (school, camp, village, town etc):

### Your views on education

- How do you find education in your setting?
- What do you think about **the quality of education**?
- What do you think about **the automatic promotion** of children to another year rather than repeating a year if they fail their exams?

## Views on education for vulnerable children

- Are there children you consider to be **missing out on education** in your setting?
- Which groups of children would you consider to be most at-risk or vulnerable?
- Is there any **support for vulnerable children** inside or outside educational settings? What type of support? Who provides the support/ are there any organisations?

## Views on education for children with disabilities

- Are there children with disabilities in your setting? Which **types of disabilities** do they have? What do you think are the **causes of disabilities**? What is the attitude of society/ religion/ culture towards disability?
- Are you happy with the **current education programme** for children with disabilities in your setting? Are there specific activities for children with disabilities in your setting? If yes, which ones and what is their aim? If no, why?
- Are there any educational activities you think can be **changed or added in the future** for children with disabilities?

## Views on education for children with disabilities continued

- How could education for children with disabilities in your setting **be improved**? What do you consider to be priorities areas for children with disabilities in your setting?
- What do you think about educating children with disabilities in **special schools/ ordinary schools/ other settings**?
- I would like you to **dream about education in the future**. How should it look like in your setting? For all children, for vulnerable children, for children with disabilities?

## Views on disability and education in armed conflict settings

- Tell me about **disability during the conflict years or before coming to the camp?**
- Tell me about **education during the conflict years or before coming to the camp?**
- How was education provision like for children with disabilities? How **relevant** was education to the needs of all children/ vulnerable children/ children with disabilities?



## Views on disability and education in armed conflict settings continued

- What should **education for children in settings recovering from long-term armed conflict such as Northern Uganda look like?**
- What should **education for children with disabilities in settings recovering from long-term armed conflicts as Northern Uganda look like?**
- If there was to be an armed conflict again, how could education for children with disabilities be **maintained or sustained?**

### Your other comments

- Are there any **other comments** you would like to make?
- Of all the areas you have explored above, which is most important to you?

*Thank you for accepting to take part in this research.*

## Appendix J: Observation guide for settings



Graduate School of Education  
*St. Luke's Campus, Heavitree Road, Exeter EX1 2LU, United Kingdom*

**Brief description of setting** (school, camp, village, town etc):

### General observations

- First impressions
- Space/ physical setting
- Social, cultural, economic factors
- Types of schools (pre-school, primary, secondary, tertiary)
- Collect documents (curriculum/ syllabus)
-

## Educational settings

- Space/ physical setting (classrooms, class size, etc)
- Educational actors (teachers, teaching assistants, etc)
- Activities (teaching, learning, etc)
- Feelings
- 
-

## Disability in educational settings

- Premises and universal design
- Inclusion/ exclusion (participation,
- Models of provision
- Feelings
- 
-

## Effects of conflict/ fragility/ displacement on education

- Security
- Signs of fragility
- Indicators to stages conflict
- 
- 
-

## Concluding observations

- Final remarks
- 
- 
- 
- 
-

## Appendix K: Analysed interview

Interview data template

About the participant	
Name	ROT
Language	English
Role	District Inspector of Schools in charge of quality assurance of teaching and learning. I am also the one in charge of special education. The district has not recruited one.
Setting	District as the setting. I have been working as DIS since 2007. As inspector of SNE since 1997.
Views on education	
Education in your setting	We have not yet got the final annual report of the numbers. If I had power on [electricity] I would give you the figure of 2010 because we have the district information management system. I can give you exactly the figure of children with disabilities in the district.
Quality of education	<p>Umm I cannot talk much about the quality of education in secondary schools because secondary schools officially have not been decentralised... We get very little grant that might allow us to inspect secondary schools. We carry out inspections only if the private secondary school wants the licence and the school pays for that. ...We have no power to carry out inspections there...Our role is majorly in primary schools and early child development centres...</p> <p>The quality of education in primary schools in Gulu I would say it is not good...We have a number of reports of inspections, there are about 18 indicators. We assess 18 indicators for example the level of teachers' preparation to teach. (Fair, poor, good, very good). The last quarter the level of preparation was fair that means averagely 50 percent, textbook use was also rated fair, actual teaching went to good that is 73 percent. But as you know there are teachers who teach based on experience and those who teach because there are inspectors coming. But when it comes to the learning achievement it comes to fair. Generally the quality of teaching and learning in this area is not good just because you know quality assurance needs collective effort.</p> <p>We still have low participation from our parents. In most cases they do not respond to the issues affecting the school and then secondly we still have rampant cases of absenteeism of learners from the school and these are the making of the parents because</p>

**Commented [PB1]:** Able to speak national language

**Commented [PB2]:**  
Vacant post for District Inspector of SNE  
Busy civil servant

**Commented [PB3]:** Experienced in SNE

**Commented [PB4]:** Information gap between central and local government

**Commented [PB5]:**  
Irregularities in the supply of electricity  
Signal of poverty in Uganda

**Commented [PB6]:**  
No recent data available as it is 2012 and this data is outdated

**Commented [PB7]:**  
Reticent to talk about the quality of education

**Commented [PB8]:**  
Funding school inspections is an issue  
Inspecting secondary schools not priority

**Commented [PB9]:**  
Inspections are only relevant when private schools need licences.  
Possibility of unlicensed private schools

**Commented [PB10]:**  
Government funded school inspections mainly in primary schools

**Commented [PB11]:**  
Teaching driven by experience  
Teaching driven by inspection requirements  
Quality of teaching and learning is average

**Commented [PB12]:**  
Parents disinterested and disengaged from education and this affects children

**Commented [PB13]:** Parental disinterest leads to absenteeism



	<p>parents are still using children as a labour force when it comes to opening fields, planting crops, harvesting crops they use children. These are periods when attendance of our learners is 80 percent. This means 20 percent of learners are absent. We also have challenges of teachers' attendance it also fluctuates, sometimes it goes to 85 sometimes to 75 percent.</p> <p>Leave alone attendance sometimes a teacher goes to class without a lesson plan. He is likely to use what we call teacher centred approach which does not profit children. So these are some of the indicators. Then management our school management committees are supposed to monitor supervise and come up with school improvement plans, a five year development plan. You will find most schools run without school improvement plans. They are supposed to upraise the performance of Headteachers. Our school management committees [equivalent of governing bodies] have very low education background. You will find a teacher with diploma, a teacher with a degree, bachelor but you are having a school management committee who has not even reached P7 or even O level ! [Ordinary level equivalent to GCSE] How much can a person do? At the end if they do not play their role effectively the whole thing goes on the child. It is the child because if the Headteacher is not doing enough to supervise the teacher and the management committee is not doing enough to supervise the Headteacher definitely you will see low achievement in the learner. This is why I am saying the quality of education in our district is very low. We have low achievement in our district and we still have a lot of other indicators. We have national assessment of progress in education. However, we can say there are some indicators of improvement because you are aware our region has been in war for over 25 years and most of the parents and community members are still in the process of resettling and so that puts most of our parents and the community in a very awkward situation because what they are focusing at is production of food and that is why even if we tell them that they should allow children to go to school on a daily basis they tell children that 'if you eat education then you go to school but if you know that you don't eat education then you have to stay with me and do the work that I want' so these are the kind of things that we are still battling. We still have the education ordinance but that is still not working.</p>
Automatic promotion	
<b>Views on education for vulnerable children</b>	
Missing out on education	
Most at-risk or vulnerable	

**Commented [PB14]:**  
Farming takes priority over education  
Survival not education is prioritised by parents in post conflicts

**Commented [PB15]:**  
Questions *teacher professionalism*  
Teacher absenteeism. Why?

**Commented [PB16]:**  
Teacher disengagement/ poor practice  
Teaching driven by experience (repeated)

**Commented [PB17]:**  
Ineffective teaching strategy

**Commented [PB18]:** Lack of planning

**Commented [PB19]:**  
Weak school leadership, management and governance structures  
Unchallenged school leaders due to their academic superiority

**Commented [PB20]:** Children are the silent victims of weak school leadership  
Children blamed for the wrongs of ineffective school leaders

**Commented [PB21]:**  
War and its effects have shifted priorities for parents: from education to survival  
War disrupts society

**Commented [PB22]:** Repeated= reliable

**Commented [PB23]:**  
Education is luxury in post-conflict settings  
Survival is a necessity after war

Support	
Providers	
<b>Views on education for children with disabilities</b>	
Children with disabilities	We have all categories of learners with disabilities.
Types of disabilities	We have all categories of learners with disabilities. We have those with physical impairment and these physical impairments they are of different causes/ we have some who are born with it we can call it congenital, there are others who got it through accidents, disease, hearing, visual problem, mental retardation, slow learners, we have autistic children, we have children with HIV/ AIDS. We have children with sickle cells, we have children with TB [Tuberculosis], children under difficult circumstances and they are the majority these are children coming from poor socio-economic backgrounds which actually make up the biggest population of this district. They are having parents who are not concerned they are having parents who are not supporting them these are children especially girls who are sometimes forced to get married when they are still young so those are the categories and we put them under difficult circumstances [Is this a new category of vulnerability- children under difficult circumstances?]. These are the categories of learners of children with disabilities we have. Yes we do categorise children in difficult circumstances as disabled. Orphans they are too many.
Causes of disabilities	
Attitude towards disability	
Current education programme	<p>I am not happy with the education programme. The Government has already come up with policy on special education but have not seen a copy. What I know is that what the Universal primary education or universal secondary education has done is to improve access that one I give a credit to our government. The battle now is to improve quality...what I know it is a general problem...we do not have teachers....even teachers with diplomas on special needs education they are not many!</p> <p>We have established units. What we now have units for example we have units within a primary school where all children who are deaf are supposed to come and learn. The government is not in favour of boarding facilities. They do not have money. Parents are saying they do not have money and sometimes because they still have negative attitude they say why should I waste money on a deaf child or on a blind child they have hope on others who are</p>

**Commented [PB24]:**  
Disability is diversified

**Commented [PB25]:**  
Disability is diversified  
Repeated= reliable

**Commented [PB26]:**  
Congenital disability  
Acquired disability: accident and disease

**Commented [PB27]:**  
Children from poor socio-economic background are disabled  
Poverty causes disability  
Society causes disability (Children are victims of rape, neglect, poverty, forced marriage and death of parents thus orphaned)

Most children are disabled  
Disability is common

**Commented [PB28]:**  
Children who become parents due to forced marriage become irresponsible parents (Child parents)

**Commented [PB29]:** Dissatisfied with the education system

**Commented [PB30]:** Information gap between central and local government

**Commented [PB31]:**  
Improved access to education not quality

**Commented [PB32]:**  
It is hard to improve the quality of education

**Commented [PB33]:**  
Need for teachers (ordinary and specialist) to improve the quality of education

**Commented [PB34]:**  
Attempted to improve quality by integrated schools (SEN units attached to ordinary schools)

**Commented [PB35]:** Funding problem from both parent and government

	having no disability. You will find these deaf children who are coming to school. If they come parents do not continue to pay. We used to have many of them in the deaf unit but many have dropped out because there is no payment coming from parents. Parents are always looking for someone or somebody like an NGO to take care of them they do not want to take responsibility so the challenge we have in the units. Even those who should be in inclusive settings we do not have teachers with the right method to teach children with disabilities or advise others.
Education activities	
Purpose or aim of the activities	
Educational activities to be changed or added	
Improving education	
Educating children in special schools	<p>We do not advocate for special schools. Sometimes we think let them be in a unit. Sometimes we do not have enough facility for them to learn effectively but we would love to have these children learning ordinarily in an inclusive settings even if brain material is not there for this child to learn effectively. But we would love these children to learn ordinarily in a normal school.</p> <p>Special schools put a child at a disadvantage as far as the learning and development is concerned that is why we don't so much advocate for special schools. But instead of special school we normally go for an integrated system where like for example now we have the units set within an ordinary school. That is much better than separating children on their own it is very stigmatising for you to separate them because if you separate them and then later on you want them to join the community it puts them at a disadvantage. And then secondly putting them in an inclusive school also sensitizes the others to know that these are children born in an ordinary community and are supposed to learn in an ordinary community...</p>
Educating children in ordinary schools	Policy advocates for inclusive but not special schools. But of course special schools put children at a disadvantage as far as learning and development is concerned. But instead of special schools we go for an integrated school. It is very stigmatising separating them. You know putting them in an ordinary school sensitises others that these are children born in an ordinary setting and are meant to learn in an ordinary setting.
Educating children in other settings	

- Commented [PB36]:**  
Children are valued based on their ability  
Disabled/ deaf and blind children are under valued
- Commented [PB37]:**  
Free education should be free  
Its government's duty to pay for education
- Commented [PB38]:** Parents not paying fees for disabled  
(believe the govt pays)
- Commented [PB39]:**  
Parents searching for funding because they cannot afford  
Parents are addicted to charity
- Commented [PB40]:**  
Shortage of specialist teachers is a challenge to education

- Commented [PB41]:**  
There are structural limitations to integrated schooling
- Commented [PB42]:**  
Inclusive schools for all children are ideal
- Commented [PB43]:**  
Special schools are not normal/ exclude  
Inclusion by location
- Commented [PB44]:**  
Special schools are detrimental/ exclude
- Commented [PB45]:**  
Integrated schools are preferable to special schools
- Commented [PB46]:**  
Special schools are detrimental: they exclude, separate, stigmatise and isolate
- Commented [PB47]:**  
Inclusive schools are ideal  
Inclusive schools re-humanise the disabled
- Commented [PB48]:**  
Inclusive schools value human diversity and create a bright future
- Commented [PB49]:**  
Special schools are detrimental  
Inclusive schools are ideal though the government cannot afford them  
Inclusive schools are constant reminders that children with disabilities are human  
Repeated= reliability
- Commented [PB50]:**  
Ordinary schools as sites of inclusion  
Learning in ordinary school sensitizes

Dreaming of education for all children	Personally I know that an inclusive setting and integrated settings gives our children a bright future. The only thing for me is with time we should have all our teachers with a component of special needs. They should be in a position to support children with special needs. We do not narrow an inclusive setting to a school but to a community. We need an inclusive school we need an inclusive community. If you look at our government policy if you are putting up a building you must provide for persons with disability if you are recruiting teachers you have to consider persons with disability. I think this is already a good move for us as a district for us as a country as an inclusive society. These are considerations that the government is willing to do.
Dreaming of education for vulnerable children	
Dreaming of education for children with disabilities	I see a brighter future for our children with special needs.
<b>Views on disability and education in during armed conflicts</b>	
Disability during the conflict years	<p>During the war it was not very easy. There was a lot of running anytime whether at night, day or morning. There were times people would just run. They suffered a lot during the war.</p> <p>During the war children with disabilities I think didn't come up. You know during the war it was not easy there was a lot of running during the night during the day you can think of a disabled child and run with it. They suffered a lot during the war. Then there was a time when everybody was sent to the camp. Also children with disabilities were sent to the camp. There was support given to children with disabilities in terms of clothing, food, specific support in terms of mobility appliances like wheelchairs. I remember visiting an orthopaedic unit in Gulu there was support.</p> <p>I worked with an organisation in community based programme where we used to go and identify children with disabilities. We organised some activities, we trained parents, we sensitized them, and we used to refer children for operation and there were some organisation supporting this kind of children...from organisations like AVSI.</p> <p>There was some support although they suffered especially when it comes to running, guns have been shot. I believe but I don't have the data maybe we even lost some of them in the crossfire or something like that.</p>
Education during the conflict years	At that time about 90 percent of all the schools were destroyed. And what used to happen was that where there is a camp we would set a learning centre and a learning centre would comprise

**Commented [PB51]:**  
Inclusive/ integrated schooling is a foundation for a bright future. Training for all teachers so that they are able to teach children with special needs in inclusive schools is needed

**Commented [PB52]:**  
Inclusive schools in the wider context of inclusive communities. Inclusion is more than educational inclusion

**Commented [PB53]:**  
Hoping that education will improve

**Commented [PB54]:**  
War was characterised by displacement. Displacement became normal

**Commented [PB55]:**  
Disabled were not a priority

**Commented [PB56]:**  
Disabled children were abandoned. Disabled children suffered

**Commented [PB57]:**  
Forced displacement

**Commented [PB58]:**  
Disabled children who made it to camps received some support with basic needs

**Commented [PB59]:**  
It was possible to continue working during conflict.

**Commented [PB60]:**  
International humanitarian organisations present in camps and engaged in varied activities such as education, guidance and medical care

**Commented [PB61]:**  
The experience of children with disabilities during conflict is characterised by suffering and death. Difficult to care for the disabled during war. Difficult to know the number of deaths during conflict

**Commented [PB62]:**  
Schools were targeted during war. Learning centres/ displaced schools emerged in camps. War transformed the way education was organised



	of many schools (4-7 schools together) that would be a learning centre. Then we would give education as per national curriculum. Education support would depend on the safety on the road. We didn't have a different curriculum. Many people would have loved to what we call education in conflict but we didn't have any modified curriculum we were using the same curriculum-national curriculum. •
Education provision for children with disabilities	
Relevance of education to all children	
Relevance of education to vulnerable children	
Relevance of education to children with disabilities	
<b>Views on disability and education in setting recovering from long-term conflict</b>	
Education for all children	<p>'For sure if you were here at that time definitely it came at a time when teachers were overwhelmed they didn't know how to deal with learners because at that time we were having children returning from captivity children born in captivity traumatized children coming from families and that wasn't normal. These were teachers trained to handle ordinary children it would be good for a government to modify the curriculum to suit the needs of the learner. You are teaching a child and someone stands and goes and fights or even abuses you as a teacher, so surely we needed education in conflict.</p> <p>So honestly education in conflict would deserve modification of the curriculum. It would be good for a government to modify the curriculum to meet the needs of the learner or maybe integrating aspects for example at that time we had Norwegian Refugee Council and they were training teachers in what we call psychosocial support, children's rights, gender issues, learning environment. Those were very good components at that time because it wasn't easy for teachers to handle the learners at that time because some researchers say if one works with a traumatized person for a long period it is likely that you are likely to be traumatised too and our teachers were not prepared for that. So it would need teachers to be prepared for that. The curriculum needed to have been modified or integrating aspects that would prepare teachers to go through the challenge. Yes.</p>
Education for children with disabilities	Of course if you look at our curriculum I think with time it is going to address the issue of disability. You find teachers are being

**Commented [PB63]:**  
War did not transform/ change the curriculum  
Education depended on security situation

**Commented [PB64]:**  
Education as per national curriculum was not relevant.  
The curriculum should have changed to that tailored to the war situation: education in conflict

**Commented [PB65]:**  
War increased the diversity of learners: returnees, stayees, traumatised, born in captivity...  
Teachers unable to cope with the diversity of learners affected by conflict  
Teachers disempowered by war experience  
Teachers were not trained to teach in conflict settings

**Commented [PB66]:**  
Need for education curriculum to respond to the EBD needs of learners preferably education in conflict curriculum

**Commented [PB67]:**  
Humanitarian organisations organised INSET for teachers  
Teachers were disempowered and unable to cope with the effects of war

**Commented [PB68]:**  
Traumatized teachers  
Teachers needed to be prepared for conflict (Conflict teachers)

**Commented [PB69]:**  
Education curriculum to be modified in advance or during war so as to be relevant  
Teachers to be trained in advance so that they are competent during war

	<p>trained. In special needs we have a number of concepts. There are concepts teachers are to use. If I were a learner in your class and you call me by my disability. You know we have a tendency of people not to call you by your name they would give you a nickname and a nickname given to you is associated with what you are and I think that is not good for a child. Me I am grown up and I have overcome my disability and I can talk about my disability but a growing child may not so definitely we would need a curriculum that is friendly to a child with disability and teachers must be trained to interpret the curriculum properly to suit the needs of children because the curriculum is about a child and the curriculum is not about mathematics, it's not about English it's not about science but it's about the whole child. So that is very important.</p>
Maintaining or sustaining education	<p>I don't wish for another war but definitely we would have learnt from the past war and I think many things should happen differently.</p> <p>I think the government has learnt a lot. When there is a war situation the government has to prepare. When it comes to planning period the central government and local government should plan for emergency situation and must consider persons with disabilities...honestly. I think the government should learn from the past.</p>
<b>Other comments</b>	
<p>Umm I don't have much now. I am very happy now you are the first person coming to me and to interview me on a PhD level I have never had even someone on a Master level to interview me I am happy for that if we get more people getting interested in this. I want to be a teacher by the way. Especially teach students who are doing special needs. Kyambogo university invite me. Sometimes with my knowledge of special needs and also experience of disability I sometimes tell teachers 'you can be a great teacher but if you lack component of special need you are not yet fully a teacher you still lack something because every learner you have a learner with special needs and of course if you have 20 children in the class you need a component of special needs. I have appreciated your coming and if you could allow me ready your final report that would be very good.</p>	

**Commented [PB70]:** It's a matter of time that disabled children will be educationally included

**Commented [PB71]:**  
Need for a disability friendly curriculum that challenges the givens of the society such as nicknaming

Teacher training to incorporate the interpretation of the curriculum

Curriculum to be holistic

**Commented [PB72]:**  
Child centred curriculum

**Commented [PB73]:**

War has taught Ugandan a lot  
War is a learning experience

**Commented [PB74]:** Conflict has been a lesson for the government

**Commented [PB75]:**  
Ugandan government needs to be prepared for conflict (Conflict preparedness and planning)

**Commented [PB76]:**

Satisfied  
Esteemed  
Career aspirations  
Committed to SEN

**Commented [PB77]:** Personal philosophy

## Appendix L: Focused coding

Overview of the 'education in conflict'			
Stage of conflict	Sifted data	Clustering	Open codes
Pre-conflict	<p><i>For all children</i></p> <p>'The aim of education is to get a career' (KJR, Kyenjojo)</p> <p><i>For children with disabilities</i></p> <p>Fostering learning, improving knowledge, providing opportunities, developing social skills, wellbeing (online)</p> <p>'The aim of education for [the] disabled is to make them equal'</p> <p>(KJR, Kyenjojo)</p> <p>If people with disability are taught well they will get good positions and do not feel discriminated'(KJR, Kyenjojo)</p> <p><i>Improving education</i></p> <p>Literacy, personal development and productivity (Kyenjojo)</p> <p>'My dream about education in the future is education that develops self-esteem in all learners irrespective of whether there are disabilities. Secondly, it should be that education which provides life skills to all. Thirdly, education should harness every individual potential's for production to the best possible level' (CBA, Kyenjojo)</p>	<p>education for knowledge, career and equality</p> <p>contested purpose of education</p> <p>varied purpose of education</p>	<p>Education for knowledge</p> <p>Education for equality</p>
	<p><i>For all children</i></p> <p>'...to make the minds of children upright. To make the minds more understanding' (JAO, Gulu)</p> <p>Improving knowledge, acquiring social skills, equalising opportunities, enhancing opportunities (online)</p> <p>Normalcy, wellbeing, coping, rebuilding lives (online)</p> <p>'...rebuild their [sic] selves and be prepared for the world since they are usually separated from their homes, relatives and education can reassure them that life is worth living if they have dreams they want to achieve' (JN, Online).</p> <p>'Enabling them [children] to keep their families healthier and improving their ability to break out of the poverty cycle' (EM, Online).</p>	<p>education for knowledge and normalcy</p> <p>education for normalcy, wellbeing and coping</p>	<p>Education for personal development</p> <p>Education for normalcy</p>

<b>Conflict</b>	<p><i>For children with disabilities</i></p> <p>'The same as above with special attention to rehabilitation/ reintegration back into the villages, normalized life and living with the losses experienced' (FB, Online).</p> <p>Re-establishing normalcy, improving wellbeing, developing knowledge, equalising opportunities (online)</p> <p>'The purpose of education for children with disabilities was to make the minds of children upright' (JAO, Gulu).</p> <p>'I feel each child with different background of war experiences, impairments and environments has [a] different purpose towards his or her education. Children with disabilities are so diverse that it is difficult to answer this type of question' (HK, Online).</p>	uncertainty on the purpose of education	<p>Education for wellbeing</p> <p>Education for coping</p>
<b>Post conflict</b>	<p><i>For all children</i></p> <p>Normalcy, empowerment, personal development, equality</p> <p>'It should be the type that rehabilitates children and helps them forget the trauma they were exposed to, empowers them to be productive and to a greater extent tolerant' (CBA, Kyenjojo)</p> <p><i>For children with disabilities</i></p> <p>'Aim of education for [the] disabled to be equality, confidence, belonging' (KJR, Kyenjojo).</p> <p>The purpose is to help people to develop the skills to break away from the circle of violence and suffering that they have experienced in their life. Not that it is education for good not conflict as sometimes there is abuse of education (TM, Online).</p>	purpose of education	



## Appendix M: Ethical approval from the University of Exeter



STUDENT HIGHER-LEVEL RESEARCH  
DISSERTATION/THESIS

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### Certificate of ethical research approval

#### DISSERTATION/THESIS

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: <http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/guidelines/> and view the School's statement on the GSE student access on-line documents.

**READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER** (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). **DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND**

Your name: Patrick R Businge

Your student no: 600045210

Return address for this certificate: 15 Simpson Close, Luton LU4 9TP, UK

Degree/Programme of Study: Doctor of Education in Special Educational Needs

Project Supervisor(s): Dr Hannah Anglin-Jaffe and Professor Brahm Norwich

Your email address: prb204@exeter.ac.uk

Tel: +44 (0) 7887607514 or +44 (0) 1582517711

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my thesis to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed:.....  .....date:..29<sup>th</sup> May 2012.....

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee  
updated: April 2011



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## Certificate of ethical research approval DISSERTATION/THESIS

Your student no: 600045210

**Title of your project:**

Disability and Education in Conflict-affected and Fragile States (DECAFS) Project

**Brief description of your research project:**

This study explores the education of children with disabilities in conflict-affected and fragile states (CAFS). It aims at improving their educational provision by generating a model. This is advanced through:

- a) synthesising literature on education in CAFS
- b) exploring educational provision in a CAFS
- c) developing a model for education in CAFS

These aims provide a basis for the main research question which is: how could educational provision for children with disabilities in CAFS be improved? The answer to this question is investigated through three sub-questions:

- a) What does literature says about education in CAFS?
- b) What does education look like in Northern Uganda?
- c) Which model for educating children with disabilities in CAFS emerge?

This study is qualitative and uses a grounded theory methodology. It takes an iterative design which involves the exploratory, experiential and modelling phases. The exploratory phase focuses on gathering information on what has been written about education and how it looks like in a CAFS. The data generated in the exploratory phase is used to inform the experiential phase which involves a field visit to Northern Uganda. During the field visit, data is generated from children, parents, practitioners, researchers, managers and leaders on education in Northern Uganda. The modelling phase involves identifying the main components of education in CAFS and synthesising them into a model for education in CAFS. This model is multi-layered as it informs educational provision for all children, then for children with disabilities, and finally children with disabilities in Northern Uganda.

**Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):**

This study involves various organisations which fund, design and monitor education in Northern Uganda. They include national and international agencies, religious and community-based organisations, institutions of learning and the ministry of education. These organisations act as gatekeepers to various categories of participants in this study. While recognising that organisations are to play a vital role in the selection of participants and this is to shape the research outcomes, efforts are made to involve various participants. This is indicated by the shaded cells in the table below.

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Research Participants	Exploratory Stage (Phase 1)	Experiential Stage (Phase 2)	Modelling Stage (Phase 3)
Policymakers			
Practitioners			
Researchers			
Leaders			
Managers			
Parents			
Children aged 6-16			

Policymakers' category includes those involved in educational policymaking in the organisations at local, national and international levels. The practitioners' category refers to those who interact with the delivery of education in CAFS and includes humanitarian workers, aid workers, development workers, social workers, educational psychologists and teachers. The researchers' category includes academics and practitioners who have generated knowledge on education and/ or disability in CAFS. Leaders' category includes political, civil, cultural and religious officials but excludes leaders from the rebel groups who oppose the legitimate government of Uganda. Managers' category includes those who run and monitor educational provision in formal, non-formal and informal settings. It includes governors and heads of social services such as schools, community centres, orphanages and rehabilitation centres. The parents' category also includes carers and legal guardians. Finally, the children's category involves those who have the right to education. Free and universal education in Uganda targets children aged 6-16 some of which fall in various categories of vulnerability such as orphans, former child soldiers, street children and those with disabilities. This study does not include children in hospitals but includes those who access rehabilitation or counselling services.

**Give details (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) regarding the ethical issues of:**

- a) **informed consent:** Where children in schools are involved this includes both headteachers and parents). Copy (ies) of your consent form(s) you will be using must accompany this document.

In this study, consent is understood to be an on-going process and is constantly negotiated. Permission to visit, observe and interview participants in educational settings goes through a chain of consent starting from educational providers through leaders and managers to participants. A letter requesting an organisation to participate is sent out (Appendix 1) and consent is to be in a written form using the attached template (Appendix 2). In cases where persons to be observed do not have a natural or legal capacity to consent due to age or disability, approval is sought from guardians, parents or carers and participants are to give formal assent. It should however be noted that the procedure of seeking consent and assent takes into account the cultural, legal, religious and social expectations which may inform appropriate processes in Northern Uganda. The attached consent forms (Appendices 3-4) are signed or thumbprinted by adult and young participants before being

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interviewed to express their informed consent. When conducting interviews with adults, attention is paid to possible loss of income. Effectively, a convenient place for the interview and its duration are agreed beforehand. In situations where children are interviewed, the selection procedure is voluntary and is made clear beforehand. Children who participate receive the attached certificate of appreciation as a symbolic reward (Appendix 5). Before observing educational settings, I am to explain to those being observed who I am and the purpose of my study using the participant information sheet attached to each consent form. Where necessary, the one leading the educational activity or someone who knows English is to interpret into the local language. Verbal permission is requested before taking photographs and making video clips.

**b) anonymity and confidentiality**

Personal data is treated in the strictest confidence possible and is not disclosed to any unauthorised third parties. Interview data is held and used anonymously with no mention of participant's name. However, the organisation, tribe, race and gender to which a participant is a member may be referred to in the thesis, in academic publications and during the dissemination of findings. A participant may request a copy of their original interview in audio or written format depending on the method used to store it. For cultural, religious, political or social reasons, it is not possible to interview some participants in privacy. Effectively, consent is sought from participants that they agree to be interviewed in the presence of others. Sensitive information is handled with extreme caution and participants are advised that any information which raises significant concerns and threatens national security or community safety is reported to government authorities.

**Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:**

This study is qualitative in nature. It takes a grounded research approach and uses theoretical sampling to generate data and constant comparison method to analyse it. The main sources of information are documents, web resources and field data. As the table below indicates tools and techniques used to explore insights into education in CAFS.

Data Generation	Exploratory Stage (Phase 1)	Experiential Stage (Phase 2)	Modelling Stage (Phase 3)
Semi-structured interviews using 'Interview Guide Sheet'			
Non- participant observation using 'Observation sheet'			
Participant observation using 'My education story activity'			
Focus group discussions using 'Our community/organisation story activity'			

At the core of this study is an iterative design which involves exploratory, experiential and modelling phases. In the exploratory stage, semi-structured interviews are carried out with a selection of informants who work or have worked in Northern Uganda. This stage also involves a pilot or context

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scoping visit to Uganda which entails accessing documents on education, interviewing participants and carrying out non-participant observation of education in Uganda. This visit provides the opportunity to inform myself about the situation in Northern Uganda, question whether my research aims and questions are worthwhile, seek ethical approval from the Government of Uganda and discover other issues of significance as a result of meeting informants in Uganda. The experiential phase involves visiting formal, informal and non-formal educational settings in Northern Uganda and generating illuminative data. During this stage, semi-structured interviews, participant and non-participant observation methods of data generation are used. Given that I am taking a grounded approach, the attached interview guide sheet (Appendix 6) and observation checklists which are to be completed after the exploratory phase are regularly reviewed and updated till sufficient data is generated. To aid in the data analysis and with the consent of the participants, some of what is observed in the educational settings is video recorded and/ or photographed. Finally, the modelling phase involves synthesising all data into a model for education and carrying out a focus group discussion with practitioners, policymakers and researchers in an endeavour to refine the model.

During this study, efforts are made to interact with participants in a sensitive and supportive manner. Unless express permission has been given, names of participants and educational settings are anonymised to maintain confidentiality and privacy. However, participants are made aware that their titles, organisations, tribe and the location of the research in Northern Uganda which has been affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) insurgency are to be made clear to readers and audiences. There is no compulsion to participate in this research project and participants may choose to withdraw at any stage. In situations where recollections of difficult memories trigger considerable stress, the interview is stopped and the participant is asked whether they wish continue or go to a relevant local service for emotional support. Promises to adopt children, send gifts to participants or engage in acts which create false hope and increase the sorrow for participants are avoided. The potential of security or safety risk to participants and researcher are averted by following local intelligence and the decision to continue, suspend or change the research programme is made on a daily basis.

**Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):**

The audio, video and documentary data generated in this study is kept in a secure cabinet at home. It is to be stored until the research thesis; academic publications and dissemination are over and then destroyed. Data kept on a personal computer is password protected. When interviewing a participant with disabilities, special arrangements are to be made. However, these arrangements are to depend on the nature of disability and advice is to be sought from those who are familiar with the person's appropriate method of communication.

This study is not to be done in areas of open armed conflict. Though Northern Uganda is officially declared to be in a post-conflict phase, there is a risk to me as a researcher in form of physical and emotional safety. This requires appropriate action of gaining up-to-date information and local intelligence from local leaders, organisation staff members, academics, human rights monitors and journalist among others on a daily basis. Safety plans on using transport, informing someone or my host organisation (s) about my research programme, talking to someone when I have conducted an upsetting interview without breaching confidentiality are put in place. Going to places which are seen as dangerous pose security risks is to be avoided. Travel insurance is to be arranged before departing for field studies to Uganda. There is no need of visa as I am a Ugandan national.

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Graduate School of Education

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Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

The risk of carrying out research is constantly weighed against the tangible benefits to participants. It might not be possible to return the benefits of this research to the community in Northern Uganda because they might have moved to other locations by the time the research is completed. If this happens, benefits to future populations in similar circumstances are to be considered. Where possible immediate benefits such as giving feedback to participating organisation is given before leaving the research context. Efforts are made to protect the reputation of participating organisations and this involves abiding by their codes of ethical practice and acting responsibly in the dissemination of research results.

It is a general expectation that research about children with disability should be participatory. However, given the nature of armed conflict settings and the distance between the researcher and participants, full participation is not possible. The participation of children with disabilities is limited to letting them express their views through my education story activity or storyboards, interviews and informal conversations during observation activities. During these occasions, efforts are made to reduce power issues between the researcher and participants. Actions such as sitting at the same level are considered. However, the suitability of such procedures is takes into account of the local culture and advice is sought from knowledgeable leaders and managers in the research context. When substantial changes occur at any stage of this study, my academic supervisor is contacted and approval is sought from relevant ethical committees.

This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's Research Support Office for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

This project has been approved for the period: 1st August 2012 until: 31st August 2014

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): [Signature] date: 29/05/12

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occur a further form is completed.

GSE unique approval reference: D/11/12/58

Signed: [Signature] date: 20/06/2012  
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee  
updated: April 2011



## Appendix N: Accompanying letter from the University of Exeter



### GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

College of Social Sciences and International Studies  
St Luke's Campus  
Heavitree Road  
Exeter UK EX1 2LU

t +44 (0) 1392 724892  
f +44 (0) 1392 724922  
e education@exeter.ac.uk  
w www.exeter.ac.uk/education

*Noted and allowed to do so  
M. Norwich 22/8/2012*

12 June 2012

#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that the student detailed below is currently enrolled with the University of Exeter for the purpose of studying on the programme specified below:

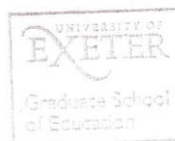
**Name:** Mr Patrick Rusoke BUSINGE  
**Student No.:** 600045210/1  
**Date of Birth:** 14/Nov/1975  
**Permanent Address:** 15 Simpson Close, Luton, LU4 9TP  
**Correspondence Address:** As above  
**Programme:** Doctorate of Education in Special Educational Needs (EdD SEN)  
**Programme Start Date:** 19/Jul/2010  
**Deadline for Submission of the Thesis for Examination:** 18/Jul/2016  
**Status:** PART TIME  
**First Supervisor:** Dr Hannah Anglin-Jaffe  
**Second Supervisor:** Professor Brahm Norwich

Mr Businge is currently working on his doctoral thesis of c.50,000 words, which is due to be submitted for examination no later than 18/Jul/2016. His working title is "Education and disability in conflict-affected and fragile states: Towards a wellbeing model."

Yours sincerely

*Jenny Andrews*

Jenny Andrews  
Graduate Research School  
College of Social Sciences and International Studies



## Appendix O: Ethical approval letter from Uganda



**Uganda National Council for Science and Technology**  
(Established by Act of Parliament of the Republic of Uganda)

Our Ref: SS 2877

August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Mr. Patrick Rusoke Businge  
JES International Travel Consultants  
Plot 29 Luwum Street  
P.O Box 35385  
Kampala

Dear Mr. Businge,

**RE: RESEARCH PROJECT, "DISABILITY AND EDUCATION IN CONFLICT AFFECTED AND FRAGILE STATES"**

This is to inform you that the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) approved the above research proposal on **July 13, 2012**. The approval will expire on **July 13, 2013**. If it is necessary to continue with the research beyond the expiry date, a request for continuation should be made in writing to the Executive Secretary, UNCST.

Any problems of a serious nature related to the execution of your research project should be brought to the attention of the UNCST, and any changes to the research protocol should not be implemented without UNCST's approval except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the research participant(s).

This letter also serves as proof of UNCST approval and as a reminder for you to submit to UNCST timely progress reports and a final report on completion of the research project.

Yours sincerely,

Winfred Badanga  
for: Executive Secretary  
**UGANDA NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

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*LOCATION/CORRESPONDENCE*

Plot 6 Kimera Road, Ntinda  
P. O. Box 6884  
KAMPALA, UGANDA

*COMMUNICATION*

TEL: (256) 414 705500  
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EMAIL: [info@uncst.go.ug](mailto:info@uncst.go.ug)  
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