A study of Children's Participation in Peacebuilding in a Post-Conflict Society

A case study of Peace Clubs in Gulu, Uganda

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DECLARATION

I Cecilie Gulliksen, hereby declare that to the best of my knowledge, this dissertation has never been presented in any university for an award. This work is entirely and originally mine, unless where acknowledged.

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Abstract

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Key words: Children's participation, Peacebuilding, Northern Uganda and Peace Clubs

The general aim of the study was to get an understanding how children participate in peacebuilding and how it is supported in a post-conflict society like Gulu. Gathering information in Gulu, Northern Uganda approached this aim. The four components that together created the "understanding" were; the actions the children took towards creating peace in their own surroundings and the sort of effects these actions had, children and adults interacting in peacebuilding, challenges that children participating in peacebuilding faced; Partners working with children participating in peacebuilding and the kind of support they provided.

The data collection was done through eight focus groups; in addition four key informant interviews were conducted with open-end questions. The focus group contained a mix of three different tools; body-map, timeline and Venn diagram. The tools have been adapted to peacebuilding by Save the Children for children to evaluate their own level of participation in peacebuilding. The results from the tools together with transcriptions from the focus groups and the key informant interview were analysed through a thematic analysis. The themes presented and interpreted were; peacebuilding activities, changes towards peaceful behaviour (past and present), adult perceptions of children's participation, support from the church and the local community to the peace clubs, challenges and significance of participation.

These themes all presented different captions of how peace clubs in Gulu interacted. The activities, actions and cognitive state of the children linked to peacebuilding formed various pictures of what peacebuilding is. Participation was a constant negotiation between adults and children. The children's perception was influenced by war and cultural circumstance. Support to children's work with peacebuilding is coherent with their activity agenda; which caused speculation about the level of children's participation in peacebuilding in Gulu.

Recommendations for further studies; to investigate more about the local networks around peacebuilding in areas similar to Gulu; measure and evaluate, to what extent, the effect of child participation has on the personal growth of a child and how that growth reaches and effects the community; to assess the similarities between child and adult, a study of the adults' vision of participation should be introduced over a continuous period of time; investigate how the UNCRC article 12.1 limits but also enhances children's participation. Finally, where recommendation to increase children's participation in peacebuilding has been taken, a study of the Gulu community's peacebulding work is required. This studies aim is to assist, guide and hopefully to ensure a continuing path to a peaceful society.

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1. Background of the study

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereafter referred to as the UNCRC) legalises both children's right to participation and to protection (United Nations , 1989). The concept of childhood is between a perception of children as dependent citizens needing protection to secure their development and children as active citizens. Children are often dependent on adult careers in the execution of their rights (Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010). The decision making process in a conflict situation prioritises the protection of child over supporting them and allowing any participation in other matters within the community. Many countries still prohibit meaningful participation for many society members, adults as well as children (Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010). Public restrictions such as no free press, gender inequality, little division of power and no tradition for consulting the public on a national or local level, discourage participation. In these cases, participation for children and especially the girls is not prioritized (Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010).

There are two events that are believed to be the cause of the many rebellion groups in the north of Uganda from 1986 and onwards (Allen & Vlassenroot, 2010). The change of president had cut a bond between the Acholi and the national state. The second was the change of internal authority within Acholi. This change saw devolvement from a purely Acholi ethnicity to one opened with candidates from other ethnicities power sharing. (Allen & Vlassenroot, 2010). Joseph Kony and his rebel group had originated from the Holy Sprit Movement; both groups were operating on the same idea that Acholi needed to be purified by the use of violence, so that the Acholi would only be left with those who were originated from the group. As the other rebel groups were defeated or went into peace agreements with the government, Kony`s group continued to grow (Allen & Vlassenroot, 2010). He named it the Lord's Resistance Army and they led a series of guerrilla attacks on the government as a protest to the changes happening in the Acholi-land. The Lord's Resistance Army would brutally attack those who moved into Internal Displaced Camps as they saw it as a sign of government support (Allen & Vlassenroot, 2010). Within two decades almost 90% of the Acholi population were placed in the IDP camps. It was in the mid-90s when the majority of children kidnappings started (Vinci, 2005). The children that were kidnapped were between 8 and 18 years of age. The lower age was preferred as they were seen as less likely to escape (Vinci, 2005). The rebel group used barbaric and torturous methods to scare children from

returning home (Schnabel & Tabyshalieva, 2013). The indoctrination of new child soldiers included a killing of a fellow abducted child by multiple group members. This was a way of introducing the children to a mentality of killing without inhibition: as the responsibility was shared by all and not just one (Vinci, 2005). Other techniques used towards the community were cutting off fingers, public rape, beating and torture. All done to be a visible and symbolic sign of the Lord's Resistance Army power and brutality on those who cooperated with the government (Vinci, 2005). The conflict is no longer active in Uganda after peace negotiations started in 2006 with the rebel leader. In later years, much effort has been made to reintegrate the children and families of those affected by the conflict. The children had knowledge, experiences, ideas and insight to help their community to build peace (Schnabel & Tabyshalieva, 2013). This knowledge and energy has been utilized in different degrees.

Save the Children Norway has worked together with children and teenagers involved in clubs and organizations focussing on peacebuilding since 2006 (Giertsen, O`Kane, & Ebbing, 2012). The project included workshops held on a local, national, regional and global level with representatives (children) from all over the world, including Uganda. The aim of the different workshops was to support child peacebuilding work and evaluate their participation with children as peer researchers, using different tools. These are developmental supportive tools, which enable children to participate, reflect and discuss on their own premises (Save the Children, 2011). The tools can be taught to other children and are useful for planning and outlining future work in peacebuilding.

In 2007, there was a Uganda National Reflection Workshop held in Kampala. Twenty-four children and young people participated (O`Kane, Muculezi, Sebuwufu, & Nkimba, 2008). The children created a document, which contained details of conflicts they had witnessed in their community. These conflicts were seen by the children as a hindrance of a good childhood development and needed urgent solutions. The document was brought to attention of the government, parents and patrons. The following five issues were presented in a memorandum. Firstly, those children affected by the war did not feel they were able to contribute their views to important peacbuilding decisions. Second issue was the severe violation of children's rights, by both adults and other children. The environment and institutions around children were not adequately integrating a children's rights perspective. The children's clubs and associations were counteracting this, by working towards empowering their friends and peers to live in a non-violent way. The third issue is the high

level of corruption; which prohibits against, standards of living, support, health services, education and children's participation (O`Kane, et.al. 2008). The forth issue was the International Criminal Court's (hereafter referred to as ICC) arrest warrant against the Lord Resistance Army. The children in the rebel army feared arrest under the International Criminal Court and therefore this fear assisted to the continued existence of the Lord's Resistance Army. (O`Kane, et.al. 2008). The government considered using alternative and traditional forms of justice, which the children of the memorandum supported (O`Kane, et.al. 2008). The fifth and final issue was the land disputes that have become a source of intercommunity conflict. Both violence and killings have occurred in the disputes over land (O`Kane, et.al. 2008). This document did not only show that children were aware and understood what was happening with their community, but also that it effected them equally as any other society member (Schnabel & Tabyshalieva, 2013).

Today Gulu has peace clubs that are supported by different organisations. The peace clubs are meant to be a platform were children and young people can gather and help create peace in their society. The Justice & Peace Commission originally initiated peacebuilding programmes in Secondary Schools in 2003 and called them Peace clubs (The Justice & Peace Commission). The goal was to introduce and teach students about conflict resolution, alternatives to violence, stopping conflict and peace building. Their implementation started with 17 schools in Gulu and 12 in Kitgum. Every patron or matron (supervisor of the peace club) was trained in human rights, communication skills and land-mine awareness. (The Justice & Peace Commission). According to Save the Children Summary Report of Children's peacebuilding activities 2012-2013, Uganda had 12 child clubs, with almost 1000 members in total, all supported by Save the Children Uganda. The report presented a line of different activities the clubs did such as dialogue meetings, peacebuilding through music and drama, negotiations in schools and reporting on conflict situations in school and society (Save the Children, 2012, p. 1-2). Save the children Uganda reported that the child clubs have been instrumental in keeping the northern part of Uganda peaceful. (Save the Children, 2012). Associazione Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale (AVSI), have expanded their support for children in education to a holistic approach to children's wellbeing, which also includes support for the peace clubs (Womens Commission for Refugee Women and Children., 2005). The main objectives of peace clubs set by the AVSI are to; enable the children to express their feelings, let members solve their own problems under the guidance of teachers, train them to be leaders of today and tomorrow who can guide people towards a peaceful society;

encourage respect for everyone they meet, grow together in harmony and cooperation; unite the teachers, pupils and parents together and so on (Womens Commission for Refugee Women and Children., 2005).

1.2 Research Problem

Children are a vulnerable group with little political agency in post-conflict societies. By victimizing children, actors such as politicians or international organizations can moderate their interest and voices. Children experience a high level of risk factors such as insecurity, education holes, unemployment, loss of parents and family and lack of resources (Schnabel & Tabyshalieva, 2013). Youth can then engage in criminal activities or join destructive groups as a way of livelihood. The engagement of children and young people is not only essential for peacekeeping, but also peacebuilding (Schnabel & Tabyshalieva, 2013). The age demographic in Uganda shows a population where 48,7% is below 14 and 21,1% is between 15-24 (Index Mundi, 2014). When half of the population is not part of the rebuilding process, its success cannot be long-term. The insight and energy of young people is a valuable resource that a post-conflict society cannot afford to neglect.

A problem of participation itself is the lack of clear understanding of its process. The UNCRC is ratified by Uganda; article 12 legalizes the child's right to participation (United Nations , 1989). The UNCRC can be seen as superficial, foreign and not relatable to the African way of life (Hart, 2008). The main reason for rejection of the UNCRC is that it is a western or an elitist view trying to determine African family life and parental power. (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development et. al., 2008). The UNCRC is known for being good in rhetoric and bad in practical implementation (Prout, 2005). Each country and institutions working with children then needs to establish their own procedures to ensure children participation. Today participation is practiced in many contexts, but still lacking stable theories and evaluations methods (Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010). This results in varying interpretations and implications of participation that does not always support the child's idea of participation, but rather an adult's interpretation of it. In this regard, is it critical to gain an understanding of how child participation in peace building in Uganda.

1.3 General aim

The general aim of the study is to get an understanding how children participate in peacebuilding and how it is supported in a post-conflict society like Gulu.

1.3.1 Specific objectives:

1. To describe the actions the children take towards creating peace in their own surroundings and the sort of effects these actions have.

2. To consider how children describe their relationships to adults that they interact with.

3. To describe and discuss challenges about children's participation in peace building mentioned by the children and society members.

4. Identify partners working with children participating in peacebuilding and how they support child participation.

1.3.2 Research Questions

1. What is the peace club doing for promoting and building peace?

2. What has changed in children's behaviour or mind-set since the members started in the group?

3. What are the similarities and contradictions between society members and children description of children participation in peacebuilding in Gulu?

4. How do children evaluate the support given to them?

5. What challenges do children face when trying to participate in peacebuilding in their surroundings?

6. What kind of significance does children's participation in peacebuilding have?

1.3.3 Significance of the study

There is a growing commitment to implementing participation in institutions surrounding children. The knowledge on how participation should be implemented measured and evaluated still needs elaboration. In situations, which adults perceive as dangerous for children, the right of protection prevails over the right to participation. This limitation of action and victimizing of children can be even further harming for children. This is certainly the case in a post-conflict society where the risk factors are many. There is a need to understand and enhance children's participation in peacebuilding so that their energy, insight and vision create a sustainable peace and participation for all society members. The knowledge can help break down barriers such as a misperception of what children can do and contribute with.

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2. Literature view

2.1 Children in a globalized world.

The twentieth century transformed the institutions altering the social world (Prout, 2005). This includes the institutions surrounding children. The new vision of childhood is more active, participatory and diverse. The local, social and economic conditions of childhood are influenced by global economy, social and cultural developments and technological changes, better known as globalisation (Prout, 2005). The development towards a globalised modern idea of childhood happened over a long period of time and within local circumstances. Changes in birth rate, demographics, fragmentation of family forms and increased migration resulted in today's diverse forms of childhoods. Uprichard (2008) is discussing two perceptions of children, children beings and children becoming. Being a child would represent the experiences of a child, but exclude the future aspect. Problematic since the future and what is coming ahead shapes a child in the present. A child becoming an adult has the future perspective, but indicate a current lack of skills. The image of children developing a riotous and immoral behaviour if not being trained and disciplined is gaining popularity in countries that have contrasting socio-economic conditions (Boyden, 2005). There is a growth in the image of the child as a troublemaker. The current knowledge about childhood says little about what it actually is. One of the reasons for that is a lack of subjective meanings on how children see themselves. The comprehension of childhood is important for understanding how to solve problems of empowerment and agency in different times during a life span. It is essential for supporting children to become participatory agents (Uprichard, 2008)

The balance between children as innocent victims and the deviant has been a focal point for human rights legislation (Boyden, 2005). More awareness around how to provide children with a happy future has been brought to an international level as governments are failing. The United Nations is one of those organisations providing attention to children's welfare around the world. A child has the right to be a child and the right to grow up and become an adult through the right to life, survival and development (article 6, UNCRC) (United Nations, 1989). That is why it is not sufficient to see a child as either a child being or a child becoming (2008). Seeing them together gives the child more agency to construct his/her own reality.

Prout (2005) argues that the biggest misconception of childhood today is to put it in a dichotomous relationship with adulthood. The power imbalance always becomes the main measure of these relationships. Children's participation has become an international torch, which burns for child advocacy: participation seen is a force for changing inequalities. Participation can erode the power dynamics between childhood and adulthood. Participation is part of the new childhood. If childhood is a social construction, children should be the social agent that determines it (Prout, 2005).

There has been a common factor for those collecting development aid in order to use an image of a child's vulnerability to contrast other parts of the world. Africa, Asia and South America are struggling with poverty, not unlike most other parts of the world. The three former mentioned countries are in cases portrayed with images of children suffering and living in unfit conditions, more frequent than other parts of the world (Prout, 2005). The aim of this is to gain financial help. Using these sorts of images the understanding of children as vulnerable, dependent and with little power to act continues. In reality, safe and good childhood is unfairly divided. These images of children let the rich and privileged set the normative framework for what a childhood is, those outside this definition are then without childhood. This is not necessary in coherence with what children in Uganda or other parts of the world define a good childhood to be. Every child has a childhood, childhood is a social construction and a great diversity is then only to be expected (Prout, 2005). Childhood is a social construction (Boyden, 2005). There are numerous and contradictive approaches, perspectives and conceptions of childhood. Often is Norms and values of a develop-supporting childhood are culturally and historically bound to the social realities of capitalist countries of Europe and the United States. (Boyden, 2005, p. 189). These values can seem foreign to other continents. A violation of an individual right of the UNCRC might be a vital mechanism for keeping group cohesion and solidarity (Boyden, 2005).

2.1.1 Youth as a force in the world

The youth bulge theory presumes that extra-large cohorts of youths will end up in armed conflicts (Moller, 1968). The explanation is that youth bulges put pressure on social institution as social services, labour markets and educational systems. Many children in a population mean many society members that are unproductive and dependent and reduce

capital formation. Large youth cohorts will have a generational consciousness of their strength, size, and will therefore act collectively.

Collective youth action does not necessarily have to lead to violence, as we have seen before in history. For example the demonstrations in United States against the Vietnam War was a youth movement, the demonstrations however stayed peaceful for the most (Moller, 1968). The circumstances, which increase the chance of youth revolting violently, are low economic growth, high unemployment and strong autocratic regimes. Youth might feel that violence and disruption is their only chance for creating opportunities for themselves. Urdal (2004) discusses the conditions that provide motives and opportunities for youths joining in armed conflict. The choice to go into armed conflict is connected with youth grievances. Unemployment causes grievances, especially if expectations to job and income are high after a long run of education (Urdahl, 2004). According to the National Labour Force and child activities, Survey 2011/2012 confirmed 64% youths among the unemployed in the population. Youths in the survey defined to be those between 18-30 (International Labour Organization and Ugandan Bureau of Statistics, 2013). The rebel force becomes an alternative way to income. A youth might feel that the life they have is less than they deserve, especially after working hard to get an education. The educated are often those joining armed conflict, they invested more in their future and therefore have more to lose (Urdahl, 2004). Further if the youth faces a situation where they cannot influence the politics that forms the situation they find themselves in, because the regime type is strictly autocratic. If the state in addition is unstable and unreliable, this can be a cause for violent demonstration (Urdahl, 2004).

The Youth Bulge theory has been criticized because not all youths turn to violence, even in these conditions. Demographic facts such as 48,7% of the population in Uganda is below 14 can cause speculations (Index Mundi, 2014). Assuming all large youth cohorts turn violent is nevertheless stigmatizing and generalizing of all youths (Moller, 1968). This is a negative way of capturing the phase of youth. In countries that have the structure to handle it, the lift of human capital can be a resource. It requires however a big flexibility in the social structures and educational capacities (Moller, 1968).

2.2. Challenges for Participation

Participation is gaining more and more focus, some say because of a modern and developing democracy (Skrivenes & Standbu, 2006). Participation through elected representatives is no longer sufficient. The people want a voice on a more regular basis to ensure that the right to participate is available for everyone (Skrivenes & Standbu, 2006). Children and their right to participation have gained focus and insight over the years. Children have the right to be included in decision-making processes and debates. Unlike other society-members, children are often accounted for as a group. Their participation also needs to be supported as individual contributors (Skrivenes & Standbu, 2006).

An obstacle is that children are made to participate on adult premises, language and forums that are not well adapted to children's voices. Skrivenes and Standbu discuss language and communication as a key component to make common social values and inter-subjective understanding between adults and children (2006). Flexible procedures for children's participation will establish a better exchange of views. A drawback can often be the interpretation adults add to children's views, taken into an adult social context that might overlook the essence of the child's message (Skrivenes & Standbu, 2006). Participation must have a sincere commitment to a development of clear procedures. The lack of clear procedures makes the term participation used ambiguous and maybe even as more of a figurehead than real action.

Percy-Smith & Thomas have listed the four main challenges for participation (2010). Firstly, child-initiated participation is often not included in the definitions of children's participation, that exclude the extent to which children's capability of participation can be reached. Secondly, the most emphasized positive effects of children's participation are often related to development of children's skills on a personal level. Children's participation is not proven to have contributed to transform the existing political and cultural structures (Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010). It needs to be more focussed on the advantages of children's participation beyond personal development. Thirdly is the conception that child-initiated participation can thrive only when it is also in the interest of adults (Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010). However, there have been examples of children who, using their skills in communication technology and their access to global information, create actions without adults being able to neither promote nor contain them. This sort of technology is however not available for every child.

Lastly and forth is the field of children participation under-theorised and over-practiced. This is repeated by most of the theorist in the study that writes about participation and one of the main challenges for implementing a participatory approach (Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010). Grandlund (2013) agrees that participation is being defined in many different ways. Future research needs to develop and measure the efficiency over activities and intervention that claims to optimize children's participation. Children's subjective meaning needs to be an added aspect. Grandlund (2013) brings out that there are two dimensions of participation. Firstly, the child attending an activity and what is being done. Second, is the level of involvement during the activity. These aspects need to be measured in different ways to expand the knowledge of outcomes of participatory situations. Outcomes of participation have however turned out to be very hard to define. Outcomes for participation should be measured in general and outcomes of participating in especially one activity. Research needs to help clinicians working with children in everyday situations to enable participation (Granlund, 2013).

2.2.1 Ladder of participation

Hart's ladder continues to have a great impact in the field of child participation although it has been repeatedly criticised by Hart himself and many others (Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010) (Hart, 2008) (Shier, 2001). Hart's ladder was useful to create the foundation, but its dominant position as a tool rather than a theoretical framework has caused the theoretical base of the field to be underdeveloped. Hart (2008) himself emphasizes that it is not an assessment tool. Its aim is to help children feel confident enough to participate with others by making them recognize that they have the competence to do so. Children should be fully aware that they are not obligated to participate at all, but that they have the possibility (Hart, 2008).

Hart (2008) created the ladder model based on his perspectives on cultural, social, political, and historical contexts in the western world. The ladder metaphor reflects the idea that individual participation with others and active engagement in decision-making are the primary influences that will lead to the achievement of children's rights in programs. The term "programs" indicate that it was not meant to measure child participation, but was used as a tool in social planning (Hart, 2008).

However, individualism and autonomy in children might not be suitable for all cultures (Hart, 2008). It is for this reason that Africa created the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (referred to as ACRWC). This version presents a balance between the rights of the child and the responsibility that comes with those rights (The African Member States of the Organization of African Unity, 1990). Hart (2008) concludes by stressing that cultures should be heard and respected. The UNCRC and the ladder of participation should be introduced with care and sensitivity while maintaining the integrity of cultures (Hart, 2008).

Healy (1998) rejects western idealised theories as the ladder of participation and focus on the context of the participation. Healy noticed a trending attitude that pays little attention to defining participation but more concentrates on that it is simply done. This resulted in a line of fields dissimilar to social work that defines the frames of participation implemented with children. Some examples of unrelated fields are community development, social planning, and social movements (Wise, 1990 in Healy, 1998). Arnstein`s Ladder was a tool meant for social planning. Among many things is the ladder`s hierarchy of participation inappropriate for social work practice. A hierarchy will devalue other varieties of participation and excuse a retreat from following up participation. Healy emphasize that the right to have the choice of whether or not to participate should be as significant as the right to participation (Healy, 1998). The importance and the value of participation will vary after which context it is conducted within (Healy, 1998).

2.2.2 Participation in National and International Law

The current resolution about protecting children in armed conflict, do not include participation in peace processes afterwards for children, and therefore does not acknowledge participation as a protective factor (Save the Children, 2013). There is a process going on currently to involve children's participation in peacebuilding. The resolution is still not approved, but the work continues by raising awareness around children's participation in peacebuilding (Save the Children, 2013).

Article 12 in the UNCRC is about securing the right to participation. Article 12.1 states the right to be involved in decision-making:

States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. (United Nations, 1989).

In addition there are other articles that support this right. For example article 13: The right to freedom of expression. Article 14: The freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and article 31: The right to participate in cultural life (United Nations, 1989). Uganda has signed and ratified the UNCRC and is working towards implementing these provisions. In national law one can refer to "The Children Act." Cap. 59, which entail provisions that ensure a child's right to participation on issues that affects them. Firstly in matters that are reported to the probation officer or police, one needs to take children views into account and use them as evidence (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, et.al, 2008). "The Local Government Act", cap. 243 encourage each sub-area to have a Secretary for Children's Affairs. This person should consult and include children in his/her work and give feedback of what is happening in their community (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, et.al, 2008).

As formerly mentioned sometimes the UNCRC can be understood as foreign and non-relatable. A reaction came in form of the "African Charter on the Rights and welfare of the Child " (referred to as ACRWC) by the Organization of African Unity (The African Member States of the Organization of African Unity, 1990). Article 4.2 in the ACRWC ensures children's right to be listened to and the right to participate in any cases that affects them. Article 7 is about giving the child the right to freely express their opinion. However, the ACRWC article 31 gives the child a commitment of responsibility to his/her family, community and the State stated in article 31 in the ACRWC. The child responsibility is for example to respect his/her parents, strengthen social and national solidarity, to preserve and strengthen African cultural values, to contribute to the best of his abilities to The African Unity and so on. Article 31 is one of the things that separate the ACRWC from the UNCRC. The ACRWC is built to reflect an African cultural heritage, historical background and socio-economic circumstances dominant in the continent (The African Member States of the Organization of African Unity, 1990).

2.2.3 Participatory research directly linked with children in peacebuilding.

Save the Children did a thematic evaluation for children to evaluate their own participation in peacebuilding (Giertsen, Feinstein, & O`Kane, 2010). This research was conducted in Nepal, Uganda, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Guatemala. Children were peer researchers and gathered information of the many elements around children's participation in peacebuilding in post-conflict societies. The contribution focuses on practical experience and reflection.

Participation as a force appraised to give children a space to share, build confidence and make them develop better life skills (Giertsen, Feinstein, & O`Kane, 2010). The children would explain participation in the peace club as helpful to make meaning of the situations they had faced. There was a variety of forms, such as writing poems, singing songs about peace, promoting peace through dialog and counselling, encourage peers to study and promoting children's participation in local school (Giertsen, Feinstein, & O`Kane, 2010).

This is an example of how children are influencing structure around them through dialogue. They are advocating for a space in political decisions affecting them and can address both what inhibits and what build peace. There is a need to recognize the subtle power and discrimination forms that are being unconsciously fostered. Social and traditional values will have an effect on child participation, such as the conception of a child as a learner and a listener. Traditional learning and disciplinary methods are antagonistic to participatory ways of engaging children (Giertsen, Feinstein, & O`Kane, 2010).

The evaluation in Uganda ended with the thematic memorandum done by a group of peer researchers. Some of the key points in the thematic evaluation on how to enhance children's participation in peacebuilding was as following:

- Sensitizing of key adults
- Support children to gather in groups and to plan actions
- Capacity building of children.
- Practical support
- Child-friendly information, on political processes
- Inclusive governmental structure.

(Giertsen, Feinstein, & O`Kane, 2010)

2.3 Children and Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is defined in many ways. The United Nations practice has since 2007 followed the following definition

> Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development
>
> (United Nation Peacebuilding Support office, 2007)

Liberal democratic peace theory is based on several assumptions about the human desire and its need for gratification from the state. It has been a dominant theory for peacebuilding for some time. The theories pillar is that every domestic government should provide protection, enforcement of law and stability of the market to the population. This will ensure a system of peace and economic interdependence. Economic interdependence is believed to have a war-inhibiting factor, as a war will stop the flow of trade products and loss of human capital (R. Newbrander, 2012).

The Liberal Democratic Peace theory is associated with the works of international organizations that partake in a post-conflict situation. The work of the organisations are comparable to the functions, the theory predicts a peaceful state is achievable (R. Newbrander, 2012). Others have a more ambivalent relationship to external interference. Democracies are seen to be more peaceful and cooperative in international relations. More accountability and structured evaluations leads to more rational and less rash decisions. Democracy is to be understood as a regime type, defined after who holds the power. In democracies, citizens can vote there is a fair and free election with at least two parties and the leader of the executive power is elected or obliged to an elected constitution. The legislative powers are separated from the executive power. These are all factors that will prolong the decision-making power, divide the power and hence avoid the rash decision, such as going to war. There are also changes that can be encouraged on a local level with smaller government segments. Liberal is to be comprehended as norms from a philosophical perspective, such as the relationship between state and individual and an individual right to freedom of choice (R. Newbrander, 2012).

Galtung (1996), a mathematician, sociologist and peace researcher was the first to use the phrase peacebuilding. The understanding of peace cannot exist without the understanding of war. Galtung describes peacebuilding as a reduction of violence (emotional violence, political violence, structural violence etc.) Galtung (1996) separates positive and negative peace. The violence can happen between human groups from different nations, but it can also have another differentiation like religion, social class, ethnic group or racial groups. Negative peace means the absence of something negative, like violence. Positive peace is a synonym for all good things in this world. Positive peace will describe the integrated relationship between human groups. Peace in this meaning has a strong component of cooperation between states, without it the states are consider being less peaceful. The actors that build peace often just intervene in the society and are not necessarily from the community itself. Galtung does not deny this possibility, but compare outside intervention with therapy. Firstly, the situation can become worse than it is to begin with, and secondly if the community use force, the capabilities for self-restoration become passive in the case of outer intervention. The important aspect of peace is to support positive conditions for the communities' own restorative functions (Galtung, 1996).

Initiatives of local peacebuilding started already before the war ended. Up to 40.000 children would walk from villages to the town to sleep on the street in fear of kidnappings in the villages. The children helped each other and arranged for a community around the night walks (Schnabel & Tabyshalieva, 2013). They established a trust that the nightwalker community wanted all children to be safe and prosper. Adults and organizations supported this initiative later by making huts and stations where the children could sleep (Schnabel & Tabyshalieva, 2013).

This can be interpreted as a state of social cohesion. Cohesion in a pure lexicon meaning refers to a "state in which components "stick" together to form an effective or meaningful whole" (Chan, To, & Chan, 2006, p. 289). Creating this state will be a result of individuals' state of mind and behaviour. Chan, To, and Chan (2006) claims that by fore filling the three requirements the state of social cohesion will follow. Firstly, the society member has to be able to trust, help and cooperate with other society members. Secondly there is a need for a common identity or a sense of belonging to their society. Thirdly is the subjective feelings in requirement two and three manifested in objective behaviour, meaning that the mind-set

needs to transmit in the behaviour and that the willingness to help needs to be strong enough to transcend into action (Chan, To, & Chan, 2006).

2.3.1 Acholi peacebuilding

"Cooling of hearts, community truth telling in Acholi Land" is a report based on survey conducted within nine IDP (internal displaced persons) camps with 1143 internal displaced persons in Northern Uganda (Baines, 2007). Over 97,5 % in the survey answered that they wanted the truth about what happen during the conflict to come out. Truth telling is a tradition of the Acholi and was used as a coping mechanism to reconcile with those coming home from captivity. A truth process would, according to the respondents, be important to understand why the conflict started and what should be learned from this to prevent further conflict. Many respondents emphasized the importance of reengaging youth in learning about their people and how they can create peace around them through traditional means. The youth would learn about the relevance of the local mechanisms and traditions that promote truth and healing (Baines, 2007). Such as the traditional "Mato Oput", a cleansing of anger that the affected people are carrying (Baines, 2007). Many mentioned the need for conversation to acknowledge what has happen. Through "Mato Oput" and a public truth telling ceremony some form of forgiveness were accomplished. The local leader makes some cultural demand to the perpetrator so the community would forgive the perpetrator. This made it easier for the community to again function together socially (Baines, 2007).

2.4 Children living in post conflict societies.

Children in and after conflict will be influenced both emotionally and socially (Schnabel & Tabyshalieva, 2013). Children are a key part of the population. In conflict, children are exploited for their vulnerability and subjected to attacks, kidnappings, loss of parents and sexual violence (Schnabel & Tabyshalieva, 2013). Even though the phase of post-conflict signifies that the society is working towards peace, can it still be dangerous, turbulent and keeps children at risk. The UNCRC is supposed to work as guidelines for what a good development for children should entail, but how well are these taken care of in an armed conflict?

Graca Machel's (1996) report "Impact of armed conflict on children" uses the UNCRC to emphasize the risk for children living in conflict. Following are some of the study's key points about what mitigates the risks for children in armed conflict. "War violates every right of a child" (Machel, 1996, p. 10). The impact is not so easily noticed, it is to be expected that they are under protection of their parents, therefore children often ends up with suffering in silence. Children are in great danger of food shortage; this also increases the risk of poor health and infection. The sexual violence against young women, because of their size and vulnerability, increases the spread of HIV/AIDS. Parents may also have HIV/AIDS, which will force the children to start early with contributing to the household and therefore not attending school. Being used as a child soldier is being described as a trend in the latest armed conflicts. A risk for children both during and after the conflict. Afterwards, the children might come back to a society that stigmatize and isolates them. Social reintegration depends on the society. Marchel (1996) writes in the report that family reunification almost seems impossible in many cases because of the awareness of the child's former actions. Armed conflict destroys schools and prevents possibilities for education. In post-conflict societies it can take a long time to gain the funding needed to build up the schools again. Many parents do not have the money to pay the school fee. Many children also experience gender difference, for example girls not allowed to attend school, but have to stay home. If the family has lost their parents to the conflict, they will have to be a child-led family. Economic stress can be a large burden to the family even though the conflict is over, because of few opportunities of employment and social support (Machel, 1996). One of the concluding remarks of the report is to make children zones of peace, not permitted to abuse or attack. This gives childhood a status of being inviolate. Protecting children then becomes a counterargument for going into war (Machel, 1996).

Post-conflict societies are societies that have been affected by a war or conflict. The rebuilding face is often recognized by a decreased governmental power and reduced economic capacity. The time and resources required from a society to move out of the post-conflict categorization depends on the sustainability and resources the society possessed before the conflict (Schnabel & Tabyshalieva, 2013). The rebuilding phase can be a dangerous and uncertain period and therefore, the children are often withheld from participating in it (Schnabel & Tabyshalieva, 2013).

2.5 Summary

Childhood perception steered the initiatives around children and the increase of the deviant child was therefore a challenge to increase the level of participation. There is a clear lack of understanding of what effect children's participation will have on the current adult-child interaction. In different parts of the world are children presented differently, often created as adult seen closest to the realistic situation. Childhood can change after the person perceiving it, it is not fixed nor based on one template. That is why the understanding of what children are and what they could do would be different if children got the opportunity to define it themselves. Just as there is a wish to have children participate, there is a lack of knowledge on how to make sure it is done. There is an uncertainty of what participation is, the current measurements are excluding instead of complementing each other. With the wrong measurement the advantages of participation that are being emphasize can seem less significant for the improvement of the society as a whole, such as personal growth for the participating child. Peacebuilding and post-conflict society are separated by the former being an active process, while the later being a term that follows a society after conflict. A post-conflict society can draw experiences and knowledge from other similar situations, as the knowledge that children are extra vulnerable both during, but also after a conflict. A post-conflict society will mean a society in chaos, in need for rebuilding and time and those with smaller voices can be ignored to the point where almost every right of the child is violated. A peacebuilding process is active; it is a line of activities working towards a common aim. There is no exhausted list or agreement of what specifically are, but it can come from several holds. Peacebuilding is a process, it is something that moves and it includes many actors.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Models of Participation

Participation is "promoting the child's involvement in planning and decision-making" (Welbourne, 2012). A very simple definition of a very complex concept. In reality within every society there is a conception of what is participation, influenced by cultural, socio-economic and historic circumstances. A measurement of participation intends to understand what are the successful implementations and if children are genuinely participating. Participation is yet to complex to be defined and operationalized by one theory or model. In this theoretical framework are two models presented. Firstly, Gallagher interpretation of Foucault's theories about power and children's participation connected with the interpretation. Thereafter Shier five step model, a model investigating the interplay between the adults and children in establishing children's participation.

3.1.1 Power and Participation

Connecting power and participation is vital to understand how children partake in today. According to Foucault (1978) does every activity involve some form of power (in Gallagher, 2008)? Power is an ambivalent force that can destroy and create. It is a force of control and a resistance. Foucault's theories, according to Gallagher, have a methodological approach with room for diversity. Gallagher (2008) has collected some methodological principles through Foucault's work that he presents as tools for capturing the different cases of participation. Because power not always is given sufficient consideration as an element in participation (Gallagher, 2008).

"Power is exercised, not possessed" (Foucault 1978, in Gallagher 2008 p. 397). According to this quote, power is something abstract, not something one can share, hold or that belongs to one person. Power is to do something; power is in the action (Gallagher, 2008). Power is diverse, just like in the case of children's participation claims (Gallagher, 2008). Power itself can help or inhibit children's participation. The key to understand participation through power is looking at what effect an action have, and then look at the action. While a power can make others executed an action, the effect of that action can be a selection of results, which

emphasize Foucault's point with the power of being in the action rather than a person (Gallagher, 2008).

Power is spread out in the society and not in a hierarchy. Gallagher (2008) argues against Foucault on this point. If children are given power to participate, does it mean that it also can be taken away from them? How would that indicate that power is dispersed? Gallagher (2008) dismisses the idea that adults empower children by giving up some of their power to them. Power is exercised through networks of relationships; therefore will these relationships need to be understood. Power always happens in a relationship between two entities. This separates Foucault from other theorists, which puts power in a hierarchy from state to people (Gallagher, 2008). Power in Gallagher interpretation is still scaled, but both those who possess large power scale structures and small power scale structures are effected by each other, rather than the effect of power going in an ascending line downwards (Gallagher, 2008). The network of people and their everyday actions is what makes an action powerful and needs to be analysed. Those who exercise power do not have monopoly on the effects of their power.

Gallagher (2008) argues that Foucault's term "Power as government" is broad and not only to be understood as governmental structure, but are useful for analysing management of groups. There is interplay between the coercive power of the governor and the governed self-autonomy. A complex balance between trying to make people participating in a subjection of themselves, while at the same time not overstepping an individual's right of self-determination. Children are one of the most governed groups in the society. While the growth of child participation flourish, the governmental institutions (school, state etc.) surrounding the children are dependent on children's compliance and agency. They are in a co-dependent relationship where participation is the fighting cause (Gallagher, 2008).

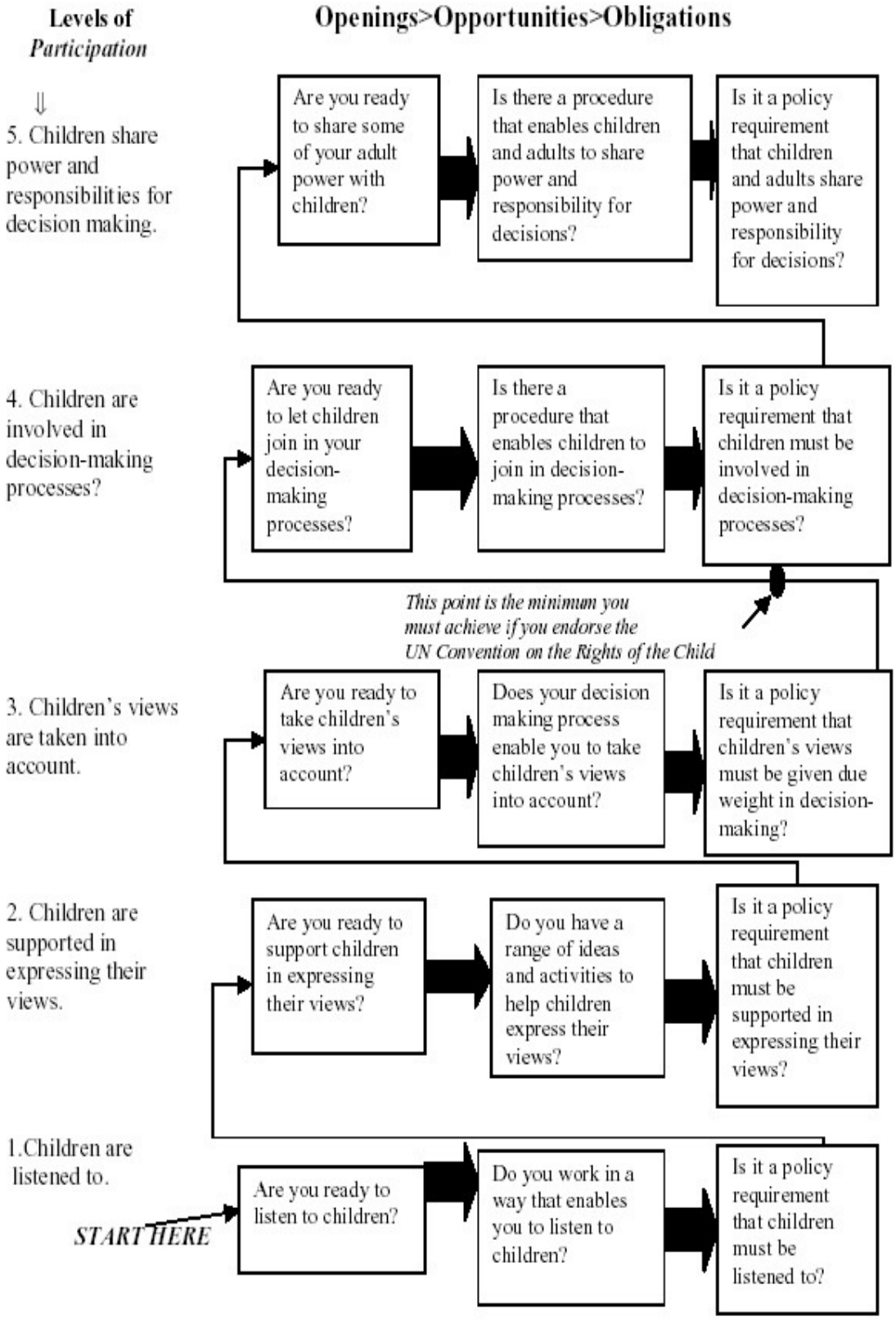
A word of caution to not make a standardized measured for outcomes of children's participation, as children already are a governed group (Gallagher, 2008). Gallagher emphasize the dynamics of power in children participation to address a subject that is not been captured as a concept. Foucault's theories and Gallagher's (2008) understanding of them allows a diverse interpretation of children's participation. Power in participation can embrace the messy stories, diverse forms, the unlikely perspectives and the shapes that children participation comes in (Gallagher, 2008).

3.1.2 Five Step Model to Participation

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child gave child participation an uplifted status, but the convention lacks direct guidelines. Article 12 is not only violated, but also one of the most violated rights of the child (Shier, 2001). Article 12.1 states the right for the child to be involved in decision-making:

> *State Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child*
>
> *(United Nations , 1989).*

Shier (2001) takes distance from the vagueness and domination of Harts Arnstein's ladder within the field of children participation. Shier does not intend his model to be all knowing, but rather an additional tool to engage in the many different aspect of the participation process. Under follows a picture, which presents all the five levels of Shier's model. Each level have a set of questions to determine which level an organization belongs to. The questions are also meant to help identify the next steps to take in order to reach a higher level of children's participation.



(Shier, 2001 p. 111)

Level 1: Children are listened to. Children are listened to with care and attention. This can only happen if children take it upon themselves to express a view where there is no organized effort to enhance and secure their participation in decision-making (Shier, 2001).

Level 2: Children are supported in expressing their views. There can be a line of different challenges for children to express their views. Adults must support children participation through actions. That will include a spectre of ideas and solutions to make children express their views and disable any challenge, for example if the children's mother tongue is in another language, shyness, disability or a non-existent culture of participation (Shier, 2001).

Level 3: Children's views are taken into account. This ensures children's influence on decisions. The separation from level 2 is that level 2 does not require any actually influence, just a forum of views. This level of participation is what the UNCRC is set on. Children views does not have the monopoly on the decisions being made, but should be equally evaluated among other elements of information available for the decision-making process. The children can in some cases receive feedback when the decision is made, but are not present when the decision is made (Shier, 2001).

Level 4: Children are involved in decision-making processes. Level of participation goes from consultation to active involvement. Advantages of this level of participation can be higher self-preservation for children, higher service equality, increased empathy and responsibility for participation and a strengthened democracy with a freer float of information. Despite the mentioned advantages, there is a challenge to involve children in planning and policy-making in a non-tokenistic way. It is Shier's belief that a child has to be directly affected by the subject to catch interest. Few children participate in decisions that do not concern them (Shier, 2001).

Level 5: Children share power and responsibility for decision-making. The power is shared between adults and children to achieve this level. Level 4 can disregard children's views or adults can overrule them, this will not happen in level 5. Shier himself question that the consequences of decisions can be shared. The reality is that adults cannot force too much responsibility on a child (Shier, 2001). This model throughout focuses on cooperation and sharing with adults, rather than excluding them.

3.2 Theories about Peace

Peace research has experienced a micro theoretic turn into looking at more subnational dynamics on grassroots level. From that has the concept Community Peacebuilding emerged; a concept concentrated on how the locals implement peacebuilding and rebuilds the foundation they reside in.

3.2.1 Community Peacebuilding

Community Peacebuilding will set out to change attitudes and behaviour that are non-peaceful into values of peace and tolerance (Waldman, 2008). Community Peacebuilding is a participatory button-up approach that revolves around the idea that people residing in the community is best at building peace there. Knowledge about the communities' characteristics and cultural context collected from the broad community is the foundation for peacebuilding. The root of the conflict can lie within non-functional social structures or local disagreements that external agents can dismiss. The aim of community peacebuilding is to build trust, safety and social cohesion. This can only be achieved through dialog between everyone in the community. Sustainable peace comes from local ideas built by the community. Through dialog about peace, relationships between people, groups, civil society and local government can flourish (Waldman, 2008). Therefore, it should be vital that peace solutions also are rooted in local capacities.

An important component of Community Peacebuilding is conflict resolution. Community Peacebuilding restore and strengthens community institutions, resolve conflict through mediation, negotiation and compensation, all methods of conflict resolution. The element of restorative justice is what can make it possible for victims and perpetrators to live together again. This will prevent further conflict and build a line of coping mechanisms for resolving conflict that does not use violence or other abuse (Waldman, 2008).

Local peacebuilding is conceptualized as locals participatory actions based on everyday experience (Simons & Zanker, 2014). The term local seems easy enough to understand, but have caused for a widespread discussion because of lack of an empirical limitation of who the locals are. For the locals to be involved must it be an established understanding of who they are and why they are significant. The current local-discourse is not really clear on who the

locals are. Locals can be understood as those working on a grassroots' level, but those can both live inside and outside the community (Richmond, 2009). Local-local is people in the society as those who not are not under the influence by international norms and agents (Richmond, 2009). Simons and Zanker (2014) argues that the separation between peace actors in a peacebuilding is complex; they are in a constant influence of each other. Finding the local-local might be a challenge and unnecessary. This is a discourse that needs to be challenged in order to proclaim that peacebuilding is a community peacebuilding.

Richmond (2009) states that the residents of a post-conflict society tends to overestimate the capacity of international agents and therefore seek help from them, rather than using own capacity, knowledge and ideas to create sustainable solutions. The understanding of locals as peace actors often excludes the power dynamics in conflict-ridden communities between internal and external peace builders (Simons & Zanker, 2014).

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

When gathering data the words of the children and key informants, matter the most; they represent an analysis of their society. The data was collected through qualitative strategies to ensure a rich data collection and a contextual understanding of the Children's Peace Clubs in Gulu (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative data offers an insight to a social reality sited in time and space (Bryman, 2012). The study design has participatory components; the interaction between the researcher and the children is where most of the data is collected. The researcher participation in qualitative studies are often more involved. The close relationship with the data material fits the understanding of social relations. Qualitative strategies allow a higher flexibility; meaningful data is gathered in an unstructured way (Bryman, 2012). Flexibility became a trait and a necessity in conducting this study. Different settings for conducting the interviews such as in the middle of the village, different time available because of the group's timetable and students in a bus crash were all challenges that were handled with flexibility. In addition does research with children need possible adaptions? The researcher must act and think flexible while staying directed towards the aim of the study (Bryman, 2012).

It is challenging to minimize this study to one research approach. It is clearly a qualitative design, but entails many different components. The study can be seen as both descriptive and explorative. A simplified description of a descriptive study is that it answers the question of "what is" or "what is it like?" A descriptive qualitative study is an accurate and thick description of a phenomenon and its deeper meanings with rich details about the environment, interaction and meanings (Rubin & Babbie, 2013). A descriptive study about children participation in peacebuilding in Gulu would describe the peacebuilding activities the children do, how it affects their life, who supports their participation and how is it encouraged and evaluated by other decisive society members. The study's purpose is to describe children participation in peacebuilding in Gulu.

The element of exploration cannot be disregarded, as this is a somewhat unknown subject. An exploratory study indulge a new interest and the familiarity with a subject (Rubin & Babbie, 2013). In the field of social science is children's participation a well-documented subject, but not in peacebuilding. The challenge with exploratory studies is that they provide little definite

information. This can also be a strength, as the flexibility allows the researcher to discover and learn from the exploration without being bound to find certain answers.

4.1.2 Case- study

Social science research has adapted its methodology from other fields and professions. The strategies and methods can therefore sometimes be more favourable for a quantitate research then a qualitative research (Bryman, 2012). When studying people and their social reality, the boxes analysing the information are significant for the understanding of the material. That is why the selection of method can be crucial to the understanding of the study's result (Bryman, 2012). At the same time it is a challenge to find a fitting method when the field and study of social sciences are so varied that common methodology is more limiting than helpful.

With that in mind and accordingly to the research design is this study a case study, or at least closer to a case study than any other method. A case study with multiple cases. What defines a case study is the exclusive focus on the cases, accomplished by a variety of sources (Bryman, 2012). The different forms of sources in this study were interviews with key informants, focus groups and observation from the research assistant. Conclusively is the study a qualitative exploratory, descriptive, multiple case study with participatory elements.

4.2 Description of Geographic Area

Northern Uganda was terrorized by a violent group from 1986 until 2006, known as The Lord's Resistance Army. The group was led by Joseph Kony and was originally a protest against the change of president which had cut a bond between the Acholi and the national state. Additionally the change of internal authority within Acholi was going away from purely Acholi ethnicity and opening up for other candidates to share the power from other cultural groups (Allen & Vlassenroot, 2010). Joseph Kony and his rebel group operated on the idea that Acholi needed to be purified by the use of violence, so that Acholi only are left with those who were originated from the group. Communities and villages were viscously destroyed and the village children abducted to be used as slaves or soldiers. The children that were kidnapped were between 8 and 18 years of age (Vinci, 2005). The rebel group used barbaric and torturous methods such to scare children from returning home (Schnabel & Tabyshalieva, 2013). For example to force the children to return back home to kill their

parents. The indoctrination of new child soldiers included a group killing of a fellow adducted child. This was a way of introducing children to a mentality of killing without inhibition since the responsibility was shared and not only on one person (Vinci, 2005). Other techniques used towards the community were cutting off fingers, public rape, beating and torture. All done to be a visible and symbolic sign of the Lord's Resistance Army power and brutality on those who cooperated with the government (Vinci, 2005). By 2006 the government of Uganda entered into a peace process with the group. Today Gulu is in the state of rebuilding. Both its people and the infrastructure are expanding and the city council is applying for city status in order to improve the offers within the town (Odokonyero, 2013). Gulu has the second largest population in Uganda. "The key challenges for northern Uganda are insecurity, internal displacement, high population growth rates, high HIV/AIDS rates and historical marginalization" (GUSCO). The reintegrated are either stigmatized or envied because of the easy access to services, such as health care. This has created a group division specific for Gulu. All the interviews were conducted within Gulu municipality.

4.3 Description of Sample

The focus groups consisted of children that are members of peace clubs within a school or out of school association. Because of the Children Act, Chapter 59 (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2008) the minimal age sat to 12 years, as that is the legal age of the child's right to be heard. The limit of the sample was 18 years as the children then are on their way out of school. The age scope was children between the age of 12-18. The gender composition was mixed, but as the two schools are separated by gender the groups was all girls or all boys. The gender division in the out of school association was approximately equal for both genders and that was purposely selected

The clubs selected for the sample was situated in Gulu municipality, Uganda. The representatives from the peace club were designated by the patron of the club or one of the reign members of the club on the same day as the study. This was not the original intent, but became necessary because of time and misunderstandings in the communication between the researcher, the school leader and the peace club. While school peace clubs have a mandatory attendance, does out of school associations have voluntarily attendance on the children's leisure time. The two peace clubs based in school were available both for the scheduled time for the focus group and feedback the following day. This was not the case with the out of school associations. The groups in school was suggested by a former participant in the

Thematic Analysis, a workshop arranged by Save the Children in Uganda in 2007. The peace club associations were selected through WAYA (War affected Youth Associations) an umbrella organisation for many peace clubs.

The key informants or as former named the decisive society members was selected based on their different experience and role in society. Key informant nr.1 works on the district level. Key informant nr.2 is working with children awaiting trial at a remand home and are more involved in the local decision-making and processes involving children. Key informant nr.3 is a former participant of Save the Children activities in and outside Uganda. He operated as both a child representative and an accompanying adult; his experience with children participation in peacebuilding is first hand. Key informant nr.4 is the daily manager of WAYA (War Affected Youth Association). The association have several peace clubs they support and gather for an overall collective work towards a more peaceful Gulu. The key informants was selected to give a broader perspective on children participation in peacebuilding in Gulu.

4.3.1 Sampling strategies

The sample was gathered through purposive sampling to ensure a relevant sample to the research questions (Bryman, 2012). The peace clubs in school were selected with the help of a former peace club activist from Gulu that participated in many of Save the Children's gatherings concerning children participation in peacebuilding. The out of school associations were contacted through WAYA and were picked by the volunteers and daily manager at WAYA.

The sample size is in terms with the data collection methods are described in section 4.4. Eight children, sometimes nine was part of one group. Within each peace club were two focus groups conducted. Three tools were used with each set of focus groups. The members within each group had some different properties, but the former mentioned sample requirements, as age and location was the same.

4.4 Data collection methods

4.4.1. Focus group

Focus group is a well-used method in qualitative research. Meaning is created collectively through discussion among the participants (Bryman, 2012). The interactions between different participants can provide information not available in an individual interview. It is necessary to have several focus groups to discuss a topic. An advantage of data collection in groups instead of individually is that the dynamics of the focus group releases pressure on the individual (Rubin & Babbie, 2013). A focus group is recommended to be a small amount of people, around 6 to 8 people. Some researchers can choose to include more, but as it is a demanding interview technique for the researcher it requires lots of training. To include and encourage every member to a discussion in a smaller group is more manageable (Rubin & Babbie, 2013). Especially when you have little experience with the procedure, as was the case with the researcher of this study. Focus group is a practical source of data that gives a good insight to what the group think of the research topic and is therefore a good choice for this study (Rubin & Babbie, 2013).

A challenge with using focus group is that the data often can seem voluminous, with less depth and details that comes from individual interviews. Another challenge is the human tendency to prefer agreement to disagreement (Smithson, 2000). This can be enhanced by one dominant participant that triggers confirmative thinking in the group (Rubin & Babbie, 2013). As half of the peace clubs takes place in school, a setting that often accustomed to receiving information instead of creating it. In this research, the focus group discussed through tools like body map and timeline (described in the following sections). Therefore is it debatable whether or not it was a focus group, but it can be equated as it.

The tools used are made by and for children to evaluate their own participation and are fitted to their level of development. The data collection method fitted the properties of the sample. During the focus group, did the researcher take notes and inform why to the participants. The tools used was thoroughly described by the researcher and translated in the local language by the research assistant when necessary. The researcher formed a manuscript for the research assistant to make sure the tools are being translated correctly. Within each case, one school or one peace club association was two focus groups conducted. The three tools where divided,

one focus group with body-map and timeline and the second one with body-map and Venn diagram. This was to increase the level of information gathered from each case.

The tools being described where gathered and adjusted to peacebuilding by Save the Children. The study itself and the researcher were presented first, both the aim of the study, its purpose and what the gathered information was going to be used for. Children were given the choice to participate or retract their participation at any time during the study. The children were given a big range of freedom to express themselves, as they wanted. The researcher and the research assistant followed up by trying to ask questions about what the children produced. All the writing on the drawings was done in English. Some of the discussions were done in Acholi and later translated. The result from the focus groups were some recorded discussions in English, some translated notes from Acholi to English, pictures and statements connected to the pictures.

The day after the focus group was the results brought back to each of the peace clubs, the two focus groups came together and corrected, added or extracted what was misunderstood. Often local slang or words that was misspelled that needed clarification. This was a valuable process for the research to secure the children expression from being misinterpreted.

4.4.2. Timeline: Introductory tool to gain an overview of the children's participation in peace building project.

Time line is a tool used to gain an overview of the children's participation in peacebuilding initiative. The timeline provided a simple illustration of the history of the peace club, capturing major events, different phases of children's consultation or participation processes, successes and challenges over time.

The practical implementation of this tool was:
1. Draw a vertical line up 2-3 A4 papers glued together.
2. Use time as a reference point enables the children and young people to think about and document key processes/events/milestones in relation to their children's participation in peacebuilding work.
3. Highlight key events or milestones that have taken place during this time. Key challenges can also be marked on the line.

4. Start a conversation about the different phases of their establishment of the line, objectives the clubs have, results that have been achieved, the strengths and weaknesses of their work, and their future plans.
(Save the Children, 2011).

This tool provided the researcher with an overview of activities that the peace club had been doing. The timeline tool was challenging for the children because activities was hard to timestamp. Activities and challenges were not connected to a specific time by the children. All the group members often had different times they joined the group so finding common starting point was challenging.

4.4.3 Body map: Reflecting on, monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of children's participation in peacebuilding.

The aim of the body map in this study was to explore the changes children feel after starting participating in peacebuilding. Each group drew a body, using different body parts to describe what happens to behaviour, action and feelings connected to that body part when they participate (Save the Children, 2011). The changes would be positive, negative, expected or unexpected (Save the Children, 2011).

The practical implementation of this tool was:
1. A pair of two people will draw a body on an A3 paper. The body is divided in two. One part represents experience before participation in peacebuilding. The other half represents the present the changes.
2.On the body parts changes connected to that part will be written down. These can be conveys through drawings, narratives, statements or whatever the child chooses.
3. Through the exercise the researcher can ask questions connected to each body part. For a fuller description of the questions, see Appendix 2.
4. The pairs gather together in one big group and put their findings and experiences on a new big body map.
5. Use the time that the children are drawing to engage in a conversation about what they have written, why and if the change is individual or shared by the group.
5. Take notes during the exercise
(Save the Children, 2011).

The result from this tool was mostly the statements the children connect to each body part. The common body map was meant to engage the children in discussion and did to some extent, but the meaning of redoing what they already had done in pairs was lost to them.

4.4.4 Venn diagram: Reflecting on the sustainability of children's participation in peacebuilding.

The Venn diagram was for the children to identify important partners who influenced their club and peacebuilding initiatives, for example local NGO, teacher, religious leader, Women's Group, Youth Group, Local Government Official, police, local military commander, national government etc.

The practical implementation of this tool was:
Preparatory work: Cut out circles in different colours and different sizes. Provide the children with papers, pencils and glue.
1. Work in pairs to discuss, identify and list stakeholders who have an influence, and support the club and children's participation in peacebuilding processes or activities.
2. Gather in in a large group and share your findings to create a list of all relevant partners.
3. Put the child club on a circle in the middle of a large flipchart paper. The children are asked to arrange the partners near and far from the child's group, depending on which degree of partnership. Those with highest level of cooperation should be placed closest to the child. The range goes from 1 to 5, where 1 is the closest partner and 5 the more distant partners.
5. Ask the children to justify the placement and discuss the main partners. How do they support them?
(Save the Children, 2011.)

The Venn diagram provided information about where and what kind of support the children receive. The support was both formal and informal. It was at a local, national or international level. The support also is to them as individuals. The children included those who supported peace in general and not directly the club in the Venn diagram.

4.4.5 Key informant interview

The key informant's interviews were conducted with open-ended questions and four candidates. That is the number that could be accomplished with the time limit, as the priority was the children's focus groups. With open-ended question was the interviewee asked to provide his/her own meaning of the question (Rubin & Babbie, 2013). The researcher asked follow up questions to clarify the respondent's answers (Rubin & Babbie, 2013). In that sense was every interview a bit different as different subjects was mentioned and needed to be followed up. It was especially necessary since many key informants used expression and terms that were unfamiliar to the researcher. The interview started with the same twenty questions, but during the interview the researcher added or removed questions as seen necessary. The interview was recorded and later transcribed. Notes were taken during all the interviews as an extra precaution in case of technical problems.

4.5 Data analysis

The material was analysed through the method of thematic analysis. The data collected took form in statements, drawings, stories, poems and the transcription from the interviewed society members. Having a supple method of analysis opens up for a larger reign of flexibility into understanding what children are trying to communicate.

4.5.1 Thematic analysis

A thematic analysis consisted of themes that are created by meanings, events or expressions from the data (Braun & Clarke , 2006). The themes are constructed after its significance throughout the interview, traced by patterns in the material (Braun & Clarke , 2006). Theme prevalence is what is relevant, not what is repeatedly mentioned. Prevalence is not easily defined, but is part of investigating the study's relevance to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis can go across cases; therefore can a theme be created by a factor that is salient across different cases, and not only one (Bryman, 2012)?

It is the researcher's job to create links of understanding between the themes, as many forms of thematic analysis are not dependent on pre-existing theories. The researcher continues the participatory role that has been consistent throughout the study. Thematic analysis can be very flexible and varied (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For example can the analysis be essentialist,

contextual or realist? The closest option to this study was evaluated as realist, since meanings, reality or experience are the foundation of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

A thematic analysis can be both latent and semantic. A latent analysis is discussing possible underlying ideas of the data and is more theorized (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A semantic analysis is based on the content of the data, and the basic idea around it (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this case are the themes presented with semantic analysis and based on a realist method.

The results were written down as the children have written the statements, directly from the A3 papers used in the exercises. No spelling is corrected and it is formulated precisely how they were written. If it was numerated or written as a poem it was copied precisely as the children had written it. The key informant's interview was transcribed thoroughly.

4.5.2 Reliability and validity

Validity and reliability is considered to be an important measurement of the quality of research (Bryman, 2012). Reliability processes if the concept the researcher is measuring is constant (Bryman, 2012). To secure the reliability the researcher can go back with the results of the data collection and give the children a chance to give feedback on whether the data is correct and represents what the children meant to tell. Throughout the research having feedback sessions where the children went through and corrected the results from the focus group ensured reliability. Sadly as presented in limitation these notes were stolen. To further ensure the reliability the children's word was kept as originally expressed in the analysis.

Validity is a measurement of many variances; external validity measures whether the sample used in the research is representable enough to generalize the knowledge produced from it (Bryman, 2012). The final aim of this study is not to generalize how children participate in peacebuilding, but studies the case of Gulu with its historical and cultural specifics. Within social sciences done with qualitative strategies is generalization often not the aim of the study, but the knowledge extracted from the specific cases. The validity of the researcher is a challenge because of the language. Misunderstandings can have happened in the reformulation from Acholi to English. Luckily was a majority of the communication done in English. To not have access to the first hand material can diminish the validity of the study

since the words of the children are spoken through the words of adults. Because of an anticipation of language challenges a research assistant from the study area was hired. She was especially needed in the focus groups with the peace club associations that used less English.

There are proposals to judge qualitative research differently from quantitative research. There is no absolute truth about the social world, but it can be presented in many different ways. Trustworthiness is one option to reliability and validity made by Guba and Lincoln (1994 in Bryman, 2012). Trustworthiness is made up by four criteria. Credibility sets demands to ensure the study is conducted to a certain level. The findings was further be resubmitted to the participants to confirm that their presentation of their social world has been correctly understood (Guba and Lincoln 1994, in Bryman, 2012). The second criterion is transferability; qualitative findings often are directed towards a context or a specific aspect of the social world. On this point the researcher was encouraged to write thick descriptions? That provides other researchers with a detailed and deep description of a specific milieu (Guba and Lincoln 1994, in Bryman, 2012). The third criterion is the dependability, an auditing approach. The researcher documented every step of the research and make them accessible. Other peers can so act as auditors to follow up the process (Guba and Lincoln 1994, in Bryman, 2012). Lastly is the criterion of conformability, ensuring that the researcher acted in an ethical manner. These criteria can be side lined with objectivity, but in social research it is total objectivity and hard to reach (Guba and Lincoln 1994, in Bryman, 2012).

4.6 Study Limitations

The work of this study was prohibited to some extent by the theft of the researcher's computer on the way to the field. The thief kept calling the researcher during the fieldwork to get ransom money for the computer. The stress had a negative effect on the researcher the following day, which was the day of the first interview and the first focus group. To compensate for the missing computer the interviews were recorded and field notes written. These notes contained observation, questions from the focus groups, notes from the key informants interview; conversations with the children, circumstantial factors and ethical choices that had to be considered quickly. When returning to Kampala, these notes were also stolen. What was left of the primary data was the body maps, timelines and Venn diagram from all the focus groups, with the children's statements. Some recordings from the focus

groups were preserved and together with the recordings from the key informant interviews. The lack of data does not only limit the scope of the study, but can also be diminish the validity of the study.

Time became a limit of the study. Since the research location was not my residual location where many of the arrangements were made in advance through phone and email. In many of the cases notice of me coming to do research had not been delivered from the school administration to the peace club or notice was only given on the same day I attended. The peace clubs had activities planned for that day, but were able to give the researcher the necessary time. On one occasion the children had to stop in the middle of the focus group to go to church. The two focus groups lasted until late in the evening, which was not ideal for the children as they already had a long school day. Some of the key informants also had limited time because of other obligations. The researcher herself also had a limitation of time and therefore had no chance to repeat the interviews after the notes and computer were stolen.

The language is a challenge and a limitation of this study. The transcription revealed several words which can have two meanings due to their spelling (for example: meant for hearing or earrings). Sometimes the children would also write in Acholi. There was also examples where the exercise had been misunderstood even though it had been confirmed as understood, examples of misunderstandings were putting statements on the assumed wrong side of the body-map. Assumptions could be made, but all the statements were interpreted from their position. Sometimes the children would also mix negative and positive behaviour on both sides of the body-map. The feedback procedure was used to clarify these misunderstandings; most of these notes were stolen as former mentioned.

The study is a fulfilment of a Master degree in social work with families and children and is limited by the requirement and time given by the course.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Research needs to be ethically conducted partly because it validates the research, but mostly because social research often involves people in a vulnerable situation and to add further distress to their situation is unjust and unethical (Bryman, 2012).

Research with children needed to take extra consideration. Children that give their consent to participate must be fully informed about the intended use of the study. It is important that it is explained in a language and terms that are understandable for the participants. A research can never, no matter what level of information, be entirely open because outcomes of the analysis cannot be predicted. The effects and conclusions of the research are not known to anyone at the time of gathering the informed consent (Homan, 1992).

There is often the parent or carers that give their consent as the children are minors. The researcher ensured that both parts were fully informed and not only the parents. To that aim two types of consent forms were provided, one for the children and one for the adults, see appendix 4 and 5. Four of the focus groups were conducted in boarding schools where they lived away from their parents. Even though the consent forms were sent in advance on email were they not given to the children before the day of the study by the researcher. The signature of the school administration solved this.

A more unsettling challenge was that the key informant did not receive any consent form. They disappeared together with the computer on the way into the field and failed to be recreated. They key informants therefore had to give their oral consent and the researcher explained the aim of the study and the right to at any time to withdraw their contribution.

As researcher it is important to acknowledge that our presence and inquisition of the subjects experience is an insight to a part of their private life. To keep this in mind is crucial to ensure respect for the individual and its surroundings (Bryman, 2012). To ensure the children's anonymity no names or clubs was mentioned in the report. No characteristics or personal details was included. Some of the ethical dilemmas the researcher noted down during the fieldwork was not anticipated and therefore had to be dealt with then and there in the line of the researcher values and research experience. These are elaborated on in the following section.

In the school peace club the following was considered a challenge. Firstly, upon arrival, no information from the email correspondence with the school leader had been transferred to patron or matron of the peace club. Often the groups were formatted right then and there. This was an unfortunate situation for both parties. The researcher had to regroup to keep the number down to eight; some of the children left voluntarily. Throughout this re-shuffle the researcher risked the children feeling like they were being excluded. Although this was what was

happening care was taken to ensure the children were not made to feel inadequate. The selection did not take much time and was entirely random. There was no specific age group or other characteristic that was used for selection, so there is no way of knowing if this had any impact on the results of the study. This was not a challenge the researcher had anticipated. The peace club was thanked as a whole, but no further contact was made with those who were made to leave the group.

Other problems were the presence of adults and patrons during the study. They would often try to help or direct the children. The children were often also aware of his or her presence and that they might, would correct their behaviour. Especially since it is in a school setting and their relationship might be more authoritative than cooperative. The researcher had to warn the patron about how her/his presence could affect the children.

An important question asked by a participant in the school peace club was if the study had a purpose outside of academia that could gain them and their work towards peacebuilding. The honest answer is that this study for now only has an academic gain, but it made the researcher aware of the inference in their private life that was required during the exercises. This kind of research carries a responsibility with being honest and explaining the range of the study carefully to not create expectation of advantages of participation.

When doing research with children that are under the legal age of consent, their parents or caretakers should always be informed and permit their children to participate in the study. Both of the schools that partook in this study were boarding schools and therefore had no caretakers available. The researcher and school leader tried solving this dilemma by letting the school leader and the patron of the peace club give their consent. The school is the children's home and the school leaders are responsible for their wellbeing so this became the best solution.

In the peace club association the following was considered to be a challenge:
A challenge with the peace club association was the lack of a fitted location to conduct the study. It ended up being done outside in the village where there were other people, goats and dust. The children did not express any concern about this, but many children and adults around them that were doing everyday chores were watching them, which made them try to hide what they were writing and spoke very low when they were asked questions.

For the participation did the peace club association require a soda and packet of biscuit for each participant? A research should not be conducted with tokens or rewards, but in this case it was to help against the heat the children had to stand when doing focus group for nearly two hours in the sun. It is assumed that the token alone did not motivate the children to partake as there was one respondent that was asked to participate, but refused with knowledge of the biscuit and soda.

The researcher and the respondent have a different background. Sometimes an ethical dilemma was a question the assumptions of the researcher about the participants life. Religious leaders was for example written up as supporting the peace club, being in a catholic school the researcher didn't make any inquiry if there was children who had a different faith, as could have been the case.

4.7.1 Reflexivity

Before leaving for Gulu did I have many expectations. Most of all was I nervous because of my unfamiliarity with both Uganda and the North's development since 2006 when the conflict ended. The media image presented of Northern Uganda was as a turbulent and unstable area of former conflict, where there was little respect for human right and human life. I was well aware of the North being without conflict in many years and on a way of peaceful rehabilitation. The second image was presented to be by both Ugandans inside and outside of Uganda's borders. My classmates from Uganda talked about their experiences with the North in recent years and they made me sure that it was the correct decision to do my study there. I had long hoped it was possible so to eliminate the safety issue and start planning for the research was a very exciting process. My interest in the children of Gulu is a combination of interest in children's participation as a professional social worker and hearing about the conflict of Gulu and the children there through the perspective of a line of international organizations. Such as Norwegian Refugee Council, which referred to the conflict in the North as the biggest humanitarian crises in our lifetime. In addition to Save the Children, UNICEF, World Vision. Save the Children and their post-conflict work with the children in Uganda was a tale that moved and inspired me. I saw the significance of using the children's participation in peacebuilding as a flag carrier for establishing in all aspects of a child's life.

Before arriving to Gulu from Kampala was my computer stolen, this became rather problematic as I had much of the preparatory work to the study at that computer. The idea was that the research process would not be interrupted by this, but the constant telephones from the thief made it hard to not be influenced. As a researcher personal distress should not be brought into an interview situation, this could to an extent not be influenced. What was extra unfortunate is that my scheduled interviews for the first days after the theft was only with children. There was a need for me to be very present, good to observe and patience to make sure everyone understood the tools we were using. I tried to be aware that feeling of discontent and stress might be connected to the theft, but that I should not let it influence my research process. I think it to some degree did and that is regretful. Children are especially aware over adults mood and can correct their behaviour accordingly to their mood. My hope is that as the time passed I became more distant to the situation and also more known with group setting of interviews and the tools and therefore was a better moderator for the children through the interview.
My understanding of participation was biased to how children participate in a social work context in Norway. Uganda and Norway are different in many ways and it can have been that I searched for the Norwegian reality of participation rather than letting the participants redefine participation based on what was experienced as participation in Gulu. What was challenging in several sense was both embracing participation as presented in the study and being critical to if the participation was genuine in Gulu. This was because the measurement of participation in itself was vague and sometimes hard to connect to the situations in the data.

My cultural upbringing does not necessary limit me to do study within other cultures, but there are things that are beyond my understanding and therefore are limiting the study. This could be as simple as the children referring the narratives from Acholi that I am not familiar with nor am I known with the stories aim or message to those receiving them. The setting of the data collection and my point of view of interpretation are different. This can cause a misread of the information that has been gathered. Doing research within a group that is well familiar with each other and share some same point of reference can also do that the group leave out information that they inherently understand within the group, but that are unknown to me.

At the end of the third focus group a child asked me as a researcher of the purpose of this research; academically or if it actually does dome difference for them as a peace club. This

was something I not was prepared for and my answer could have been more honest, but the idea was that for the time being it only had an academically purpose. After telling it to the child, I reflected on how it can go beyond that in the future. It cannot only be done as a favour for the children for participating. My motivation for bringing it further is that much like participation in peacebuilding promoting the role of young peacebuilders needs to be a responsibility of all society members. There needs to be a collective action. I hope my research can be a contribution to the knowledge and interest around what young peacebuilders can do and why it is important.

5. Findings

A thematic analysis was used to interpret and represent the themes in this chapter. The sub-themes under each theme broaden the understanding. In this presentation and interpretation of themes are the research questions tried answered. Each quote or statement will be marked if it is a child's statement in school peace clubs with "School". Otherwise, peace club association will be marked as "Association". The amounts of data from the school peace clubs turned out to be much larger. Therefore, it is being marked by chance of significant differences. The excerpts taken from the key informant interviews will be marked with "Society member". The term society member and key Informant will be used interchanging to create some variation in the text. Keep notice too; that since the quotes are taken directly from the drawings produced by the children, there might be spelling errors made by the children. All text is presented in original form to not interfere with children words. The quotations or statements used to present the themes are a mix of verbatim quotations from the recordings of the discussions during the focus group, statements from the drawings that were created by the children during the focus group and quotes from the transcription of the key informant interview

The tools talked about in the analysis are the timeline, body-map and Venn diagram that was presented in chapter 4.4 (Save the Children, 2011). These tools measure the scope of the children's participation in the community, the changes the child experiences when being a part of making peace and presents activities where children participate. The tools used in this study had some modifications. In order to keep the information from the tools as true to the original form as possible is there sometimes short statements, clustered together presenting results from the tools, rather than quotes that appear in most other themes.

5.1 Theme 1: Peacebuilding Activities

This theme was evident in the data because of the tool the body map, which asked the children to write how they changed before and after peacebuilding. The timeline gave information about what the children were doing in peace club. The key informants gave their insight and reflection around peacebuilding activities involving children. A significant amount of the data went specifically into this theme because the preliminary literature review

formulated a very vague picture of what peacebuilding is. What is the peace clubs doing for promoting and building peace?

A majority of the peace club activities revolved around telling people about peace, presumably because the community had adapted to another mind-set during the war days. All the excerpts below represent ways of communicating peace. The children and society members mentioned a diverse way of executing it such as teaching, speaking, dancing, singing writing, educate, dramatize and discussing.

> *Debates, town life vs. village life, educate the ones that have lost on certain topics (Child, School).*
>
> *Teaching parents about peace (Child, Association).*
>
> *To inform other people and about peace and it makes us research more about this deeper issues into peace when you go for debate you need to do micro-research. So it is a win win situation for winning and losing team (Child, School).*
>
> *To write in order to inform the people about the benefit off peace in our Environment (Child, School).*

The children did not mention the reaction or interplay with the receivers of the message. Often their target group was kept rather anonyms and vague. The following excerpts define the peace club as more than a messenger of peace, but talks about their whole existence as help with the psychosocial environment in Gulu. The peace clubs presence is an advocacy for peace. This quote was unlike the others, said by a Society Member so it is viewing the peace clubs and their activities from an outside perspective with a very positive attitude.

> *They do educate the community on issues about peace, in that education they can use drama, they can use plays and personal messages like the war is bad, conflict is bad. Peace clubs is not only selling information, but it is also in itself an asset to the progress of psycho social within. They are given an affective community, they discussed issues that affected themselves, and they resolve how much they can be able to do to get issues within the local leaders. Peace clubs within the community and the*

schools is a force in themselves; it is an advocacy to, to realize the rights of those who are being violated, so it is an advocacy too (Society member).

The diversity of activities presented, such as *Digging and laying bricks* (Child, Association), was written on the timeline as a peacebuilding activity. This could be a misunderstanding of the tool since laying bricks has little to do with peacebuilding. It can also be interpreted as a commitment to the community and building peace through doing what needs to be done for the community's development. Maybe the former understandings is the researcher trying to interpret the action of a child in an adult context, rather than considering the latter explanation as more believable and embrace it as a caption of a peacebuilding activity defined by a child participating in his/her community. To understand why it is a peacebuilding activity would require a more in-depth investigation, but what the child define as peacebuilding is peacebuilding.

5.1.1 Subtheme 1: Understanding of Peace and Peacebuilding

There was no general goal or a simple definition of what peace and peacebuilding was for the participants. This theme came as a necessity after the variety of descriptions of peacebuilding and peace, embracing the diversity found in the data. The children rarely referred directly to what they considered as peacebuilding, but answered in form of activities and behaviour that they do for peace or consider peaceful. However, during a discussion a child described peace as a vital element and something that gives joy and development. Peace is the next step where everything is "moving on well".

First of all peace is a vital element in a community, if a community is peaceful we shall have joy in our lives and everything should move on well, I joined peace club because I felt I should be an activist of such a wonderful club that brings freedom to everyone (Child, School).

The freedom the child talks about come up again when a society member talks about freedom now unlike the days of the rebels. The freedom includes for example sleeping without gun sounds, dance and going to school. This can give some perspective on how life without peace was like in Gulu.

We are free to move, we are able to have education and to school and we are able to come out with our important issues that concerns us. Because now a days children issues, voices have even been heard so even that one we can consider as important of peace. Because those days when the rebels were still around you cannot come out with any issues, no one respect the children's right, children's right are just violated in many way. So we can see peace, happiness, sleeping without hearing the gun sounds, dance, no fighting in the family, everyone is happy, going to school, those we can see at least we are enjoying some part of this (Society Member).

In both verbatim quotations is there a connection between freedom and happiness or joy. There is a common understanding of what peace can bring in a society. One part of the society member's quotation that should have been further investigated in the interview is the last part claiming, "at least we are enjoying some part of this". Hinting that there is part of the society, which according to him people are not enjoying. This however remains unclear.

One of the key informants also mentioned the importance of being supported by those around. The togetherness is key to build peace and solve problems. The process of peacebuilding is done in fellowship and rewards the individual with a peaceful life. The last sentence put emphasis on the harmony already present needs to be extended into time and to future generations.

Wow, peace is not absence of war only, but peacebuilding to me is a process, a process that can make somebody live peacefully and an enjoyable life no matter where they are they are able to solve their problems amicably and there is mutual support among one another. Peacebuilding is about problem solving, it is about togetherness; it is about sustainability of the harmony that we have. That is my understanding (Society Member).

5.1.2 Subtheme 2: Peacebuilding through cultural means

Almost every focus group had a dominant element of culture in their activity agenda. Some society members had the experience of being in direct contact with the peace club or helping peace clubs arrange their activities further confirmed the present of ethnic performances.

The communication and encouragement to live peaceful was further emphasized in this theme. One society member was working closely with the arrangements of activities for several peace clubs said the following about cultural dance:

> *Our strategy is to use the cultural means to mobilize and sensitize our community about the effect of the war and how we can mediate it, and of course the cultural dance have been the model approach in all of our programs. (Society Member)*

During the interview, it was explained to the researcher that the term "to sensitize" is a process to inform or create awareness around a subject, in their case peace. Peace was communicated through traditional mechanisms that both the children and the community could relate to, something they could gather around. It is an approach adapted to children's way of participating and triggers communities' willingness to listen to children after seeing them as perpetrators.

This was an approach used from the start by the peace clubs, as explained by a society member did *"abducted children would sing to the community to tell that it was not their choice to join the rebels"(*Society member). Dancing, storytelling and singing was talked about in the focus group by the children. They focused less on why they were doing it and more on what they were doing. Some of the activities was beyond the researcher's cultural understanding and is therefore hard to interpret as a finding, as for example

> *Stories that promote peace for example Gipiir and Labongo (spear and the bead). Storytelling, wisdom stories of hyena and M. Hare and folks. (Child, School)*

5.1.3 Subtheme 3: Peacebuilding towards others

Including others and caring for those around was noticeable in many of the peacebuilding activities. For example was street children included in a football tournament and there was made extra effort to find and mobilize them.

> *It was a very colourful tournament, we had teams that played, we also brought on board street children …Cause they are so mobile, so when we organized the football*

tournament they turned up of course at the contact of their leader who mobilized them after we talked to them first in the office. (Society Member)

Another example is the peace club that went to tell orphanages to show them love, talk to them and ensure them that they also are part of this world. This is an act of care and love from the peace club. The peace club supports by reminding them that they have a purpose in the society. The sharing and inclusion can be interpreted as how the children will proceed to create peace.

Like the orphanage they see themselves as neglected by people, they are lonely and so as the people of the peace club we also have to go and talk to them, to show them love and also tell them they belong to the world (Child, School).

The following excerpts are additional examples of the children's capacity for showing care and commitment to include everyone in their society. It shows a priority of making everyone feel part of the society and showing love to those who needs it. With their actions, one can say that children are creating a sense of togetherness.

*Embracing the lonely, weak people (*explained as fragile, sick or pennyless) (Child, School)*

Like for example if a person lost her relatives, and I go and invite him over, but that is no longer so you should forget about it and think about the future (Child School).

We make some people forget about the past during the world war by advising them, playing with them, telling the good words, news (Child, Association).

Unlike the Society Members, understanding of peace in Subtheme 1 is the children grasp of peace and peacebuilding more practical. The activities use culture as a way to gather people and focus on common traits rather then what separates the community. Their work is often directed towards others and how they should feel good or cared about, in that way, through interpretation, will children build peace.

5.2 Theme 2: Changes towards Peaceful behaviour: before and now

What changes for a child when she or he starts with peacebuilding? While theme 1 was planned activities with the aim of creating peace, this theme is concerned about children's behaviour. How they act on a daily basis and how peace infiltrate their behaviour. The data was mainly extracted from the body maps. Some of the statements are somewhat short, unless they have a further explanation given by the children during the feedback session or if it is mentioned during the discussion in the focus groups.

Theme 2: Changes towards Peaceful behaviour: before and now
The transformation from non-peaceful to peaceful behaviour is presented in this theme. Some of the respondents described previous behaviour related to violence:

> *Before: Kick to discipline people (children often do so to make them fear you). After: Instructing children, not beating (Child, School).*

The after segment presents a completely different reaction in the same situation that is less harmful for both parts. Here, the child has specifically claimed that after starting participating in peacebuilding she/he stopped acting violently and found another way of solving the same task.

Some of the respondents started acting differently towards others. There was also the case exemplified in the next quote. Change in one's own reaction pattern to not act aggressively or violently towards others. The solutions involved to remove oneself from the situation or talk and listen to solve the situation.

> *During the time of the war I was very rude, you cannot go with a punch or a kick" (corrected in feedback to that when the person would be annoyed he would react by kicking or punishing people, (now, during feedback the respondent says he walks away from the situation or talk and listen) (Child, School)*

Some children before used their verbal skills to abuse or discriminate others. Their behaviour alternated to reflect values that are fair, equal and more respectful. Either it was a general change, or a particular such as language use or discrimination directed towards one specific group.

> *Before: Abuse teachers and others with vulgar language. After: Using vulgar language is not a way of living among us (Child, Association).*

> *Before: Discriminate ugly people from beautiful people (mock or do not want to be friends with) After: Look at everyone as equal (Child, school).*

The changes always seemed to go from harmful, to a behaviour that was considered good or positive for the receiver. Alternatively, did the children simply exclude bad behaviour from their vigour? Participation in peacebuilding seems to make them think about how they were behaving and if their actions reflected a peaceful way of living and relating to others.

5.2.1 Subtheme 2: Changes in way of thinking: before and now

A child in the study used a lesson from the bible to argue that the need to love yourself needs to be met first, and then you will give that love to others. Those who give more will receive more from God (the figure they worship in Christianity). This lesson from the bible is presumably being used as an example on how to build peace because she/he has some personal experience with the growth from learning to embrace oneself and to extent that to others. Otherwise, it can also be that the words of the bible better captured what she would like to say than herself, as she confirms by saying, "that is what I have".

> *The bible says love one another as you love yourself if you do not love yourself how are you going to love anyone else? So love starts within you, then you extent that love for your neighbour, then those who gives, receives more. If you have some money and you see someone that needs some help, better that you give so the lord also give you more, that is what I have* (Child, School)

Change in thinking is not detected between problem and new solution as behavioural changes. Thinking is not necessary directed towards one specific problem, but concentrated around a way of conducting one's life. One respondent say:

Before joining the peace club, I was jealous. After: I create peace. I seek for peace (Child-Association)

It can also be a perception of other people in the society that changes. Through getting a better understanding of those who the respondent acted unkindly towards before, have the relation towards them changed. They could have understood what kind of people they become by making fun of others.

"Before: Laughing of people that are needy. After: Having passion for those in need." (Child School)

While some children needed to change their view of co-citizens, were others struggling with their perception of their own self-value?

Before: Think bad about my life, that I have a useless life because I could not respect my friend, elders and teachers. After: peace club creates respect among students and teachers at school (Child, School).

The peace club have the abilities that he/she before was lacking, to create respect. It is difficult to understand if the ability to respect others, including him/herself, is something that she/he feels have happened within also.

5.3 Theme 3: Adult perceptions of children's participation

This theme emerged from the transcriptions. The society members were reflecting around the community relationship to children's participation in peacebuilding. What are the similarities and contradictions between society members and children description of children participation in peacebuilding in Gulu? These relationships can be negative and inhibit children from participating.

One of the society members did describe some of the adults perceiving children's increased participation as a threat to their authority. Instead of forming a complementary relationship, did it have a tendency to become competitive?

And there is that generation gap, other seem to think that their understanding is much better than the children's, and children on the other hand will say that these adults are old-timers. There are some kind of competition between a child and an adult, and that is one of the reasons for one of the children being here also, because they want to break through the shell but the parents say no, you get my point? (Society Member)

The society member is talking from his experience of working at a juvenile correction facility with children facing a crime. When he refers to the child breaking out of their shell, can it be assumed that the adult in the child's life has wrongly accused or done something the adults considered criminal, which might in a child's eye was a way of gaining independence. From this assumption, one can also reflect on the words of an adult counts for more than the words of a child, being that the child now is in a correction facility.

Several society members have talked about the adult uncertainty of what the children's participation means for them. The following quote shares an interesting point of view on children being inhibited from participation, but are engaged otherwise in domestic chores.

Many times people think is it is something that compels other people to do certain things. They fear challenges from children because during participation children ask a lot of questions, even parents. Others do not want to be asked those questions, they may think children are only challenging them…But to some extent they will want children to do a lot of things for themselves as productive activities within the homes and within the society, but very little is being shared. You know children only; many times children come as the third person as a follower (Society Member).

The circumstances described within the two former quotes do not nurture children participation. The question remains if there is a need for adults to support children in order for them to partake in peacebuilding. Another society member take on this question.

Researcher: "Can children participate without the support of adults?"
Respondent: "Well they can participate, but it is important to involve adults because they are big people. Without their support we cannot bring peace, cause peace need everyone together, so we cannot say we have peace and we are dealing with children

only, everyone need peace, and we need to train children including their parents yeah" (Society Member).

"They are big people" can be understood as a metaphor for the adults' power or space in the public room they are occupying that limits children to participate. This quote has a more hopeful inclination towards cooperation between every entity in the society, including children, based on the common aim of achieving and needing peace. The description of relationship between adults and children in this quote is interdependent and equal. The respondent is including both children and their parents in training.

5.3.1 Subtheme 1: What children say about adult involvement?

Children's description of adult involvement in their peacebuilding work was either ambivalent, excluding or negative. There was no data material of children talking about a strong cooperation between them and adults. Children would describe the adults holding power as someone that could stop them or make them take choices they did not find suitable. In the following excerpts, a child talks about the power the school used to refuse the children's vision for a peacebuilding activity. The reason behind the rejection was unknown to the children.

We decided to ask administration to help us so we go and reconcile with those people through the human right focus and the human rights commission, but the school failed us they let us down (Child, School).

Another child talks about the decision-making process within the peace club. However, the clubs decisions are not shared with the patron or others adults around them.

Researcher: "How do you decide what kind of peace activities that you want to do? Are you doing it with or without adults?"
Respondent: "We do it by ourselves as a club, we sit and discuss what we should do and what are the benefits, like planting of flowers, so we decide (Child, School).

A somewhat positive or at least nuanced outlook on adult as an influence on children choices is the following quote.

For me it depends right, if an adult is talking to you is positive and what she is really telling you is good, than you can take it. But if an adult is telling you what is not good then a parent telling you go and get married yet you are still young and cannot go and get married. At least you can try to argue with a good adult, no I cannot do that I am still young, I want to go the school and study (Child, School).

The child uses the term good adult and tells she/he can try to argue with those who are of that kind. The respondent is also open to what an adult is telling, when it is good. There is no definition in the quote of what separates good and not good, but the child uses an example of child marriage.

All three excerpts are concerned about choices and who is included in taking them. Little in these descriptions indicates a free sharing of information between child-adult or peace club-school administration. There is no mention of common meetings or feedback procedures, which again would make it easier for adults to understand children's way of participating in peacebuilding. In addition, for children to comprehend why adults take the choice that sometimes discards children pronounced wishes.

5.3.2 Subtheme 2: What is an adult's responsibility for children's participation in peacebuilding?

The adult's responsibility of children participation is a more active role than the former described perception of children's participation in peacebuilding. The first excerpt is a description of a cooperative relationship between children and adults to instigated children's participation.

We do not want the kind of participation where parents say what the children should do, telling children what to be done. But we want a situation where when talking about participation, when children initiate things by themselves and then they proceed with it, so parents should also be. The responsibility their parents have is to encourage children so that they go ahead with the work they are doing, but if there is any problem with the initiative they are making, parents can help, only so parents can be

supportive to children so that they become more. They participate more (Society member).

The respondent describes a balance between help and independence: That the adult has to allow the child space and encourage them to participate by own means. At the same time should parents help if needed, but in a sustainable way so that children can increase their participation. This respondent brings out two very significant points; firstly, he/she talks about the kind of participation that is unwanted, where children participate, but parents telling them how. Secondly, he/she brings up the symbiotic relationship between adults and children. Both entities can draw advantages from cooperating.

Another respondent talks about the responsibility of telling children that they have rights. It is not given for a child that they have rights and it is a mentality they must be indoctrinated in. This respondent emphasizes the adult's responsibility at several different levels, at home, office and school.

Yes it should be adult's responsibility. First of all we must be able to tell children what belongs to children. We must be able to tell children that they have rights and that they are claimers to rights. Unless they have been told about that then they will not be able to participate because they don't know that they need to. It is a responsibility at home, it is a responsibility in an office, it is a responsibility in a school that we should be able to tell them that there are right holders (Society Member).

The level of responsibility connected to the adult's responsibilities of children participation are not coherent with the former subtheme where children described their relationships to adults interference in peacebuilding (Chapter 5.3.1). These extracts presents a vision for what adults have to do for children's participation. It still lacks a more practical understanding, which can be a disturbance between the adults' commitment to children participation and the children's perception of adult's interference as non-supportive or not wanted.

5.4 Theme 4: Support from group's organisations, church and community, to peacebuilding and participation.

How do children evaluate the support given to them? This theme emerged from the children drawing a Venn diagram, consisting of those who supported on a scale from 1 to 5. It was later discussed how those in the diagram was supporting the peace club. In the peace clubs in school the discussion was done in English. The groups had a strong language competence. The four cases of peace club associations were most of the discussions done in Acholi (the local language) and thereafter transcribed by the research assistant that was present during the focus group. In addition, some of the key informants contributed with information of support given to the peace clubs. The main theme came from the dominance of group, church and organizations in the inner circles of the Venn diagram in many of the cases. The support given came in many different forms.

One of the respondents talked about how a peace club association helps them. This emphasizes the variety of support that can be given.

> *Supports us with cultural peace dances, playing football for unity, teach us songs for peace, dramas, give us storybooks and scholarships (Child, Association).*

These are coherent with peacebuilding activities that are mentioned in theme 1. Support for doing activities such as playing football and learning songs that they can sing for peace. Such a close coherence can make one wonder how much the support granted is steering the peace clubs agendas? The supporter is also providing them with material resources and scholarship. This association and the peace club have the same aim to create peace. The exchange between them is rather frequent and they can both work as a resource for each other.

Another example of a relationship of the cooperative kind that was seen as supportive for the respondent and working towards the same aim.

> *Ilo Mon Malo Womens Group; They teach us traditional dances; they also send us to several places where we perform our dances for peace (Child, Association).*

The support is often directed more towards peacebuilding than specific participation. The former extract can be a good example of both processes, as the children dance and the aim is to build peace. However could it also be an example of adults trying to support children participation by telling them what to do?

Another excerpts talks about the support from the church in form of advice.

> *So always when we are in the church they advise to share like the other people who are needy, and by sharing with them you make friends with them you talk to them about peace, cause there is others who have less, almost nothing. So when you share with them you give some sort of advice and you listen (Child, school).*

The quote itself goes from point to point at times. The main thing to notice is the lesson the church is giving about sharing. These are words that the respondent might personally followed, as she thoroughly described what kind of consequences these actions could have. In many cases, the children answered in a way that made the researcher uncertain if they understood the tool. Still through a repetition of the aim of the tool, the children kept referring to support not directly engaged with the peace club. Instead it is learning and wisdom children took from the interaction and turned into support for their peacebuilding work.

The last quote is a mix between material support and support through advice. The support is coming from the human rights office.

> *Okay, like last year we had some members from human right offices they came to the school here so they were trying to advice us about peace how to create peace even at home. Maybe if we want to go out they can also help us financially so that's how they help us to promote peace at least by something to go and visit. Like last year we went and visit some children from Acholi and we take some things for them that was all from the human rights offices (Child, School).*

The quote itself is a bit confusing since the child is going back and forth. The child is talking about what they learned from the human rights offices on how to create peace. Financial support that makes it possible for the children to bring gifts to those they visit. Several

children define learning skills to promote peace as a way adults support their participating in peacebuilding.

5.4.1 Subtheme 1: Support from individuals as parents, siblings, teachers or friends.

Support from individuals also was in the Venn diagram. Their support was often not frequent, but still visible and significant for the children. It might be support by engaging the children or by believing in their abilities. A very good example on support is from a parent presented as a narrative in the following excerpt. The story is quite extensive, but shows support to change from one type of behaviour to a more peaceful one.

> *Like for me I can say that my mother she will be number one bringing peace in my life because I can say that for example that my dad declared that he is not ready to pay my school fees, but my mother just told me; my child you get settled, this is not the end of your life, you will still have a bright future. Because by that time my father were not taking me to school, but other children were going to school. I grew very angry. I knew it even when mom left me with young kid at home you don't do any kind of mistake I will just beat you because of that. But after when we went for this storytelling, at night my mother kept advising me in order for you my daughter to be a good women in the future you must be a kind person, a caring and a peacemaker. (Be) cause if you cannot make great peace in our family no one will come to our family in the future, which means you are going to be a woman alone in future. Then by that time I started feeling peace in my life by that time. Then she started taking me back to school to repeat senior four, then I repeat it and then by fourteen then I joined 5, that make my life now to be a peaceful life to the end as I promised (Child, School).*

The use of traditional mechanisms such as storytelling is the turning point in this narrative. The advice and care the mother gives this child results in inspiration, help and knowledge on how and why to act kind and live peacefully. By supporting and giving the child a future hope, the child exceeds to continue at school and live a peaceful life. This is again helpful for the peace club as their members are committed to making peace and the narrative can inspire others that might be in the same situation as her/him.

Parents were also helpful in contributing to the peace club by giving material resources on visitation day. The parents contributed with things the children could give or money to buy what the children wanted to give.

> *Last time during visitation day we just settled there and we were collecting money from parents in order to support us, and go and visit with people at Acholi. Then they have given us a lot like they have offered soaps, money, even sugar, all those things, I was the one personally collecting it from the gate and I was amazed (Child, School).*

A child is highly appreciative for the support given by the parents. It might have been hard for children to collect these things otherwise. For the parents is it a way of showing that they want to contribute to the peacebuilding activities the children are doing.

The children mentioned the school and the people working there several times. They could be supportive in the children's understanding of peace and bring awareness around the subject of peace.

> *Okay the teacher can help us by teaching us how to write poems, stories about peace and they can also give us advice about peace and how to write those stories and poems about peace and through that they will create peace (Child, School.)*

Patron and matrons, adult leaders of the peace club, also gave a great deal of support. In the following statement it is said how the patron is creating work for the club and raising the clubs significance in conflict management in the school. He is supporting them and advising them on how to go into a conflict situation.

> *Our patron sometimes if things are in a mess at school, so he normally calls for a meeting with the peace club and he will start telling us as peace club members should at least try to advice the other students. Not to maybe there is something wrong maybe the students wants to (another students whisper strike) strike so he can easily advice us so that we can advice other students not to go ahead with such kind of manners (Child, School).*

5.4.2 Subtheme 2: Indirectly support towards peacebuilding

The researcher expectation to the Venn diagram was that more of the support would be an action or cooperation the peace club was involved in. Instead, many of the children considered a support for peace, as support for the peace club. Therefore, some of the supporters had never been in contact with the peace club directly. Artist and radio presenters was seen as supports by the children, but never been in contact with the peace club. They were seen as helpful because they could influence and reach out to people, for example through song.

> *Researcher: Musicians, who do they help you with peace?*
> *Respondent: The songs, they sing songs about peace like for instance the local artist of one he sings about peace in many songs and music also transforms people's life (Child, School).*

The musicians are handed the ability to change people's life by singing about peace. That the artist in this case is local can do that they in a higher degree can relate to what the artist is singing about.

In addition, radio presenters was said to be a support for the peace club.

> *Okay, a radio presenter they organize talk shows where the public goes and listen to and now we will be listening to what they are talking about when we come back to school we will be able to share it with our friends (Child, School).*

The respondents would learn from the radio presenter and teach it to others. It does not affirm what the radio presenters are talking about, but that many people go to listen. The ability to gather many people to listen seemed valued by the children. The support comes through the knowledge the radio presenters are disposing during their talk show.

Government officials, for example police officers was working and supporting the aim of peace. The children would consider the fear of being arrested, so strong that people would be scared to act in a peaceful manner. This was seen as supporting peacebuilding and the peace clubs work in the end.

The policemen will arrest those criminal in the society so if those people are arrested at least they would even scare others that might be having that heart of doing something bad, through that they will be creating peace and harmony in the community (Child, School).

5.5 Theme 5: Challenges

What challenges do children face when trying to participate in peace building in their surroundings? Each focus group came up with some challenges. The key informants also talked about challenges they saw for peacebuilding, for Gulu, for participation and general difficulties.

One of the challenges brought up by the key informants is the threat to the safety of the future. The respondents recognize the force the young population possess:

> *I think this is the moment were everybody has to analyse included the children because I am afraid that they could be even revolution in the future where children will turn to fight away the adults. So it could be an opportunity for children participation because if they see things are not moving very well they better also come in to analyse the whole situation so that we make our place, a good place to live in* (Society Member)

The perception that all youth will turn and fight is rather deterministic. Especially in a society where children and youth are engaged in almost two hundred peace clubs. A very important point is though, that all society members should analyse the current situation and work together to make it a good place to live in. The quote gives children an active role, either through revolution or through being a part of building the society. The danger is however to ignore the force of the young generation and the loss will be their energy, abilities and ideas helping Gulu and Uganda develop.

The effort to get children into positions where they can influence, analyse and contribute in decision-making processes is challenging. A respondent specifically references the work they put into trying to establish a children's parliament.

Respondent: Well the problem are first, we raised a concern to bring children parliament in Gulu district level so that children can come and discuss things that effects them and present district level to discuss things on district meeting we want that one a children parliament in Gulu district.
Researcher: so there is a child parliament?
Respondent: …that they have agree to put a children representative in the district level, we have that one…, 6 years, so that need follow up always, but the problem now is we should forward this one, but as save the children are supporting us in training and whatever the persons who have just completed save the children. She left work, she is no longer working with these people so we are just stuck like that so, but still we expect and we have some help that we can go ahead (Society Member).

There are several challenges within this excerpts; the constant follow up, the key person leaving their position in Save the Children and the need for help to proceed. The main challenge is that children are not represented on a district level with anything else than a representative. In order for children to participate, they need the space to do it. The more functions and roles deposed for children, the more natural is the act of children's participation becomes, both for the children and the society.

The children mentioned challenges that inhibited their vigour, such as time and finances. Children did not bring out many challenges on a structural level, but rather daily challenges in their work.

Let's talk about some of the challenges, you write about time and time factor?
Child: cause to do that but you also need to balance it out with some studies and also helping the needy and sometimes we do it balanced with classes (Child, School).

The children felt the time was not sufficient for both helping and manage classes. Probably the time of classes and the time set for peace club activities arranged at the same time.

The peace club had ideas and inspiration for actions, but where faced with a challenge of gathering funds.

Okay the main challenge is the financial problem you find you want to do something important for other peace club members, but you find you don't have that ability to

raise the money that we need to do what we want to do, so that is our greatest challenge that we face in the club (Child, School).

The challenge itself is clear in this quotation. They are lacking funds. What is not clear is why the actions are directed to the other members of the peace club. This could have a multiple of interpretations. One of them is that the respondents are talking about doing something with the peace club members. Another interpretation is that the child is talking about doing something for the other peace club as a way of strengthening the group fellowship. There is little evidence in the other data material that indicates that the group does activities only involving the peace club, often are the activities directed at others. This quote can be interpreted in many ways, but the main challenge remains, lack of funds.

5.5.1 Subtheme 1: Post-conflict society effects

Gulu is not only facing the difficulties of insinuating children's participation. They are also facing these challenges in the context of post-conflict. In the following extracts, key informants are summing up the challenges of the war, as a problem in itself and also for the development of child welfare and children's participation.

The reality many children face today in Gulu are war-made. They are living in circumstances that changed because of the war, such as loss of parents, chased away because of perception and behavioural disturbance caused by inhumane conditions and traumatic events.

The fact that they are on the street we know that some of them is not because of their interest, but because of some challenges as a result of conflict some of them lost both of their parents and chased away from home and some of them have also their own behaviour which could not be sustained by the society. Eventually they would be forced out of home and find their way into abandoned buildings sometimes they can also snatch peoples bags and you get your way-be careful (Society Member).

These circumstances offer a whole other spectre of challenges on how to engage children in participation. When children are not found on the common arenas such as school or interest clubs, but rather on the street, it requires flexible solutions. A challenge to be aware of is that when the field of participation already is in disagreement on how to proceed with children in

social institutions, these street children living outside the institutions could easily fall out of the scope.

The perceptions of children in Gulu are associated with the war. The upcoming excerpts talks about how children from captivity is seen as unwanted - a devastating description for children to hear. The society members also talk about a solution, to see the children as resources. This change of reputation requires the participation of every member in the community.

> *Where the child's are getting problems, some children been born from captivity and when they come back home no one wants to visit them. So the parents sometimes start talking about the issue of land, your home is not here, you go where your home is so that one also affects much. Which shows there is a lot to be done, so parents could understand these children are our children, we have to look these young people they should know that these people can grow and help them as they are growing their future rather than chasing them away to go and look for where they can stay. So this is rather affecting the young people and lot in the community it is very common, it needs allot to be done from the community, the religious leaders, and it need everyone together.* (Society member)

The former and the forthcoming quotation are sharing the understanding the influence the war had on the society's mind-set. Much of the work towards change, consist of rebuilding cognitive mechanisms and associations. When those who are affected, those who have been abducted and the whole community builds a fellowship, the work towards peace will be more effective as everyone is working together.

> *Emmh we wouldn't say that Gulu is directly still under the influence of the civil war, but we are dealing with the effects of the civil war. You know we are talking a lot of destructions in terms property and life, we are talking about destruction of the model fabric of the communities. Yeah so to reconstruct all these takes a bit of time, even if you are no longer in war, but the resemblance of war is in the minds of the people. So that is what we need to do to reconstruct the minds of the people and reset them to understand and comprehend what is taken place now. And be able to stay where to begin from and start the longer journey to fully recover. (*Society Member)

A challenge that might be specific for the geographical area of Gulu is the eroding of the traditional family structure and loss of support from the extended kin. In the following quotation, the respondent explains this development stranded in a general loss of trust in the community. Higher crime levels and less cases of conflict that are solved locally. The level of corruption has increased while the level of trust and local solutions are diminishing. This will be a major challenge to overcome in order to build peace, create a society with space for everyone, and create a common peace initiative.

Respondent: "So the extended family system is eroding, is eroding, they are not supporting."
Researcher: "And the supporting of the kin and the extended family is quite normal in other African context or in other parts of Uganda?"
*Respondent: "Yeah it has been the most ideal situation. And very normal thing, but if it is now not being taken care of we are seeing something is clearly wrong. And the rate of crime is also high, but even simple cases, which could have been handled within the community, people have left the LCs; people are now taking things to court. Recently I have been training some community based organizations wanting them to identify the local solution for their problems they discovered there are very many things that they could do, but because people have lost trust in another they are not relaying on them and even another who could have been passing good judgement. They are easily inflamed because of they are giving money, corruption or something like that. So those are key things which are making peace a big problem."(*Society Member)

An unexpected portray of the post-conflict effects was the positive effects of international organizations arriving, both during and in the years following the war. Both help and employment opportunities arose as a spiral effect of their entrance, even contributing to the level of tax income.

First of all as a result of these challenges many international organizations came on-board creating awareness, sensitizing and supporting children. That is already influencing the way which people used to look at children's participation because was limited towards some key activities, but not in decision making but as a result of the coming of the international player which was sparked by the conflict. It is also changing the perception and the way people look at the kids generally fight from the grassroots to the district level. Although it was a negative event it also became an opportunity and also, and it is also boosting the level of employment because during the conflict there were very many people that were employed. That were supporting their families, their children, who have now gotten into a good job, but their level of income has also contributed to the local government tax that is also a contribution, which is an opportunity even though it came from a negative angle. (Society Member)

5.5.2 Subtheme 2: Challenge for peacebuilding

The information forming this theme is mainly extracted from the tool "Timeline". The challenges the children mentioned are categorised in material and non-material challenges. School and association are not separated by the challenges. This was one of the themes, which showed a strong coherence between the different cases. The statements are representative for all four timelines made during the focus groups.

The material challenge represents a lack of transport, resources and funds. The challenges are coherent with the peacebuilding activities (see Theme 1) such as teaching peace to other communities, writing a peace essay or arranging a football match. That kind of activities requires transport, footballs, writing material and even water and glucose. When these are not provided, it can be hard for the peace club to do work outside the club that are engaging others. One of the peace clubs noted that lack of finance also made a dent in the member's motivation, as they could not go on a planned trip. Material challenges also have consequences for the group's mentality.

> *Material challenges:*
> *"Transport problems to reach out to communities. Limited financing. Lack of writing materials. Shortage of other material to teach about peace. Lack of seeds for planting, Lack of insecticide. Lack of uniforms. We play on sun without drinking water and taking any glucose. Lack of hoes (tools for agriculture) capital. Lack of means to go and visit people in the hospital, prison and orphanage. To go on our trip to Kotido because of financial problems – which made the members annoyed." (Children, Associations and School)*

The non-material challenges were more varied. Time, war, other people's perception of their work, the group structure, stealing, witchcraft and overprotection are examples of some of them. These challenges can limit the children in form of perception to their role and the arenas they get access to. Some of the challenges were directly connected to the peace club structure such as lack of cooperation, that some members felt too lazy to work or lack of time at the Friday assembly. Others were more general such as pest and diseases, discrimination, murder and fighting.

> *Non- material Challenges:*
> *Time: things take allot of time to get done, others think it's a waste of time. Lack of cooperation between the members of the club. Little time during the Friday assembly. War (peoples mind after the war). Pest and diseases. Lack of interest by other students in the club. Some student when they are under conflict, they don't accept to be corrected. Some members always feel lazy to work. Challenge in the way of treating one another at the work time. Fail to organize parties for the club in school. In lack of effective communication from administrators to patrons and to students who are*

members of the club. Discrimination. Fighting (land issues). Stealing from each other. Witchcraft. Murder. Insults and abuses. Over protection from parents against other categories of children. (Children, Associations and School)

The last statement contains more information than many of the others. The first part of the sentence about their parents being overprotecting is clear. It is the second part of the sentence compering them with other categories of children that are unspecific, both who they are and why their presence requires further protection of the children of the peace club. Again, considering the activities of theme 1. Is one possible explanation that the quote refers to the children in the hospital or the orphanages that the peace clubs visits? A misconception of orphanages or the infective range the children at the hospital can be the reason for overprotection.

The following quote illustrate a specific challenge related to communication between the school and the peace club.

Researcher: "so why do you have grudges towards other schools? Are there some specific reasons?"
Respondent: "The truth is in those days we used to have something like a sports day, but it used to take place in the main stadium and that is called Weke stadium where by there is some students from Singa school, a boys school and they will be like bullying students from here from sacred heart. And sometimes they will stand there with the sticks waiting for you (laughter), yeah they will stand in the way with their stick waiting for you and if they ask you any question sometimes you must answer sometimes you will also be in trouble. So it is difficult to dictate whether to keep quiet or to answer therefore we as peace club members of sacred heart, we decided to ask administration to help us so we go and reconcile with those people through the human right focus and the human rights. Commission, but the school failed us they let us down (Child, School).

The children experienced a conflict and wanted to find a way of solving this by own ideas and own means. The school creates the scope of the peace club. Without knowing more about how the school failed the club it can be assumed that they did not allow or prioritize funds for them to make the arrangements of conflict resolution. It is unknown if the school provided

any feedback on why the children not could go. This discouraged children's participation in peacebuilding.

Peace clubs have increasingly been establishing in Northern Uganda since the war broke out. People's relations to this are not always positive. They might lack trust in that the clubs are working for a better community. With a culture of corruption, it might be easier to assume that they are working for themselves. This makes a common effort towards peace problematic, because it needs everyone working together, and one of the core agents will be the peace clubs.

> *As I told, some of these peace clubs, the associations many people think they are working for their own money, they are not believing that they working for the good of everybody, so unless they can begin the realize that oh this is for everybody, so other people that come out and transparency, accountability, concealing then everything will work well. You know the problem is also corruption, this animal that they call corruption, has made everything worse.* (Society Member)

5.5.3 Subtheme 3: Challenge for participation

The children mentioned many challenges they faced during their peace building activities, but few directly obstructing their participation. Some relational aspects between children and adults were presented in Theme 3, under subtheme 2; What children say about adult interference?

Children's participation cannot be implemented based on what adults understand as participation, but rather on what children perform as participatory activities. This tension is well portrayed in the following quote.

> *Sometimes they will want you to tell stories when you are not interested in telling stories* (Child, Association)

Storytelling was explained to the researcher as a cultural tradition, taking place in a public space where stories known to Acholi are read out load. It is from an adult's perspective a good example of participation, since it includes everyone, also children. A misconception however is to assume that an adult perceptive on how children want to participate is representative for how children wants to participate.

Participation needs to be enhanced in every level of the society, both on grassroots and structural level. The concept needs to be adapted to local circumstances to be implanted in local and national decision-making processes.

> *Yeah, but if you look like critically NGOs are announcing more participatory approach that than the government. Although we are also contributing to government program, but in practice NGOs seen to do more involving children in participatory with the planning even monitoring if I make a comparative analysis.* (Society Member)

Every contributor that strengthens and creates space for children to participate is an advantage. However as seen in the later quote, does NGO`s having a more participatory approach then the government. For participation to become a natural part of the community's functions, must it be embraced as a local tradition and built into the local system of government and social institutions.

This last quote brings up a sweeping characteristic that has been discussed previously in this theme, people's mind-set. The respondent also refers to children's mind-set. Both mind-set can be an inhibition for children's participation. Children also need to take responsibility for their participation, to comprehend why and how they could participate and challenge the role as a follower.

> *To change the mind-set, both in the children and the people. To understand that yes everyone can have a say and everyone should participate, because traditionally the child must listen and the child must follow. So we need to change that mind-set. Two, we have to, the challenges that we have to provide the room, the space, where children should be able to participate. In schools, in homes, that should be accorded and that is a challenge, do people believe that it is their time for children also say "we want to do this we want to consult on this". That space is not given to children even in the house.* (Society member)

The second challenge is the space children need in order to participate. The respondent emphasize that the space needs to be created, as it is not yet there. This space is a challenge to create. The commitment to children's participation must be so strong that society mechanisms are altered in order for children to get to participate.

5.6 Theme 6: Significance of participation

What kind of significance does children participation in peacebuilding have? Few children expressed a direct link between their participation and the advantages it gave. They had more focus on peacebuilding and how that was conducted. The closest that could be found was a statement saying *Lessons; It's a good thing to unite* (Child, Association). This quote does not further explain why it is good to unite. From the perspective of the key informants, a lot of effects, advantages and future challenges were predicted. Even the development of the nation was intertwined with children's participation.

> *First of all if we are expecting the development of the nation we really must go for child participation. We really have to go for child participation because if we don't involve children in moreover their a future generation and if we involve them at a later stage or we don't involve them completely how will we expect them to rule in the future. I think that is the gap we shall be having and child participation really energize children. Makes children create a kind of very strong resilience for children, self-esteem comes from child participation the whole of life skills actually comes from child participation, but if we want our people our children to be very productive in the future we need to emphasize on child participation. A meaningful one, not one where we talk about it but we do most of the thing for the children.* (Society Member)

The presented excerpt cited possible advantages for children such as increased self – confidence, resilience and life skill development. These are things that the respondent may have experience with or have witnessed happening to some children being active in decision-making. He/she also discusses the long-term effects of letting children participate in the present to make them productive in the future. If they do not participate, what kind of people are they then expected to become, the respondent asks. Looking at it as a long-term investment instead of an instant help is a misconception that can discourage investment in children's participation.

The upcoming excerpts talk about participation in the context of northern Uganda and the recovering process. The current process has a varied selection of needs and a variety of responses are needed to involve everyone.

> *Participation is paramount for Gulu at the moment because if not all kids are taken aboard then identify their various needs will be a challenge. Because in the context of Northern Uganda, which is, recovering with various needs that needs to be simultaneously done in northern Uganda. Needs the participation of all the key stakeholders. So it will be very important than few people identify their needs. Cause the needs in northern Uganda vary from the trauma healing, economic, social, political. That requires the participation of everyone. Women's have the different needs men as well as children, all of them needs to participate otherwise if we single it*

> *out to be adult's then we can be biased on children's need or if we say men only to participate then we can leave out the needs of women* (Society Member).

An across-the-board argumentation through the empirical material has been that the children's participation cannot go on account on other peoples partaking. In a peacebuilding context, the participation of all is significant to develop a sustainable form of peace. This attitude can enhance children's participation through a culture of participation. Despite this perspective are still women, men and children are facing difficulties in participating at their level of development and choice.

The following quote talks about Gulu and Northern Uganda, specifically why participation predominantly in this space, at this time, is important. After a long recovery process with receiving assistance from the government and international agents, the people abilities to self-help and self-determination has weakened. The respondent is connecting the capacity of participating as significant to empower the people to take charge over their life. Be part of the development and use their abilities

> *You know Gulu has been in war for quite a very long period of time, people have been reduced to a level of receiving. It is a high time people started saying yes or no, it is a high time people started seeing what do they need, I mean how can they direct their own life so that why I believe participation is very key, it is an empowering tool, that you can decide to agree or not agree. Decide what is good for you and it requires responsibility for the action you take. So Participation is good and they should be a key issue in the development process, that we involve the people that are effected to decide and see what they can be able to do, to improve and apply it.* (Society Member)

Participation cannot only help children, but the whole society to regain an active role and take responsibility for peacebuilding actions. The quote captures what the researcher understood as the current state of mind in Gulu, receiving and provision. The respondent offers a solution, participation to empower the community. The community will feel connected to the rebuilding face and the development process can accelerate. Instead of putting all their belief in the work of external agents

The significance of participation are also legalised in international and national law.

> *We have the children act which is domesticating the UNCRC, and in the children act the aspect of participation is very very important, it's a right of a child by itself, and the responsibility by parents towards that is to ensure that children really are free to talk about issues that effects them and to get involved into activities that helps them grow.* (Society Member)

Both the rights of the child and the responsibility of the parents are emphasized in this quote. Participation is understood as freedom to express their opinion and get involved into activities that helps them grow. This is limiting children to participate in causes that only effect and surrounds them.

5.6.1 Participation defined

In defining participation, two of the society members express a similar description. They both present participation in a slightly theoretical manner with steps and levels of involvement. The importance of identifying either an issue or a need, as it is a right of the individual to consider and identify what they need. That gives them an active responsibility to participate.

> *Participation is according to my understanding is about getting involved from planning, identification and then implementing what is agreed as a course of action to address a problem or identified issue. (*Society member)

> *Participation is when every society member is given an opportunity to identify their own needs prioritize it and also implement, included in the process. (*Society member)

A more subjective definition comes out in the following quote. The respondent brings out a significant aspect, having participation available at every development level for children. Not only for those children how started communicating in a way relatable to adults around them. Again the development of the nation is been brought out like a result of participation. The process of participation connects to the same process steps as the former quotes within this theme, like planning, implementing and so on.

> *Participation to me means more than involving children, if I am to take it in the context of child participation, it is, to me it involves ehh getting opinion from the children, drawing their ideas together, their contribution and planning for a specific inactive that is under way. And this one also follows their understanding, so at each and every level children participate, whether their understanding is very low or very high. But the most important thing to note here is that the contribution of children towards their well-being and the development of the country were all of them are involved through, okay like seeking the opinion, planning and also making suggestions to possible things that can also contribute to their well being.* (Society Member)

All the former quotes within this subtheme define participation as a process with multiple steps. These steps are not necessary described fully or listed exhaustive, but they are presented as an active procedure where the children should be able to follow steps.

5.6.2 Children participation now and in the future

Some examples of participatory activities from the children's body maps and timeline have been extracted in this theme. The activities have been an answer to the question "What do you do after starting participating in peacebuilding?" and "what kind of activities does the peace club do?"

Participatory activities from the children's body maps and timeline:

> *"Loving and caring about others. Concealing and guidance. Doing voluntarily work. Solve problems among my friends in dorms, community and outside school. Interschool connections. Perform cultural dance. Planting flower as a sign of peace. Participation in club activities for example debate. Visit school to promote and talk about peace in our community. Through sending aid to the orphanage, hospital and prison. We show dance to visitor we make them enjoy more about our cultural dance. We bring street children together and teach them children right."(*Children, School and Association).

Looking at the activities, there is little that binds them to each other or the previously presented definition in subtheme 1(Participation defined). Few activities describes the process of partaking in decisions making or planning with other community institution. There is no mention of adapted space for children to participate. It seems more like the peace clubs are deciding for themselves what they want to do and are making the space they need. Such as visiting hospitals, debating, offering counselling and so on. Few activities are dependent on the cooperation of adults, the children rather are describing activities they do and that they initiated. They themselves are acting from their own level of development without anyone necessary adjusting activities for them.

An example in the data that is quite significant for children's participation in peacebuilding is their contribution to the Juba peace talk. In the preparatory work of the agreement children was consulted. They gave their opinion and expressed their needs. Some still had their parents with the rebel group and wanted them back. Others wanted an international acknowledgement in form of an international court.

> *Respondent: I remember when I was working with a different organization. That is when we were identifying the views of children on success on hostility regarding the juba peace talk. Children were consulted I happen to be one of the persons that participated. By then I was with Gulu support the Children organization. WAYA children also participated.*
> *Researcher: So they participated in giving insight to.*

Respondent: Their opinion about what should be done about the peace talk. Because there was two agendas. Should have taken the traditional reconciliation method or ICC.
Researcher: What did the children say?
Respondent: Most of the children had varied opinion. Some say we need to adopt the traditional way of reconciliation because some of these children their parents were still in captivity And if they are already in jail who will look after them. And some were also saying this people abuse, abuse them, abuse them, so they face the ICC. (Society Member)

Even though the respondent is not saying it, the researcher is aware that the decision ended with the International Crime Court as punishment mechanism. The quote says the children were consulted and given their opinion. There was little information telling if they had any influence on the decision at the end. There is no knowledge of weather the children received feedback on the development for the peace plan. Today the agreement remains to be signed. This excerpt can seem like an example of participation as adults perceived it, but can be questioned as an act of participation by children.

In the upcoming quote participation was described within the frames of Remand home. This was a juvenile detention centre. The respondent used examples from the remand home to answer the following question "Can you give an example of activities or events that you know has been adapted so that children will be able to participate in the decision making process?" This example of participation takes place outside the peace club, but the processes and structures described connect to the former definition of participation (Chapter 5.6.1) and puts children in the role of decision-makers.

The educational component that we have is not being funded by the government, so it is the children who have initiated these projects together with the staff and they are running these projects for purposes of getting, making them realize the goal for education and I think this is very very useful. They the same people who are running chicken, they make decision how many should we buy this time, ehh, what the money will be used for, that is what they do. Also we have a borehole, a borehole here which has been sunked by them and they are saying this borehole can be used by even the community members and even they are sharing with the community member and they are running of the borehole is in the hand of the children of the remand home. So when they get this money, of course you know this water users gives us a fee, they always receive the money and they sit together with us and they only give us the feedback, but the money, whenever the borehole is broken down they sit together they educate the community members. I think this to me is the kind of participation which I think that I really think will go a long way to help shape the society (Society Member)

The children are running and taking initiatives to have different projects. Steered and planed by the children themselves as the borehole that the children share with the community. Here the children are dealing with the maintenance, budgeting the money, but also involving the community by sharing the knowledge they have so that they all can fix it and have clean and safe water.

Every key informant was asked how he or she pictured Gulu in 50 years in terms of peacebuilding and children participation. Most of the responses was positive to its development, but emphasized the hard work it required.

> *In fifty years to come, if the trend continues I think that is why I was talking about the revolution. But if we work very hard Gulu as well as other parts of Acholi region can be a very very peaceful place, very peaceful place if a lot has been done and given the opportunity for children to participate. Then this can be a very very peaceful place after all we still have a big land, we have natural resources, we are involved actually with the natural resources and the population is not as big as others ethnic groups are having. (*Society Member)

The future prospect was generally quite positive in this quote. The first outcome talks about a revolution, or that Gulu can be a very peaceful place. This will depend on the space and effort given to children's participation.

Others also agreed that the development was going towards peace. The problem they were facing was decisions made from top-down. Now a new development had started were people are getting involved and making decisions from the bottom and up.

> *In fifty years, I think we may be having at least, let me use a percent of one hundred at least 80 will be understanding the importance of peace. You know the problem in our, in Gulu district here, politicians always take decisions, but we also see that people now are involving themselves in peacebuilding which is good compeered to the past where we just started, people are also becoming involved in peacebuilding*. (Society Member).

5.7 Discussion of findings

5.7.1 The actions the children take towards creating peace in their own surroundings.

Could it be that the children are doing peacebuilding activities, but not really participating? Peacebuilding in school, Peace Club and Peace Club Associations has been an important process for children in regards of taking ownership over the peacebuilding process, but how far does their scope of activities reach? The children defined a variety of activities including sport gatherings, ethnic dance shows and visits to hospitals and orphanages as peacebuilding. Embracing the variety rather than trying to categorize peacebuilding allowed for a colourful set of actions based on what the children thought needed to create peace.

What will it have to say for the peacebuilding activities that the peace clubs are accustomed with the community and the traditions within? Many of the activities revolved around showing of dance, songs or plays inspired or originated from the ethnic community. It was a way of gathering people and makes them interested in what the peace club wanted to express. Getting people to listen and approach became easier this way. The peace clubs had a huge repertoire of conveying their message of peace that went beyond the cultural means as well. They discovered that communicating how to act peacefully and why it is important, because people were living with another mentality for a long time, which was inherent in the community. The idea of using cultural means to communicate about peaceful living was based on the children's understanding of their environment. This is comparable with Community Peacebuilding, a concept that captures the process of peacebuilding based on the residents' own ideas (Waldman, 2008). The ideas will ideally come from a bottom-up perspective and fit the local circumstances (Waldman, 2008). This is a perspective that easily can get lost in bigger international organisations peace work (R. Newbrander, 2012). That is why children's participation in peacebuilding is essential. The question remains to be if these activities are implemented and planned by the children or if they are doing peacebuilding without participating. There were examples in the empirical material where children would learn cultural dance or were made to read a story without it being the wish of the child. A perspective that is easily forgotten is that even though these activities were meant as an opportunity for the child to participate, do the decision to participate carries an element of

power (Gallagher, 2008). The child might feel obligated to participate and overwhelmed by the power implemented by adults. The effect of an action where the power is not taken into account can have negative replications on the child's relationship towards adults' (Gallagher, 2008). This could be one of the perspectives that are missing when trying to implement children's peacebuilding in Gulu.

The activities arranged by the children often included many people and targeted those who felt excluded. The children showed a higher commitment to including people in the society, than the society showed to them by including them in decision-making arenas. The children are supporting, helping and trusting others in the community through their actions. Ideally, these actions can create a new process of trust and cooperation where the community continues the work inspired by the selflessness of the peace club. That will help the community to develop together. The peace clubs are determined to create togetherness, for example, by proving to those who feel neglected by the society that they have a place in this world. Social cohesion is an important element for community development, a state of trust, help and cooperation with others, producing a feeling of belonging to a society and an on-going process of help, trust and support (Chan, To, & Chan, 2006). These factors are also vital building blocks in peacebuilding and the children might be creating group cohesion without being aware of it.

A local network was starting to take form around peacebuilding in Gulu, but there was still a low self-determination longing after the many international organisations that had been present in Gulu. In this local network it is questionable if everyone, such as the children, get the equal amount of space to participate. The culture of participation was still low as the key informants described it in Gulu. Many countries still prohibit meaningful participation and it becomes extra challenging for children (Perry-smith). Participation in the data is described as a process of implementation and planning, where everyone together identifies needs, problems and solutions. There is a contradiction between participation and peacebuilding, while children participation is based on how children decide to participate. Community peacebuilding however should be activities reflected in local circumstances based on what the community needs. Meaning that children might have to do things that were not their idea or their first choice on how to contribute. In the end, the effects of the activity is what is important, it is the effects that holds power (Gallagher, 2008). Meaning that the ripple effect

of children participation in peacebuilding holds the truth about how much children participate in peacebuilding.

What does it mean for children that they are right holders to participation? How can children's level of participation in peacebuilding be measured as low, high or sufficient? If we are to understand how children participate in peacebuilding, an interesting perspective is if whether the participation is significant for peacebuilding or just makes a dent. UNCRC article 12 states that a child has the right to be supported in expressing their opinion and are guaranteed an influence (United Nations, 1989). What is missing from this level of participation is that children are present at the decisions and have equal decision power as the adults. When evaluating participation, one theory, model or tool is insignificant. To understand participation measurement, perspectives, theories and models can all give a different outcome. It is a field that is under-theorized and over-practiced (Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010). What is significant is that the understanding of participation is that children themselves should define the limits. The level set by the UNCRC needs to be seen as a starting point for all nations to approach participation, not as a maximum level (Shier, 2001). Models measuring participation, as Shier`s (2001) 5-step model is useful to identify what adaptions have been made to the social structures to support children's participation, but it cannot dictate where children's participation is going. What might seem like a mess of different peacebuilding activities with unspecific aims or motivation might have a reason behind it, unknown to those understanding participation, but known to those participating.

The difficulty with using Shier 5-step model can be that there is no cooperation with adults and children in the participation presented in the data materiel. The critical reflection falls on if the participation seen in the study are insufficient according to the model or if the measurement of participation used by the model are insufficient. The model does however not only focus on the interaction between children and adults. The five different levels also provides a description of what the children should be doing to participate, such as express their meaning, give insight, and share their opinion (Shier, 2001). Shier describe this as a measurement for those around children to see which level of children's participation they have reached. The difficulty by using this model with this data-set that was not anticipated was that the children doesn't work with many else. They rather work towards others or in cooperation with the society that they wish to help in becoming peaceful. While Shier talks much about other creating the opportunity for children to participate, does the children in the

study form their own space for participation. The connection between children and adults portrayed by level 5 in the model, does not exists in the data-material. Participation outside Shier's model is still participation, but falls under a different measurement.

5.7.2 Children's descriptions of their relationships to adults that they interact with.

The relationship between adults and children became clear in the findings. The children from the study were more negative to the idea of adults engaging in the peace club work, because of their former negative experiences with adults. They were disappointed with adults using their power to make children take unsuitable life choices. The peace club would not share their decisions with the adults at the school. The key informants were divided between the community seeing children's participation as a vital and welcome development, and seeing a child as a follower and a learner, not a participant. Adults in Gulu were described to be more customary to let children do practical activities than take part in decision-making. Using children's participation to the households' advantage, without giving them a power that reflects their contribution is a suppressive use of power. Children participating within the frames of adults are a well-known problem for participation in general and also in the data (Skrivenes & Standbu, 2006). Participation is throughout the empirical material presented as a vision of what it should be, but with few guidelines. Commitment to children's participation from both adults and children was a prominent wish throughout the findings. Instead the empirical material presented a competitive relationship between children and adults, where the children relaying on their own help and the adults saw children's participation as a threat to their authority. The key informant's vision of children's participation was a balance between receiving help from adults and children developing own independence. This avoids putting children's accomplishments in a comparative relationship with adults. It will only focus on the power imbalance between the two entities and fail to recognize the power a child that partakes can have (Prout, 2005). As much as children have a right to participate, they are dependent on adults to fulfil them (United Nations, 1989). What will it means for children to have or not have adult support? Shier comprehension of children participation and evaluation of its extent never exclude adult's interaction, even at the highest level. The presence of both entities during decision-making processes is the most possible outcome (Shier, 2001). Can children participation in Gulu reach the highest level when the adults are not following their development? Can it be that the association to children are still too strongly connected to the

war and that this is inhibiting adults from letting them take part in significant choices? Or is it the adults using their power to stop the development of early independence from the family?

The understanding of peacebuilding and peace is an equal and interdependent process, again envisioned, but not reflected in the empirical material. None of the activities mentioned in the study was in cooperation with other peacebuilding actors or let them participate, side-by-side with adults or was taken into decision-making processes concerning the development of Gulu. There is little information to be found about what sort of peacebuilding activities is done by adults in Gulu. Although, recently the area decided to apply for city status in order to increase their service sector (Odokonyero, 2013). Was this a decision the children was a part of? Did the children share the idea that being a city would be an advantage to Gulu's rebuilding process? The adult and child relationship is fundamental in children's participation in peacebuilding, because the adults can support roles for children to participate and because children equally can contribute in decision-making together with adults (Shier, 2001).

5.7.3 Partners working with children participating in peacebuilding and how they support child participation.

The establishment of a children's parliament in Gulu is an example in the findings of a failed try to involve children in decision-making processes in all levels of the society. According to Shier (2001) is this level 2 of participation; children are supported in expressing their views and not inhibited by any challenges they might have. There are few examples of support that encourage children in expressing their opinion to social institutions, government departments or anyone that are involved with the decision-making process in Gulu. Uganda National Reflection Workshop in 2007 resulted in a thematic evaluation by children given to the government (Giertsen, Feinstein, & O`Kane, 2010). However, there was no such support or activity registered in the data material.

It seemed like children had a much better relationship with adults who were supporting, rather than interacting. Parents, patrons, teacher, reverend sisters were praised for the support they showed to peace and the peace club. The children were very generous with the description of those who supported them. A women's group had taken the time to teach the children from the peace club in their community an ethnic dance. The heritage of cultural traditions from one generation to the next is a vital example of support through skill learning. The children

talked about material and non-material support. The support did not have a cooperative character, but was more about what the child would interpret as support. It could simply be an act of kindness from their parents. The support mentioned in the data also went beyond supporting the peace club directly. The police, a radio presenter, or even the president was supporting peace and marked as a supporter. The power to gather and influence people with their words was admirable for the children.

The supporters and the type of support were coherent with the activities that the children were marking as peacebuilding activities. Was the support steering the activities or did the activities require the support? Is the motivation based on self-interest through tokenism of the supporters? While Shier (2001) says that it is difficult to engage children in subjects that do not interest them, does Percy-Smith and Thomas (2010) claim that children participation can only thrive when it is in the interest of adults. It was not clear evidence that self-interest was fuelling the activities or the participation in peacebuilding. They wanted the best for their community, a community they reside in. One may interpret this as an act of self-interest as well as selflessness. It is therefore not straightforward to determine what children's agenda for participation is. One assumption though it was little frequent, material support being granted to the peace club is not enough to motivate based on tokens.

The core principle of community peacebuilding is that the locals should be the carriers for the ideas on how to achieve peace; the main problem is to define who the locals are. One definition is that local-local is by definition those uninfluenced by liberal peace workers and other agents (Richmond, 2009). Local is then those who are living in the community and interacts or is affected by external or local organizations and institutions (Richmond, 2009). That statement would disregard children's participation and eliminates a large majority in the peacebuilding force in Gulu. Finding the true local or the local-local is not only a problem of definition, but also a factor of interaction. People in a society will in a continuous circle influence each other (Simmons and Zanker, 2014). In order to increase their influence, the peace clubs interacted with organisations, groups and individuals who share the same goal; peace. The support to their work came in the form of money, giving the children space to participate; knowledge exchange among others. Rather than considering the supporter and children as local or local-local, it seems that together they form an informal network around peacebuilding. Different parts of the network relate to each other in a different way. Some cases the church, human rights offices, or women groups give support to the children. Other

times they visit children and supports hospitals or orphanages. These different relationships give the children a chance to participate in different degrees. Power is executed in a relationship between entities, but does not necessarily mean that it is being forced or used to make people take choice they do not prefer (Gallagher, 2008). More realistically is that the children have power to interact in a variety of relationships and actively form their social role and level of participation (Prout, 2005).

5.7.4 Challenges about children's participation in peacebuilding mentioned by the children and society members.

The key informants described the advantages of participation varying from life skill development to development of nation. The children themselves allocated participation in peacebuilding as a force to change their behaviour and way of thinking. Perry-Smith and Barry (2010) defined a challenge for the participation in which its positive effects should focus on the development of children's skills on a personal level and as a group. In the study, there is a consistency about precisely this point, both from key informants and children, and even earlier in this discussion. The consequence is that there is no reference of how children's participation can contribute to transform the political and cultural structures (Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010). Children's participation needs acknowledgement for what it can do beyond personal improvement. The key informants managed to connect children's participation to the nation's development leading to a prospect of the future generation and to an avoidance of a youth revolution. This is a solid argumentation for investing in children participation also at a higher level. This argumentation seemed to be divided in Gulu as the key findings represented mind-sets that both feared participation and a youth revolution. Conceptions of childhood is changing, but not in a unilaterally way. It was a challenge to create space for children to participate because of an uncertainty in the community on how to relate to children (Prout, 2005). This perception get further generalised when the peace clubs are analysed as one group instead of looking at them as individuals. Focusing on social and political changes made by individual children participating in a peace group was not evident in the material.

The change towards peace is going to happen; the hope should be with the children and the youth. Herbert Moller (1968) discusses youth as a force often turning to violence in order to overcome the insecurity and hopelessness of the existence of the future (1968). Violence is not necessarily an automatic action of being simply a youth in a post-conflict society, as

proved by the agency of the nearly 200 peace clubs in Gulu with children and youths. In another setting, a large youth cohort can be a massive resource if the state has a large educational capacity and flexible social structures (Moller, 1968). In post-conflict societies, like Gulu, the resources was described as few and therefore was a large youth cohort perceived as a threat to the state, rather than a resource, which further burdens children in an already marginalized situation. These are some of the structures influencing participation in Gulu.

The children from the study found it challenging to have a lack of time between school and peace club, friends talking negatively of peace work or lazy members of the club not doing their work. Challenges in interacting with others were for example insufficient communication between school and children, such as who signed up for peace club. The children and the adults need to be aware of these kinds of obstacles. A simple act of communication from the adults that might just be forgetfulness can become an obstacle for the children's work. Using power as a perspective is important when evaluating participation. The adults might think they hold no power over the children, but the effect of their non-communication has turned into a challenge for the children. That is the effect of their action. One must always remember that power follows the action, or an unfinished action (Gallagher, 2008).

A sweeping argument coming from the empirical data is that everyone has to participate in order for peace to become a fact, not an aim. This is confirmed by the literature. Sustainable peace cannot be achieved without including all people, also children (Schnabel & Tabyshalieva, 2013). An important reality to acknowledge is that children living in a post-conflict society affect them equally as adults (Schnabel & Tabyshalieva, 2013). Looking at the empirical material, the respondents are referring to both damage to the infrastructure, on the mind-set and eroding family structures as a post-conflict effect. The government themselves has a less participatory approach then NGOs in Gulu and the community suspects peace clubs for being corrupt. The level of peacebuilding will never reach its necessary level unless it is committed on all levels. Creating space for children will be decisive in that process.

5.8 Conclusions

The tools used in the study provided large quantitative information about both the specific peace work children were doing, and the structure around them. The information that came from the focus groups could be varied statements, poems, stories and pictures. The children's voices were kept as they were expressed, through the presentation of the findings. To change them in order for them to make "more sense" would adjust them to the researchers' context and go against all principles of participation. Words and the power of definition carry a huge power in the case of participation, a power the children should keep also in this study. The identity and role of a child does not have to be seen as passive nor dependent; the new role can be defined by themselves as politicians, activists or leaders.

The peacebuilding activities of the children were many and varied. The data collection offered rich examples of actions, aims and activities, which the children were using to build peace. The activities described were common for most of the peace clubs; there was often a performance of the cultural dance, song, drama or storytelling. In other cases there were sports-events, community-events, visits to those who received few visits, all activities that included others. Children showed a willingness to include others, which others might not always show them. The children did much work directed towards others, yet the response of the receiving partner was unspoken off. The children took wisdom and learned from wherever they could. They praised reverend sisters, community members, parents and many more for teaching them to live in a peaceful matter. Peacebuilding is understood from the activities as a shared process. The children did not speak from the point of view of the receivers, but brought up own advantages and challenges with the interaction. The true motivation for encouraging children and other community members to be peace builders is their community comprehension and the sustainable activities. The children themselves also committed themselves to a long-term relationship with peace. There is a tension between peacebuilding and participation. Children participation is based on how the children decide to participate. Community peacebuilding should be activities reflected in local circumstances based on what the community needs. These are aspects that can work together and do not necessarily mean that the two concepts compete with each other.

The understanding of participation in the literature has a tendency to switch between the adult's involvement being negative or positive. The relationship to adults as supporters was

much better than in the case were they had to interact with them. In the case of Gulu, the interaction between adults and children was sometimes more competitive than symbiotic. The relationships could not be described to be one way or another, but in multiple ways, both as a challenge, as a vital relationship and in change. What the study did not catch was the effects of these relationships, even though many of the respondents talked about their experience of it. The power between the two groups was emphasized in situations where children were inhibited to execute their ideas or told how to participate. Power used in the right way can support and enhance children's participation. That does not mean that children are dependent on adults to permit them to partake. There are several examples of children making their own vigour through activities they saw possible. The researcher did not expect such a focus on adults in children perceptive. Excluding one group does not necessary increase the inclusion of another, which is why adult-child relationship in Gulu can be significant.

In the study, children's participation in peacebuilding is understood through cognitive and behavioural changes they had experienced by being peace builders, the challenges and activities they did as a peace club, and the support they had around them. These structures together with the perspective from the key informants compiled the understanding of children participation in peacebuilding. Challenges also might have been the subject where it was clear that Gulu was between living in and developing out of the state of post-conflict status. These are challenges, which need to be included in the understanding of children's peace work such as children in a dual role as a perpetrator and a victim or eroding family structures. In a community, highly dependent on family as a social system, lack of trust and loss of parents will have a great impact on the children future. These challenges and those directly linked to participation in peacebuilding were in some cases redefined as an opportunity.

Why is it important that children participation in peacebuilding receives attention? Because it does not only prevent further conflict, but also because the modern child should participate for the benefit of the society. Since all society members need to partake for peace to be sustainable and since children is the future for any society. The conflict in Gulu harmed, hurt and scared the whole of Northern Uganda, but in the aftermath they can be an example of peacebuilding, which the whole world would like to follow. This power rests in the hands of children and the adults. It can be a unique process, which will break through perceptions of children and portray Acholi's ability to forgive, re-build and be peaceful. If the force of children could be as powerful as forced child soldiers, one can imagine how far they could go

for what they believe in, like building peace. The study had an aim of getting an understanding on how children participate in peacebuilding and how it is supported in a post-conflict society like Gulu. If the reader can reach the same conclusion as presented in this last paragraph, then the aim would be reached.

5.8.1 Recommendations

The researcher would like to make the following recommendations:

5.8.1.1 Recommendations for further research:

- The networks around peacebuilding need to be studied. These networks also contain a large quantity of information and local knowledge. A beginning for understanding these networks could be helpful to external agents who want to work with the community in a sustainable way. Peace have gathered people, will it keep being a point of cooperation?

- The motivation behind the participation of children in peacebuilding relies in their hopes for what they can do for the future development of their society. In addition, a broader study, in order to involve adult's perceptions of children's participation in Northern Uganda, should be performed to see if their vision of participation is coherent with the children.

- To perform a study to measure and evaluate if the effects of children participation goes beyond personal effects. What kind of advantages does it give on a district level, national level or even an international level?

- How does the UNCRC article 12.1 limit children participation and how does it enhance it? Is it in need of a revision to fit and require a higher level of participation all over the world? Is it a starting point or a limit?

5.8.1.2 Recommendations for increasing children's participation in peacebuilding:

- Service providers, government official and others in social institutions, together with children must make an action plan with specific means on how to include children in decisions-making processes. This needs to include assessable information to children and appropriate meeting time. Every child can participate; there must be means for every level of development so that all children who want to participate are able to do so.

- Children must be aware of their rights, as well as their parents must be aware of the consequences for denying their children their rights. First, the UNCRC needs to be available in the local languages, secondly; a local discussion forum needs to be established where the rights can be discussed among children, parents and other community-members. There are traditions and functions in the Acholi culture that captures some of the rights. How can the local culture be used to support children's participation? There must be created more arenas for children and adults to meet and to talk on equal grounds.

- It needs to be established a platform for the peace clubs to meet, discuss and create a cooperative network. Many of the peace clubs uttered a wish for meeting other peace clubs, and most of them did similar activities in different areas. The reach and opportunities for peace work could then go so much further.

5.8.1.3 Recommendations on how Gulu should direct their work to continue on the path to a peaceful society

- Gulu needs to have its own agents after a long period of receiving them. Their capacity for building peace has been proved by cultural traditions and the children's peace club. There needs to be incentives that can connect cultural traditions with peacebuilding.

- To continue building bridges between groups in the society. To arrange a common meeting place, like a town meeting point where conflict resolutions can be reached in common discussion. To arrange elections for the local council, in order to renew its trust in local solutions.

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Appendix 1: The Body map.

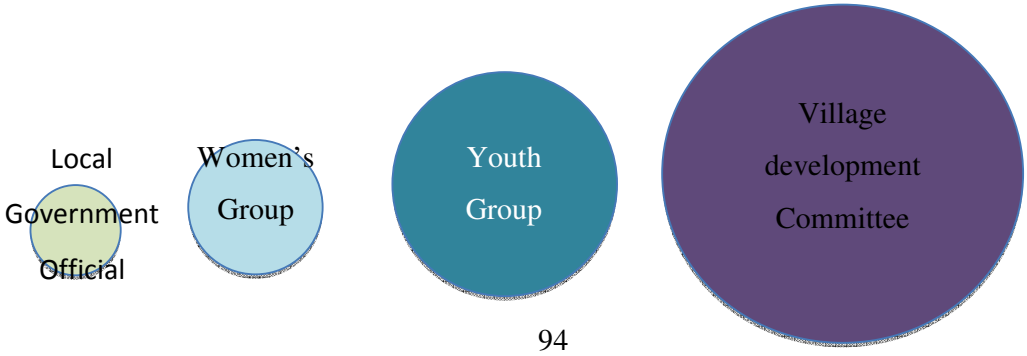
Question to ask the children during the body map exercise:

- The *head:* are there any changes in their knowledge? Or what they think about/ worry about/ feel happy about? Are there any changes in the way adults think about children?

- The *eyes*: are there any changes in the way they see their themselves/ their family/ their community/ their school? Are there any changes in the way adults see children?
- The *ears*: are there any changes in how they are listened to? Are there any changes in how they listen to others? Or what they hear?
- The *mouth*: are there any changes in the way they speak? The way they communicate with their peers, their parents, their teachers or others? Are there any changes in the way adults speak to them?
- The *shoulders:* are there any changes in the responsibilities taken on by girls or boys?
- The *heart:* are there any changes in the way they feel about themselves? Are there any changes in their attitudes to others? Are there any changes in the way adults or other children feel about them? Or others attitudes to them?
- The *stomach*: Are there any changes in their stomach? In what they eat?
- The *hands and arms:* are there any changes in what activities they do? How they use their hands or arms? Are there any changes in the way adults treat them?
- The *feet and legs:* are there any changes in where do they go? What they do with their legs and feet?

These questions are taken from Tools for Reflection, Monitoring and Evaluation of Quality work in Children's Participation in Peace Building by Save the Children, Norway.

Appendix 2: Example of a Venn diagram



Appendix 3: Questions for the key informants

Questions for key informants.

Participation

1.What is participation for you?

2.Can you give examples of activities or events that you know of and that has been adapted so that children will be able to be involved in the decision-making process?

3. What are the adults responsible for in order to ensure children's participation?
4. Why do you think participation is important?
5. How were your own experiences of participating as a child? Are there any traditions you and your family had which encouraged you to participate?
6. What are the challenges for children in order to participate today in your community? What is the main challenge of those you mentioned?
7. What is peace building for you?

Peace clubs

8. How do the peace clubs of Gulu have an important role in their community?
9. How do the parents participate in the peace clubs?
10. What other partners does the club have and what do they support with?
11. What are some of the activities of the peace clubs that you are familiar with?
12. How are the different initiatives of the peace clubs reflected in the societies attitude towards peace?

Post-conflict & Peace Building

13. In what ways is Gulu still influenced by the civil war?
14. How are these challenges changed into opportunities for children participation for peace building?
15. Where do you see Gulu in 50 years? In terms of peace and children's participation in peace building.

Appendix 4: Consent form from the Children

How you and your peace club participate in building peace.

You are invited to be part of an activity that will help me understand more about what your peace clubs does to make Gulu a better place.
I want to understand the activities you do, why you do them and who helps you. The activity will take place next week during the peace clubs. We will do two different things like draw, discuss and think about what you do for peace and what peace does for you.
If you decide that you want to do this activity with me but then change your mind later, that is ok. You can stop at any time – even in the middle of it -- and you will not be in trouble if you decide to stop. I can also ask you questions during the activities and its up to you if you want to answer these or not.
If you have any questions about the activities, please ask me.
Writing your name on the line below means you understand the activity and that you want to be part of this.

_____ _____

Your name and Today's date in the line above.
Thank you for your help!
Cecilie Gulliksen, Makarere University, (+256 7892 991 743)

Appendix 5: Consent form from the Parents

Parental Consent Form for Children's Participation in Peace - building Research

Good Day. I am a student of Makarere University and am conducting research as part of my master degree in social work. My study and passion is about children's participation in peace building. I need many to be part of this study so hopefully can you help with this.
The general aim of the study is to get an understanding on how children evaluate their own participation in peace building. Therefore will I engage peace clubs in the community and the

school to do two interacting activities together? The children will draw, discuss, reflect and evaluate their own contribution to peace building.

It is completely up to you as a parent/guardian and your child whether or not he or she can participate in this study. There will be no harm or risks for your child and the activity will take place in the peace clubs after school responsibilities. Your child has the right to withdraw from this study at any time. Although all the questions we ask are important to us, your child does not have to answer specific questions if he or she does not want to. The answers given by your child will be completely anonymous.

If you have any questions about the study, don't hesitate to contact me at 0782 991 743. My supervisor at Makarere University is also available for questions regarding the study at telephone number 0772 352 887.

Thank you very much for your help! Cecilie Gulliksen.

I understand the information on this page and am willing to allow my child to participate in this study. I understand that he or she can withdraw at any time and his/her results will not be used. Please have your child return this form to the peace club.

_____ Printed name of child

_____ Signature of child

_____ Printed name of parent/ guardian Date

_____ _____ Signature of parent/guardian Date

Appendix 6: Letter of interest

Letter of Interest

Cecilie Gulliksen
Via Makarere University
P.O. Box 7062
Kampala,
Uganda
+256 0782 991743
gulliksencecilie@gmail.com
17.02.15

To Coordinator WAYA
C/O Holy Cross Church,
Kanyagoa,
C/O P.O BOX 352,
Gulu,
Uganda

Dear Coordinator at WAYA.

Waya as an organization is recognized for its work on peace building with children and youth. The approach to children with participation and empowerment makes it ideal for my research. In the same conduct as Waya do I wish to engage children and youth in evaluating their own participation in their community through participatory activities?

My former research experience with children are little, but both work experience with children and good supervising make me sure that I can collect data, while acting respectful and considerate of the children. I choose only activities that take place in pairs or group to not cause any distress to children on an individual level. The tools that I will be using are build to fit children level of development and allow for participation to be on their premises. Since the tools explore the children work as peace agent can I only hope that they also will feel that it is a useful interaction.

My professional background as a social worker and experiences in working with children helps me steer the research in an ethical manner. I also will ensure an ethical conducted research where no names or characteristics will be mentioned.

I would mostly appreciate the opportunity to do research with the children of Waya and the association.

Best Regards From

Cecilie Gulliksen
Telephone: +256 0782 991743

17.02.15