JUST ADD WOMEN AND STIR?

Education, gender and peacebuilding in Uganda.

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Abstract

Although Uganda is not short of policies and strategies to promote gender equality, women's political and social agency remains significantly low. Reasons are rooted in two main challenges: persisting structural barriers; and low levels of education among women. Both are most prevalent in the country's conflict-affected sub-regions. Against this backdrop, we explore and critically reflect on the interplay of education, gender and peacebuilding. We showcase how gender-responsive approaches in education at the macro-level have traditionally been based on initiatives that embrace gender equality by means of a "just add women and stir approach" thereby side-lining history, cultural sensitivity and context.

Keywords:

Gender, peacebuilding, education, social transformation, Uganda,

Introduction

There is widespread consensus among practitioners and scholars that peacebuilding can be more effective if built on an understanding of how gendered identities are constructed through societal power relations between and among women, men, girls, boys and members of sexual/gender minorities.[1] Growing evidence further suggests that the greater the level of gender inequality in a country, the higher the chances of conflict.[2] Yet, to ensure gender equality and sustainability in peacebuilding; a country's public institutions and social services – such as education – cannot be detached from how rigid gender roles and persistent power dynamics are culturally, socially, politically and economically perpetuated and reproduced.[3] It is exactly at this juncture of norm-promotion within and through institutional regulation where the Ugandan case offers an interesting puzzle: Even though the country is not short of policies and legislative acts promoting gender inclusiveness, women continue to be

significantly disadvantaged and marginalized in political, economic and social everyay life. To give an example, according to the latest data from the Afrobarometer[4] 34.8 % of male respondents strongly agree (26.4 %) or agree (6.4 %) with the statement that men make better poltical leaders than women and should be elected rather than women, compared to 16.9 % of female respondents. More broadly, the OECD Genderindex[5], highlights the discrepancy between opinons about gender equality and practical actions in everyday life and discriminatory social behaviour is still widespread within communities and insitutions at large.

According to an evaluation report on gender inequality in Uganda[6], there are two main reasons as to why women lack political and social agency: First, Ugandan women continue to face several socio-cultural and economic constraints that are deeply rooted in societal values and norm setting.[7] Second, low education levels hinder women from overcoming these structural barriers. With regards to the former, women suffer especially from unequal land rights and management, restricted access to justice and continued sexual and domestic violence. As for the latter, Uganda made only mixed-progress towards gender equality in education. For instance, while parity in primary education is almost achieved, gender gaps widen significantly in secondary and tertiary school.[8]

In the course of our research we further encountered, that these aspects – low education levels and structural barriers - are most prevalent in Uganda's conflict affected regions spanning from West-Nile, to Acholi and Karamoja. It is against this backdrop, that we explore the ternary relation between education, peacebuilding and gender in Uganda. Concretely, we question *how and to what extent the country's macro education policies and initiatives address gender dimensions to promote sustainable peacebuilding?*

We commence our paper with a short theoretical overview on the interplay of gender, education and peacebuilding. In briefly delineating different forms of gender-based violence in and through education in a post-conflict context, we explain why we will make use of a socio-historical approach in the remainder of our analysis. This is followed by a method section, after which follows a discussion on how regional conflicts in Uganda fortified certain gender dynamics and the role education played therein. We then shift our focus on how gender has been addressed in the education sector in the country's peacebuilding processes. Concretely, we pay attention to: education access, direct forms of violence in schools,

education sector plans and policies, national curriculum initiatives, the role of teachers and teacher training, specific strategies for girls education. Drawing on a discursive analysis we arrive at the conclusion that within all initiatives under our review, there is no critical and socio-historical approach to gender, peacebuilding, and a clear conceptualisation of the role of education therein. We showcase how education is not perceived within current initiatives as a tool towards sustainable processes of social justice in relation to the political and social agency of women and men in a (post-) conflict context. Furthermore, in addressing gender in education and peacebuilding policies, we found that strong emphasis is placed on indirect and direct forms of violence, thereby sidelining alienating and repressive forms of violence. This not only has a depoliticizing effect on a society as a whole, but also decreases representation and voice in the country's peacebuilding process. Such developments are also fortified by a tendency to dismiss the socio-historical evolution of gendered behaviour and norms within policy rhetoric, school curricula, textbooks and general public debate.

Gender as an entry point for peacebuilding through education

Our analysis is based on a specific understanding of peacebuilding and education and consequently, how and why we perceive both as closely intertwined. We embrace a conceptualization that focuses on the necessary core transformations in order for conflict-affected societies to move towards sustainable peace. As such we understand peacebuilding in Galtung's terms - a transition from negative peace (absence of direct forms of violence) to positive peace (absence of any structural, repressive or aleniating forms of violence), and consequently intertwined with a broader development agenda. [9] Peacebuilding is therefore a process encompassing a variety of institutional and socioeconomic transformations, from the local to the national level, aimed at ensuring social justice, equal opportunity and human security. In this light, peacebuilding is a long-term activity, which, in an ideal case, leads to sustainable and long-lasting development. This is in line with a range of contemporary theories of war and conflict [10], which see horizontal and vertical inequalities as drivers of conflict or barriers towards sustainable peace. Addressing these inequalities and structural barriers, in their different economic, cultural and political dimensions, supports the promotion of social cohesion, whereby trust, solidarity, and a sense of collectivity and common purpose within and between groups are strengthened. Needless to add that educational inistutions, settings and governance plays an important part in these processes. [11]

Against this backdrop, we found that various initiatives have recognized the need for gender-sensitive and gender-transformative approaches in education and peacebuilding. [12] This includes supportive curricula, attraction of more women to the teaching profession[13], or using educational insitutions as plattfomrs to encourage positive views of femininities and masculinities[14] – to name but a few. A recent literature review on (formal and non-formal) education initiatives for youth[15], found it also crucial for such initiatives to avoid and question binary representations of girls-as-victims and boys-as-perpetrators in situations of conflict.[16] Such binaries may reinforce and limit girls and boys to reductive or stereotypical roles of what is considered to be feminine and masculine. For instance, in relation to girls' sexuality, Hayhurst (2013) analysis of a programme in Uganda for empowerment through sports, concluded that while the programme did promote forms of empowerment, it also (unintentionally) reinforced stereotypical notions of femininity and masculinity. In addition, direct forms of gender based (sexual) violence are prevalent in schools all over the world. Sadly, in conflict-affected Northern Uganda gender based violence in schools seems to be highly tolerated and normalized[17], often perpetuated by teachers.[18] Hence, it is questionable how education could be used as a positive force for transformation of gender regimes and the promotion of equitable norms, recognizing the various forms of violence, including gender based violence, that are present in schools.

More generally, there is a growing recognition for the need of a critical approach to the gender dimensions of violence in education. [19] As Novelli and Lopes Cardozo (2008) highlight, education in a peacebuilding context is surrounded by various visible and invisible forms of violence perpetuated within and through education.[20] Building on their work, we further argue that, gender is an important entry point for addressing disparities, exclusion, direct and indirect forms of violence and thus conflict.[21] Because gender relations always intersect with economic status, ethnicity, culture, religion, etc., it allows us to question existing structures, systems and institutions, the interplay of power in these, and consequently gendered norms and binary assumptions.[22] In placing this into the context of education, we broadly categorize the various forms of gender-based violence in peacebuilding settings as follows:

Table 1: Types of gender-based violence in education in conflict-affected environments	
Types of violence	**Examples of how Gender, Education and Peacebuilding may interact**
Direct violence	E.g.: Gender-based violence in schools, abduction of specifically girls or boys in schools (due to conflict , recruitment, and/or as a form of terrorism),
Indirect violence	E.g.: Unqual access to education (due to conflict or post-conflict reconstruction), unequal opportunities , or lack of gender sensitive infrastructure
Repressive violence	E.g.: Underpresentation (due to gender) in important decision making processes affecting the education sector in the post-conflict phase
Alienating violence	E.g.: Gendered norm promotion that leads to discrimination of either sex (curricula, teaching methods, etc.), absence of critical reflection on social truth in educational settings
Adapted from: Novelli and Lopes Cardozo, "Conflict, Education and the Global South: New Critical Directions"; Salmi, "Violence, Democracy, and Education : An Analytical Framework."	

Admittably, Table 1 above is far from being complete. For this paper, its purpose is simply to delineate the complexity of gender-based violence in peacebuilding processes within and through education. As it will become more evident in our ensuing analysis, Table 1 also helps us to further strengthen the argument that the sheer focus on direct and indirect forms of violence is not enough to foster a positive gendered norm model through education. Gender, as a historically situated social construct, deserves to be questioned and constantly re-negotiated, if the aim is to also target repressive and aleniating forms of violence.

A socio-historical approach to gender, peacebuilding and education

As much as 'women' have generally become conflated with 'gender', access ratios to schooling seem to be equally so an unquestioned measure of gender equality. While surely ratios are to some extent indicative of gender in/exclusive practices and tendencies in various contexts, they only paint part of the picture. Moreover, increased representation of women in education does not necessarily mean greater gender equality and egalitarian notions of citizenship. Paradoxically, in some instances women's ability to influence policy may even decrease despite higher levels of participation, depending on political contexts.[23] Secondly, statistics on gender parity and equal ratios in education are only able to reveal part of the

historical, socio-cultural and geopolitical processes that have constructed gender relations in its current form.[24]

By contrast, a socio-historical approach to gender, conflict and education recognizes how history of state formation (such as for instance colonialism) and the (violently) reshaping of the gender order has further strengthened deeply-rooted patriarchal systems.[25] Consequently, contemporary forms of dependency and Western imperialism continue to have impact on societies gender regimes.[26] Governments in post-colonial environments are under various pressures from donor agencies and international communities which is among the main reasons why gender initiatives are easily adopted, often arbitrarily employed in policies and programmes lacking contextualisation for meaningful gender transformation.[27] As a result, forms of direct and indirect gender violence are more easily targeted and addressed but engagement with more deeply rooted repressive and alienating fomrs of gender violence are more challenging to address.

Given this contentious history of education and colonization, 'development' efforts based on modernization models as well as the fragmented promotion of gender equality is highly problematic on its own. It narrows gender down to the 'personal' or the 'private', ignoring the 'political' or 'public' nature of gender. The side-lining of how gender emerged as a social construct over history and time in school curricula or textbooks can arguably have a depoliticizing effect on the society in question. Differently put, educational interventions by means of an 'adding women and stir' approach to enhance access and outcomes, are gaining international popularity because of its pragmatic nature, yet fail to critically question the historical evolution of structural forms of power domination, or transforming institutions.[28] This is unfortunate, as education can serve as a poweful tool to facilitate re-negotiation of social and political agency of women and men alike, if the risks, challenges, and uncontested nature of education are equally addressed and questioned.[29]

Methods

To analyse how and to what extent Uganda's macro education policies and initiatives address gender dimensions to promote sustainable peacebuilding, we build on a multi-track data collection strategy and policy document analysis. Data collection involved focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews with government officials, teachers, youth, civil

society organizations, academics and other stakeholders. Research took place in a variety of sites in the country from January – April 2015 and again from Feburary – May 2017 in Uganda.[30] Data collection comprised rural and urban environments and diverse geographical regions, namely Kampala, Gulu, Adjumani and Karamoja. The research involved in total 89 interviews and 13 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The latter were held with student teachers and various youth in four regions of the country. These interviews and FGDs were conducted on the overall theme of education, peacebuilding and citizenship in Uganda – with gender as a 'cross-cutting' theme.[31] In some instances interviews solely revolved around the theme gender, education and peacebuilding – in other instances a few questions were asked in addition to other topics. For confidentiality reasons, we will not reveal the identity of our interviewees but refer to their professional background and institutional affiliation. We synthesise general findings from all interviews and FGDs and selectively refer to specific interviewees as listed in the reference section (see Appendix 1 for a full list of interviewees that are used for the purpose of this article).

In addition, we conducted an extensive review of policy documents and government initiatives, concretely: education sector plans; the country's ministerial statement; Uganda's formal school curricula; and two recently introduced mechanisms: the National Strategy for Girls' Education (NSGE), as well as the newly launched Teacher Handbook and Manual on Gender, Education and Peacebuilding in Uganda. Evaluation reports and education statistical abstracts inform the study's analysis.

Uganda's history of state formation from a gender perspective

As in most countries, the status of women in Uganda was traditionally seen as being subordinate to those of men. With that said, it is important to acknowledge that during pre-colonial times, traditional societies (that would later become part of what is known today as Uganda) attributed women with some important economic and social responsibilities. Prior to British occupation, women were considered by many ethnic groups as "sacred custodians next to God regarding life".[32] This perception of women was severely distorted in the course of colonial rule and the increasing number of conflicts throughout the country. For instance, forced recruitments of men and ethnic wars in the sub-region of Karamoja required women to provide for their households and take on many additional responsibilities that were initially the duties of men - such as fetching water, farming or collecting wood.[33] Overall, the forceful

implementation of Christianity also produced a new form of patriarchy, giving men and women new roles and identities throughout Uganda.

Uganda's history of British administration had its first roots in 1877 with the arrival of the British Missionary Society in the traditional kingdom Buganda, which would later become the centre of the Protectorate. There is widespread consensus in the literature, that the policies of the British Protectorate (formally established in 1894) impacted Uganda's history of state formation and fuelled ethnic, religious and regional divisions that implicitly or explicitly contributed to instability and political violence in later years. [34] This also included an importation and appropriation of 'gendered norms' as they emerged during the 19th century British Victorian period – fortifying the establishment of separate spheres among women and men.

Uganda was ultimately given internal self-government in 1958 and the country became independent in 1962. In the decades to follow, the new-born state endured a military coup ensued by a brutal military dictatorship which ended in 1979, disputed elections in 1980 and a five-year war that brought current President Yoweri Museveni to power in 1986. Since then, Uganda has experienced at least seven civil wars, located mostly in the northern regions. More than 20 militant groups have thus far attempted to displace President Museveni's government both within and beyond the Ugandan borders. External diplomatic incidents and/or armed incursions occurred with Rwanda, (South) Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Somalia. Probably the most prominently debated conflict in the media, but also in scholarship and policy practice, is the civil war in the north against Joseph Kony's LRA (Lord Resistance Army) since the 1990s. War and conflict in the Northern regions affected men, women,boys and girls in various ways. As far as direct violence against women is concernec, this was excercised by rebel groups and government troops in the form of rape, forced marriages or forceful recruitment to fight in the war.[35] Women who were not abducted suffered from the lack of economic opportunities and the erosion of infrastructure and access to public services such as health-care and education. On the other hand, women were also instrumental to bring peace into the region and participated in peace talks or launched campaigns to raise awareness about the atrocities they have suffered.[36] Not many of their efforts are widely and publicly acknowledged in Uganda, however.[37]

Between 1987-2007 Uganda resembled a "war with peace" model, suggesting that the government in power embraced the antagonisms of conflict (in the north) alongside peaceful coexistence and development (in the south), in one country at the same time.[38] Whereas southern Uganda emerged as a showpiece for Western donors to highlight remarkable successes in combating gender inequality, HIV/AIDS rates, or fostering economic growth and development, conversely, northern Uganda's developmental progress has been challenged by two decades of war and also greater discrimination for women.[39] In 2017, Uganda still ranks 23rd amongst the world's most fragile states.[40] Regional instability within the country persists, driven by factors such as: economic disparities and unequal distribution of wealth, resource competition, land-disputes, cattle riding, poor governance and democratic deficits, human rights abuses and erosion of civil liberties, lack of truth, reconciliation and transitional justice, the politicisation of ethnic identity, corruption and tensions between cultural institutions and the government.[41] The ensuing sections illustrate that all these drivers of conflict did and still do have different effects on women and men - notwithstanding the introduction of several policy instruments to enhance gender equality at the national, regional and local levels.

Gender policy environment during and after Uganda's conflicts

Shortly after President Museveni seized power in 1986, Uganda established a Gender National Machinery, currently the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) since 1989. Under the MGSLD, the National Gender Policy was developed in 1997, and updated in 2007. Many of the gender-related policies focus on the role and status of women in Uganda. The Act has provided guidance for nationwide gender mainstreaming across key sector Ministries through various programmes over the years.[42] The political leeway for women was also significantly widened in 1995, with the recognition of equality of men and women in the Uganda Constitution. Since then the number of women in the Uganda parliament increased steadily from 18 % in 2000 to 35 % in 2015.[43] In order to further promote and protect women's rights, the parliament passed several landmark laws, namely: the law on Domestic Violence (2010), the Domestic Violence regulations (2011), the anti-Female Genital Mutilation Act (2010), and the anti-human trafficking law (2009). In addition, At the local level, *The Local Government Act* 1997 provided for 1/3 affirmative action for women's representation at various local government structures, aiming at strengthening women's participation in decision making across the country. As noted earlier,

women's participation at lower government levels has not been effective however, due to low education levels and socio-cultural and economic constraints[44] Both are particularly prevalent in Uganda's conflict affected regions spanning from West-Nile, to Acholi and Karamoja. The subsequent section elaborates on how these regional conflicts in Uganda fortified certain gender dynamics and the role education played therein.

Gender, education and peacebuilding in Uganda

As in many other conflict-affected countries, education in Uganda was initially seen as an essential ingredient for economic and social development. [45] Only since recently, a few policies started to embrace at least to some extent, the integration of peacebuilding aspects into the education sector. [46] Lately, the MoESTS also launched some programmes and initiatives to promote gender equality within and through education in Uganda's peacebuilding process. By drawing on data obtained from expert interviews and FGDs as well as an extensive review of policy documents we delineate these efforts, - which are frequently designed in collaboration with aid agencies, external consultants or international NGOs. Policies and documents included in this review are: education sector plans; the country's ministerial statement; Uganda's formal school curricula; and two recently introduced mechanisms: the National Strategy for Girls' Education (NSGE), as well as the newly launched Teacher Handbook and Manual on Gender, Education and Peacebuilding in Uganda. These documents inform our ensuing analysis on access to education, direct forms of violence in schools, education sector plans and policies, national curriculum initiatives, the role of teachers and teacher training, specific strategies for girls education, gender based violence in schools, and lastly issues of masculinity.

Education access

In 2015 Uganda's literacy rate was 73.9% (80.8% male and 66.9% female, a gender difference of 14%). The latest statistical abstract from the Ministry of Education Sports Technology and Science (MoESTS) further highlights that there is almost gender parity in provision for primary education: 58% of females and 59% of males have attained some primary education. According to the UNESCO 75.49 % of girls and 74.83 % of boys drop out in primary school. In lower secondary it is 40,7% women and 40.4% men who do not complete school.[47] While drop-out rates used to be much higher among girls (mainly because

of early pregnancy or marriage), during conversations with the MoESTS it was noted that this trend has now changed (as shown in the statstics above) and boys are equally at risk of dropping out of schools.[48] One of the main reasons for early school dropout is poverty and the responsibility of children to contribute to household duties and income in any way they can.[49]

Despite near gender parity in primary education at the national level, the situation changes significantly for females in conflict-affected regions located in the North and North/East of the country. Acholi has the highest gender imbalance with 64% male and 36% female students enrolled, followed by West-Nile with 63% male and 37% females and Karamoja region with 58% male and 42% female.[50] All three regions were affected by the conflict against the LRA and remain in close proximity to the on-going instability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), South Sudan and Central African Republic (CAR). Besides, a survey that was conducted during the war in northern Uganda, also found that one in five female youth have received no education at all, and only one in three were functionally literate.[51]

Direct forms of violence in schools

Education continues to be in the main viewed as an inherently positive tool to promote gender equality. However, gender based violence in schools seems to be highly tolerated if not normalized, thereby frequently perpetuated by teachers.[52] No nationwide, rigorous and representative prevalence data exist for the case of Uganda, yet it is estimated that 74.3% to 80% of children have experienced physical punishments such as caning and slapping by adults or teachers in school. It was also found that 77.7% of interviewed primary school children, and 82% of secondary school children have been sexually abused at school [1].[53] Teachers were repeatedly reported to be the major perpetrators of abuse (68% of children indicated they were sexually harassed by male teachers) followed by peers. Notably, boys and girls are at equal risk of experiencing violence or sexual abuse in schools. Of the participants in the sample study, 40% of girls and 39% of boys reported sexual abuse.[54]

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[1] Sexual abuse in this study was defined as sexual contact with a child such as sexual touching and fondling, kissing, and penetrative sex or defilement; as well as engaging a child in other sexual behavior that she or he does not comprehend or give consent to, such as indecent exposure of sexual objects, engaging in sex in front of a child, encouraging children to engage in prostitution, or sharing pornography with a child (UNICEF, 2013, p.2)

Most attention is usually given to violence against girls. However, a recent study found that violence against boys in schools increased low self-esteem or aggressive behaviour among males and perpetuated ideas and practices that 'valorise toughness and strength, and dominance and control over women, including dominant ideas of male sexual entitlement and use of violence against women'. [55] There is clearly a striking lack of research (and consequently open debates) on why more male teachers but also male pupils tend to display violent behaviour in the first place. Furthermore, the impact of violence in education on masculinity should not remain unaddressed. Only when the root causes of these patterns of behaviour among males are subject to debate can peacebuilding through gender and education be achieved. Furthermore, the heteronormative messages in schooling and its negative effects for sexual minorities cannot be underestimated. [56]

Education sector plans and policies

Uganda's 1992 Government White Paper laid the groundwork for the country's Education Sector Strategic Plan 2004-15 (ESSP), the Revised Education Sector Strategic Plan 2007-2015 (RESSP) and a Ministerial Statement from 2012-13. Notably, Uganda's ESSP (2004-2015) is the country's first policy document acknowledging the importance of a 'cessation of internal hostiles' for education. In this regard, strong emphasis is placed on education as a means towards economic growth and eradication of poverty to promote nationwide stability. This approach was accompanied by a clear commitment to remove gender disparity in education. Gender disparity, disadvantage and special educational needs are seen largely through the lens of providing greater educational opportunity, skills acquisition and economic progress. As such, education is mostly viewed as a 'technical tool' for development, and situated in a context of economic growth, governed by various NGOs and international actors.

Analysing these documents, we found that in the ESSP no direct link is made between the root causes of regional and ethnic conflict – not to mention the various gender-dimensions therein. Issues of disadvantaged youth (and the particular challenges of female and male youth) received limited attention but are referenced with regard to providing greater variation in post primary education promoting the Business Technical Vocational Education Training (BTVET) programme. The ESSP makes also mention of 'cross-cutting themes' which include girls' education. However, no mention towards a peacebuilding dimension is made,

though an appendix refers to 'children living in areas of conflict' as part of the social disadvantage agenda, which intersects with gender-based disadvantages.

The subsequent RESSP (2007-2015) was substantially revised and re-echoes the need to deal with gender inequalities, particularly, addressing barriers to girls' education. At the same time the plan points out that near parity was already achieved by 2005 in primary schools (though regional differences as outlined above were acknowledged), but that at public secondary schools the gap has actually widened. Generally, when reference is made to disadvantaged youth and gender disparity these are more consistently associated with conflict regions. For instance, in relation to gender equity the MoESTS is expected to 'continue applying the policy of affirmative action especially in the civil war ravaged area of northern Uganda.' Overall, aspects of policy related to peacebuilding feature more frequently both implicitly and explicitly in the RESSP (2007-215). Implicitly, curriculum reform, critical thinking, citizenship education and effective democratic practice are connected. Explicitly, though inconsistent, 'peace education' and 'refugee education' appear within the cross-cutting themes. Further, there is a commitment to support civil society work in conflict regions. However, an explicit gender perspective seems to be absent from all of these strategies. The Ministerial Statement, perceives 'improved and equitable access to education' as one of its top priorities.[57] A notable addition is paid to the needs of youth, though no direct correlation between gender, peacebuilding and the lack of opportunities for youth is made. During interviews with MoESTS staff, it was mainly emphasised how enrolment rates of girls successfully increased over the past two decades, yet the resources to accommodate a much higher number of students are still scarce. The role of education as a tool to re-negotiate gendered norms towards social transformation was neither mentioned nor a recurring theme during interviews.

National curriculum initaitves

In February 2007 a new national thematic curriculum was introduced to Ugandan primary schools. This was a response to failing standards at primary level despite the progress made in extending access to schooling – also in regard to gender parity in numbers. Within the new curriculum both 'peace and security' and 'culture and gender in our sub-county division' are now cross-cutting themes in the lower primary school curriculum (P1- P3).[58] In upper primary (P4-P6) and secondary education, the peace dimension is mainly found in the Social

Studies component and cross cutting themes such as life skills. Our analysis of the curriculum revealed that, peace as a theme in schools is generally embraced as a tool of conflict prevention or conflict resolution at individual, group or communal level.[59] Concretely, past and present drivers of conflict in various regions of Uganda are not addressed. This may change in the years to come with a new social studies area syllabus for lower and upper secondary but its implementation continues to be postponed at least until 2020.[60] This finding was additionally strengthened by the responses of several interviewees who felt that the way in which history is taught in schools is not always objective and lacks critical reflection. For instance, one respondent from Gulu University mentioned how the history curriculum is not gender sensitive: 'it emphasises male heroes, not great women. It is always men, men, men'. The respondent further mentioned how the current curriculum was influenced by desires to get foreign support, 'to please the donor', but lacks vision and does not meet the needs of the society. Although human rights and peace education is increasingly becoming an integral part of formal and non-formal education, it is not seen as a pedagogical mechanism to come to terms with past and/or present conflicts, social grievances or injustices, and does not mention the role of gender therein. During interviews with the NCDC and the MoESTS it was argued that the peacebuilding element (and indirectly also emphasis on gender) in the Ugandan curriculum is encompassed within the curriculum's overarching aim to produce good citizens, without specifying what a 'good' citizen means and entails. The NCDC futher explained that within the curriculum strong emphasis is placed on issues of inclusiveness and non-discrimination through teaching and class room set up.

Against this backdrop, we argue that silencing the gender dynamics in history curriculum with a strong focus on male narratives and heroes, contradicts discourses of women as peacebuilders and limits the political and social agency of young women. It represents an alienating form of (gender) violence through gendered norm promotion that lacks critical reflection on the socio-historical evolution of current gender relations.

The role of teachers and teacher training

When we asked teachers how they promote peaceful coexistence in their own teaching, they responded:[61]

- We were trained to give at least one life skill advice in every lesson you teach, at times this relates to peacebuilding as well;

- We sometimes organise sporting activities to promote companionship;

- We encourage or in some instances initiate the formation of peace, environmental or sporting clubs, where everyone is welcome to become a member. These children then become a group so peace and unity is achieved.

Overall, teaching practices of the new curriculum tend to revolve around inter-communal activities aiming at nurturing relations with the 'other' without engaging in any critical reflection on Uganda's conflicts and peacebuilding process. This is fortied by resource, capacity and infrastructure challnges hindering the development of innovative and creative teachers capable of becoming agents of peacebuilding.[62] Besides, a socio-historical approach of how gendered norms and structures emerged, how it further affected women and men during conflict and peacebuilding is also absent from teaching practices and curricula content.[63] Initiatives are currently underway to engage in a curriculum review and how gender is addressed therein.[64] However, some of our interviewees felt that the majority of teachers do currently not have the necessary training, resources and skills to engage students in a critical relfection on the emergence of gendered norms and its effects on the peacebuilding process as a whole.[65]

Notably, one of the most recent efforts by the MoESTS (in collaboration with UNICEF) includes a Teacher Handbook on "Gender, Conflict and Peacebuilding", published in July 2015.[66] The objective of the handbook is to train 1000 primary teachers nationwide in order to: overcome gender biases; engage in social norm questioning; create awareness of norms related to gender equality; build skills to engage pupils in constructive dialogue; and provide teachers with materials to foster a shift in gender related attitudes and beliefs to promote behaviours in the classroom. It has to be mentioned that at the time of writing trainings were either about to start or not yet in progress. In comparison to other instruments, our analysis finds that the handbook does promote for the first time positive notions of masculinity and femininity, and mentions historical and social dimensions of gender. Moreover, it encourages the teacher to facilitate discussion on stereotypical information on

girls and boys that is recognised to be present in current text books. However, it lacks guidelines on how this is signitifant to peacebuilding efforts. Then again, gender is discussed only in relation to differences between boys and girls, which reproduces binaries or stereotypes, and does not embrace issues such as sexual minorities and heteronormativity. In part, reasons can be found in Uganda's restrictive political environment accompanied by punitive legislation against LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) rights, which again may promote compulsory heterosexuality. Furthermore, while the teacher manual encourages teachers to reflect on gender stereotypical information in text books, if no changes are made to gender- or conflict-biased information in text books of other subjects, there might be little space for sustainable improvements.

In relation to peacebuilding, we found that, gender in education is once again embraced as a tool towards conflict prevention and improved learning outcomes, but not as a mechanism to address how social injustices emerged in the first place. While this may be admittedly a difficult task to undertake in lower primary, it would be yet of significance in upper primary.

Specific strategies for girls education

Recently the MoESTS launched a National Strategy for Girls Education (NSGE) 2015-1. The NSGE is a new mechanism by the MoESTS, showcasing that the sector has further committed itself to mainstreaming gender in education as a cross cutting issue.[67] The NSGE is a result of a Gender in Education Policy (GEP) aiming at promoting girls' education, creating gender responsive school environment, constructing separate sanitary facilities for boys and girls, promoting sex education, and recruiting of teachers - particularly females as role models for young girls.[68] Notably, neither the GEP (2009) nor the NSGE (2015-19) perceive Uganda as a post-conflict country that not only finds itself in the midst of a peacebuilding process but also continues to face several regional instabilities. The country's complex political situation is reduced to one out of seven guiding principles for the implementation of the NSGE, which states that[69]:

> Girls are not a homogenous category. Girls' education vulnerability worsens in specific situations such as of disability, orphanhood and residence in hard-to-reach areas, post conflict situations and in specific production systems such as pastoralism and plantation agriculture, hence requiring targeted intervention.

Apart from this short reference, the NSGE leaves many important aspects that concern gender and education in Uganda unaddressed. First, neither attention is given to the many specific challenges for males and females in a country that has been shattered by conflict and regional instabilities, nor to the role education should play therein. It is particularly striking that little reference is made to the high prevalence of gender-based violence in schools and the role of teachers therein. In fact, in relation to gender-based violence, considered by the NSGE as 'a persistent challenge education for girls', the NSGE explains:

> "Gender based violence (…) impacts on girls schooling by debasing their human dignity and self-esteem thus affecting the quality of girls' education participation and outcomes. Men's abuse of power puts girls at risk in the home, community and school. Gender based violence require concerted efforts and a combination of legislation and law enforcement with mass conscietisation."

However, the remaining of the document lacks analysis, insight, or a response to how dominant understandings of masculinities, feminities and causes of gender-based violence, are related to peacebuilding and structural violence more broadly. Following from this, Ugandan males are solely portrayed as the perpetuators of violence, reinforcing stereotypical beliefs and missing an opportunity to address root causes of violence. In other words, both the NSGE as well as the NGE fail to acknowledge the multiple conflict roles and experiences of men and women as both survivors and perpetrators of violence, or as change agents, and how their gender intersects with other sociocultural identities.[70]

Discussion: Adressing gender dimensions in peacebuilding education

Uganda promotes girls' education in areas of policy, strategic partnerships and actual translation of interventions to impact equal access, enrolment, retention and completion rates. The country's NSGE clearly plays an important role in this process. Recently, new pilot initiatives (such as the teacher training handbook) and macro-initiatives started to relate gender and education also to aspects of peacebuilding. Within all initiatives under our analysis, the triennial relationship of education, gender and peacebuilding continues to be mainly seen as a driver for modernisation and economic growth (thus overcoming direct and indirect forms of violence) but not so much as a tool to overcome deeply historically rooted structural barriers and gender stereotypes for women and men alike (repressive or aleniating forms of violence). Gender initiatives in the country seem to have started as an 'add women

and stir approach', thereby fortifying an 'add another policy and stir' approach in relation to gender – and recently also peacebuilding. In this process, policies appear to meet the standards of the international community as set out in the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) or SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). Yet according to our analysis, they fail to address root causes of structural inequalities in Ugandan society. Perhaps partly due to this pressure of international norm setting from donors and agencies to inform Uganda's policy-environment on issues such as gender, much of the rationale fails to link to realities of most Ugandans. Therefore, we have argued in this paper that a socio-historical approach to gender could complement a critical approach to education and conflict.[71] In the scope of our analysis, we found that other possibly relevant fields of policy-making and macro-level initiatives, such as (sexual and reproductive) health and/or women's organisations[72] seem to be largely excluded and disconnected from the field of education and peacebuilding. However, further research is required in this regard.

In relation to the above, another reason why most education interventions hardly take into account the socio-historical evolution of gendered norms, stems from a general fear to generate new tensions if not revive former divisions.[73] As a consequence of this fear – which also relates to political control and elite domination - a large majority of the population is currently deprived of a social truth that embraces multiple narratives, experiences and viewpoints about the past. Such a social truth would, however, ultimately shape, if not alter Uganda's cultural, social and gendered identity. The absence of multiple interpretations (and critical reflection) of Uganda's past and how gendered roles evolved affects social transformation in the longer term. It constitutes repressive and alienating forms of violence in impeding access to knowledge about the political and socio-historical evolution of the status quo. As a result, stifling of public discussion in the education sector on the various societal interpretations of a conflict (and consequently gender) inevitably depoliticizes the transition process in question. Though, if schools ought to be the birthplace of a flourishing civil society[74], silencing how norms evolved over history and time hampers the nature of political activism, agency and voice stemming from female and male learners.

Besides, while it is important to recognize the often-marginal position of females in a conflict-affected society, issues of masculinity seem to be absent from policies and public discourse. If at all they are discussed, more often than not it falls back to topics of equal access ratios and the benefits of gender equality in relation to development and economic

growth. Similarly, hardly any attention is given to how the conflict and peacebuilding process in the country has a different impact on both males and females and the emergence of 'gendered' binaries such as victim and perpetuator. During and after the war, Uganda's high incidences of violence in private as well as public life were generally related to males as the typical offenders. Hence, a more critical approach to gender, masculinity in particular, and its relation to violence should be translated into policy initiatives to better address such issues. In this regard, more research is necessary on norms of violence, how they are socially engineered, the root causes of different types of violence – including, neglected forms of violence perpetrated by women and compulsory heterosexuality. In the same vein, issues in relation to gender/sexual minorities, in particular LGTB rights in Uganda, should be better researched in relation to discussions of gender and peacebuilding in the country, however difficult due to its controversial nature.

All the same, school curricula can be a powerful mechanism in conveying and instilling messages about what are expected behaviours of girls and boys. In this regard, our analysis found that there is a tendency to embrace gender stereotypical messages in relationship to education and peacebuilding, instead of questioning binary assumptions, existing structures, systems and institutions, and the interplay of power in these. in part this can be explained by the fact that persistent forms of gender based violence still need to be better researched, understood and addressed.

Lastly, and building on the previous point, discussions on the limitations of appropriating a western-style educational model to non-western contexts and gendered-norms, history, culture, conflicts and everyday realities can no longer be avoided. Uganda's present gendered norms and structures got distorted during colonial rule only to be 'modernised' and 'corrected' during subsequent post-colonial peacebuilding and development processes. This of course, extends to several other countries in the sub-Saharan African region. Importantly, the complexity of pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial times tends to be disregarded within policy documents yet should be part of the debate when it concerns initiatives on gender, education and peacebuilding.

Conclusion

To conclude, by drawing on the illustrative case study of Uganda, we have shown, that gender discussions in relation to education and peacebuilding hardly go beyond statistical

representations of gender equality. However, sheer gender parity in education, we argue, does not necessarily increase the agency of women and men in Uganda's peacebuilding process. This 'just add women and stir' approach reproduces the understanding of gender as a binary between men and women and does not allow to contextualize or paint the full picture of intersecting factors that produce inequalities. Instead, attention needs to be paid to how gender identities, power and processes at all levels are socially and historically constructed and need to be questioned in order to transform social contexts and processes of exclusion.[75] These are inevitably linked to socio-historical dimensions, particularly in post-colonial contexts.[76] Thus, to further build on a critical approach to the role of education in conflict, we argue a discussion of gender and the socio-historical processes underpinning current gender relations can provide an important entry point in better understanding repressive and alienating forms of violence[77]. However, ignoring socio-historical aspects and the political nature of gender struggles tends to be the trend in dominating targets of for instance gender equal ratios in schools. These may do more harm than good and exacerbate tensions rather than reconcile them as is much needed in post-conflict societies.

Appendix

List of interviews quoted in the paper

- Professor, Makerere Univeristy, School of Education, interview held 25 April 2017
- Women's Advocacy Network Platform, interview held 21 April 2017
- Local district offical for Moroto, Karamoja, interview held 16 March 2015
- National Curriculum Development Centre, Kampala, interview held 2 March 2015
- National Curriculum Development Centre, group interview with curriculum development staff, interviews held 2 March 2015 and 27 April 2017
- Ministry of Education Science and Technology, Primary Teacher Education Section, Kampala, interview held 23 February 2015.
- Ministry of Education Science and Technology, Policy and Planning Section, Kampala, interview held 31 March 2015
- Ministry of Education Science and Technology, Special Needs and Non-formal Education, Kampala, interview held 02 April 2015
- Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Project (JPR), Gulu, interview held 13 February 2015
- Refugee Teacher, AYILO-A settlement primary school, Adjumani, interview held 13 March 2015

- Teacher, AYILO-A settlement primary school, Adjumani, interview held 13 March 2015

- School Inspector for the Adjumani District – 80 primary schools, 20 secondary schools, Adjumani, interview held 18 February 2015

- Lecturer, Gulu University, Faculty of Humanities and Educaiton, interview held 23 Septmber 2016

Focus Group Discussions held on 16.02.2015

Theme: education and livelihood initiatives and agency for youth

FGD 1 (10 participants, 8 female, 2 male), Age: 18-34 years

FGD 2 (10 participants, 8 female, 2 male), Age: 18-34 years

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[1] Myrttinen et. al.: "Re-Thinking Gender in Peacebuilding.," 2014

[2] Hudson et al., *Sex & World Peace* 2014

[3] UNICEF and Learning for Peace, "Gender, Education and Peacebuilding Brief" 2016

[4] See: http://www.afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis/analyse-online, accessed 17.01.2017

[5] See: http://www.genderindex.org/uganda-country-study, accessed 17.01.2017

[6] Coffey International Development, "Gender Equality in Uganda: A Situation Analysis and Scoping Report for the Gender Development Partners Group. Commissioned by DFID and Irish Aid."

[7] See also: OECD, "Uganda SIGI Country Report. Social Institutions & Gender Index."

[8] MoESTS Uganda, "Educational Statistical Abstract."

[9] Galtung, "An Editorial"; Galtung, *Peace, War and Defense*.

[10] Stewart, *Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict*; Cramer, "Civil War Is Not a Stupid Thing. Accounting for Violence in Developing Countries."

[11] See for instance: Bush and Saltarelli, "The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict. Towards a Peacebuilding for Children."; Smith, "Contemporary Challenges for Education in Conflict Affected Countries"; Novelli and Lopes Cardozo, "Conflict, Education and the Global South: New Critical Directions"; Smith, Datzberger, and McCully, "The Integration of Education and Peacebuilding. Synthesis Report on Findings from Myanmar, Pakistan, South Africa and Uganda. UNICEF-PBEA. Research Consoritum on Educaiton and Peacebuilding."

[12] UNICEF and Learning for Peace, "Gender, Education and Peacebuilding Brief" 2016; El-Bushra and Rees Smith, "Gender, Education and Peacebuilding. 2016

[13] Dunne, "Gender as an Entry Point 2009; Kirk, "Promoting a Gender-Just Peace" 2004.

[14] UNICEF "Gender, Education and Peacebuilding Brief," 2016.

[15] Mieke T.A. Lopes Cardozo et al., "Literature Review: Youth Agency, Peacebuilding and Education 2015.

[16] Becker, "Girls in Fragile Context," 2012; McKay, "Reconstructing Fragile Lives" 2004, Pruitt, 'Fixing the Girls' 2013 as quoted in: Mieke T. A. Lopes Cardozo et al., "Literature Review: Youth Agency, Peacebuilding and Education" 2015

[17] Porter, "Say no to bad touches," 2015

[18] UNICEF, "Research Briefing: Assessing Child Protection" 2013, Mirembe and Davies, "Is Schooling a Risk?" 2001

[19] Confortini, "Galtung, Violence, and Gender," 2006; Kolawole, "Re-Conceptualizing African Gender Theory,"2004; Maclure and Denov, "Post-war education and the struggle for gender equity in Sierra Leone," 2009

[20] Novelli and Lopes Cardozo "Conflict, education and the global south: New critical directions," 2008

[21] Connell, "The State, Gender, and Sexual Politics: Theory and Appraisal," 1990; Dunne, "Gender as an Entry Point" 2009; Fuest, "'This Is the Time to Get in Front' 2008

[22] Dunne, "Gender as an Entry Point." 2009

[23] See for instance: Burnet, "Gender Balance and the Meanings of Women in Governance." 2008

[24] Connell and Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity" 2005; Dunne, "Gender as an Entry Point" 2009; Fuest, "'This Is the Time to Get in Front" 2008; Mama, "Demythologising Gender in Development" 2004,

[25] Mohanty, "Transnational Feminist Crossings" 2013,

[26] Connell and Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept" 2005; Mohanty, "Transnational Feminist Crossings." 2013

[27] Lewis, "For Women and the Nation" 1997

[28] Dunne, "Gender as an Entry Point" 2009, Mama, "Demythologising Gender in Development" 2004.

[29] See for instance: Bush and Saltarelli, "The Two Faces of Education" 2004

[30] Research conducted in 2015 was funded by the UNICEF-PBEA (Peacebuilding Education and Advocacy Programme). The second research stay was funded by the European Commission Horzion 2020 programme.

[31] Other research outputs include for instance: Datzberger, McCully, and Smith, "Education and Peacebuilding in Uganda." 2015

[32] Interview with Local District Offical for Moroto, Karamoja, held in March 2015.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Branch, "Exploring the Roots of LRA Violence" 2010; Byrnes, *Uganda: A Country Study.* 1990; Otunnu, "Causes and Consequences of the War in Acholiland" 2002.

[35] See for instance: Amony, *I Am Evelyn Amony : Reclaiming My Life from the Lord's Resistance Army*.

[36] Ibid.; Liebling-Kalifani et al., "Violence against Women in Northern Uganda: The Neglected Health Consequences of War."

[37] Ibid. but also: interview with Women's Advocacy Network Platform, April 2017, interview with Professor at Makerere University, April 2017.

[38] Shaw and Mbabazi, "Two Ugandas and a 'Liberal Peace?" 2007

[39] Ibid.

[40] See: http://fsi.fundforpeace.org/, accessed 29 April 2017

[41] Knutzen and Smith, "Uganda Conflict Analysis," 2012.

[42] Coffey International Development, "Gender Equality in Uganda: A Situation Analysis and Scoping Report for the Gender Development Partners Group. Commissioned by DFID and Irish Aid."p. 5

[43] Source: http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS, accessed 13.12.2016

[44] Coffey International Development, p. 5

[45] Datzberger, McCully, and Smith, "Education and Peacebuilding in Uganda." 2015

[46] For an extensive analysis of how peacebuilding is integrated into the Uganda's policy landscape see Datzberger et al. 2015.

[47] See: http://data.uis.unesco.org/#, last accessed 28 April 2017.

[48] Interview with MoESTS, April 2015.

[49] Mbabazi et al., "Out of School Children Study in Uganda," 2014

[50] MoESTS Uganda, "Teacher Issues in Uganda." 2013, p. 47

[51] Annan et al., "The State of Female Youth in Northern Uganda: Findings from the Survey of War-Affected Youth (SWAY) PHASE II." 2008

[52] Mirembe andDavies, "Is Schooling a Risk?" 2001

[53] UNICEF, "Research Briefing: Assessing Child Protection, Safety & Security Issues For Children in Ugandan Primary and Secondary Schools." 2013. We want to clarify, that sexual abuse in this study was defined as sexual contact with a child such as sexual touching and fondling, kissing, and penetrative sex or defilement; as well as engaging a child in other sexual behavior that she or he does not comprehend or give consent to, such as indecent exposure of sexual objects, engaging in sex in front of a child, encouraging children to engage in prostitution, or sharing pornography with a child (p.2)

[54] UNICEF, "Research Briefing: Assessing Child Protection" 2013

[55] Coffey International Development, "Gender Equality in Uganda" p. 48

[56] Mirembe and Davies, "Is Schooling a Risk?" 2001

[57] Government of Uganda, "Ministerial Policy Statement, Ministry of Education and Sports, Financial Year 2014/2015."

[58] See also:
http://www.ncdc.go.ug/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=111:curasse&catid=80&Itemid=498 , last accessed 10 December 2016.

[59] See also: Datzberger, McCully, and Smith, "Education and Peacebuilding in Uganda." 2015

[60] Interviews with NCDC 26 April 2017

[61] See appendix for list of interviews with teachers.

[62] Ibid. pp. 62-90.

[63] Interview with Lecturer at Gulu Univeristy

[64] See appendix for list of interviews with MoESTS and NCDC.

[65] Interviews conducted with NCDC, academics and CSOs see list below.
[66] MoESTS Uganda and UNICEF, "Teacher Handbook: Gender, Conflict and Peace Building." 2015
[67] MoESTS Uganda, "National Strategy for Girls' Education (NSGE) in Uganda 2015-2019."
[68] Ibid. p. 9
[69] Ibid. p. 18
[70] Becker, "Girls in Fragile Context" 2012; Lopes Cardozo et al., "Literature Review: Youth Agency, Peacebuilding and Education." 2015
[71] See for instance Confortini, "Galtung, Violence, and Gender: The Case for a Peace Studies/Feminism Alliance"; Novelli and Lopes Cardozo, "Conflict, Education and the Global South: New Critical Directions."
[72] E.g.: El-Bushra, "Feminism, Gender, and Women's Peace Activism," 2007.
[73] Interview held 13 February 2015, Gulu
[74] OECD, "Civil Society and International Development" 1998
[75] Dunne, "Gender as an Entry Point " 2009; Mama, "Demythologising Gender in Development" 2004
[76] Ibid.
[76] Novelli and Lopes Cardozo "Conflict, education and the global south: New critical directions," 2008

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