



# Community Dance and Youth Empowerment in Uganda

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# Declaration

I, Wenxi Wang, hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and has never been submitted, either in whole or in part, to this or any other university for any academic award.

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# Abstract

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**Key words:** empowerment, youth, community dance, community project, Uganda

This study documented the ideologies and strategies used by community dance organization to empower youth and revealed youth experience in such project. The whole research employed a qualitative approach. The Breakdance Project Uganda (BPU), which had provided free breakdance classes to disfranchised youth for more than 10 years, was selected as the study case. Thirteen youth aged from 15-30 who had been participated in BPU for more than 1 year were recruited in in-depth interviews and focus group discussions using a purposive sampling approach, one BPU facilitator was interviewed about the strategies and ideologies of the project. Recordings of interviews and focus group were transcribed in a denaturalized way and analyzed in a thematic approach. The participant observation note also worked to compensate the data of the research. In general, the study revealed that community dance project had a positive impact on lives of youth, especially those who had stayed longer. Dancing as an expressive performing art improved their self-esteem. The dance community provided a safe and resourceful place for youth to explore and develop themselves. Thus community dance project provided chance for youth to be empowered socially and economically. Besides the youth also gained potent sense of self, developed more skills and competences, and raised critical awareness about themselves and the environment. Eventually youth were more able to control over their lives. However there were also challenges in terms of time and transportation expense for youth to attend the dance session, also there could be sub-groups in such project that brought negative impact on youth. Moreover the society especially parents usually held negative image of such dance group thus stopped their children from participation.

# Acronyms

<b>ADHD</b>	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<b>BBC</b>	British Broadcasting Corporation
<b>BPU</b>	Breakdance Project Uganda
<b>CCTV</b>	China Central Television
<b>CNN</b>	Cable News Network
<b>DMT</b>	Dance Movement Therapy
<b>FCD</b>	Foundation for Community Dance
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UNYP</b>	Uganda National Youth Policy

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Background of the study

Working with youth is one of the major aspects of social work. Youth are recognized as a country's backbone, and the goodness and well-being of youth directly pose an influence on a country's future. However, the period of "youth" is also perceived as one of the most challenging period during one's life-span (Lloyd, 2005; United Nations, 2013). It is the period when one leaves the compulsory education and heads towards their first job, a transitional time for one's psychological, physical and behavioral development (ibid.). It is also a transitional time for one's social status in terms of the means of economic income, marriage status, citizenship and parenthood (ibid.)

Yet this certain period of "youth" could be various in different settings. In Uganda, a "youth" is an individual from the age of 15 to 30 (Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development, 2016) while the United Nations recognizes youth hood from age 15 to 24 (United Nations, 2013). In consideration of the specific national setting in terms of social, economic and cultural background in Uganda, and along with the statistic convenience, a youth in the following discussion will be defined as per the Uganda National Youth Policy document that refers to all those individuals between 15 and 30 years.

According to Uganda National Youth Policy published by Uganda's Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development (2016), 22.5% of the Uganda population consist of youth aged 15 to 30, which make Uganda the youngest and most energetic country in the world. Contrary to that, youth in Uganda are disenfranchised by the structural deficit of social and economic setting: First of all, economic unemployment is rather high that the youth share of unemployment has reached 53.4% (Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development, 2016). The quality of education is also rather



low as the system has failed to deliver youth relevant skills that enable them to get jobs. Meanwhile, participating in vocational training is not affordable for most of them either. Secondly, the health condition of youth reveals a troubling picture. There's a low perception of risky sexual behaviors and high HIV prevalence among them. Similarly, alcohol and drug abuse are also severe. Besides, a big population of youth are orphaned by HIV/AIDS, which means that they don't have a normal family support network (ibid.). Some positive traditional practices that promote proper socialization and engagement of youth are highly looked down upon and as a result, some deviant lifestyles become popular (ibid.). Morton and Montgomery (2013:22) remind us that the time-being of a youth is also a period of high psychological risks such as "low self-esteem, hopelessness, exposure to trauma, and associations with negative peer groups". Socially and economically deprived, together with other psychological and behavioral challenges, youth in Uganda are exposed to severe vulnerable situations that require attention and efforts from all levels of the society.

## 1.2 Problem statement

Youth in Uganda are experiencing a disfranchised social-environmental structure that is not favorable for their development and well-being. They are confronted with high levels of unemployment, poverty, low education, institutional corruption, broken family support system, involvement with crime and drugs, HIV/AIDS prevalence, teenage pregnancy, and early marriage. In addressing the well-being of youth and empowering youth, practitioners have developed a wide range of approaches that could be effective including for example: livelihood enhancement; health programs; youth advocacy; civic engagement, formal and informal educational program; vocational training; entrepreneurship and leadership training; enterprise funding; career guidance; art and crafts; sports and recreation; drama and dance; community services; and youth clubs (Hope, 2012; United Nations Development Program , 2014). Different

approaches contribute differently into the personal, social, economic and political aspects of youth, and it is notable that they also interlock with one another. The development of one aspect might also result into a positive influence on another. Among all those, my focus will be on community dance project – dancing project that often led by dance artist and happens in community or groups that open to amateurs to learn dance regardless of their background - a specific approach that is also widely recognized as “therapeutic, liberating, empowering and affirmative” (Amans, 2008:8). Amans’ description and other existing literatures heightened my curiosity about community dance, as it sounds perfectly corresponding with social work profession, a profession that aims to “promote social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people” (International Federation of Social Workers, 2017). However little is known about the topic of community dance in academic fields, especially in social work arena, I am thus well motivated to initiate this research in order to discover the influential impact of community dance in addressing youth empowerment as well as promoting the well-being of youth. Community dance is not limited within a specific type of dance and it could be any type of dance or even a mix of several types, yet in this research we particularly talked about breakdance project, using the example of Breakdance Project Uganda (BPU) which located in Nsambya sharing hall of Kampala city, a community dance project that organized by a break dancer and providing free breakdance classes to vulnerable youth who don’t have access to learn dance.

### 1.3 Research objectives

As little is known for the details in a community dance project and its effectiveness on youth empowerment, this research aims at fulfilling the following objectives:

1. To document the empowering aspects of community dance from community dance organizer’s view

2. To explore the experience of youth participants in participating a community dance project
3. To identify the challenges of a community dance project in achieving youth empowerment

## 1.4 Research question

Although this research aims to address different objectives, the ultimate goal is to answer the following research question:

1. How can a community dance project empower youth?
2. In which aspects has youth participants in a community dance project felt empowered?

## 1.5 Policy relevance

The 2016 National Youth Policy approved by Uganda parliament calls for a multi-sectional cooperation among government ministries, political organizations, private sectors, youth councils, developmental partners and civic society to work towards the well-being of youth. It aims to cover mainstreaming youth issues at all levels yet the priority is given to the unemployment issue as the theme of UNPY emphasizes: “unlocking youth potential for sustainable wealth creation and development”. Skills training and entrepreneurship development might be the most wanted and mainstreamed approaches that will be favored by the government, yet those approaches are sort of “old stories” people always know. It seems that community dance is not directly linked with the upcoming stream highlighted by the current policy. However, it is also out of this purpose that I conducted this research. If the power of community

dance is found out to be spontaneous in empowering and uplifting youth, a new angle could be provided in contributing an effective youth policy.

## 1.6 Reflexivity of the research

Unlike other researchers, my specific interest into community dance and youth empowerment was coming up incidentally and had nothing to do with my past experience or knowledge. Before conducting this research, I had zero experience in dancing, I never attended any dance class nor participated in any dance group. In fact my body was so stiff that I never imaged myself in dancing. Besides, in my 6 years' social work study, I barely heard anything that related social work with community dance. What motivated me was a short video clip from YouTube named "break dancing inspires youth in Uganda", it was a video about Breakdance Project Uganda (BPU) and the interview with the project funder Abramz, and in the interview he talked about his suffering childhood and his motivation to start this project. A strong connection came when I saw youths with skinny legs and arms dancing with powerful music and doing powerful moves in that video. Checked the BPU website I found out that the exact aim of this project was to use breakdance to empower youth and bring social change. It was a completely new area (community dance) to me but I felt like there was something inside, something powerful that worth discovering. In addition, existing literatures already denoted the empowering potential of community dance yet little was known from the social work profession. Carrying those motivations, I initiated this research and participated in community dance for around two months, however I believed this experience didn't bring me any bias in my investigation, instead it helped me to have a better understanding of the topic as a participant.

# Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter brings a quick glance at the existing literature about what has been studied and known in relevant research of community dance and youth empowerment. Information is mainly accessed through online database as well as hardcopy of published books. While initiating the search, terms such as “empowerment”, “community dance”, “social work”, “youth”, “Uganda” were used as the key words to identify literatures. Literature about community dance will be presented firstly in terms of its definition and its empowering influence. Afterwards literatures about dance and dance movement therapy will also be borrowed to enrich the comprehensiveness of the context.

## 2.1 Community dance

Whereas the profession of community dance is no longer new, little is known about what it is and how a community dance project could influence people’s life. Based on the very limited literature found, the later section will try to give a review based on those two key topics: the definition of community dance and the existing literature addressing the influence of community dance.

### *What is community dance?*

In terms of the definition of community dance, Anthony Peppiatt (1996:3) in the book *Thinking Aloud: In Search of Framework for Community Dance*, for the first time distinguished community dance as “all dance activities at every level but not professional dance performance”. However, this definition is still very vague, which makes it hard for outsiders to understand what exactly community dance is. We could only sense the term from some key attributes of community dance identified by Peppiatt(ibid.): that community dance “embraces diversity, involving every dance style and everyone in the whole community, inclusive of class, age, ability, gender, sexuality and race”; that the purpose of community dance activity is described to increase

people's access to dance through experience and participation; and that the core areas of community dance involve not only art (increases people's access to art) and education ("dance education and education through dance"), but also politics ("creating change for the individual, the group, the art, and those in power") and society ("growth for the individual and the group in social situations").

Until Jill Green (2000) in the United States conducted a pilot research about community dance education based on a summer workshop for children aged 9-13, literature about community dance was scanty. In her work, Green asserts that the term community dance is not a "homogeneous theoretical moment", she instead prefers to conceptualize it with some key characteristics which include: that community dance values accessibility and participation more than a high art standard; that it is often related to disenfranchised groups who may not have the access to dance; and that many community dance programs tried to fulfil the need of "personal expression of social issues and problems" and "embrace the notion of involvement and decision-making by the community members themselves"(ibid:53-55).

A very important authority in defining community dance also must not be forgotten here. The Foundation for Community Dance (FCD), the pioneering and leading authority of community dance in UK that constantly tries to promote the development of community dance and community dance network. In fact, the framework of Pappiatt is also related and published through FCD. Amans' (2008) book, *An Introduction to Community Dance Practice* also refers to the definition from FCD as an important source of understanding community dance. Thus, a necessity is required to review the latest information from FCD as it is still regarded as the most influential and authoritative reference for community dance profession. According to FCD, community dance as a participatory dance includes: "gathering together as a group or community to dance together"; "coming together with others who want to enjoy a specific dance style"; "coming together to work with a dance specialist who is skilled

in supporting you to use dance in a creative way to express yourself and your ideas” (FCD, 2017, What is community dance, para. 4).

“Professional Code of Conduct” indicate that community dance is “for everyone, irrespective of where they live, their age, gender, sexuality, race, disability, educational attainment or economic circumstance” (FCD, 2017, Professional Code of Conduct).

According to the latest update from FCD, the influence of community dance could: “impact positively on people’s health and wellbeing, their personal motivation and their social relationships”; “provide people with an important focus for their lives, overcome barriers to participation and enhance people's sense of community”; “offer people new ways of relating to other people, based on respect and valuing difference” ; “enhance the quality of relationships between people, their communities, their dancing and their dance” and “make a positive contribution to wider social change, and artistic and learning agendas” (FCD, 2017, Definitions, core values and a code of conduct for community dance, para. 14).

### ***Community dance and empowerment***

Green (2000) conducted a summer dance workshop on at risk children aged 9-13 who lack financial resources and access to social power. Her findings reveal that community dance provided participants with a chance to talk and open up to one another, a place to learn dancing as well as collaboration and decision making. The diverse social background of each participant also allows them opportunities to learn from one another.

While the general atmosphere was eulogizing the fantasy power of community dance towards transformation and empowerment, Houston (2005) realizes that none of the professionals have provided any concrete evidence to prove this power. To open this myth, she made her own research to evaluate the true sense of empowerment based on

two community dance projects: one is a 3-year project for the elderly people and the other is an 18-month's project for male prisoners. In this research, she proposes that community dance has some positive impact in terms of: enhancing confidence and sociability; providing ways of structural life; improving the awareness of self-identity; fostering a sense of pride and enjoyment; retaining a positive life view; and achieving self-integrity. However, Houston also criticizes that those impacts can only be seen as a clue to empowerment but not as solid evidence of empowerment, considering that those changes only proved to stay within dancing and that the impact on participants' further lives cannot be assessed. She further stresses that community dance "may be a potential road to empowerment and transformation, but that road is far from straight or smooth" (Houston, 2005:176). Above all, this article stands out to remind us of a crucial lens in viewing all practices and literature about community dance: that the prosperity of community dance especially in UK is promoted following a political agenda to include socially excluded groups; that studies about community dance might be commissioned to favor the interested parties by intentionally proving that community dance is empowering and transforming with social and economic values so that professions and organizations can obtain funding from the government or the society in an easier way. Houston's work also inspires the methodology part for further research that the real impact of community dance should be viewed in a long-term project, and that analyzing one's feeling of empowerment is difficult and should take into account the thoughts of both participants and the project facilitators.

In a further study with empowerment in community dance, Deasy (2014) also initiates a qualitative research with four participants ages 26-44 over eight dance sessions in nine weeks. Rather than addressing social environment, Deasy approaches community dance from participants' somatic experience in breath, touch, body connectivity and gravity. She notes that community dance poses a positive impact on people by evoking their feeling of freedom from the mainstream influence and allowing them freedom to express and explore. It also helps individuals to enter a process of self-discovery and make them feel connected by experiencing a sense of giving and receiving. However,



Deasy also acknowledged that “whether this effect was a short-lived experience or would have a lasting impact on participant’s life, it could not be determined”; and that “the impact of the dance experience remained limited to feelings and thinking, rather than making active changes” (Deasy, 2014:138).

The existing literature suggests that community dance “can be therapeutic, liberating, empowering and affirmative” (Amans, 2008:8). However, former researches put much focus in the area of the dance practice itself, acknowledging the empowering potential in community dance while they could not really give concrete evidence about it. It could also be due to the fact that most community dance projects assessed are short-lived ones that only last for weeks or months and the wider social impact in people’s life wouldn’t have time to show up. It is therefore worth trying to conduct a research in a long-term project, addressing both the dance experience and the social environmental experience of people.

## 2.2 Dance and Dance Movement Therapy(DMT)

### *Dance Movement Therapy*

From the psychotherapeutic perspective, dance is commonly employed as a therapeutic tool in Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) sessions to “further the cognitive, emotional, physical, and social integration” (Finlayson, 2015:9). Early back in 1978, dance therapist Kleinman gave us a very comprehensive understanding of the positive motion among DMT:

“By exploring one’s body through expressive movement, it is possible to awaken inner sensations and feelings. As these inner senses awaken, they join with outward expression and awareness come to light. As this happens it becomes possible to make discoveries about ourselves. If we are able to accept and acknowledge to ourselves the importance of these discoveries, we can

begin to form insights. These insights can begin to fit meaningfully into our lives, if we are able to connect our body discoveries with our cognitive thinking. Once we have connected ourselves in this way, we can integrate the meaning of our insights so that our experience can bring change in our life patterns and added meaning to our existence” (Kleinman, 1978: 13).

Later in the empirical study, Grönlund et al (2006) pointed out the coherence power of DMT by proving that kinesthetic coherence and motor coordination generated from DMT sessions lead to positive behavioral and emotional change as well as a better ability to resist stress of life on ADHD patients.

Goodgame (2007:79-83) emphasized that: dance is a non-verbal expression that can actually excel the boundary of culture and language among different groups; it creates a form of physical release that helps young people to deal with anxieties, frustrations as well as other emotions which they cannot find explanations for; and allows them to explore “thoughts and feelings beyond the barriers of words”. Moreno and Dona (2013: 471) with their research about music and dance therapy on young adults who have severe autism specified four main influential dimension of DMT and music therapy: “one’s capacity to modulate self-adaptive behaviors; empathic capacity of sharing emotion and imitating gestures; individual instinct behavior such as sleeping and feeding; and emotional disorder such as mood disorder, intolerance and frustration to environmental change”.

### ***The power of dancing***

The uplifting power of dance is undisputable. It is not only approved by the therapeutic approach of dance, but also affirmed by other empirical study of dance art itself. A study among young dance students indicates that dance helps individuals to live in a disciplined life and gain control over life. Through dancing, individuals are also allowed to forget things in the real world and enter a transcendent state of their bodies

and souls (Stinson, Jones and Dyke, 2017:18). Loots (2015:128-131) states that the value of dance lies especially in the fact that it “allows every child to be productive and heard” and also “allows for social interface between different races, cultures, physical abilities and genders that offer different ways of being in (and experiencing) community and the body”.

# Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

This Chapter will introduce three main theories of this research: the empowerment theory, self-efficacy theory and ecological theory. Concepts and arguments from those theories shaped my understanding of research data and will be used to illustrate and interpret the research findings. For empowerment theory, definition of empowerment, dimensions of empowerment will be presented. The theory of self-efficacy and ecological theory are in fact very closely linked with empowerment. Thus, I will also discuss both in detail as they are very important in understanding the concept and dynamics inside empowerment theory.

## 3.1 Empowerment theory

Empowerment theory is viewed by many practitioners as a vehicle for social transformation and a way of resisting oppression and marginalization (O’Neill, 2015: 2). It looks for “solutions to problems in living in a diversity of local settings, rather than in the centralized single solutions of a monolithic helping structure” (Rappaport, 1987:122). While Rappaport (ibid: 130) regards the concept of empowerment as a multileveled construct that is “not only individual psychological, but also organizational, political, sociological, economic and spiritual”, Anderson et al. (1994:78) classify the practice of empowerment into 5 key dimensions: personal empowerment, social empowerment, educational empowerment, economic empowerment and political empowerment. Regardless of those complex dimensions or levels, what lies in the centre of empowerment is the belief that people have the power to master their own fate and to put influence on the environmental surrounding (Rappaport, 1987:142).

### *Definition of empowerment*

Till now, there’s no one dominant idea about what exactly means by empowerment, empowerment as a multileveled construct is defined differently in various context and

the meaning of empowerment differs from people to people.

While British social work theorist Robert Adam (2008:36) regards empowerment as “the capacity of individuals, groups and/or communities to take control of their circumstances, exercise power and achieve their own goals, and the process by which, individually and collectively, they are able to help themselves and others to maximize the quality of their lives”, Sadan (2014:13) defines empowerment as “a transition from a state of powerlessness to a state of more control over one’s life, fate, and environment”. Narayan (2002:11) from the economic view specifies empowerment as “the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives.” Lee and Hudson (2011:163) further develop that those assets and capabilities could include “good physical and mental health, education, production, belonging, leadership, relations of trust, a sense of identity, the capacity to organize, and values that give meaning to life”.

### *Dimensions of empowerment*

Whilst empowerment could be such a multi-faced concept, Sadan (2014:20) defined empowerment as a process dealing with “citizen’s right to self-definition”, “people’s critical awareness of their social situation” and “people organizing in order to achieve important goals”. Lee and Hudson (2011:163) had a similar view and enlarged empowerment into three interlocking aspects: “the development of a more positive and potent sense of self”, “the construction of knowledge and capacity for a more critical comprehension of the web of social and political realities of one's environment” and “the cultivation of resources and strategies, or more functional competence, for attainment of personal and collective goals”.

Sense of self, consciousness and competence are the three interlocking dimensions that built an interacting mechanism of empowerment and gave a basic framework of this research. The following findings were also be analyzed according to those three

dimensions.

- Changed sense of self/self-definition

It has been commonly recognized that the change of one's self-perception is an important milestone throughout the empowerment process. It is a great range of ideas and concepts about the way people think about themselves and the world. Individuals perceive a more positive sense of self with "a better feeling about themselves", "a sense of more self-respect and self-esteem", "a new self-confidence" and "a feeling of self-efficacy" (Sadan, 2004:84).

- Widened awareness/comprehension about the social-political surrounding

Deasy (2014:128) claimed that consciousness is an expanding learning process instead of a "fixed entity". It not only represents a range of things that we are aware of, but also determine the scope of things we can reach and do. Critical consciousness development is indeed "the most significant personal experience" in the empowerment process. It is a process by which people gain a greater knowledge of the oppressive power in their cultural-social environment, and a better insight of their ability to change the condition (Sadan, 2004:82). A heightened critical consciousness helps people to "think, see, talk, and act for themselves" (Lee and Hudson, 2011:164).

- Developed competence/ability to achieve one's goal

Skills and abilities are the executive powers and fuels to move steps forward to personal and collective achievement. People don't learn skills by thinking. Instead, they gain competence gradually by interacting with the environment. It is also about the resources and opportunities they can get and the effort they invest to participate. According to Sadan (2004:81-195), groups and communities are the perfect environment for developing social skills, exercising problem-solving, and for experiencing interpersonal influence. The more a person invests in a community or group, the more benefit he/she can get to accelerate the empowerment process.

In conclusion, one's empowerment is achieved through the improvement in sense of self, development of competence and ascendant of consciousness. It is critical to note that the above three dimensions are more of interactive processes rather than a sequential order; they are interlocking factors which cannot be viewed separately. In an empowerment process, none of them can stand alone and they must be combined together. With the transactional force, they can heighten each other and eventually uplift individuals to a renewed altitude with a control over their lives. While competence building could help to build a better sense of self, one's improvement in critical awareness about his/her capability to influence the environment can also reflect back to a potent sense of self. Once a good sense of self is developed, individuals will have more confidence and strength in competence building and in the meantime a better understanding of the environment and self which will contribute to consciousness raising. The relationship between competence building and consciousness raising is also the same. Good competence improves one's awareness while a raised awareness can also benefit competence building. Those three dimensions work together to nourish each other and eventually make one to feel integrated with the environment, as well as powerful to change it. In this way, the process of empowerment is realized.

## 3.2 Self-efficacy theory

Self-efficacy theory is closely linked with the empowerment theory in the sense that it is an important part of "sense of self" that is referred to in empowerment. Thus, it reveals one's capacity to act and exercise control in the environment.

### *Definition of self-efficacy*

According to Bandura (1997:2), self-efficacy refers to "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to manage prospective situations". One's self-efficacy could be developed by four difference sources: the mastery

experiences, which refers to people's experience in overcoming life obstacles; the vicarious experiences, which refers to the impact of social model in which individuals "see people similar to them succeed"; social persuasion - that people are realistically persuaded by others and that they have the capability to succeed in certain things and; the physiological and emotional states, that could influence the way people judge their capabilities (ibid.).

### ***The process of activating one's efficacy***

The process to regulate one's self-efficacy is identified as a four-interweaving process. First, the cognitive processes, which illustrate that human thought functions to "predict events and to develop ways to control the life of individual". People with higher efficacy tend to challenge themselves and think in an analytic way that results into their good performance while people with lower efficacy would have less aspiration and become erratic in thinking which deteriorates their performance. Second to that is the motivational processes, which bring out the fact "that the capacity to exercise self-influence by goal challenges and evaluative reaction to one's own performances provides a major cognitive mechanism of motivation". Third, the affective processes underline that people's coping capacities under stress could influence one's efficacy level, social support influences social efficacy and eventually adverse stress, the mood of a person could also alter the sense of efficacy; Lastly, the selection processes indicate that the perception of self-efficacy directs people's choice of environment: "By the choice they make, people cultivate different competencies, interests, and social networks that determine their life course" (Bandura, 1997: 5-11).

### ***Distinction among sense of self, self-esteem and self-efficacy***

The term self-efficacy is usually mixed with self-concept and self-esteem. Despite the



fact that they have some inter-relationship with each other, they are independent concepts representing different meanings. Sense of self, or self-perception or self-concept, is “the composite view of oneself formed through direct experience and evaluations adopted from significant others” (Farkas, 2011: 430). Self-esteem instead, is “primarily and singularly concerned with self-worth” (ibid: 431). Self-efficacy as mentioned above is “a perception of capability that is developed through both observations of others as well as personal experience” (ibid.). The concepts of self-esteem and self-efficacy are both part of one’s sense of self. Self-esteem is a value-based term that doesn’t necessarily connect with one’s ability; it does relate with self-efficacy in that people “tend to cultivate their abilities in activities that give them a sense of self-worth” (ibid.).

The above distinctions clarify some misunderstanding of self-perception, self-esteem and self-efficacy and help to build a better analysis of research data. The theory of self-efficacy contributes in understanding the process within which youth could acquire a better sense of self.

### 3.3 Ecological theory

The ecological theory is especially important in the field of community practice as it provides a “person in environment” perspective to understand the interactive dynamics between individuals and their environment. An ecological theory assumes the “individual organisms and species of organisms in an exchange relationship both with other organisms and with the natural elements within a specified environment” (MacNair, 1996:183). Although human beings are change agents who are capable of empowering themselves, the formation of one is not only influenced by heredity, but also constrained by the opportunities and experiences from the environment. Environmental conditions can pose a significant influence on each individual. People’s sense of powerlessness is the co-product of several social and political factors, which

might include “economic insecurity, absence of experience in the political arena, absence of access to information, lack of training in critical and abstract thought, physical and emotional stress, learned helplessness, and the aspects of a person’s emotional or intellectual makeup that prevent him or her from actualizing the possibilities” (Lee and Hudson, 2011:162). Human ecology suggests that individuals “must seek and negotiate the human and material resources it needs within its habitat, which is a community” (MacNair, 1996:183). A community dance project is a social collective entity where people gathered with common needs and problems. It is usually set with its own culture, rules and values. By participating in such a project, individuals access an alternative environment where “new climate, resources and relations are available to help boosting the empowerment process” (Sadan, 2004: 86-245). A commensalistic relationship in community among individuals built on mutual bonding that “serves the purpose of gaining strength” when they “experience similar frustrations, distress, and deprivation” (MacNair, 1996: 185).

# Chapter 4: Methodology

In search of the dynamics in a community dance project towards youth empowerment in Uganda, a qualitative research method was employed in this study. The following chapter explicates in detail the key methods used when conducting this research: the research design, description of the chosen case, study site and targeted population, sample size and sample selection, data collection and data analysis. Lastly, ethical considerations and study limitations related to the research methodology are discussed.

## 4.1 Description of the research design

Existing literature provided an insight of the impact of community dance from a micro perspective in terms of the body sensation and mental status. However, an empowerment approach requires a broader view beyond one's body perception. Thus, the influence of community dance to individuals in a social environment must also be looked through. Due to lack of knowledge for the latter aspects in former literature, an open discovery must be made in order to reveal the unknown impact lying in community dance for youth empowerment. A qualitative research would thus better serve this need as it allows a researcher to have greater flexibility in the research process and to also avoid the inappropriate frame of reference putting on the study population (Bryman, 2012). Besides, a qualitative research method is more favorable to "view a social life in terms of process" and consequently give a researcher a better insight into the interconnections of different social elements and social systems (ibid: 402).

Even though various types of research design can be used in a study, this research was conducted only on a case study formulation. According to Bryman (2012), a case study design method uses a representative case to examine the intensive details for a phenomenon and the fieldwork was undertaken in a single location. Bearing in mind that a comprehensive understanding of a certain phenomenon requires concentration and dedication, a case study that focuses on one single community dance project can be

more beneficial for the research than stretching out among different organizations. The unit of analysis was youth who participated in the organization rather than the organization itself.

## 4.2 Study organization: Breakdance Project Uganda

The study was conducted through a community dance project called “Breakdance Project Uganda” (BPU). BPU is a grass root organization and private-founded project initiated in 2006 in Kampala, Uganda. It is established with a high motivation and inspiration from the funder Abramz to help youth who are suffering from vulnerable situations. The initial point of BPU is to use dance as a tool to engage and empower youth in disadvantaged situations, to “build mutually beneficial relationships between people of different social statuses” and “to teach people breakdancing and how to pass on those skills to others, as well as promoting leadership skills, social responsibility and positive change to members and local communities” (Breakdance Project Uganda, 2017).

The key service provided by BPU is breakdance session that happens twice a week in Nsambya youth sharing center in Kampala. It is an open stage near a basketball playground and a church. Whenever the service is on-going, there are always people around sitting and watching. They also have a branch in northern Uganda, Gulu district, but the one in Kampala is the head quarter and base-camp. A regular breakdance session usually contains four parts: body warm up from 5pm – 6pm; Teaching from 6pm - 7:30pm; Cypher for group improvisation from 7:30 – 8:30pm and; Communication session from 8:30 – 9:00pm. In the body warm up session, people gather together to do warm up exercise and stretching. After that, they are divided into 4 big groups: beginner class for breakdancing, advanced class for breakdancing, b-boxing class and popping class. Participants are given the freedom to choose and try whatever they are willing to learn. Following the teaching session is the Cypher in which people are supposed to

show whatever they've learned and what they have in groups, and one tradition that is from the element of hip hop culture. At the end, there is the communication session in which people interact, sit down and listen to one another. The section of gratitude is designed for people to appreciate others, teachers, students and whoever they feel like thanking. The other section of communication is for the facilitator and members to communicate the things they would like to share or discuss; it could be a topic about gambling, or a topic about public speaking, or someone may just come out and communicate on behalf of other members why they couldn't make it.

Even though the aim of BPU is to empower youth and bring social change, participants from all ages and backgrounds are welcomed to join. Everything is free and there is no membership requirement or registration.

Apart from the regular dance session, BPU also provides many community outreach projects, they (BPU) go to communities where people don't have access to learning of the dance (usually in slum areas), teach young people dancing and inspire them to make a change in life. They also organize relevant activities, for example "hip hop for society" as an annual event. In this event, they organize the performance of hip hop elements (including dancing, b-boxing and popping) as well as workshops to discuss social life and social change. Currently, the BPU has over 1000 members (and the regular attendance is around 30-50). It has become one of the most influential breakdance organizations in the country especially in Kampala area. The group has been reported by many media houses including international channels such as BBC, CNN, and CCTV and some of its members have also become famous in the area due to their dancing skills.

### 4.3 Study site and study population

The Breakdance Project Ugandan is an open community where anyone can join. The

participants come from very diverse backgrounds. Approximately 30-50 participants join the dance session each time. 50% of them are more stable and they always attend the sessions. The other 50% are those who come for the first time or those who come irregularly. From the nationality level, the majority in the dance project are Ugandans although there are also some foreigners from other countries, for example Congo, United States, Germany, etc. In respect to age, participants stretch from 5 to 25 years old or even beyond. But, majority are young people from 13-25 years old. Economic and social background can be different as well. However, through talking and observation, I realized that most of them come from low-income families or slums; some of them even find difficulty in getting money for transportation to the dance avenue; some are sponsored through this dance project to go to school; some are working as waitress in restaurants or sell clothes in second hand markets. In the perspective of gender, both girls and boys participate in this project. However, the number of boys outweighs that of girls especially youths who are above age 15. While there's a big variety in the group, this research only focused on Ugandan youths aged 15-30.

#### 4.4 Sample size and sample selection procedure

As the research is based on the case study of Breakdance Project Uganda, the study sample or study unit was youth that participating in this project. Initial access to youths was obtained by participating in this project while having the oral consent from project facilitator. Through the initial contact with participants, I noticed that not everyone is appropriate to be recruited in the research since there is a big variety relating to their time of participation in the program. Bryman (2012:416) suggests that a sampling method is “essential to do with the selection of unit”. If research questions “provide guidelines as to what categories of people need to be the focus and therefore sampled”, then a purposive sampling method is more proper than a probability one for my research.

I employed a purposive sampling method as several hints were given in my research question. I needed to ensure that proper samples are selected while addressing the key characteristics and criteria which could influence the research result.

While the research question focused on the impact of community dance project towards youth empowerment, when selecting the sample, a certain period of participation was required in order to allow the impact of the project to be reflected on participants. Theoretically, the longer the time youths participate in the project, the better reflection I could get. As the project already exists for more than 10 years, a minimum participation of half a year was required when selecting the participants. Because the research targeted youth, those outside 15-30 age bracket were eliminated. Even though there's no specific literature indicating the difference among gender, both boys and girls were recruited just to eliminate the gender influence. Lastly, to acquire good communication with participants, a certain level of English speaking was included in the criteria.

In terms of the sampling size, Bryman (2012: 425-426) emphasizes that in purposive sampling, the sample size could vary a lot based on different situations. However, one important criterion was that the size could be good enough for the researcher to achieve theoretical saturation and to support convincing conclusions. Two key factors decided the sample size: the first was that the depth of each case is more important than the quantity in this research; the second was the accessible number of participants I could get from the organization. Since the number of participants in each session is usually no more than 50, I eventually recruited 7 youths for individual interview and 6 youths for focus group discussion as it should be reasonable to access as well as to support data saturation.

Since I was part of the dance group, I was able to get close to youths and built basic trust with them. In this way, I acknowledged basic information about them and started the filtering process in order to find the proper participants. After participating in the session 8 times, I started to recruit youths for my interview and focus group: after each

session, I approached those who were available there, introduce my research and ask if they had interest in participating. They were youth I knew that already fulfilled the participants' requirement of the research. Interviews/focus group usually happened the day after or within 3 days after the dance session. Through this, I ensure maximum attendance of the participants and it turned out to function well. That was also the reason why I chose to invite them session by session instead of arranging everything in advance.

Basic information of participants:

No.	Participant	Age	Gender	Years in BPU	Occupation
1	A	17	M	3	Student
2	B	21	M	6	Student
3	C	16	F	5	Student
4	D	21	M	3	Factory worker
5	E	22	M	5	Shop assistant
6	G	21	M	6	Part-time Dancer
7	H	18	F	1	Waitress in restaurant
8	F1	17	M	2	Student
9	F2	21	M	5	Self-employed
10	F3	20	M	7	Maintenance worker
11	F4	17	M	2	Student
12	F5	21	M	10	Student
13	F6	22	M	6	Freelance photographer

## 4.5 Data collection method

There are 3 main sources of data collection: Participant observation, individual interview and focus group discussion. A tape recorder was used during the interview session and focus group session. Besides, I also noted down some of my observation throughout the participation.



### ***Participant observation***

By participating in dancing, I became a member of the dancing community which helped me to “find a role” in the organization and thus had the chance to get familiar with my research participants as well as “develop an understanding of the culture of the group and people’s behavior within the context of the culture” (Bryman, 2012: 433-439).

Meanwhile, I found out that being a community member also involved me in the empowering process, although time was limited. It was beneficial for me to understand the dynamics and shaped my research with inspirations coming from my own dancing experience. I noted down some of my feelings whenever dancing or inspired by something that happened in the community.

### ***Semi-structured interview***

Since research is more interested in exploring “why” and “how” questions, semi-structured interviews give more space to discover different views of an interviewee and allow a researcher to follow up questions that might be relevant to the study. Bryman also asserts that “qualitative interviewing tends to be flexible, responding to the direction in which interviewees take the interview and perhaps adjusting the emphases in the research as a result of significant issues that emerge in the course of interviews” (Bryman, 2012:470).

Thus seven Semi-structured interviews were carried out in order to generate research ideas and reach theoretical saturation. The venues for the various interviews were according to the needs of participants. They included the dancing hall which aimed at matching with the tight schedule of youth and a café or restaurant guaranteed a quiet environment for tape recording and communication. Each interview lasted for around 1-2 hours until all the questions were finished. The interviewees were informed about

the rough topic we would discuss and the length of the interview before they came. Because most of the youth could speak English meantime I couldn't speak their local language, all interviews were conducted in English.

At the beginning of each interview, an interviewee was given the information about the researcher and the research. Appreciation for their participation was highlighted and clearance on confidentiality was also conducted. Besides, oral consent was secured from the interviewees in order to participate in the research as well as permitting to be recorded. An interview guide was designed before the interview to ensure the effectiveness of the interview and all the questions were asked in a certain order to make the interview flow reasonably. All the interviews provided a comprehensive understanding of the impact of community dance towards youth empowerment from the participants' experience, and ample data was well prepared for further analysis.

### ***Focus Group***

Compared to individual interviews, focus group discussion could be a good option to discovering people's experience in a way that the environment offers opportunity for participants to probe for other reasons for holding their view. The researcher is also in position to get a more realistic account of what people think than in an individual interview because participants are exposed to each other and they could be challenged by others (Bryman, 2012). For that reason, I conducted a focus group session with six youths whose experience in this project ranges from 2 to 10 years. The focus group session was arranged after all the individual interviews. This was to ensure that all the topics discussed were helpful to the study after being examined in previous individual interviews. Besides, conducting individual interviews before the focus group would allow me to get a better sense of whom to invite in the focus group session, so that I could assure the efficiency of the discussion. Once again, English was the key language during the focus group session, which was conducted in a restaurant just near the corner

of the dance hall.

## 4.6 Data processing and analysis

The transcription process started after the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview so that the previous information obtained could better guide the later research. Oliver et al (2006) summarize that a transcription should be proceeded by a naturalization or a denaturalization manner. While the former intends to recover the original conversation by capturing many of the details including laughter, stuttering and response/non-response tokens, the latter tries to focus on the informational content within which the interview noise is removed and grammar is corrected. The main focus of my research was the content and information revealed by participants; “how” and “to whom” the information was organized have little relevance to the research topic. Therefore, I employed a denaturalization transcribing method throughout the process. When executing the data coding, a combination of open coding and axial coding were used. Open coding helped me to “condense the mass of data into categories” and axial coding worked to stimulate my thinking about the connection of different themes as well as aiding me to understand the different angles of community dance in empowering youth (Neuman, 2014:481-483). In this research, a certain theoretical framework was settled before the interview and some preconceptions already exist ahead of the analysis, therefore a thematic analysis was conducted throughout the analysis process.

## 4.7 Ethical consideration

### 4.7.1 Confidentiality and No Harm

As a researcher, I took special care about the confidentiality of each participant and tried to reduce any potential harm throughout and after the research process. Bryman

(2012) suggests that a social research might be disturbing and this disturbance could pose harm to participants. While conducting the research, my role as participant observer wouldn't allow me to avoid none disturbance. However, I was always careful not to disturb any of the members by integrating into the environment as much as possible with the role of dancing participant. Besides, attention was paid while accessing participants for an interview/focus group invitation by conducting it after the dance session through one-on-one talk to minimize the influence. In terms of confidentiality, Bryman (2012) points out that in a qualitative research, it is more difficult to ensure that individuals are not identified since possible identification of persons or places could be revealed in the research report. To avoid this, in this paper I used Alphabet to represent participant name, also possible identical information of youth was eliminated to the largest extent.

#### 4.7.2 Informed consent

Informed consent is related with issues about participants' right to have a full understanding of the research and to "make an informed decision about whether or not they wish to participate in a study" (Bryman, 2012:138). To address the issue of informed consent, three different tools are employed in the research: Firstly, the oral consent for the researcher to conduct research among Breakdance Project participants was obtained from BPU facilitator, who was also the key informant of youths in this project; Secondly, youths were aware of my identity and my purpose in there since the project facilitator introduced me the first day I participated in their project. Thirdly, before each interview and focus group, information about academic identity of researcher, content of the research, my personal motivation of the research, purpose of the research, confidential rules, potential publicity were all stated clearly to participants and acquired their oral consents. Where necessary, their written consents were also able to obtain.

## 4.8 Limitation of the study

### 4.8.1 Language barriers

Considering that English is the official language in Uganda and that most youth could use English to express themselves in BPU, I chose to conduct interviews and focus group discussion in English. This enabled my direct communication with the participants and also provided more flexibility in time as there was no translator involved in each meeting. However, there were also drawbacks when conducting the research. I noticed that although youths were able to express themselves in English, their proficiency level was limited to a certain level that they could only use simple words to illustrate things and opinions instead of a more profound expression.

### 4.8.2 Subjectivity of participant

There was a slight inconsistency in what had been told by youths during the interview or focus group and their real behaviors outside the conversation. It seems that some level of glossing was put when youths talked about themselves and their experience in the project. I assumed that some youths prefer to show only the good side of themselves. Besides, those youths were familiar with Medias and researchers, some of them knew well what researchers want to hear. For example, some youths could talked about clubbing as a bad thing but the next day you found them posting club pictures on social media. However, it is also hard to avoid such things in research.

# Chapter 5: Findings and Analysis

The following chapter aims to provide an in-depth understanding about how a community dance project could be used and facilitated to promote youth empowerment in Uganda. Primary data from individual interviews with the dance participants and organization facilitator, focus group with dance participants and observation notes of the researcher were combined and analyzed under a thematic tradition. Empowerment theory acted as the theoretical framework to guide the analysis, theories of self-efficacy and ecology as well as existing literature relating to community dance and community project work as the complementary material to support the argument of each finding. Three separate sections are presented in response to previous research objectives: 5.1 Ideologies and strategies used by community dance provider (BPU) to achieve youth empowerment; 5.2 Understanding empowerment in community dance through youth experience; 5.3 Challenges of a community dance project in achieving youth empowerment.

## 5.1 Ideologies and strategies used by community dance provider (BPU) to achieve youth empowerment

This section responds to the first objective of the study: to document the empowering aspects of community dance from community dance organizer's view. Besides, in order to have a better understanding of how the empowerment process generates, it is also important to first figure out strategies used by the community dance service provider. Since there was no official written document in BPU that could give good reference to this part, I tried to extract and summarize it through the interpretation of BPU project facilitator M. Quotations from participants were also used to reflect on it and interpret the process. Based on that, the whole section is introduced as: 5.1.1 Ideology: using dancing as a tool to empower youth; 5.1.2 Strategy: building a supportive, safe yet resourceful environment; 5.1.3 Strategy: sensitizing youth through peer talks and group

communication; 5.1.4 Strategy: the principle of “everyone is a student and everyone is a teacher”

### 5.1.1 The ideology: using dancing as a tool to empower youth

BPU dedicates to “use hip hop as a tool to engage and empower disadvantaged youth in Kampala and other areas of Uganda” (Breakdance Project Uganda, 2017). Dancing and the dancing class are the key instruments BPU applies while empowering youth and also the first and foremost service it provides. BPU believes that dancing especially breakdancing or hip-hop dancing could generate positive effect that empowers youth in several ways. This part addresses the ideology in four separate parts: develop dancing as a skill; provide a new social identity through dancing; and increase the possibility of youth to mobilize geographically.

#### *Develop dancing as a skill*

BPU believes that what really empowers a person is the skill he or she could acquire. While most vulnerable youths suffer from resource deprivation, dancing as a skill is something that could be acquired and merged into one’s ability.

If you have dance as your own skill, no one is gonna take that away from you, most of the time we tell young people that, think about it in a way that, let’s say you looked at a policeman, what makes them a policeman, they have a gun, if someone takes the gun away from them, their power decreases 70%, if you have a skill that no one would take away from you, that really empowers someone, you know what I have something that really cool, I have something that people do not have.

(Facilitator M)

In the above description, M used the metaphor of policeman and the gun to highlight that dance is a skill that will not be taken away. It implies that a skill is an ability gained

by individual through their effort (Cambridge Dictionary, 2017), something that dwells inside. A skill could give individuals a sense of ownership and control, which is substantial to secure youth especially those who perceive little control in life. Besides, a skill can only be acquired when someone really works hard for it. Bandura (1997:3) suggests that success through perseverant effort is especially powerful to build individual self-efficacy. Moreover, the above description also imparts another influence of dancing in that it makes people feel “cool” because it is something other people don’t have. This kind of “coolness” is similarly unveiled from two of the participants from the focus group:

For me I’m proud to be a dancer, because when I’m there chilling with my friends, everyone has talents, when someone says that I know how to play football or basketball, I felt good because I also have my talent as a dancer, it’s not like be there and know you don’t have any talent. That’s why I kept doing dancing and I’m proud of it...I choose dance, also because if you are with your friends and you are asked if you have a talent, if you are a dancer you can just dance. How can you show someone who asked you if you have a talent? if you are playing football, you cannot show him if you don’t have a ball there. But if you are a dancer, you can just dance and show him.

(Participant F3)

F3 generates a sense of pride because in front of his friends who play basketball or football he could have his unique talent of dance. More so, the performance characteristics of dance allows him to show what he has in front of others. This sort of self-worth could eventually refer to the improvement of one’s self-esteem, as Bandura (2012:29) denoted, “Self-esteem is a judgment of self-worth”. Besides the side of personal traits and perception, dancing as a skill has a potential to help youth to generate income, the facilitator M highlights that:



People come and learn skills, they can use them to generate income. So, people get jobs like dance studios, formal school, private classes and other, so they are really empowered economically because they can go make their own money and support themselves.

(Facilitator M)

Although not everyone can make it to the extent of using dance to make a living, those who develop a good level in dancing do have a chance to make money through it. The story of participant F2 is a good case for it:

It was 2012 when I joined BPU, for me I live far really, by then I used to drive a bicycle from where I stay to BPU, for sure, every session I used to come with a bike, I spent like almost 3 years doing that, then it was in 2014 when I won BA(dance competition), I won some money, then I was also collecting some money then I opened up a small business, I started selling movies, then I could get money for myself for transport, and also my basic needs, so from then I stop driving bicycle to BPU, I could get transport to BPU. That's one of the impact really, the biggest impact from BPU and what worked for me.

(Participant F2)

Through dancing and winning the dance competition, the economic status of F2 changed dramatically from lacking the money for transport to owning a business and being able to maintain his life. The case of F2 is powerful yet not so common. The more popular case of others is to earn a living through teaching dance, like what participant B、 D、 E、 F5、 and F6 do. They get paid through teaching dance either on part-time or full-time. Sadan (2004: 193) signifies “development of skills reinforces people’s belief in their ability and improves their self-confidence, and in this way the individual empowerment process is reinforced”. To sum it up, developing dancing as a skill for the youth could improve self-efficacy and self-

esteem, as well as a sense of control. Some of them are even able to make a living through dance. All those ultimately contribute to the empowerment process.

### *Dancing provides a new social identity*

Another goal BPU wants to achieve is to change the negative social image of youth through dancing. Whereas youth in vulnerable situation are stereotyped by the society with certain negative labels (i.e. orphan, homeless, street boys), BPU aims to remove those labels from youth by replacing those labels with a new identity of dancer. The facilitator M explained:

Most of the communities where the young people come from that we work with, those communities are where young people are under looked at, they are looked at kids from slums, kids from the street, orphan kids, school dropout and unemployment, but for us we use dance to break out those stereotypes.

(Facilitator M)

To illustrate this point M gave his life story:

I was orphaned at the age of 15, from then people was like M the orphan, you are looking for M the orphan, that kid who don't have a home, you are looking for that homeless kid, you are looking for a guy that is school dropout. But after I became a b boy, they were like ah you are looking for M the break dancer. So, it means you get a new name and you are re-named, these are things small, but in the end, you don't want to be an orphan. Because if someone is an orphan that a misery anyway, so if you always call them by that, you are making them miserable again, you make them remember their gone parents. But if you name them like oh that dancer, they will be yeah that's what I am, there are something they are proud of, something that gives them more joy.

(Facilitator M)

With M's example above, we witness how negative social labels oppress youth and how a new identity as dancer gives them strength and power, allowing them to stand in the society with pride instead of sadness and inferiority. Lee (2001: 158) highlights that "the healthiest way to cope with stigma and oppression is through a process of positive identity formation". Identity of dancer or artist seems to represent a positive hint and has some power inside. Participant F2 in the focus group expressed his appreciation to BPU because they helped him to have the identity of an artist on his passport and he felt that that makes him happier than the identity of student or business man:

I'm proud of BPU because they recommended me to get my passport with the occupation of artist. In the beginning people were giving me occupation like business man or student something like that, but BPU fought for me and said no you should give this person an artist on the passport, because he is an artist, he is a dancer and he worked hard for it, he deserves it. So, they gave me artist on my passport. I was so happy, if it wasn't because of BPU, I couldn't achieve it.

(Participant F2)

Lee (2001) suggests that social labeling could pose an influence on one's self-concept and self-esteem. To conclude, dancing provide a new social identity that re-labelled youth from a negative one to a positive one, this process improved their self-perception and thus accelerate the process of empowerment.

*Create a new incentive for youth to mobilize geographically*

Sadan (2004) indicates that one's perception of environment is also a reflection of power in that the wider their world is, the more powerful they are likely to become. Another ideology behind dancing affirmed by BPU is that dancing helps to mobilize youth. Another point of dancing recognized is that dancing can actually mobilize people and expand their geographical boundary in the world and explore new environment:

We see people once they get those skills, they go back home and like you know what I have something cool that in my community they don't have, they even starts to see those things different, cause that's begins their way to go into other communities, where young people do dance are best. so you find youth lives in this slum area, but because of dance they would say I would like to go to other place and practice with the guy thagt do the same thing with, for us we believe the more freedom a person gets to move around, the more exposure, when you come back to your community, you are not the same, even it breaks your name.

(Facilitator M)

M's view unearths the perspective that dance creates incentives for youth to mobilize from different areas as they seek for professional communication in dancing. This expands their geographical boundary and increase their opportunity to be exposed to various new things, which would potentially bring changes to their lives. It is true that some youths got opportunities through BPU to travel within and even outside the country for teaching or communication. A section of them mobilizes themselves to other communities for the same reason. But, we need to notice that this could also differ from one person to another. Apart from the difference in passion, motivation and dedication, personal resources are also important aspects that couldn't be missed. Time and transportation costs could also limit youth even when they would want to mobilize. Those studying usually find it hard to participate in such activities due to lack of time.

### 5.1.2 Strategy: building a supportive, safe yet resourceful environment

According to Sadan (2004:75): “a person is not formed only by heredity and conditions of growth and care, but also by opportunities and experiences in the world around him”. She also points out that community environment could be an ideal place to empower youth as it provides corresponding resources and atmospheres and developmental channels (ibid.). BPU is aware of the importance of community and strives to provide a good environment for youth empowerment.

#### *Create a safe environment*

Robert (2016: 69) illuminates that people who do not feel safe in an environment “might unconsciously prevent their full range of physical expression in order to defend against potential physical or psychological harm”. BPU acknowledges the importance of safe environment as below:

It is important to create a safe environment, because people come here to grow, but how are they going to grow if you suppress them and making them unsafe...The more give young people the freedom to share, to learn, you gave them a safe environment, the more they will start creating...Some people just felt safe around, the environment is not going to judge them, the environment accepted the way they are.

(Facilitator M)

Jennings et al. (2006:41) refer to a safe environment as “a social space in which young people have freedom to be themselves, express their own creativity, voice their opinions in decision-making processes, try out new skills and roles, rise to challenges, and have fun in the process.” By not suppressing, non-judging and through giving freedom in sharing and learning, BPU endeavors to create a safe environment where youth could put away all constraints from their social life and emancipate themselves to the fullest, as they also engage in creating and growing. In consistence with this, youths in the

interviews also gave similar description as “home”, “family” and “safety” to identify their feelings in BPU:

“BPU is really different from other places, is like you are really at home”

(Participant D)

“BPU there’s not thief there, that’s the first place I’ve seen, you can leave your thing the way you leave there, or you’ve forgot a thing, they pick it and they saved it for you, the next time they announce it until they find the owner. I feel safe there”

(Participant G)

On the other hand, the ‘non-judging’ aspect was appreciated by participant F5 as “no power assumption”:

Most of our families where we come from they like to use power assumption...in case you did something, they will give you a negative punishment...In BPU there’s no power assumption, no love withdraw... Even you did a mistake, they are not going to hate you, but they will tell you you just made a mistake in this thing but then you also good in those things... that’s one of the most amazing things I like about BUP, correcting you whenever you go wrong, and appreciate you whenever you are doing well.

(Participant F5)

His expression revealed a fact that in Uganda most families are still using punishment as a way of educating kids. This hinders the young people’s motivation and curiosity to discover themselves and the world as they struggle to avoid punishments from parents. Youth’s experience are more positive in BPU community where mistakes are allowed, they will not be denied because of one mistake, instead other members correct them when they fail and encourage them when they succeed: “no power assumption”, “no

love withdrawal”. While Lee (2001) stresses that a safe and resourceful environment could stimulate people to explore more in life, Sadan (2004) also asserts that a feeling of safety at home encourages youth to take responsibility in a broader environment and guides them in the process of discovering new abilities and further potentials. A case of English learning from participants F6 and B well demonstrated this:

English is not my first language, in BPU even if I don't speaking it right it is OK as long as people understand me. School is different, you have to speak the way it is, if you don't they will laugh at you and make fun of you, I hate it.

(Participant B)

While at BPU, I got a chance to practice my English. I used to translate Luganda into English for international people who came to BPU and this experience taught me how to speak it properly. In fact, English is also a subject in school but I never got opportunity actually. It is not really you don't have a chance because they do force you to speak, but if you use a Luganda word within it, they give you punishment. It makes you scared and afraid to speak it again, so you could kept quite the whole day. In BPU you can speak anything, if you make a mistake, anyone just help you to make it better and correct.

(Participant F6)

B and F both took English classes at school but they were scared of speaking. This is because in that environment a mistake would lead to being laughed at by classmates or punishment from the school teacher. They felt safe at BPU since no one would judge them and people could help them to improve, thus they got the freedom and courage to practice and eventually improved. Jennings et al. (2006) suggest that to achieve in learning and empowerment, there must be a safe and supportive environment as well as enough opportunities and challenges. Apart from a safe environment, BPU also works to make the community supportive and resourceful for its members.

### ***Build a supportive network***

Gitterman (in Turner, 2017) denotes that the reciprocal support exchanged in the environment, supportive network provided for various resources corresponding to people's instrumental needs in goods services, the informational needs in advice and feedbacks as well as the expressive needs in empathy and encouragement, serve to resist life stressor and release human potential.

If you are there, participate, learn, and also try to be supportive. If someone is struggling with a particular thing, instead of laughing, tell them how to do it better... We had situations where someone lost their family member, the first one to be there is BPU people, that's how we told them, you gonna be with the person in a good time, but also worse times. If someone is going through anything, a relationship, a breakup, talk to each other and share some constructive information... Another thing in BPU it's important to learn it's our thing and our organization, you own it and you need to take part and contribute to it. If an opportunity come to somewhere like a community outreach, you gonna go, that means BPU can take you somewhere but you have to contribute to it, it cannot be a one-way street, it's a two-way thing, you give and you receive.

(Facilitator M)

BPU seeks to build a supportive network by encouraging mutual help as well as teaching a reciprocal relationship of receiving and giving. The more youth contribute to the community and others, the more they benefit. From the participants view, almost everyone had received something from the community before. One of them received food from BPU member and the other received help in form of money from BPU when he lost his wallet. Participants F5 and D highly appreciated the help they got from BPU community in their difficult times:



When I join BPU I didn't expect these people to help me, in one way or another. But when I lost my Dad, BPU volunteered to pay for my school fees. I'm grateful for everything they've done for me. If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't complete my A level, I wouldn't become one of the people that joined the University.

(Participant F5)

There was a time when my dad chased me from home because my mum died and he got a new wife at home. We were not connecting very well so he wanted me to move out. I had nowhere to run...that time was the only time in my life I felt like so small...A friend I met in BPU helped me and I stayed in his place for quite long. If one member of BPU helped me, it means all BPU helped me. That friend even helped me to get the job I'm doing now.

(Participant D)

Gitterman (in Turner, 2011: 282) reveals that in one's social surrounding, "not all the networks are able or willing to provide available social supports. Some networks have insufficient resources to meet their members' varied needs. Still others withhold available resources for reasons such as selfishness and punishment". For most young people, families are the key supporters in their lives. In case of family situations such as re-marriage or death of parents, their lives undergo dramatic changes, resulting into a hopeless and despairing situation like what participant D described: "felt like so small". Indeed, one's sense of power is closely linked to the resources available. Lack of resources could lead to a sense of helplessness and disempower people. What happens in Uganda now is that most youths are suffering from a socio-economic deficit. There is such a high rate of poverty, orphanage and unemployment as stated in the first chapter. In BPU, most youths are from slum areas and orphaned at an early age thus facing different social and economic problems. A supportive network such as BPU

could be so crucial in their lives. A sense of supportiveness and safeness could give them great comfort and make them feel more powerful in life.

### **Create a free and accessible learning environment**

According to Lee (2001: 139), “people are born with a bundle of potentialities and the capacity for many life scripts that may be released or stunted by the qualities of our environment. However, she also recognizes that disadvantaged groups are in positions which block their “access to options, choices, resources, and opportunities”. Despite that, some youths might have the willingness to learn new things and skills, although their vulnerable situations do not allow them to do so. One important standing point of BPU is that it is free for everyone:

The program is free of charge to everyone, people come from different background nationalities, ages, social classes. We want to create an environment where people feel they are all equal...In BPU you can come learn for free and you will also teach for free

(Facilitator M)

When asked in the focus group why they came to BPU and what their motivation was, most youths addressed the fact that BPU is free. Participant F5 raised out that learning other things was not affordable for him:

In Uganda, it’s difficult to find youth from the slums or families which cannot afford themselves financially, to help their children to go those basketball academies or football academies, because you have to pay for those services...For example, when I was young the enrollment fee for the KKL(Kampala Kid’s League), one of the biggest youth basketball club, at that time was 80K which was about two times of my school fees....BPU is where

I learn everything from, they teach us for free, actually through BPU we also get the chance to try other activities

(Participant F5)

While disfranchised youths are deprived from learning opportunities, the chance of learning dance is rather valuable for them and once they get the chance from BPU most of them really try hard to learn. Because of that, M also said:

In BPU, people are hungry to learn, people are hungry to change, and they want to be better...we have people come from far, like a hour away, and people walk to the center, that shows how passionate and hungry people are, to learn, to be better, to uplift themselves, but also to uplift the community where they come from.

(Facilitator M)

This element of hunger also helps to build a positive learning atmosphere within BPU, an aspect that inspires other youths to participate and devote more. Although BPU community is not limited in dancing, as a community, it also functions as a hub that attracts many resources inside and outside:

If I saw someone doing something I want to learn, I just go there, I talk to him hey how I can learn this. I went to Oscar, Oscar taught me how to take pictures, now I've been taking pictures for many years. I learned all those from BPU, at university you have to pay your tuition fee, but here you just learn that for free.

(Participant F6)

On one hand, members of BPU come from different backgrounds with different resources, they help each other and forms a sizable resource pool. On the other hand, resources are also coming from outside as BPU has many connections and partnership programs with other organizations and companies. For example, some organization

provides free computer classes while some even provide opportunities to go overseas. Youth are aware of those opportunities and resources. Some of them take good use of them and learn other new skills from BPU just like F6 did. Undoubtedly, everyone has his or her own potential, however most of times those potentials remain undiscovered due to limitations in the surroundings. The dance community addresses this issue and provides pre-conditions that allow youth to discover and activate their potentialities.

### ***Provide a cultural alternative***

An important aspect of community dance is that it provides an alternative culture for youth to experience and to re-learn certain things. Lee (2001: 156) notes that “as people become aware of the possibility of alternative perspectives about themselves and the world, they can change through systems and response repertoires to gradually divest themselves of internalized social imperatives and exert more effective influence on their environments”.

We believe that in the modern society, the ability to learn and re-learn is really important, if you come from a community where they don't respect women and you go to a community where they respect women, you gonna re-learn that behavior to respect women, because it's not acceptable here (In BPU). But again, we are not going to beat you up, not by force but you are gonna to understand over time, you have the chance to see women and girls taking responsibilities...and also respect children and young people, because it's important you have a respect for other in order to be here.

(Facilitator M)

Participant F6 also explained this learn and re-learn process from his point of view:

The BPU community is one of the best community I've ever been, first of all, it's positive, weather you are negative or what, whenever you are in this community, you have to be positive...you have to be humble and behave well. When time came, that's what you are going to do forever, whereby the person who you used to be with in the peer groups and people who do drugs, now you give them little time, you spend much of your time in BPU community, where you find people that are nice, famous, admired by other people and you just want to be like them, behave like them, so you also go to that direction.

(Participant F6)

Cultural solutions can be effective in an empowerment process. It brings behavioral and mental change and gradually becomes internalized into one's self-concept (Lee, 2001). When the community culture is humble, positive, respecting women and children, youth will also be influenced and they will have to think and behave like that if they want to be accepted in the community. They are aware of the fact that if they don't change, there will be a risk of getting rejected by the community:

When the people you are interacting with have that positive mentality you can't stay the same. Because to fit in them you must change accordingly. You can't be in a society where people have high moral values and you are contradicting to it, you may end up being kicked out.

(Participant A)

In Uganda, there's a popular mentality among youth, especially those from slum areas, that there is "no hope", "we can't make it a better people" (Participant C), because of the high poverty and unemployment rate and learned helplessness. Thus, it is very important to provide an alternative culture where youth could re-learn positive thinking and start to build their lives. In the long run, those ways of thinking and behaving as learned from the community will be internalized in youth and become part of them.

More so, by participating in the dance community, youth make a choice of living another way of life:

When I joined dancing, it helps me to avoid different habits. Instead of going with my friends, going to club, clubbing, I was home practicing my moves...my aim was to be one of the best dancers and I like dancing.... I reached 18 when I don't have boyfriend, someone can say how can you live like that, but for me my boyfriend was dancing, I like dancing even more than my life....if I joined my friends and I leave the things which I like most, I would have produced three kids and became a young mother, I'm so sorry to say this but most of my friends are like that, they already produced, they got pregnant by those guys but after making them pregnant, those guys left and they told that no no no that is not my baby, those stuffs.

(Participant H)

Participant H talked about a popular problem with young girls in Uganda: teenage pregnancy, for which most of her friends are victims, but because of dance, she was kept busy and she did not have time to go to club or hang out with boys. It reveals the fact that dancing can give people a goal in life and keeps them away from bad peer groups by occupying their time. This finding is supported by Huston's (2001:172) research that dance also provides a support structure for participants to manage their lives. Jennings et al. (2006:34) also state that, "positive social bonding can prevent youth engagement in negative social activities".

### 5.1.3 Strategy: sensitizing youth through peer talks and group communication

One important part of the program is that it always spares 30 minutes for members to sit down in half circle and communicate after each practicing session. In those 30 minutes, members are encouraged to stand up and express their gratitude to members in the group in public. Over the two months of my stay in BPU, members talked about various things: appreciated other members to visit them when they were sick; appreciated friends to always comment on their social media post; appreciated teachers for teaching; appreciated fellow members for helping them in certain moves; appreciated someone to buy them a cake; appreciated others to support them in transportation expense; Moreover, this time period is also open for all the members as well as project facilitators if they want to communicate certain topics within the group, for example, how to respect people, how to dress up so that the police will not misunderstand them and how to conduct themselves in front of others such as looking straight into people's eyes while communicating. I've seen members talking about topic of gambling, encouraging one another to stay away from such harmful practices and further encourage them to spread out the message to their classmates in school. Through the communication, people are exposed to different things and they start to filter what is good and what is not good in society. Their insight about the world soon expand with the help of the experience from each other.

Apart from group communication, BPU also gives value to peer to peer talks:

So one of the thing we really using is the peer to peer method whereby your peer can understand you better. Overtime, people start to open up more... but in the beginning there has to be someone (for him/her)...Most of the time what we do is that, let's say Mata brought a friend and they understand each other well, maybe they can relate more, I told Mata, I see your friend doing this and that, do you mind talk to him? If you need me to come up and talk to him, I

will talk to him, but if you can talk to him, good I can talk to him. So we use peer to peer mechanism whereby people talk to each other because they can understand themselves better...If a girl is pregnant or have a relationship thing, maybe as a man I'm not in a place to advise them, because I've never been a girl, but if a girl talks from a girl's perspective, maybe she will understand better than I do.

(Facilitator M)

BPU believes that young people know each other very well and that opinions from their own peers could be better understood and more effective than someone else's authority.

#### 5.1.4 Strategy: BPU principle of "Everyone is a student and everyone is a teacher"

BPU project is centered on the belief that "everyone can learn and everyone can teach and be a positive role model to others" (BPU, 2017). While everyone can come and learn dancing from BPU without a fee, they are also expected to teach and share with others what they have learned from the community. In the dancing session, members are encouraged to help each other regardless of their current level in dancing. As long as one knows a move better than the other, they are required to help the rest to improve. This is done sometimes with the teacher's request and sometimes voluntarily. Besides, those who show good potential in dancing and teaching stand a chance of getting promoted as teachers in the community. During my stay in BPU, I always witnessed small groups of people gathering together after each teaching session, practicing together and sharing with one another what they have learned. More interesting was the sight of a child of about 6 years old teaching a 20 years old youth about a certain move. The boundary of age, gender, and race is so vague at BPU that one always observes an



active learning dynamic flow in the air. According to the interview with the facilitator, several considerations are underling this belief:

***Give youth a chance to be in a powerful position***

While youth in community and schools usually lack opportunities to express and represent themselves, BPU create an atmosphere where everyone can teach and has a chance to be someone's helper. This allows them to practice influence over others, realize the power they have and look at things and the environment in different ways, just as what the facilitator described:

let's say we have a class of 5 or 6 students, 3 of them are kids below 15, the others are people above 20, if the young ones learned first, we gonna challenge them to teach other 'if you learned it, it means you can teach others, break it down, try'. That put them in a position like 'you know what, I can teach someone that is even older than me, and because I have something they don't have so I can share with them' Because sometimes kids think oh you are old so you know everything, So that put them in a position of power, not a power to suppress others but to help...that mentality will transfer from there to their everyday life. They are like if I have this and this, I can actually help someone, you heard what kids say "My brother have 600 shillings he gave me 100' that's how thing kept building".

(Facilitator M)

When youth realize that they can actually teach someone who seems to be "better" than them (for example in terms of age, education, economic status, etc.), their internal power is highly elevated. Besides, this equal relation of teaching and learning provides them with another insight of understanding the society unlike in schools where the education system sets teachers in a holly position that no one could challenge.

### ***Motivate learning through teaching***

It really give people a position of sharing with someone. Cause most of the time that situation challenges you to learn better because you know you are gonna share the next time

(Facilitator M)

Teaching and sharing inspire youth to put in more effort in learning and so as to obtain a better skill in dancing. Besides, if the experience of sharing in dancing becomes joyful, youth are likely to develop a positive image about sharing. This could stretch beyond dancing and it could spread to other virtues and skills. Through this, a youth will develop the habit of helping others, inside and outside dancing, which could make the whole community more supportive and enhance the sense of belonging among members.

## **5.2 Understanding empowerment in community dance through youth experience**

The following section illustrates how a community dance project empowered youth using the narratives from youths and the service provider (BPU facilitator). Empowerment theory provides three major dimensions that analyze those narrative. Earlier researches about dance, community dance and community project are combined to buttress the analysis and argumentation after which an integration part is given about the interlocking relationship among the three dimensions and how they work together to uplift young people. The structure of the section is arranged as follow: 5.2.1 community dance and sense of self; 5.2.2 community dance and competence building; 5.2.3 community dance and consciousness raising:

### 5.2.1 The influence of community dance on youth's perception of self

A person's sense of self is a complicated concept that relates to different aspects of a person's perception. Oladipo (2009:124) denoted that when people are empowered, they are more likely to have a better sense of self as they prefer to believe more in themselves and their ability. This part demonstrates how a community dance project could change youth's perception of self in order to achieve empowerment. Five aspects are discussed in relation with the impact of community dance on the youth's perception of: 1) self-image of physical fitness; 2) self-image of emotional state; 3) self-efficacy in stress coping; 4) self-esteem of human relatedness and 5) self-esteem in social value

#### *The impact of community dance on youth's perception of self-image in physical fitness*

Youths reported a good general sense of physical fitness. Words such as "energetic", "light", "strong", "fit" are used to identify their feelings of the body. For example, one of the youth shared, "For me my body, I felt like more energetic, more fit...sometimes I feel flue, but when I practice I don't feel like I'm sneezing anymore and I'm OK". Another one also demonstrated how his body feeling and physical ability changes throughout the dancing process, "I used to dance but I felt tired and even I want to sleep, but now when I dance I can dance and dance and dance, have energy and power, I can even dance 100 hours." Participant F2, who has been participating in BPU project for more than 5 years told a story of how dancing strengthened his body and how it snatched him from an accident:

I consider dance as a sport, because your energy, your body, your head, hands, and legs, you use all of them. To be able to move those parts to different angles, you need to practice a lot, if you want to make your head strong, you have to work on it and put it on the ground everyday so it gets strong and you don't get injured. When it reaches to a certain time, your head is strong... Me I'm strong with my hands, few month back I got and accident, a motorcycle

knocked me from the back and I fall to the ground, the moment was quick and my instinct is to put my hands to the ground, so my hands protected me because they are strong, I get a small injury in my back, but if I wasn't training I could get even worse injury.

(Participant F2)

Participant F5 who is the oldest among the participants in terms of their experience in BPU (10 years), said that he is even doing extra physical exercises because of dance: "I do a lot of physical exercise, a lot of workout, a lot of stretching...because I got inspiration from dance...I tried other new things as long as they adding something to my physical ability in order to be a good dancer." To some of them, being a dancer means having a physical image different from that of other people:

Sometimes I went somewhere, they immediately know I'm a dancer, the way I walk I move, they just say, Hey are you a dancer? ... There's a difference, they are just...the muscles...there's a way you look, it's different from someone do work out

(Participant G)

Sherborne in Gronlund et al. (2005:67) said that "Creative dance and movement can enable the children to rebuild a healthier connection with the body". Dancing as a form of physical activity by nature is involved with a great range of physical movement and exercises. Amans (2008:4) in his definition of community dance expressed that: "community dance is working with people using movement, community dance can include set dance steps and free movement, it inspires and motivates, community dance gets people moving who may not normally dance".

People who participated in community dance project are usually those who don't have dance experiences before. By participating in such a project, their body routine changes from limited exercise to a more intensive and frequent routine. Regardless of which

type of dance they are involved in, the more time they invest on it, the more likely they will experience a better physical self-image.

***The impact of community dance on youth's perception of self-image of emotional state***

Youths easily recalled their memory of dancing as “happy”, “free”, “relief”, “beyond”, “great”. They reported that dance “gives me space in my mind and I feel free”, “when I was dancing I just forgot everything, it was just me, to just go and just fly away out of the blue, and I was there, very cool.”

On one hand, those feelings could come from the natural body mechanism explained by O'Brien (2016). He points out that exercise actually helps to loosen up muscular tension and release body endorphins, a special kind of hormone that keeps people clam, improve thinking and eventually lead to feelings of happiness. Researchers also describe those positive statuses as “body as lived” which indicates a strong sense of individual exists or lives in his/her own body, revealing one's transcendent connection with the body and the world (Berson, 2005:36), it also denote a sense of power in the body.

On the other hand, it could also come from the satisfaction of fulfilling one's needs to express and to let go their emotions, Roberts' (2016:72) research in dance movement therapy denotes that “reconnecting the body with feeling allows the client to experience affect and express her inner world, to recognize meaning in her behavior and relationships, and to develop healthy psychophysical unity”. For example, the participants acknowledged that:

To me dancing is not all about move, I express feelings, I can say that through dancing I express my emotions to the world, I want other people to see, through the moves I do.

(Participant A)

I feel awesome when I'm dancing, because that's the only way I can tell I can express out my feelings.

(Participant D)

Lomas in Deasy (2014:126) underlines that self-expression is achieved by the precondition of “energy, time, space and flow” in community dance, which could drive the body to encode itself of “knowing, creating, communicating and learning through dance”. Expressiveness as one attribute of art especially dance releases human feelings. It brings youths into a transcendent state of emotional and mental status and re-shapes their self-image of their psychological well-being. Besides, the self-efficacy theory also denotes that “Physiological and emotional states, positive mood enhance perceived self-efficacy” (Bandura, 1997:4).

### ***The impact of community dance on youth's perception of self-efficacy in stress coping***

Coping is a specific strategy of problem solving by which people learn to deal with the stress posed from the outside environment. According to Berlin (1983:1097), people in hardships such as poor economic condition, unemployment, education or women, are less likely to have means to defend themselves in case of attendant stresses. In this case, they are also more likely to be in need of finding an effective tool to regulate stress. Participants in the research indicate that dancing and coming to BPU have proved to be very effective in helping them to cope with various struggles and stresses in life.

Participant C, a girl of 16 articulated that dancing helps her to stay away from the stressful school work and annoying interpersonal relation. By coming to BPU, she

enjoy a cheerful environment and does away with stress by focusing on the dance practice:

I tend to leave school maybe like when I'm given so much work or maybe someone has annoyed me like that. But whenever I came to sharing, BPU is like where a family, you always found people that will give you at least joy, people make you happy. Plus you coming and practicing, I think it can take away the stress at least you can do something apart from what you have hidden in your mind.

(Participant C)

Participant F6, a 22 years old boy stated that dancing is like a meditation to him from which he could regain a good mood and forget about family problems and issues:

I take dancing like a meditation, it was like a medicine for me, because when I at home, I used to have problems or issues, sometimes I could come to session when I felt that I'm not really in a good mood, but the end of the session I felt like I'm fine, I'm happy. When there's music, funny ones, people dancing, you felt like I shouldn't pick up what have happened at home, I should now dance, and you felt like there's a change in your mind.

(Participant F6)

Participant H, an 18 years old who works in an Indian restaurant reported how she perceived herself as tired of everyone and the world after work but becomes the happiest girl in the world through a refreshment in dancing:

I work with Indians, I work in an Indian restaurant whereby those guys can shout upon you, abuse you, when you went back home you can feel that you are even tired of the world, you are tired of everything and everyone....but if I focus and put exercise in my mind, I hear the music, I can feel inspired by

those moves, by that those word, and I started to make my own moves, they can come to my mind and I can do it practically... When I'm doing those moves practically I can feel free and I am the happiest girl in all over the world. All my stress that time can simply move out.

(Participant H)

Young people tend to relax when they involve themselves with dancing and music. With the music beat and movement, people interact with their body and achieve the sense of body harmony and mindful dedication. When the surroundings are also favorable with lovely people, they are more likely to move away from the present and enter into a new transcendent state. When working with autism young adults using DMT method, Moreno and Dona (2013:471) observed that bodywork could bring a positive psychological and physical status. It helps individuals to gain a greater sense of self-control for emotions, stronger self-regulation for impulses and a better self-acknowledgement for body function. In the same tone, Gronlund et al (2005: 66-81) also emphasize that dance and movement helps with motor coordination and they foster a sense of body coherence, ultimately enhancing the ability to resist stress. Lee (2001) suggests that this process of acquiring problem solving strategy elevate people's self-esteem and regulate negative feelings, self-esteem and self-regulation. In return, it also fosters problem solving which formulates an upward spiral in all dimensions.

### ***The impact of community dance on youth's perception of self-esteem in human relatedness***

Maslow's hierarchy of needs expounds that people have different needs. The higher needs could not be achieved before the basic needs are satisfied and that a proper fit of lower needs could motivate people towards self-actualization (Oladipo, 2009:124-125). Human relatedness is located in the 3<sup>rd</sup> level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. It is about the desire to be loved and cared for by others and the needs to belong to something,



one's self-esteem (4<sup>th</sup> level in the pyramid) could not be reached before the need of human relatedness is satisfied.

Most youths appreciated BPU as a community where they could feel cared for and loved. They describe BPU as “one of the best community”, somewhere “special” to them and a place where “you are really like home”. Participant B, a 21 years old boy who lives in a slum area described that:

People in BPU they are really generous and nice, where I come from many people they mind their business, they don't want to know what's going on in your life, or what you are facing and what you want to do. At BPU they do care, you get to interact with different people, you learn more from them. Which is impossible in where I come from. Because to find somebody you can talk to, just share with anything, that's the thing in BPU that kept me coming.

(Participant B)

He feels cared for at BPU because people want to know about his life and it is a feeling that he couldn't find in his original living environment.

Participant A, who has been at BPU for 6 years also reported that:

In BPU s people take themselves as brothers and sisters, the person takes that the responsibility of knowing how your life is going how's your day and the challenges you faced, and someone takes that initiatives to come and try to know you, if you have a problem they look at the way they can help you go through problems.

(Participant A)

“Human relatedness is restorative and essential for functioning throughout the life course”, it is an important fitness between people and the environment (Lee, 2001:143). People who have lost such vital ties might feel imbalanced and isolated with the

environment whereby a positive experience of human relatedness could help them to rebuild the connection and attachment with others, enable feelings of trust and support and revoke one's self-esteem. While youths feel loved and cared for in the community, they are more likely to have a better self-esteem in life.

Community itself contains the notion of "common" and "communication" where the ground of human relatedness is created. Community dance, according to Thomson (in Amans, 2008: XI), director of The Place (one of the community dance organization in UK), is primarily a social activity where participants could experience solidarity and significance, flourish a reciprocal relationship of trust and being trusted, and create a sense of belonging. Interpersonal relationship is indeed a very personal experience. While community dance provides good foundation for people to build love and trust relationship, we have to note that it is also related with the commitment and effort one makes in the community. The level of participation could also influence the interpersonal experience.

### ***The impact of community dance on youth's perception of self-esteem in social value***

According to Sadan (2004:223), "People need proofs and reinforcements in order to feel and think differently about themselves". One of the highlights youth talked about in a community dance project is that throughout the time of participation in this project, they have got many positive feedbacks inside and outside the community, a thing that makes them feel "inspired", "loud", "encouraged" and "proud".

- Inside the community: youth are appreciated by other participants

Participant D was appreciated for his teaching by other participants and he felt a great sense of pride:

I feel so loud, someone comes up and say I want to appreciate what D is doing or what he taught, I feel so touched, because I did it just to teach, but if you appreciate then it's another thing. You are like wow I never thought you are going to appreciate what I've been doing to you, so you feel so good and you feel so loud. If someone appreciate what you are doing it means you are not going to give up what you are doing, you have at least to push it. I felt proud of myself, also not everyone can do it, for me I've only joined BPU for three years, but I can be able to teach.

(Participant D)

Participant B felt appreciated with the clapping from audience and that made him feel inspired:

People clapping and you felt like there are people you inspired and people who appreciate what you are doing. People who wants to be like you.

(Participant B)

Bandura (1997:4) identifies social persuasion as one source of individual's self-efficacy, he claims that "persuasive boosts in perceived self-efficacy lead people to try hard enough to succeed, self-affirming beliefs promote development of skills and a sense of personal efficacy". Being appreciated by other people largely enhanced the self-efficacy of youth and could thus boost their success and further skill development

- Outside the community: youth also report feedbacks from the people around, the families, school teachers, classmates and others.

Participant F2 got some positive feedback from his sister and he felt supported:

My sister once came to BPU and she told me brother what you did is great, even you didn't gain much for me, but at least you have something to spend time on, something productive to your life, something you love, something you

do with love, at least for me I don't have it, for you you have it, so I'm so happy to you. When someone proud of me in my family, it support me in a way that they believe what I'm doing is good for me and for my life.

(Participant F2)

Participant C's classmates also think she is cool when she is dancing.

Whenever I'm dancing my classmate was like hey what you are doing is really nice and cool, could you at least teach us some moves, and they really love it a lot.

(Participant C)

Other people's feedback gives youth a new angle beyond self-judgment to know about themselves. The reflections of others could make them understand how they are perceived by others. If the feedback comes positively, they start to understand themselves as valuable and important, and such self-worth then brings a heightened self-esteem to the youth.

In conclusion, community dance helps youth to develop a positive perception of themselves in terms of their physical, emotional image, as well as improving their self-esteem by optimizing their social relationship and their value system. Through dancing, youth also developed a functional stress coping system that improves their self-efficacy. Thus, a potent sense of self is achieved and the process of empowerment is promoted.

## 5.2.2 Community dance and competence building

Competences and abilities are substantial in promoting a positive person-environment relationship in one's life course (Lee, 2001). Staying in a safe environment with the opportunities and resources available, youth are able to explore and develop themselves freely. In general, young people claimed that they have developed many skills, especially communication skill, leadership skills and social skills.

### *Communication skills*

Community dance is a social platform that provides people with the chance to interact with others who have “different races, cultures, physical abilities and genders that offer different ways of being in community” (Loots, 2015:128). Many youths talked about their improvement in interpersonal communication. They asserted that they are no longer scared of a one-on-one conversation with people, and able to express and make people understand them now:

Some time back, whenever someone come to me and that person approaches me and ask, hey I want to require something, do you mind if I take some of your time. I was that kind of person who used to be, you know used to fear that moment, you know one to one talk with person. But now I can express myself freely and give my opinions to people. My ideas, so, I think all those come directly from BPU you because you get to interact with people they give you a class that you have to led this class, and you have to make sure that you provide the best for the student, the day and day practice make you gain that confidence.

(Participant A)

Participant A mentioned two main factors that helped them: the first one is the day to day opportunity to practice, and the second is the experience of leading a class.

### *Leadership skills*

Some of the young people who take roles of leaders or teacher reported that they developed the skill of leadership. In fact, leadership is a very broad term that not only about leading people, public speaking is also an important dimension of it.

The project funder plays an important role of teaching youth how to be good leaders. Although some youth have got the opportunity to take leadership classes, it seems that those skills that impressed them most is the ways of leading shown by the project funder:

I've learned a lot of things from Abramz (the funder), he is so cool to everyone, and another thing is leadership, he is not so serious or so easy, he is just there, he doesn't comment but he is just trying to help you, or inform you, I liked it so much. Some leaders they failed to lead, when you force someone or comment on someone, it's not good. Abramz doesn't have nothing to comment, or to show he is leader or what, you don't even notice that he is the one that is leading everything, he doesn't show or talk to people that I am the one leading, he doesn't show off, very humble.

(Participant D)

This is in coordination with what Sadan (2004) discovered in his research: "The practitioner serves as a model of collaborative behavior and dialogue. In this method, important interpersonal skills are demonstrated by showing, not by telling, and these are thus reinforced in the course of action, while doing so reinforces values important to empowerment". It reveals an additional message that in a community dance project, the core person could be very influential to the dynamics of the whole community.

In terms of public speaking, many youths stated that they've gained much confidence in the community through the communication session that happens after each dance practice:

Different people used to tell me oh I couldn't show up could you communicate for me in the sessions? At first, I was so scared ...sometimes I even feared coming for practicing because of that, but after when I could communicate, I was like yeah I got used to it, so I realize that there's nothing we should be scared of, we are human being, so what.

(Participant C)

According to Lee (2001), powerless people are usually voiceless because they lack the ability to express themselves. Public speaking therefore is a crucial ability for people to act politically and to represent themselves, and it is greatly related with one's self-confidence. Through day-to-day practice in the communication session, youth overcome the fear to speak in public and therefore improve their self-confidence and they experience their influence over people.

### ***Social skills***

Social skills are skills that could impact on one's life tremendously, social capabilities help a person to live in harmony with the people around, which indicates one's level of dealing with the environment. A person who is better equipped with social skills finds a better sense of harmony with environment and therefore gains self-efficacy. While in the community, youths have the chance to interact with and learn from one another. Participant F6 talked about the skill of interacting with a policeman which he learned from the experience of another member who got caught because of walking on the street during the night:

Some of our members have been caught by police and taken to police station, whereby one of the facilitator go and talk to the police. When they got there,

they come back with people and they advise you how to talk to the police. Some people you may find them talk to police like “ah you guy what do you want to do to me?”, but you are nothing to the police, if you tell them “I’m from practicing and heading back home, I have no transport that’s why I’m walking on the street”, something like that to show that you are a person that is responsible and understandable, then it will work better.

(Participant F6)

As a social being, knowing how to interact with different people, especially authorities like policeman, could be very beneficial and it also contributes to one’s ability in problem solving. This further improves one’s self-efficacy. Apart from that, young people also learn some social rules that could help them to function better in a social setting. For example, how to respect other people, how to dress in a public setting, what to do when you are misunderstood by others etc. Those skills equip them with the capability to deal with social problems and become more attractive in social setting. Lee and Hudson (2011) underlines that powerless people have low social attractiveness due to poor resources. In this sense, social attractiveness also helps people to connect resources and promote a sense of power.

### 5.2.3 Community dance and consciousness raising

Critical consciousness raising is the peak indicator of the empowerment process. By raising the consciousness, people are more aware of the social structures and processes as well as their own roles and actions within this framework (Jennings, 2006:47). This understanding of self and environment will then help them to take the initiatives and gain control over life, which we call the process of empowerment.

Participants have shown a certain level of awareness-raising by stating their understanding of themselves and the environment:



It's true you go to dance and people make you like a role model, for example like F2, he won BA(dance competition), and whenever people looked at him, they are like I want to be like him, I want to be like him, so it also makes people to believe in themselves that at least people look after me and people want to be like me, it's a way you keep yourself positive and try to introduce things that can inspire other people...when you go to the stage, you want to say about violence and corruption, you can do a dance piece, you can show how people corrupt. You can communicate and you can tell the story you want to tell, so I felt like dancing yeah that's my power.

(Participant F6)

F6 talked about how he discovered his power through his and other people's experience in dancing. He is now aware of the power he has in dance and how it can also inspire and influence people. People discover their power and relation of the world through actions. One might join a community without good consciousness, but through gaining experience and discovering the unfamiliar, individuals are able to obtain new understanding of the environment and eventually turn to an increased self-awareness (Sadan:2014; Deasy, 128). Participant B also revealed the same approaches:

People in my community (slum area) they don't feel proud, because they are poor they are so poor, their parents, their grandparents, they are not living their fancy life. So you are like that's the end of the thing you will also be poor. For me if my dad was poor I will not be poor, when I reach his age, I don't have that mentality but there are people who think like that, for us we are born poor and that's who we are, you can't change anything about it. It's just about how you think about things.

(Participant B)

Participant B talked about people's mentality of being poor and not being able to change. He is very aware that it is not true and it is just about thinking. A distinction between what

others think and how the reality is differentiated showed his ability in understanding the environment. Later on, he shared his experience of trying to inspire people by talking about his own understanding:

I always go (to the communication session), last Wednesday I talked about kids who are doing gambling, they are idol but they are doing nothing. I was trying to encourage those young ones, to inspire their friends, to do something important with their lives...So many people come to me and they are like, especially Abramz(the funder) came to me and like, thank you for communication and talk about that, there are so many people, since that things happening, they don't have chance to come and talk about such things in public, so they come and talk to me and thank me.

(Participant B)

While this experience of sharing is confirmed and appreciated by other people, it will give him a positive reinforcement that what he is doing is useful and positive. Sadan (2004: 196) illustrates that people “feel that they can influence, they are willing to commit themselves and to take responsibility, and can play an active role in the world, because they know that their efforts are important and valuable”. By doing that, the empowerment process is completed. The example of participant D could exemplify it very well:

I want to change. The time I dropped from school, I was at home for 2 years, I started to do bad groups, we club every night, we smoke, we do bad things sometimes, behaving very wired...I want to at least to give myself a chance, to do at least something which can make me happy and to make other people happy. I teach someone breaking, someone will appreciate what I did, or maybe he will also go somewhere and stated teaching, he also do what I was doing, if I see someone at home is also teaching, I feel so happy... now I've changed a lot, I can't go back to my street life where I used to be... because

now I respect myself, I respect who I am, I respect people around me. It has even given me a chance to do something which is productive to the society.

(Participant D)

Participant D was a street boy before. By participating in the community, he found his talent in dancing and started to teach dance to other people. Through the positive feedback he got from other people, he felt appreciated and valued and realized that his dance teaching can be useful and productive to the society. A great sense of self-respect was fostered and thus he wouldn't allow himself to go back to the street life.

### 5.3 Challenges of a community dance project in achieving youth empowerment

The above section approaches community dance from a rather positive perspective with the affirmation from youths that demonstrates how powerful it can be to promote youth in a social environment. However, I am also aware that constraints and challenges also exist and the following section aims to address those constraints and challenges of a community dance project in achieving youth empowerment, uncovering the other side of the story and giving a more comprehensive insight for community dance.

#### 5.3.1 Situations of sub-groups

One of the difficulties facing a community dance like BPU is that because of the diversity and openness in participating, it is always hard to keep track of everyone and ensure that they progress in the same speed:

This kind of program is like a rehabilitation program, it's not like people come when they are perfect, it designed for imperfect people anyway. People come before they understand or before they grow, they team up with another person that also haven't discovered themselves yet. It can be a challenge as they can

demotivate themselves, but if they are in our program it's our responsibility to make sure that we know that's the status of everyone and how we can support them.

(Facilitator M)

As an open program in which youths from different backgrounds are welcomed to join freely, there could be those who already made a good progress towards their development. There could also be youths who haven't had time or opportunity to make progress yet and thus their personal performance could be quite different. It is hard to make sure that everyone is at the same pace, acting the same way and always keeping upright, especially for those who just joined the community. It may take time before they could benefit from the community and there is risk that they could also get in touch with youths who haven't "discovered" themselves either. As a result, instead of uplifting one another, they could do it the other way. Such interpersonal influences are always hard to control fully.

### 5.3.2 Lack of time and resources

Many youths report time as the most hindrance to their participation in the dance session. Some of them either have heavy school assignment that need to be handled or have to work long time to support themselves. Sadan (2004: 215) also mentioned that "The poorer that people are, the more they work in jobs that demand more time, and the more difficult it is for them to control their spare time".

Apart from time, youth also have the difficulty in affording the transport expenses. Young people come from all over the city to BPU; some live quite far that it requires them to take public transport to reach the venue. "The more powerless people are, the narrower their world" (ibid: 197). Vulnerable groups are more likely to face economic challenge that limits their freedom to move around.

### 5.3.3 Social bias towards dancing

Contrary to the positive impact of dance, the social awareness of it seems weak. Social bias and stereotyping still exists towards dancing:

At first my mom and dad they thought I was going to do drugs or hanging with bad people staff like that.

(Participant B)

My mum when I started dancing she asked me who told you to go there? Here in Uganda they call it stupid dance, my mum tell me you will get to spoiled when you dance

(Participant E)

Most parents and communities regards dancing as bad and “stupid” things that will have bad effect on their children. They are afraid that their children will be spoiled and will get involved in bad acts after joining in dancing. There are some cases where parents become angry when they find out that their children dance in BPU. They have often come to the community and taken them out from the practicing session and also forbid them to go back to such a place. Parents are the legal guardians of youth, they are the authorities at home and most children must obtain the consent of parents before they join any other activities. Without the permission from parents, youth would not be allowed the freedom to participate in the dancing session. It is quite common among members of BPU that their parents have many times stopped them from attending the dance. Some of them have waited for years and years to finally become independent and have the freedom to come. Some choose to come but drop out from the program while others succeed in convincing parents as time goes by.

# **Chapter 6: Summary of findings, Conclusions and Recommendations**

This chapter serves to summarize the findings and analyses for community dance and youth empowerment. It also outlines the conclusion for the whole research. Further, recommendations are also given for further research, improvement of community dance project, Uganda youth policy and social work practice.

## **6.1 Summary of findings**

This study aimed at finding out how a community dance project could empower disadvantaged Ugandan youth in a deprived social-economical surrounding. Three specific objectives were settled. The first was to elaborate the empowering aspects of community dance from community dance organizer's view (BPU). The second was to discover the impact of community dance on youth empowerment from youth perspective and the third identified major challenges of community dance project in achieving youth empowerment.

The BPU project was established with the purpose of empowering disadvantaged youth through hip-hop dance. The ideology that lies behind dancing was that dance can give youth an essential skill to rely on and be proud in the world; that dancing endues a socially valuable identity as dancer that released youths from the previous oppressive and stigmatizing social labels imposed by the society (orphan, homeless kids, street boy); that participating in dancing helps to mobilize youth geographically and opportunities and new insight could be possibly obtained through mobilization. The first strategy the BPU used was to nourish a safe, supportive yet resourceful environment that stimulates and activates the abilities and potentials inside the youth. They also expect youth to unlearn improper behaviors and mentalities through relearning more upright and constructive ones in BPU. Instead of throwing a bunch of values and rules to youth and force them to accept, BPU believes in the power of positive peer communication and group

communication. It encourages the youth to talk and to help one another. It also spare time after each session to have group communication in order to sensitize the youth. Lastly BPU holds the faith on the potential of each member in that they are all able to learn and to share. The principle that “everyone is a student and everyone is a teacher” gave chances to members to practice power in the community as well as accelerate them in learning.

Although not recognizing those strategies, participants expressed positive change in different aspects of their lives. Economically, some youths could be able to generate income using their dancing skills. Politically, most of them learned public speaking and improved in leadership skills and some of them gained a position in their family or in school to have their voice heard. Socially, dancing helped most of them to gain popularity among peers. They were regarded as cooler persons because of dancing and because of the things they have been exposed to in that community. All those changes interrelated with a change in their sense of self. Most youths reported a positive self-image of physical and psychological health. Meanwhile, there was an obvious improvement in their self-worth, self-confidence and self-efficacy (Bandura,1997), and those were especially coming from the social affirming their skills and values as well as the sense of belonging, care, love and support they had received from the dance community. Moreover, most youths reported an improvement in communication skills and social skills. Combining all those aspects, youth are able to uplift themselves through participation in community dance and the dance community.

Regardless of the above positive impact of community dance, drawbacks such as social bias towards dancing groups especially hip-hop dancing, the lack of time and transport of participants, and possible wrong sub-groups influence in the community could also post a challenge in the empowerment process.

## 6.2 Conclusion

To conclude, community dance has got a great potential in empowering the youth. Through combining dance art and community building, it builds a sophisticated ecological system that empowers youth socially, economically, politically and individually. All those functions and systems interlock and promote each other. Another special point is that it is not only an empowering tool, but also a recreational activity and performing art. Those two attributes make it attractive to youth and improves participation and engagement among youths. We however need to be careful that despite all those positive impact, the process of empowerment could differ greatly from person to person. As Pardeck said: “the same environment provides different inputs to different persons, and even different inputs to the same person should be the individual’s behavior change” (1988: 136). On one hand, personal achievement is closely related to commitment. The more youth devote themselves to community dance project, the more they could acquire. In contrast, the less time they invest on that, the less they could be empowered. On the other hand, youth diverse from their cognitive, emotional and behavioral abilities. Minor changes in those aspects could alter their motivation to work with the environment. This thus alters their result and output of empowerment.

## 6.3 Recommendation

### 6.3.1 Community dance project

Inspired by my research experience, I would like to give some suggestions to further community dance organizers in utilizing a better project

- A spot which is reachable and reasonable time arrangement are crucial and could largely improve the participation and performance of such projects.



- It is important to provide a safe and supportive community environment as it is essential for youth to be able to liberate themselves from social constraints and explore more talents inside of them.
- The more open a community dance project is, and the better diversity it can address. Openness allows the community to interact with the society and maintains the project in a sustainable way while diversity among participants allows a resourceful community network and bigger possibilities to exchange mutual help. All these elevate the power of an individual.

### 6.3.2 Social work practice

From the above research, it is concluded that community dance could bring positive impact on youth and can be an effective tool to promote youth empowerment. However, it is a pity to see that practitioners and researchers in community dance areas are majorly dance artists. It could be understandable that the initiative of an art project requires organizers to have certain level of qualification in art for which might be difficult for social workers, yet this area is worth exploring for the practice of social work especially for youth workers. Both professions are working towards the well-being of human being and if good cooperation is built among those two professions in a community dance project, integrating social work skills in community building and other activities to stimulate the development of individual, the influence and result of such project could be more spontaneous and more people would benefit from it. It is surprising to see a project running for more than 10 years but still remains so attractive to the service user. Contrary to that in many social work practices, it is rare to see that and social workers in most of the occasions run after clients. This research reveals that the recreational element and most importantly the sense of belong in the community and the possibility to achieve make the youth to continue coming for the project and

eventually uplift themselves. Those elements should also be considered when placing social work practice.

### 6.3.3 Youth policy in Uganda

The findings proved that community dance project could not only improve the self-esteem and self-efficacy of youth, but also bring opportunities to generate income. Community dance teaches youths to become responsible citizens in the society. In this sense, it could be very beneficial for policy makers to allocate resources in promoting community dance project especially in slum areas, providing another alternative and effective tool to boost social change.

### 6.3.4 Further research

To fulfil the requirement of the Master's Program, this research was conducted under constraint of time that would not allow in-depth investigation into the topic. Based on the experience of this research, I would suggest further research to pay more attention on the following aspects: First of all, this research is mainly based on the testimonies of youth participants and project facilitator and both are insiders of community dance project. It would be very interesting and beneficial to have the opinions from other people outside this project. For example, the opinion of family members and school teachers, their perception towards the project and the changes they observed from youth. Secondly, I would like to advise researchers to be cautious of the way they invite youth for interview or the way they introduce the interview. This is because some youths have some certain imagination about what an interview is, which makes them to intentionally polish their words during the interview. To some extent, this impacts on the findings of the researchers. Clearing such unnecessary imagination could be helpful getting reliable

data. Besides, where possible, a longitudinal study could be more effective and reliable in capturing empowerment through comparison and shift in people's life course, feeling and thoughts.

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## **Appendix 1: Interview Guideline with youth**

### *Introduction:*

Good morning/Good afternoon. First of all, thank you for coming today. My name is Vincy, I'm a student in Makerere University, studying a master degree for social work with family and children.

The interview we are going to have is part of my research about community dance and youth empowerment, I conducted this research mainly to fulfil the requirement for my master study, but also out of my interest to see if a community dance project like BPU can bring positive impact to youth and how the magic happens. I really appreciate your help to participate in this research, you know more about BPU than I do and your experience here is very valuable for this research.

If you wouldn't mind, I will use a tape recorder later on in case I missed some of your words and the interview will last about 1 hour. I will ask questions about your experiences as a participants in BPU, how it post an influence or challenge in your life. If at any point you are uncomfortable with my questioning, please let me know so I can change what I'm doing. Also you have the right to decline answering any questions, or terminate the interview without giving an explanation. Everything we talked about today will be used anonymously within the academic fields, your real name wouldn't be mentioned in my paper and your story wouldn't be published in any newspapers or Medias without your permission. But your experience will contribute to the research about youth empowerment and probably benefit other young people in the future.

Is that clear and Ok for you? If clear, I would also like to have your oral consent for voluntarily participating in this research, and also please acknowledge that in case of any specially occasion I might also require your written consent. In case you have any further concern later on, please contact my number: 0787149397

Thanks then let's get started.

### Basic Questions:

1. How old are you? And for how long have you been participating in BPU project?
2. How often do you come to BPU? What is your motivation to come each time?

### About dance:

1. Do you like dance? Why do you like it? Do you also practice it in other times? And when do you usually feel like dancing?
2. What is your image of a dancer? Do you regard yourself as a dancer? How do you feel when people call you a dancer?
3. Do you like to dance alone or dance with people? Why?
4. How do you feel when you dance alone? And how do you feel when you dance in a place like BPU? What is the difference between those two?
5. How do you feel when there's some people watching outside the dance circle? Will you get more stressed or will you get more inspired? Or any other feelings?
6. Do you like to dance in a room or dance in an open space like this? Why?
7. How has dancing be helpful to you?
8. Do you believe that people dance with their emotions? And what is in your mind when you dance? Can you recognize different emotions from other dancers when you watch them dancing? And what are they?
9. Do you think dancing is difficult for you? Have you ever meet a move that is difficult for you? How do you deal with it? How do you feel when you succeed in it? Do you think your success in dance also helped you succeed in life? Give me an example?
10. How do you find your body when you dance? Do you always have good control over it? How do you feel when you can control it? And how do you feel when you lose the control? What will you do if your body is out of your control?

### About the dancing community:

1. Do you like BPU? Why do you like it?

2. How do you like the people in BPU? Is there anything special you think about them comparing to your friends in school or home?
3. How's your relationship with BPU members? Have you made any good friends here?
4. Which part of the session do you like most? Do you think the gratitude and communication session is helpful to you?
5. How do you feel when people express their thanks to you?
6. What have you learned from BPU? How has it been beneficial to your life?
7. Do you think BPU gives you some good energy in life? Why?
8. What is the biggest improvement you've made ever since you joined in this project?
9. Which kind of skills are you able to acquire here?
10. Has it changed you in a way? What are they?
11. Are you satisfied with who you are now?
12. How do you feel being in this dance community?
13. Have you ever experienced anything that make you uncomfortable in BPU?
14. If we can give a suggestion to make this dancing project better, what will you suggest?
15. How can a person benefit from BPU?

About their social interaction:

1. How your parents think about BPU? How did you manage to convince them?
2. Do you also have siblings? How do they think about BPU? Have they ever been here before?
3. How your friends is think about you dancing in BPU?

Open question:

1. Do you think community dancing project like BPU can empower young people and make a positive change in their life? How?

2. If we replace dancing with other things like sports, do you think it will have the same impact on you? Why?
3. In Uganda most young people are facing different life challenges, what is your idea about that? What are the biggest challenges they face? How can we help them?

## **Appendix 2: Interview Guideline with Project Facilitator**

### *Introduction:*

Good morning/Good afternoon. First of all, thank you for coming today. My name is Vincy, I'm a student in Makerere University, studying a master degree for social work with family and children.

The interview we are going to have is part of my research about community dance and youth empowerment, I conducted this research mainly to fulfil the requirement for my master study, but also out of my interest to see if a community dance project like BPU can bring positive impact to youth and how the magic happens. I really appreciate your help to participate, to give me chance to know about this project.

If you wouldn't mind, I will use a tape recorder later on in case I missed some of your words and the interview will last about 2 hours. I will ask questions about the goal of BPU, strategies you use to empower youth and some challenges BPU face. If at any point you are uncomfortable with my questioning, please let me know so I can change what I'm doing. Also you have the right to decline answering any questions, or terminate the interview without giving an explanation. Everything we talked about today will be used anonymously within the academic fields, your real name wouldn't be mentioned in my paper and your story wouldn't be published in any newspapers or Medias without your permission.

Is that clear and Ok for you? If clear, I would also like to have your oral consent for voluntarily participating in this research, and also please acknowledge that in case of any specially occasion I might also require your written consent. In case you have any further concern later on, please contact my number: 0787149397

Thanks, let's get started.

1. How do people know about this project?
2. Who are they that usually come dance?
3. Do you think dance is applicable to all?
4. Do you think there's some important factor that decide if one can benefit from dance/BPU project?
5. Is it important to attract new members? Why?
6. What is the mechanism we can rely on to make those who come stay?
7. What inspired you to open this project? What is your motivation to keep doing this for the past 10 years?
8. What is the biggest challenges Ugandan youth face from your observation?
9. What is the most important goal of this project?
10. How do you know dance can be useful to empower youth? In which ways this form of community dance can benefit youth from your point of view?
11. What kind of tools and approaches do you use in order to achieve those goals?
12. How do you measure the progress of each goal? Which perspectives and dimensions do you use to measure the impact of your organization?
13. Is there any difficulty or challenges you meet when organizing the project?
14. What is the logic behind the organization of each session? Say it consists of dance learning, cypher and gratitude/communication session? What is the purpose of it?
15. Why we use an open avenue instead of a dancing room?
16. Do you think there might be some unexpected negative thing about dance or about this dancing community that you observed or want to tackle?