



DISSERTATION

Titel der Dissertation

Interpretation of Child Labour in Uganda: A Case of
Children's Work in Fishing Communities in Wakiso
District.

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For the cause of children, their aspirations



Children hooking fish by author

A shared understanding of childhoods in a variety of contexts

A celebration of multiple views

A re-interpretation of child labour

Dedication



By author and Jimrex Byamugisha

To the King of Kings Jesus Christ

My mother Deborah Nakalembe

My wife Betty and the beautiful daughters Angel, Deborah and Blessing

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List of abbreviations

ACPF	African Child Policy Forum
ACWRC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANPPCAN	African Network for Prevention and protection Against Child Abuse
ARVs	Anti-Retroviral Drugs
BMC	Beach Management Committee
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CBS	Central broadcasting Services
CD	Community Dialogue
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSEC	Commercial and Sex exploitation of Children
CSOs	Civil Society organisations
ECLAC	Education to Combat Abusive Child Labour
EFA	Education For All
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FUE	Federation of Uganda Employers
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immune Virus
ILO	International Labour Office
IPEC	International Programme on Elimination of Child Labour
ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification
KII	Key Informant Interviews
KURET	Kenya Uganda Rwanda Together
LC	Local Council
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
MoGLD	Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development
NCC	National Council for Children
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
OCHA	United Nations Office for Coordination Humanitarian Assistance
OVCs	Orphans and other Vulnerable Children
PE	Physical Education
Pr	Primary
RE	Religious Education
SCIU	Save the Children in Uganda
SOMA-Net	Social Science and Medicine Network
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UCW	Understanding Children's Work
UDHR	The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UDHS	The Uganda Demographic and Health Survey
Ug. Shs	Uganda Shillings
UHRC	Uganda Human Rights Commission
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHS	Uganda National Household Survey
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
UPFC	Uganda Parliamentary Forum for Children
UPFC	Uganda Parliamentary Forum for Children
USE	Universal Secondary Education
WFCL	Worst forms of Child Labour
WHO	World Health Organisation

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Abstract

This study interrogated the interpretation of child labour basing on insider and popular perspectives of children, and local people in Uganda's fishing communities on Lake Victoria, in Wakiso district. Analytical areas involved the context of child upbringing and how it shapes working childhoods; the emerging discourses on children's work; views on school and work; and views on child labour in light of public policy. It was guided by among others, the interpretive, constructivist, and ecological theoretical frameworks and tools, during conceptualisation, data collection and presentation of findings.

The findings reveal that ecological factors and parenting behaviour play a critical role in child upbringing, and shape working childhoods. Poverty, vulnerability and exclusion however, largely frame the interpretation of child labour. Children abstract child labour as "forced, abusive and cruel work." They underline *vulnerability, traditional responsibility and children's agency* as responsible for their involvement in work. Adults' construction of child labour reveals three discourses: i) traditional approach to child upbringing; ii) a hegemonic cultural concept of the West; iii) as abusive, violent and exploitative work.

Children crave for practical and affordable learning, involving traditional and modern skills; however, the school cannot provide it. Hence, they choose work instead of school. Parents view as unrealistic, most of the provisions in public policy on child labour.

The emerging discourses challenge language use that is not reducible to local interpretations and call for dialogue in generating the local equivalent for categories such as child labour and children's rights. They suggest a need, to identify indicators of abuse that constitute child labour. In addition, interventions aiming to shape desirable childhoods ought to target ecological and parenting factors, that induce failures in the child care ecology—comprising micro, meso, exo, and macro systems; shaping positive child agency; and fostering dialogue driven interventions.

Zusammenfassung (Deutsch)

Diese Studie hinterfragt die gängige Interpretation von Kinderarbeit durch die nähere Betrachtung von vorherrschenden Ansichten der Kinder und der lokalen Bevölkerung der Fischergemeinschaften im Wakiso District am Viktoriasee (Uganda). Zur Analyse stehen dabei die Kindererziehung sowie der Einfluss auf die arbeitende Kindheit, der neu aufkommende Diskurs über Kinderarbeit, Meinungen zur Schule und Arbeit sowie Meinungen zur Kinderarbeit als Teil von öffentlicher Politik. Zur Konzeptionalisierung, Datensammlung und Präsentation der Forschungsergebnisse wurden in dieser Studie unter anderen interpretative, konstruktivistische und ökologische Theorierahmen und –instrumente herangezogen.

Die Forschungsergebnisse zeigen, dass ökologische Faktoren und der Erziehungsstil einen erheblichen Einfluss auf die Kindererziehung haben und die Kindheit von arbeitenden Kindern erheblich formen. Nichtsdestotrotz bestimmen Armut und Vulnerabilität die Wahrnehmung von Kinderarbeit. Kinder selbst nehmen Kinderarbeit als „erzwungene, missbrauchende und grausame Arbeit“ wahr. Für ihre Arbeitsbeteiligung machen sie vor allem Vulnerabilität, traditionelle Verantwortung und den Eigenwillen der Kinder selbst verantwortlich. Erwachsene konstruieren den Diskurs über Kinderarbeit auf folgende drei Arten: i) als traditionelle Weise der Kindererziehung; ii) als ein hegemonie-geleitetes Kulturleitbild des Westens; iii) als eine missbrauchende, gewalttätige und ausbeuterische Arbeit.

Die Kinder verlangen nach einer praxisorientierten und bezahlbaren Bildung, die traditionelle und moderne Kenntnisse vermittelt, was Schulen allerdings nicht bieten können. Deshalb bevorzugen Kinder zu arbeiten anstatt zur Schule zu gehen. Die Haltung der Eltern ist gleichzeitig unrealistisch, genauso wie die meisten öffentlichen Bestimmungen in Bezug auf Kinderarbeit.

Die entstehenden Diskurse stellen die allgemeine Sprachverwendung in Frage, die nicht auf lokale Interpretationen reduziert werden kann, und sie verlangen gleichzeitig nach einem Dialog, der die Entstehung von lokalen Konzepten von Kinderarbeit und Kinderrechten zulässt. Diese Diskurse zeigen die Notwendigkeit auf, Indikatoren von Missbrauch zu entwickeln, die Kinderarbeit klar festlegen. Zusätzlich müssen Maßnahmen zur Verbesserung von Kindheiten ökologische und erzieherische Faktoren berücksichtigen, welche bisher zu Fehlern in der Kinderbetreuung beigetragen haben – auf einer Mikro-, Meso-, Exo- und Makroebene. Weiters dürfen Maßnahmen zum Wohle der positiven Kindsentwicklung und zum Dialog nicht außer Acht gelassen werden.

Chapter one

1. Introduction

The mainstream interpretation of child labour framed in the discourse of children rights articulates very clearly what should characterise an ideal childhood modelled on the conditions of the developed world and middle class families around the world (see Lancy 2007; Punch 2003; Boyden 1990; Myers 1999; Stammers 1999; Nieuwenhuys 1996). The interpretation is reflected in the existing international laws and policies with provisions on children's rights as well as their participation in work. On the account of existing diversity and complexities underlying the reality of children in the developing countries, this view of childhood idealised as 'Western' should not simply be discounted as hegemonic. Rather, it is important to interrogate its categories such as *child labour*; *children's rights*; *childhoods*; and how they are constructed in the communities where they are enacted. In essence, it is not clear whether people at local community levels in developing countries like Uganda (including children, parents, and any other valued sources of local opinion), have similar views as reflected in both international and domestic provisions on child labour; or have divergent, competing, or complementary discourses regarding what child labour means, or what it does not mean.

This study presents emerging discourses on child labour from several people in Uganda from whom data was acquired. They include parents or guardians of children, children directly affected by the official interpretation of child labour in the fishing communities, community, and cultural leaders, policy makers, and professionals knowledgeable in Luganda language and culture. The findings are not to be used as a basis for validation or justification of local opinion concerning the interpretation of child labour. Rather, to offer in a number of areas, local interpretations and alternative, or complementary ways of interpreting child labour. This creates room for dialogue on generating an interpretation that takes into account the needs and concerns of those who are directly impacted by the laws and policies enacted on child labour.

This thesis is organised into three major parts namely: i) the introduction; ii) presentation of findings; and iii) the implications of the findings to both theory and practice. The

introductory part presents the context and statement of the problem, key research issues and questions, theoretical frame of reference, and the methodology used in the collection, analysis and reporting of findings. The section on findings comprises seven chapters. The first two chapters discuss the factors or conditions that shape working childhoods. Emphasis is put on ecological and parenting factors and work undertaken by children aged 5-14 years in fishing communities. The four chapters that follow examine the discourses on child labour and represent the views of various actors. A specific discourse on child labour emerging from the views of children both working and school going children, is also presented. The last two chapters of the findings focus on the interface between child labour and education and the interpretation of child labour in light of existing laws and policies. The final part synthesises the findings from each chapter and discusses their implications to both theory and practice.

1.1 Situation analysis of child labour

Despite the ensuing controversy on the actual definition or interpretation of child labour, there is a guiding definition provided by the International Labour Office [ILO] (2006:6) that distinguishes between economically active children on one hand, and children in child labour on the other.

Economic activity is a broad concept that encompasses most productive activities undertaken by children, whether for market or not, paid or unpaid, for a few hours or full time, on a casual or regular basis, legal or illegal; it excludes chores undertaken in the child's own household and schooling. To be counted as economically active, a child must have worked for at least one hour on any day during a seven day reference period.

Child labour is a narrower concept than "economically active children", excluding all those children aged 12 years and older who are working only a few hours a week in permitted light work and those aged 15 years and above whose work is not classified as "hazardous".

Hazardous work by children is any activity or occupation that, by its nature or type, has or leads to adverse effects on the child's safety, health (physical or mental) and moral development. Hazards could also derive from excessive workload, physical conditions of work, and/or work intensity in terms of the duration or hours of work even where the activity or occupation is known to be non-hazardous or "safe". p.6

On the basis of the above definitions, the ILO Global Report on Child Labour of 2006 estimates that there were 317 million economically active children aged 5-17 in 2004 of whom 218 million could be regarded as child labourers. Among child labourers, 126 million

were engaged in hazardous work. The report further shows that among the younger children aged 5-14, there were 191 million economically active children, 166 million child labourers and 74 million in child labour.

The incidence of child labour in 2004 was estimated at 13.9 percent for the 5-17 age group compared to 16 percent in 2000. In relation to child labour by sex, boys were more exposed to child labour, particularly work of hazardous nature, than girls. With regard to the incidence of children involved in economic activity, Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) registered the highest rate of 26.4 percent in 2004, followed by Asia and Pacific at 18.8 percent. Latin America and Caribbean had 5.1 percent, while other regions had 5.2 percent. The report notes a decline in the number of child labourers by 11 percent in both age groups 5-14 and 5-17 over the four years from 2000-2004.

1.2 Child labour in Uganda

The Uganda National Household Survey [UNHS] 2005/2006 (see Uganda Bureau of Statistics [UBOS] 2006) provides recent indicators on the situation of working children in Uganda. The indicators demonstrate an attempt to draw a line between working children on one hand and child labourers on the other. Building on the ILO definition with slight modifications, the UNHS 2005/2006 report defines child labourers as comprising:

- i) Children aged 5-11 who did any work (including household work) and those who worked more than 14 hours per week
- ii) Children aged 12-14 who worked for more than 14 hours in a week
- iii) Children aged 5-17 who worked in the mining and construction industries (UBOS 2006: 126-127)

On the basis of these parameters, the UNHS report shows that 32 percent of children aged 5-17 years were economically active.

Table 1.2: Working children and Child labourers

Characteristics	Kampala	Central	Eastern	Northern	Western	Uganda
Working children						
Female	12.6	40.1	38.0	23.8	34.7	33.8
Male	8.1	40.0	34.7	19.1	33.1	31.1
Both sexes	10.3	40.4	36.3	21.4	33.9	32.4
Child labourer						
Male	9.1	21.9	19.3	10.8	16.8	17.1
Female	4.6	20.9	16.2	6.6	13.3	14.1
Both sexes	6.8	21.4	17.8	8.7	15.0	15.6

Source: UBOS [UNHS 2005/2006 report] 2006:127

There were slightly higher percentages for males (33.8%) than females (31.1%). Sixteen percent of the children aged 5-17 years were child labourers with males having slightly higher rates (17%) than females (14%). The Northern region exhibited the lowest percentage of child labourers — 9 percent, while Central region had the highest — 21 percent. This data is obviously not without limitations. The survey approach used to generate this data is unable to capture hidden forms of work such as child prostitution, children in armed conflict (child soldiers), and those involved in other illicit activities. Moreover, the definition used while represents an improvement it still uses working time as the key denominator. This denominator is blind to activities or occupations which consist some of the worst forms of child labour.

Furthermore, the indicators used for defining child labour are closely tied to the international view generated by professionals. It is less clear as to what kind of input can be derived from the views of the local people (including children) and whether this can contribute to a shared understanding of child labour. Some parameters used such as designation of all children aged 5-11 as child labourers, may generate controversy. However, there could be other variables that parents and children could consider as relevant in defining child labour.

1.2.1 Occupations

Children in Uganda work in numerous occupations, including: agricultural activities (on plantation farms, subsistence farming, and tending animals); traditional medicine; work in factories, industries and mining; street working and informal sector activities such as hawking, luggage carrying, and scavenging (ILO/IPEC 2004; Walakira & Byamugisha 2005; Luyima 2001:6 & Walakira 2008). The Uganda National Household Survey reanalyzed the

2002-2003 data through the *Understanding Children's Work [UCW] Project* supported by ILO, United Nations Children Fund [UNICEF] and the World Bank. The findings show that majority of working children are in agriculture to the tune of 93 percent. Domestic service (2%) and manufacturing (1.4%) are among other sectors where children are engaged in work.

Table 1.2.1: Children's economic activities

Sector of child economic activity, by sex									
Sex	As percentage of children in economic activity								
	Agric	Mining	Manf	Constn	Wholesale & retail	Hotels & rest.	Transpt	Other services	Private households
Male	93.77	1.18	1.45	0.00	1.56	0.43	0.23	0.81	0.58
Female	92.53	0.38	1.23	0.02	0.96	0.77	0.00	0.81	3.30
Total	93.22	0.83	1.35	0.01	1.30	0.58	0.13	0.81	1.77

Notes: (1) Children aged 5 to 14

Source: http://www.ucw-project.org/resources/cl_indicators_explanatory.html date read: 7th July 2007, based on Uganda National Household Survey 2002-2003. (Agric: Agriculture; Manf: Manufacturing; Constn: Construction; Rest: Restaurant; Transpt: transport).

Some of the work children do in Uganda is very dangerous to their physical, moral and psychological development and constitutes the worst forms of child labour. Those most commonly referred to by the ILO Convention on Worst Forms of Child Labour [WFCL] 1999, (No.182), include involvement of children in sex work and pornographic activities, trafficking of children and their involvement in illicit activities, recruitment of children in armed conflict for use as child soldiers; and child slavery or bonded labour. There are also other forms of work which by their nature or circumstances under which they are carried out are likely to harm the health, safety, or morals of children (ILO Convention on WFCL, part d). These however, are in the process of being defined by each of the state parties.

Poverty has been singled out as the major reason why children work (Walakira 2004; Ansell 2005; Bourdillon 2000; Bass 2004; Kyomuhendo et al. 2004). There is however an opinion that children's engagement in work is more of a cause of poverty than being a panacea and that it hampers development by driving wages low. Save the Children (2002) points out that the high level of child poverty forces children into child labour. Other explanations for the growing child labour have highlighted insecurity (e.g. in northern Uganda, for two decades) which has led to displacement; and HIV/AIDS, which has left behind between 1-2 million orphans (UNDP 2002; Hunter 2000). UNICEF (2003) has pointed out that children are forced to work to support themselves when their parents die or are ailing from HIV/AIDS. Other

causes of child labour have been blamed on structural inequalities that differentially impose workloads on girls and boys based on gender, caste, class, religion, and disability. These lead to exclusion from school and limit employment prospects. The result is entry into harmful forms of work (Save the children 2001). The lack of access to good quality and relevant education, the different ways of bringing up children, work as a form of learning, and children working on the basis of their own will, have also been cited as major causes (Woodhead 1999; Ansell 2005; MOGLSD 2003).

1.3 Tackling child labour through legal and policy frameworks

Uganda government has put in place a comprehensive legal and policy framework which is a response to the undesirable situation of child labour and children rights in general. The Government has acceded to several international and regional treaties, including the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [UNCRC], the ILO Convention on WFCL, the United Nations Protocol to combat the use of Children in Armed Conflict, the Optional Protocol on Commercial and Sexual Exploitation of Children [CSEC] and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children [ACWRC]. The Uganda 1995 Constitution, article 34(4) provides for the protection of children from performing work that is likely to be hazardous or injurious to their development. The Uganda Employment Act, 2006, section 55(1) states that “no young person may be employed in any employment which is injurious to health, dangerous or otherwise unsuitable.” Section 51 specifies that “no person may employ a person of or under the apparent age of twelve years except on such light work as the Minister may, from time to time, by statutory order, prescribe.” The Children Act 2000 (cap 59) also prohibits the employment of children in any work that is likely to impact negatively on their physical, social and moral development. Section 5(9) prohibits the employment of children or their engagement in any activity that may be harmful to their lives, health, education, mental, physical or moral development.

Besides making child labour a legal issue, the government has also developed and adopted a Child labour policy, 2006, that prohibits children from harmful forms of work. The overall objective of the policy is to guide and promote sustainable action aimed at the progressive elimination of child labour, starting with the worst forms. The specific objectives of the policy relate to, “integration of child labour concerns into national, district and community

programmes and plans; establishment of a legislative and institutional framework to initiate, coordinate, monitor and evaluate child labour programmes; and stimulation of collective and concerted efforts, at all levels, to eliminate child labour.” The policy puts premium on advocacy and awareness raising, access to education and vocational Training, legislation and enforcement and capacity building.

Other policies that directly respond to the current situation of child labour include the Universal Primary Education [UPE] introduced in 1997 and the Universal Secondary Education [USE] introduced in 2007. These policies are increasing access to education for the most needy and help prolong the period of entry into hazardous work for some children. The Orphans and other Vulnerable Children Policy (OVC) passed in 2004 targets vulnerable children who are orphans, those affected by armed conflict, abused or neglected, in conflict with the law, children affected by HIV/AIDS or other diseases, in need of alternative family care, affected by disability, children in *hard-to-reach* areas, in WFCL and children living on the streets. Areas earmarked for intervention include socio-economic security, food and nutrition security, care and support, mitigating the impact of conflict, education, psychosocial support and health, and child protection. Policies and planning frameworks include the Revised National Strategic Framework on HIV/AIDS Activities in Uganda 2003/04-2005/06; the Revised Poverty Eradication Action Plan, 2004; and the Decentralisation Policy 1997; National Policy on Disability 2006; Education Sector Investment Plan 1998-2003 and the Public Investment Plan 2004/2005. These complement the existing policy framework for tackling the perceived problem of child labour.

While these policies and national laws are commendable, there has always been a mismatch between the availability of policies and laws on one hand, and their implementation on the other. Indeed, much as the contribution of the above policies towards protection of children from harmful forms of work and other rights violations cannot be overlooked, it is still apparent that institutional weaknesses related to limited human and financial resources, lack of coordination and harmonisation of activities of various actors and weaknesses in monitoring undermine their effectiveness (Walakira & Opio 2006; Walakira 2008; Save the Children in Uganda 2007). Moreover, the child labour policy has yet to prove an empirical basis that reflects local peoples’ voices in constructing the meaning of child labour.

1.4 Problematising child labour

The official interpretation of child labour as reflected in international law and policy (excluding the known worst forms) is under dispute, even as there is wide spread implementation of projects in the developing countries aimed at prevention and elimination of child labour. So what is the problem? Not everyone talking about child labour refers to or means the same thing. An examination of research reports, technical reports, advocacy papers, academic writings, policy guidelines and national or international laws (see International Labour Office [ILO] 2002; 1999a; United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [UNCRC] 1989; Save the Children 2001; Uganda Bureau of Statistics [UBOS] 2001 & 2003; Education to Combat Abusive Child Labour programme [ECACL] 2002; Walakira 2002 & 2005; Walakira & Byamugisha 2008; Ennew, Myers & Plateau 2005; Myers 2001) reveals the following definitions of child labour that have been differentially used:

Hazardous work; work that is harmful to children; all paid work; wage employment; all work performed by children; work that interferes with schooling; work undertaken without adult supervision; work that exploits children; work that is too difficult for the child of their age or sex; work that violates national labour laws; work that violates international laws.

Ennew et al. (2005) have suggested that the current usage of the term has been “devalued beyond any technical usefulness because the concepts and definitions used are so many, so varied and frequently so vague” (p. 27). In their opinion, the problem is caused by differences in perception and mixing observations resulting into competing definitions:

Although children can be seen working all over the world, their activities are perceived in a wide variety of ways, resulting into multiple, competing definitions of child labour. This means that whichever it is used, the term is not an objective, technical description of a single, observable set of human relations, but rather a rhetorical label that blends description with negative value judgements. Identifying a situation as child labour, involves mixing observations about what children do, with ideas about the nature and value of their activities. The process of identifying child labour is an exercise much cultural and political as scientific. This means, that as with all social constructs, it is difficult to provide a factual justification for any definition of child labour or to prove that one definition is better than another (p. 27).

Therefore, the confusion owes to the fact that child labour is not a natural phenomenon, but rather a social construct. Social constructs are cultural ideas that differ between actors, histories, contexts and purposes (Ennew et al. 2005). At stake in the construction of child

labour, is the interpretation or understanding of childhoods—whether or not, work is an appropriate part of normal or conventional childhoods. The answer depends on a number of social, economic and cultural and religious variables in any given context and the opinion of the person on such variables.

Critics present the view that the official discourse on child labour reflects the ideals of the developed West. According to Boyden (1990:184), the notion that children should be raised in a safe, happy and protected childhood is based on the norms and values that are culturally and historically bound to the social pre-occupations and priorities of the capitalist countries of Europe and the United states. This construction of childhood according to Qvortrup (1990), Young (1990), James, Jenks & Prout (1998), and Cunningham (1995), presents children as innocent, vulnerable, passive, and dependent on adults. They are perceived as becoming rather than being. Boyden (1990:198) notes that:

The different competencies and incapacities perceived to be associated with childhood in different societies are numerous and often imply contradictory conceptions of the child ... while in many countries children are seen as dependent until well into their teens, in many others they are expected to be fully independent from an early age.

Based on the Western view, most of the work that children do in the poor economies is judged as child labour irrespective of the circumstances or situations. This stigmatises and even criminalises the poor people's ways of bringing up children (Cunningham 1991; Boyden 1990, Lieten 2003; Nieuwenhuys 1996). "The sum of the many forms of child labour in developing countries creates the image of countries that are held together by child labour" (Lieten 2003:23).

The official definition further shows contradictions particularly when it is used to measure the magnitude of the child labour problem. For example, children involved in non-paid domestic work are not classified among the working children under the ILO definition. However, they are counted among child labourers if the work they do exceeds two hours per day for those aged 5-14 years. Furthermore, when domestic work is undertaken for pay, it is regarded as work. Ansell (2005) and Nieuwenhuys (2007) point out that this type of work (domestic work) is disregarded because it is undertaken by children and women who are excluded from production of value.

Another problem envisaged in the definition of child labour (for children aged 5-14) concerns the categorisation of work that children do, as child labour, even when it is intended for good. The measurements isolate the negative consequences, while overlooking the positives both in the short and long term. The various indicators used in the measurement of child labour are intended to protect children. However, some are a subject of contestation and are often a source of great controversy. Some of the indicators include among others, working hours in excess of two per day, performing work during school time, undertaking any economic activity below 12 years, or undertaking work below a minimum age and getting injured or harmed in one way or the other. Taking an example of harm, Save the Children (2001) has argued that children should have a right to participate in work that meets their best interests and that they should be protected from harmful work. However, it has also clarified that:

... within the broad category of harmful work, degrees of harm vary. In some forms of work, harm may be an inevitable part of work, while in other forms it may be possible to prevent the harm from taking place (p. 2).

Supporting the above view, White (1999) also argues that since abuse and exploitation have not been ruled out at certain times, places, and in certain forms of work relations; the focus should be placed on abuse rather than the involvement of children in work (p. 133).

Of significant concern in the problematisation of child labour, is the limited or lack of consideration of the views of children, parents and other valued sources of local opinion in defining what constitutes and what does not constitute child labour. The conventional or official definition is much a product of professionals in the developed nations. Robert Chambers challenges the standardised package, top down models and in this context, pre-determined meanings attached to development issues. He calls for wider participation of those affected and suggests the need to embrace a new paradigm in which “multiple, local and individual realities are recognised, accepted, enhanced, and celebrated” (Chambers 1997:188). In my understanding, seeking for multiple realities on child labour will not act as a barrier to fighting intolerable forms of work, but rather, it should act as a tool for exploration, learning and informing professionals and other actors to incorporate flexibility and be sensitive to multiple realities.

The involvement of children in generating multiple realities about child labour moreover deserves urgent attention. Not only is a coherent discourse missing on child labour emerging

from the views of children, but more profoundly, young people and more particularly children remain marginalised in areas of decision making on the basis of age. Ansell (2005) and Edward (1996) allude to the fact that the views of children as a consequence are not taken into account in policy making. This is the case in spite of the fact that they remain the majority in the developing countries who are directly affected by the policy implications of the official definition of child labour. Children's voices have also been marginalised in research yet their participation helps to empower them by increasing their knowledge and skills, makes research view children as active agents in their own lives and not passive victims or research subjects (Save the Children 2004; Alderson 1995; Worrall 2000; Kirby 1999).

1.5 Objectives of the study

- i) Assess the context of child upbringing in the fishing communities and how it affects children's involvement in work
- ii) Provide insights into children's work (including life-styles) and examine how child labour is socially constructed by children (what constitutes and what does not constitute child labour?), with a goal of generating a child discourse on child labour
- iii) Generate an interpretation of child labour by parents/care takers and elders and what constitutes the 'local equivalent' of child labour in their circumstances
- iv) Assess children's views on work and education, pointing out compatibilities and incompatibilities
- v) Identify areas of convergence and divergence from parents' and children's views on child labour in relation to international instruments and national policy and legal framework

1.6 Research questions

- i) What is the context of child upbringing in fishing communities, how does it shape working childhoods and how does it inform the interpretation of child labour?
- ii) What are some of the activities that children do in fishing communities and how do they fit into or affect their life styles?
- iii) How is child labour socially constructed by children and local people (including opinion leaders)? *In their opinion, what constitutes and what does not constitute child labour?*

What are the emerging discourses in the interpretation of child labour? What concepts or categories do local people use to isolate work which is tolerable and that which is intolerable?

- iv) *How do the local perceptions* on child labour compare with the official understanding of child labour as reflected in the existing public policies?
- v) *What are the views* of children living in fishing communities on education and work?

1.7 Review of approaches underpinning the interpretation of child labour

Researchers Myers (2001:28-37) and Ennew, Myers & Plateau (2005:28-31) have identified the four distinct perspectives that underlie the current interpretation of child labour. Each of the perspectives reflects a particular set of ideas about children and work. These include:

- Labour market perspective
- Human capital perspective
- Social responsibility perspective
- Children centered perspective

1.7.1 Labour market perspective

This is identified as the oldest perspective and it is the basis for the ILO Convention on Minimum Age for admission to Employment, 1973, (No. 138) and most national laws affecting working children. It is also the basis for earlier instruments on minimum age for admission into industry: ILO Convention on Minimum Age (Industry) 1919 (No. 5); ILO Convention on the Abolition of Forced Labour 1957 (No. 105); ILO Convention on Minimum Age (Industry) Revised 1937 (No. 59); and ILO Convention on Minimum Age (Underground Work) 1965 (No. 123). In essence, the Labour Market Approach is a legalistic approach that tends to explain child labour through the theory that the weak are exploited by the strong. The exploiters therefore must be controlled through legislation and its enforcement (Ennew et al. 2005:29).

This discourse regards work and education as incompatible and insists that children should not be allowed to work until they complete their basic education. Critics argue that this is aimed at keeping children out of the labour market (Nieuwenhuys 1996 & 2007), which is

seen as a preserve for adults. To remove children from the adult labour markets, state power is exercised to pass legislation, undertake work inspection, to prosecute law violations, and enforce compulsory primary education. The institution of the minimum age may serve to protect some children from hazardous work. However, it also denies others the right to work even when the work could promote their best interests. The ILO global report on Child Labour (2006:77) nonetheless, contends that generating consensus on children's participation in work is beset by "social, economic, political, and cultural factors that play an important role in setting the limits to children's participation." Critics further argue that the discourse assumes that the interests of adults and children coincide and that children are viewed as dependent and defenceless (Myers 2001).

1.7.2 The human capital perspective

Under this perspective, child labour is seen as a result of underdevelopment, and defined as work and/or health conditions that undermine the development of the health status, knowledge, and skills that children need to contribute in adult life both to national economic development and their own prosperity (Ennew et al. 2005:29). In this discourse, there is no fundamental objection to children being economically active as long as their human capital is not threatened and is properly nurtured—for example through apprenticeships. Without objecting to children's participation in work where their lives are not endangered, the perspective is more concerned with concepts such as "poverty alleviation, labour productivity, and developing human resources with marketable skills." (p. 29). Largely used by economists and championed by organisations including the World Bank and its affiliate—the United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], and other agencies, the perspective understands children as having evolving capacities that must be nurtured in order to prepare them for productive adulthood. Hence, *childhood* is viewed as a period of *economic investment* that produces future returns through individual incomes, taxes paid, increased productivity, and an expanded economy (Ennew et al. 2005:29). Therefore, the Human Capital perspective places emphasis on education and skills training, and supports programmes that ensure access by all children including, working children.

1.7.3 Social responsibility perspective

Under this perspective, child labour is defined as work that exploits, alienates, or oppresses children and separates them from society's normal protections (Myers 2001:37). Labouring children are those who are at work and are vulnerable to adult greed and exploitation because they are no longer receiving the protection accorded by their families and communities. Hence, the perspective looks at children in the context of social (or human), rather than economic development, and is concerned with their separation from mechanisms of social protection, participation and opportunity (Ennew et al. 2005:29-30). Child labour according to the perspective is *a problem of social exclusion, leading to work that exploits, alienates, and oppresses children*. The consequences of war, unequal global trade which affects the poor countries, the escalation of epidemics such as HIV/AIDS, and the ensuing phenomenon of the orphans and other vulnerable children in the developing countries; all seem to support the claim made under the perspective that child labour is accentuated by social breakdown of the family, community and nation, so that support does not reach the marginalised children. This could explain why the incidence of child labour is highest in Africa (see ILO 2006).

To address child labour, the perspective proposes mobilisation of society to reach out and include those who are excluded, using a variety of innovative approaches. The perspective espouses the views of civil society organisations (SCOs) in developing countries, many of which have a religious orientation or democratic ideology that emphasises human rights. In industrialised countries and development agencies, this perspective has been associated with *social capital*, which emphasises the importance, for political and social development, of civil society structure, informal networks, and relationships built on trust (Ennew et al. 2005:30). Further emphasis is put on the well being of children resting on care and moral values of society. As such, children are regarded both as *a social product and a social project*, with the well being of children ultimately resting on the care and moral values of their society (p. 30).

1.7.4 The children centered perspective

The Children Centred Perspective puts the interests of children first, in the understanding and interpretation of child labour. It is underpinned by the Rights Based Approach (RBA) and puts premium on the best interests of the child as provided for under the UNCRC and other human rights instruments. The UNCRC article 3(1) provides that, "In all actions concerning

children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.” Therefore without outright rejection of children’s participation in work, the UNCRC article 32(1) compels states parties to protect children from harmful work:

States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

The perspective underlines the need to give children a voice and hence puts premium on their participation in all issues affecting their lives. It recognises that children are on one hand vulnerable and dependent, hence need protection. On the other hand, they are seen as having evolving capacities, resilient, capable, and knowledgeable in some ways. They are not necessarily passive recipients of actions, but are active agents who can influence circumstances around them. In addition, the focus is put on children’s wellbeing and their own initiatives.

While the perspective ideally champions children’s rights, in some cases, it risks being used as a basis for stifling these rights, including rights to work. This owes to the fact that children’s rights are determined by adults. The fact that adults are the ones pushing children’s rights, the exercise of these rights promotes children’s “fundamental dependency upon adult agency” (Lee 1998: 472). Moreover, while children’s rights have been universalised, in some communities, they are seen as relative and limited or culturally variable (Ansell 2005; O’Neill 2000). In other cases, these rights (including expectations or childhoods in general) are understood in particular historical contexts (Aries 1962).

1.8 The case for interpretive and constructivist theories in guiding this study

Research on child labour is dominated by economists and social scientists who employ positivist and empiricist approaches and study child labour as if it were a natural phenomenon. Their approaches suggest that the meaning of child labour is predeterminate and identified by indicators that can be quantified and not subject to further interpretation. The indicators used describe social reality based on overt acts of individuals and the

motivations for the behaviour based on beliefs and affective states among others. The findings are used as a basis to claim universal truth about child labour.

Post—modern thought which underpins interpretivist and constructivist theories, rejects any claim to universal truth (see Denzin 1986 & 1991; Clough 1992 & Richardson 1991) and doubts that any method or theory has a universal or general claim as the right or privileged form of authoritative knowledge. Although the conventional research methods are not rejected, under postmodernism, they are subjected to inquiry and a window is let open for introduction of new methods which are also subject to critique. In relation to child labour, this study argues that there are several other methods of knowing that can bring diversity to the interpretation of the concept and which can expand the scope of dealing with the intolerable aspects of the phenomena as well as claiming the good in children's work.

Interpretivists and constructivists argue that the empiricist's picture of social reality omits something most important which is *inter-subjective* and *common meanings*, "ways of experiencing action in society which are expressed in the language and descriptions constitutive of institutions and practices" (Taylor, 1987:75 [1971]). Interpretive and constructivist approaches (see interpretive theories: Denzin 1989, 1992; Gergen 1985; Gergen & Gergen 1991; Geertz 1983; Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2006) all base their approach on a cognitive or mentalist view of reality. Central to the interpretive, constructivist or phenomenologists' view is the social construction of reality:

Reality [is] what people know and believe to be true about the world around them. Unlike positivists who assume that reality has some tangible referent and agreement can be achieved on its own nature given sufficient time and careful research—interpretivists believe that what people know and believe to be true about the world, is *constructed*—or *made up*—as people interact with one another over time in specified social settings (LeCompte & Schensul 1999:48).

These approaches uncover ways in which individuals and groups participate in the creation of their perceived reality. Reality of child labour in the case of this study is the *interpretation* or *meanings* associated with child labour or the work of children (in the fisheries activities). Accordingly, the study looks at ways how the meanings concerning the work of children are created, institutionalised and made into tradition by humans. In addition, it examines the economic and social practices including work, customs, rituals, institutions, beliefs, and the general way of life that inform the understanding of children's work which is acceptable and

that which is not. These theories suggest that socially constructed reality is seen as ongoing and dynamic process. Reality is reproduced by people acting on their own interpretations and their knowledge of it. The meaning of child labour in the local contexts should neither be conceived as static, nor should it be understood as a purely mental or an ideological construct. Rather, within the local contexts, work that is interpreted as unacceptable or intolerable can be identified by its very nature or within the contexts under which it is performed.

Hence, by primarily focussing on meanings and how they are created, negotiated, sustained and modified within specific contexts, social constructivist and interpretivist approaches present an opportunity for revisiting the interpretation of child labour. Complemented with dialogical approaches, they create a possibility for generating a shared understanding of child labour.

1.8.1 Limiting the weaknesses of interpretive and constructivist approaches

Hacking (1999) points out that social constructionist claims are not always clear about exactly what is not inevitable or exactly what should be done away with. Mather (2002) raises the claim ascribed to Gergen that “reality is in fact unknowable morass presented by ‘narrative’ accounts that are themselves theoretically incapable of adjudication” (p. 695-696). To the extent that there are those who can make sceptical claims about the world and those whose claims may be contradictory, it is reason enough to call for a moratorium on narratives. In his opinion, social constructionism should be oriented in the direction of questions such as group dynamics and inter-subjectivity. Yoshida (2007) criticises Geertz’s interpretive anthropology that it does not address the issue of multiple interpretations that could emerge concerning a single cultural phenomenon.

Some of the criticisms of the interpretive and constructionist approaches can be seen as points of strength particularly for the present study. For example, Yoshida’s criticism of multiple interpretations can be a cause for understanding different or multiple realities on a phenomenon such as child labour. It may provide a testing ground for relativist views about child labour vis-à-vis universalist views. However, given the fact that there is no any single theory or approach without any limitations, this study makes use of other approaches to limit

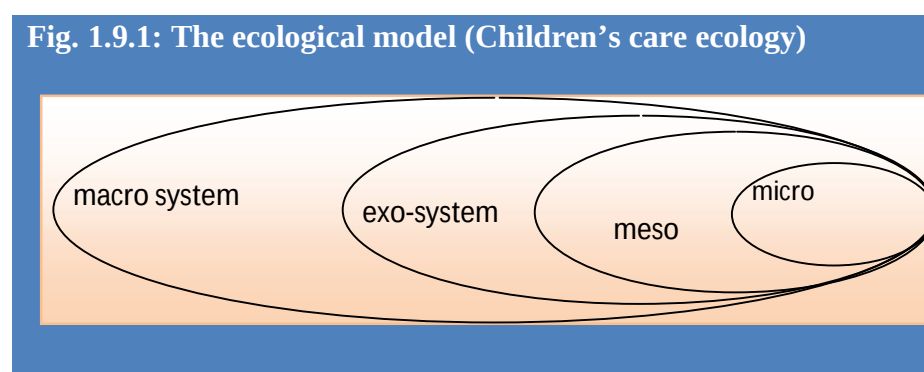
the weaknesses of interpretive approaches as indicated below. Of particular significance, is the lack of an interventionist approach under interpretive or constructionist approaches, a gap that is addressed by the use of complementary theoretical approaches. In addition, there is a moral limit regarding the use of these approaches. For example when children are forced into prostitution, slavery, illicit activities and soldiering etc, an argument is made that it should not be like that. The conditions that lead to such situation have to be addressed. The use of these approaches is viewed as limited on religious issues with moral contradictions, as is the case with WFCL.

1.9 The case for other theories or models

To limit the weaknesses associated with interpretive, constructivist, and phenomenological approaches, selected theories and models discussed below were used.

1.9.1 The ecological model

The ecological model as developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) provides a realist view of the context of child development, which under the present study, gives the context for understanding child labour. The model maintains that a child's development is shaped or conditioned by the factors within his/her environment and has three distinct levels. These levels represent sources of care and/or influences on the child as he/she grows up. The first or primary level is also referred to as the micro context and comprises the home or family environment.



The second level which is the meso-context relates to the immediate community environment and comprises institutions such as churches, schools, and the neighbourhoods where a child

grows up. The third level is known as the exo-system. It represents the context with wider influences on the growth of the child including the policies enacted by the government at various levels. The fourth level comprises international influences including the media and international policies etc. The interactions and relationships the child has within these levels can shape as well as be shaped by the child. Dahlberg et al. (2004:13) point out the individual characteristics of the child and the way they relate to his or her behaviour. These include educational attainment, prior history, and impulsivity etc as factors that can make a child a victim or perpetrator of violence. For the purpose of this study, it could be violence in relation to child labour or another situation that impacts on the life or behaviour of the child.

In relation to understanding child labour, the ecological model is useful in isolating the factors at each level designated by the concentric circles of care, that are important in understanding and interpreting child labour. These factors or situations can therefore be identified within the home context, community context, and the wider contexts. They include economic, social, and personal factors that play an important role in explaining child labour and shaping children's experiences. Regarding personal factors, these do not only relate to children, but also to care givers. In utilising the ecological model, greater emphasis was put on the micro and meso environment. This was aimed at narrowing the scope of analysis.

1.9.2 Social learning theory

Elements of social learning theory put emphasis on the importance of observing and modelling (copying) the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others (Bandura 1977 & 1997). Bandura suggests that most human behaviour is learned through this process of observing and copying what others do. His theory underlines the interplay between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental influences on human behaviour. For an individual to learn through observation, s/he has to give attention to the event to be modelled, retain the observed behaviour, reproduce it and be motivated (internally, externally, or self-reinforced, by obvious reasons). It is assumed that children's participation in work can partly be accounted for by modelling the behaviour of their peers, parents and any other actors in their environment. The theory however may not adequately explain circumstances where children's participation in work is a result of coercion. In addition, while the theory is important in providing insights on how behavior is learned and reproduced (in this case

participation in work), it is not very clear on the factors that influence the process of adopting the behavior.

1.9.3 Contagion theories

This study further underlines the power of peer influence on young people's behaviour including their involvement in sexual activities which leads to teenage child bearing, use of drugs and their involvement in paid work in fishing communities. Peer influence, in particularly ghetto like settings in the fishing communities, can lead to school dropout and violence and has the potential to affect young people's health and safety. To understand some of these issues, the study has made use of the contagion theory to explain aspects of problem behaviour based primarily on the power of peer influence (see Rodgers & Rowe 1993; Crane 1991; Mayer & Jenks 1989). The use of the theory is only limited to problem behaviour that emerges from children's participation in work. Consideration is also not paid to problem behaviour associated with rioting, demonstrations, and related behaviour.

The study further highlights the importance of models who partly account for children's involvement in paid work. It utilises the theory of collective socialisation, in which neighbourhood role models and monitoring are important ingredients in a child's socialisation.

1.9.4 Agency-structure theories

The study further makes use of theories that help to understand the role of children's agency in relation to their involvement in work. Giddens' structuration theory (Giddens 1984) and Acher's agency-structure theory (Ancher 1982) do provide some insights. The use of these theories is nonetheless limited to their relevance in understanding children as *agents* of change, rather than *passive actors*. In relation to agency, children can be seen as social agents who attempt to understand the world around them and affect changes to it through their actions. In this way, children's involvement in work can be accounted for by their agency. It can also be influenced by social structure involving institutions or power structures operating within society (including but not limited to family, values, beliefs, traditions, formal and non formal institutions etc). Children's actions however, whether conscious or unconscious, could also impact the way these institutions operate. In so doing, this could shape the way work is

interpreted, the attitudes and practices regarding children's work. While the theories have some relevance to this study, they are limited in offering an interpretation that is outside agency and structure considerations. The use of other theoretical models already explained, helps to fill some of these gaps.

Chapter two

2 The research methodology

2.1 Research design

This study has utilised qualitative approaches which are exploratory, interpretative and explanatory, to generate the current discourses on child labour from children and other participants in the study who were selected at the local or community levels. The study adopted a two phased approach to data collection: In the first phase, a variety of issues were investigated cutting across children's work, its interpretation, linkage to education, child upbringing, children's interests, and policies on child labour and poverty—among other considerations. The second phase of data collection followed a write up of the draft thesis. This phase was meant to enable collection of additional data to fill data gaps identified during the process of writing the draft thesis.

2.2 Theoretical orientation underpinning the research methodology

This study was an inductive inquiry in the sense that the study setting was an open ended field where no controlled variables were under study. So the inquiry started with research questions that have been explored through a variety of data collection techniques. The process enabled the continuous yielding of information to the point that data collected could build into a clear pattern that supports a general explanation about child labour. Being an inductive study, it has utilised a holistic perspective to get a clear explanation to the phenomena and in this line of thought, it considered the social, economic, political, and other contexts in which the work of children takes place and how it is understood. The study made use of indigenous or local peoples' understanding of issues. It was guided by a variety of qualitative methods and tools to generate explanations about children's work and child labour, child upbringing and poverty, just to mention a few.

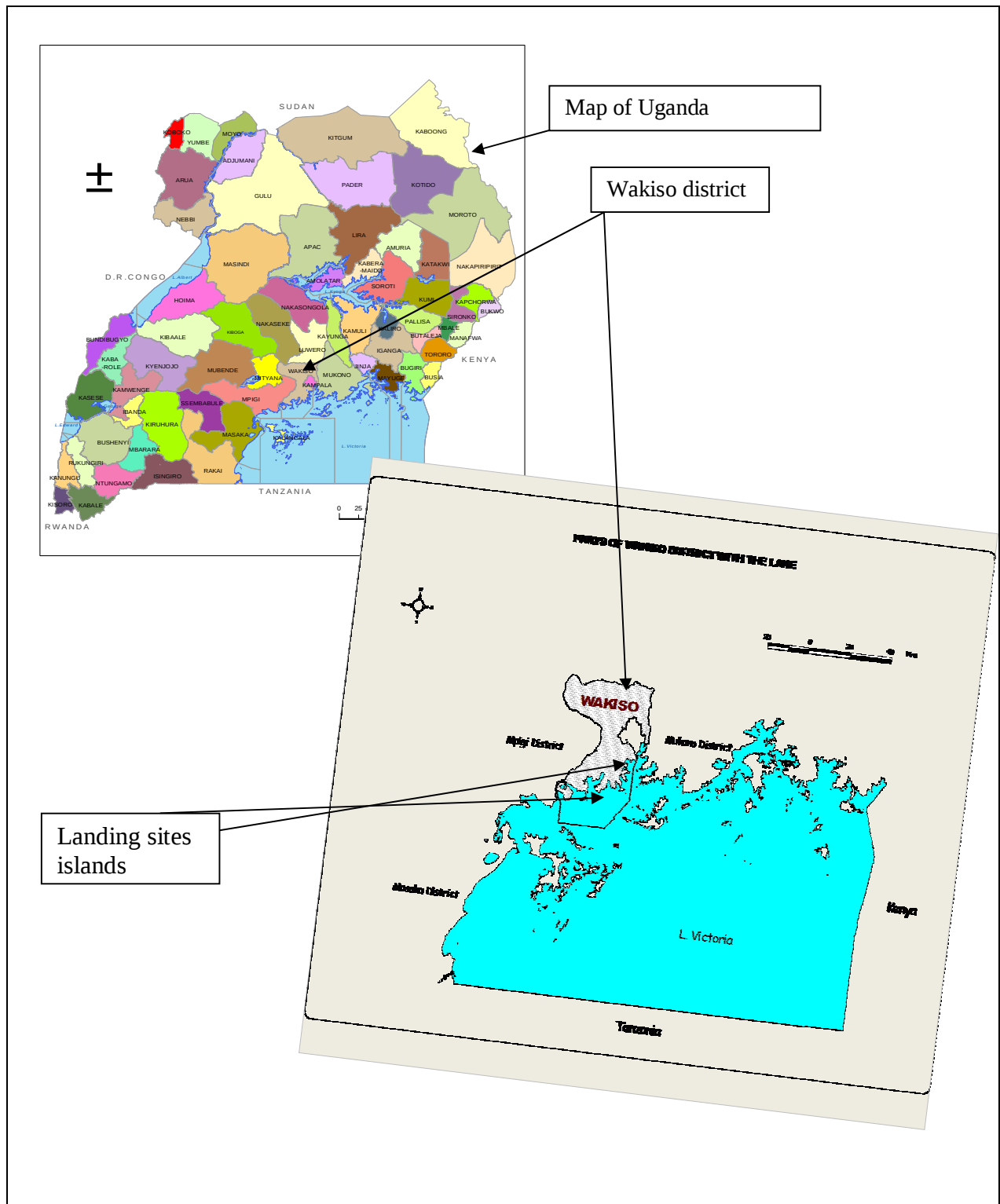
The methodology applied while fits the interpretive, phenomenological, and constructivist paradigm (see unit 1.8), is not oblivious to and to the extent considered befitting; borrows

from models (such as the ecological model) that harbor a realist view of abusive practices in children's work. The social construction of reality (Social Constructionism) is traced from the works of Berger and Luckmann (1967) whose focus is to uncover ways in which individuals and groups participate in the creation of their perceived reality. Reality in the case of this study relates to the *interpretation* or *meanings* associated with child labour or the work of children (in the fisheries activities) by the study participants. Accordingly, the study has examined the meanings attached to the work undertaken by children for pay or not for pay, by children in and out of school, parents, and other actors within the children's environments. The socially constructed reality is seen as ongoing and dynamic process. It is reproduced by people acting on their own interpretations and their knowledge of it. The study nonetheless, describes from a realist or an objective point of view, those elements of work that result into injury and sicknesses, those that impact children's physical, social, and moral development.

2.3 Study area and choice of study activity

The study was conducted in the fishing communities of Lake Victoria, located in Wakiso district. These communities were based on the landing sites including Gerenge and Kasenyi and Bussi Islands (Kachanga kava enyanja). Data was also collected from selected areas on the mainland including Wakiso Town Council for comparative purposes (on child upbringing) and from Kampala where data on policy and cultural issues from Buganda Kingdom was acquired. There were two main factors that made Wakiso district the preferred site for data collection. First, a decision had been made on the basis of consultations with my supervisor as to what kind of activity offered the best chance to generate new insights on child labour. From the literature review, quite a lot had been done on children's work in agriculture (mainly farming), in the informal sector, armed conflict, cross border trade, commercial and sex exploitation of children, and domestic service. However, at the start up of this study, there was virtually no research data on child labour in the fisheries activities. Given the fact that Wakiso district accommodates large chunks of Lake Victoria with numerous fishing landing sites and islands, it was placed on the list of districts that were to be considered for selection. Other districts on the list included Mukono and Mpigi.

Fig. 2.3: Study areas



The second reason for selection of Wakiso was based on easier accessibility and cost minimisation. During the preliminary visits made to the three districts prior to data collection, Wakiso offered the easiest and least costly access to the fishing communities from which

children involved in work could be identified. In addition, for purposes of locating the study within a cultural domain of the Baganda, Wakiso district not only met this requirement as well, but also offered the best chance of fitting the costs of accessing the Baganda and their cultural institutions from which an anthropological understanding of child labour would be contextualised.

2.4 The choice of fishing activity

Although virtually no research had been done on child labour in the fishing activity at the time this investigation started, there were growing concerns about children's participation in the fisheries activity among employers and workers (Walakira 2005). Moreover, the fishing sector was perceived to constitute hazardous activities where children were involved. The Child Labour policy, 2006, designates work in fishing as hazardous for children. Still, the fishing sector at that time was increasingly gaining significance in its contribution to Gross Domestic Product and employment. Fish and fish products, until recently, have been the largest non-coffee exports accounting for 16 percent of Uganda's total exports (MOFPED 2004). These were estimated to have increased by about 18 percent in 2003/04. Between 0.75 and 1.5 million persons were estimated to be employed or source their livelihood from fishing activities (Uganda Bureau of Statistics [UBOS] 2005; Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries [MAAIF] 2003, 2005). Other anecdotal sources put the figures to 2.5 million persons citing the widespread informality in the sector which makes data capture unreliable. The sector relies heavily on artisanal fishermen who use small wooden boats (canoes) and gillnets of varying sizes to catch fish. While children may work on their own in catching fish using hooks or boats, they are in many instances working for an employer. Others also offer support services in fish cleaning, drying, food kiosks, entertainment and trading activities among others (See findings, chapter three and four).

2.5 Study participants and selection

Table 2.5: Study participants

Study population and method	Gerenge Landing site	Kasenye Landing site	Kachanga Islands	Wakiso TC (Main land)	Total
FGDs with working Children (boys & girls) 5-14 years	3	2	2	-- --	7
FGDs with school going children 5-12 yrs	2	1	1	3	7
FGDs with parents/care takers	2	1* (CRC committee)	3	2	8
FGDs with elders	1	-	-	1	2
Case studies of working children	-	-	-	-	4
FGDs with teachers	-	-	-	-	2
KIIs (Local councils-6, elders-6, Radio presented-2, Policy officials-5)					19

FGDs- Focus Group Discussions; KIIs- Key informant interviews, TC- Town Council

The study participants were purposively selected on the basis that they would provide the information needed to achieve the objectives of the study. Key consideration was placed on inclusiveness of participants on the basis of gender, age, and working status (in the case of children), designation or role in community (in the case of adults). The selected participants comprised of children aged 5-14, working for pay or not, in and out of school, girls and boys. Adults were categorised into primary care gives comprising parents and guardians of children aged 18 and above and secondary care givers, who comprised of teachers in primary and secondary schools within the surroundings of the landing sites. Other secondary care givers included elders, cultural leaders, opinion leaders and policy makers at national, district and local levels. Key informants were drawn from this category of secondary care gives. Table 2.6 gives the details of study participants.

2.6 Data collection methods

The study made use of multiple data collection methods including but not limited to:

- FGDs with children, parents and local leaders
- Case studies of working children
- Observations
- Informal consultations
- Key Informant Interviews with fisheries officers, policy makers, cultural leaders and elders
- Narratives
- Extensive use of secondary sources

In the analysis of data, emphasis was put on thematic and content analysis, reflexivity, meanings construction and interpretation. The use of multiple methods of data collection facilitated triangulation and offered an opportunity to critique emerging meanings. It also made it possible to generate coherent arguments and narratives.

2.6.1 Key informant interviews

These were conducted with people deemed knowledgeable about the study problem. They included opinion leaders in the communities, elders, and service providers and policy makers. An in depth interview guide was prepared for collection of data with this category of participants.

2.6.2 Observation

Using this method, it was possible to document elements of work that children do, the circumstances under which it is done, and the likely effects of work on the health and safety of children.

2.6.3 Focus group discussions

These were organised with parents and guardians of children, children themselves, and elders in the communities. Through FGDs, there was dialogue on the what child labour is and what it is not, the factors that lead children to work, the contextual and social-cultural meanings attached to work and several other issues. Child participants in FGDs were limited to ages five to fourteen (5-14).

2.6.4 Documentary review

Secondary data from several sources including academic journals, research reports from International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), Kampala office, the Ugandan Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), and other relevant agencies, was sourced. An attempt was made look at literature involving folk stories and other cultural writings to examine traditions and elements of child labour in them. Existing laws and policies were also analysed to develop a contemporary understanding of child labour within the literature. Other sources included books and working papers among others.

2.7 Analysis of data

A discourse analysis was made for secondary data sources so as to generate the interpretations of child labour among the professionals and/or policy makers. The emerging discourses were contrasted with local opinions to isolate areas of convergence and divergence in interpretations.

For primary data, a series of processes were undertaken during and after data collection. Data which was recorded both manually and by use of electronic recorders was transcribed and typed. Editing of data was done with a view of limiting data generated, to issues that would generate the discourses on child labour. From the transcribed data, key themes were isolated that offered the best option of generating patterns which offered general explanations about the key issues under investigation. These explanations were also used to generate a general or preliminary theory, grounded in the experiences of participants (see Charmaz 2001; Angrosimo 2005; LeCompte 1999; LeCompte, Preissle & Tesch 1993; Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2006). In the second phase of data collection, the analysed data which formed part of

the draft thesis was presented or disseminated to a limited number of selected groups of participants (children, four FGDs) and parents (three FGDs) to allow for validation of the findings. A summary of findings was also made and sent to various actors on issues of children via e-mail. The feedback given was further incorporated into the final write up of the thesis.

2.8 Scope of the study

This study was limited to an investigation of the interpretations of child labour (so as to better define child labour) based on the views of participants including children and those within their interactive environments. The emerging views are to be identified with the communities where they were generated or the social-cultural orientations of those communities. In this way they can be interpreted as relativist views which cannot be used as a basis for universalisation or generalisation. However, they can be used as a basis for understanding differences in interpretations of social phenomena and for the taking into account of these differences when generating theories on child labour and considering policy and other interventions. The study did not pay great attention to the consequences of work on children, but prioritised the opinions of children and other participants on the work children were doing in the fishing communities. Hence, the interpretations emerging may consider as normal, the aspects of work classified as hazardous by the international or national laws. The findings are also to be read as a construction of the meanings of the communities rather than the meanings of the writer. Where the views of the author are included, they are specified as such.

The study has not yielded quantitative data on the magnitude of child labour in the fishing communities of Wakiso district nor on the profiles of working children. This is because the study is qualitative by design and never intended to generate numerical indicators on child labour. However, for purposes of guidance, secondary data has been utilised to paint a picture of numerical aspects of the phenomenon where considered necessary (annex 2). In certain cases, descriptive numbers are given from cases observed (like the number of working hours for children involved in work at home including that which generates income). While the study discusses the plight of working girl children, those working due to poverty, and those who are orphans, it does not discuss the circumstances of all vulnerable children including

those with disabilities, those affected by war, HIV/AIDS among others. An endeavour is made to highlight various kinds of vulnerabilities that working children experience.

Chapter three

3 Child upbringing in fishing communities

Ecological factors (neighbourhoods, open spaces, multiculturalism, identity groups and youth subcultures etc) play a dominant role in child upbringing more than parenting factors (parenting styles). There is maternalisation or motherisation of child care. The interpretation of child labour is framed in the existing conditions of poverty. There is a failure in the concentric circles in the child care environment leading to “child labour” and various forms of abuse. Interventions need to focus on failures in the circles of care—micro, meso, exo and macro systems, as well as targeting social and structural arrangements of fishing settlements.

3.1 Introduction

One of the concerns of this study was to assess child raising practices in the fishing communities and how they affect children’s involvement in work. Thus, this chapter examines the context that shapes working childhoods within the fishing communities. Particular attention is paid to parenting and ecological factors, how they contribute to children’s involvement or non involvement in work, and how they inform the interpretation of inappropriate and appropriate work for children.

3.1.1 The shaping of childhoods: Parenting and ecological factors

Who and what children are or come to represent at various stages of their life cycle (i.e. early childhood—0-5 years, middle childhood 6-11 years and early adolescence 12-14 years), who they are likely to become, and who bears responsibility, are some of the questions that are central to the understanding of childhoods in a variety of contexts, including fishing communities. Within the bulk of existing literature, the shaping of childhoods (more particularly their behavioural and developmental outcomes) is understood in relation to parenting behaviour or styles (Baumrind 1967, 1989; Cater & Welch 1981; Mckee, Colletti, Rakow, Jones & Forehand 2008; Maccoby & Martin 1983; Chen & Kaplan 2001). The premium placed on ecological factors is in relation to how they influence parenting (see Reis, Barbera-Stein & Bennett 1986; Belsky 1984). While the importance of ecological factors is illuminated in child care and development by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and more recently underlined in issues related to violence against children (Dahlberg & Krug 2002), limited use has been made of the ecological theories in understanding childhoods characterised by wide participation in work at the expense of education.

The parenting behaviour that generally shapes children's behaviour and ultimately affects their achievement levels and or developmental outcomes is broadly classified into four styles (See Baumrind 1966, 1971 1989; Maccoby & Martin 1983; Cater & Welch 1981; Mckee et al. 2008). The first is *authoritative parenting*, also referred to as constructive parenting by Chen & Kaplan (2001). A parent shows high levels of affection, allows psychological autonomy or democracy, and combines these with high levels of behavioural control or supervision. Without insisting on obedience for its sake, the parent attempts to direct the activities of the child using restrictions realistically and explains to the child the reasoning behind the firm control policy. This style is associated with positive developmental and behavioural outcomes such as higher education achievement levels, healthy psychological development, and lower rates of externalising behaviour (aggression, antisocial and non compliance). The second, which is the *authoritarian style*, is associated with high levels of behavioural control and harsh discipline. The parent shows low levels of affection. This style is associated with abusive parenting and is characteristic of high levels of violence against children. The violence can be internalised and transmitted during adulthood. The third style, *permissive parenting*, is where the parent shows high levels of warmth and caring to the child and also allows the child to regulate his/her behaviour (low control) as much as possible. By

allowing the child too much freedom and limited guidance, this parenting style has the potential to affect a child's positive development. The fourth, which is *neglectful parenting*, is characterised by low levels of warmth, care and control. These last three styles are more associated with child and adolescent internalising and externalising behaviours.

None of these parenting styles appropriately accounts for the wide spread involvement of children into work—and in the case of this study, fishing and related work on fish landing sites. Moreover, it is apparent that the conventional discourse on child upbringing locates the shaping of childhood experiences within the family context (see Oldman 1991), where a care taker has a particular level of control over a child's life cycle experiences. This hardly gives an accurate account of contexts where caretakers have virtually no control or have limited control over ecological factors which shape the nature of child experiences and outcomes as is the case in congested urbanised shanty settlements characteristic of fishing communities. More still, the predominant focus on the role of care takers excludes the analysis and understanding of childhoods shaped outside the family context in which the guardian, usually an adult, performs the role of a parent. Such children who grow on their own, having lost their parents due to HIV/AIDS, war, or other causes are increasing in number. To such children, the ideas rooted in the theories of parenting arguably have limited practicability.

The understanding of parenting has also been motherised (Amber 1994) to the extent that the role of fathers continues to be invisible. With the motherisation, the conceptual tools for an analysis of a child's upbringing have been maternalised. Yet the role of gender in role modelling and more particularly with regard to gender division of labour cannot be discounted. Evidence shows that girls' and boys' work in fishing, informal sector, and industrial work is characterised by the traditional gender division of labour (Walakira & Byamugisha 2008, Walakira, Byamugisha, Omona & Nakabugo 2005; Bliege 2007, ILO & MoGLSD 2004). However, Bandura (1977) has pointed out the role of modelling in structuring behaviour. His social learning theory puts emphasis on the importance of observing and modelling (copying) the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. That most human behaviour is learned through this process of observing and copying what others do. This theory in the context of fishing communities can be helpful in the identification of role models responsible for transmission of sexual experiences among children and young people as well as those responsible for child labour. However, it may not fully account for the role of children's agency regarding their involvement in work.

A further elaboration on ecological factors has paid attention to issues of vulnerability. In the context of developing countries, focus has been devoted to the impact of poverty, HIV/AIDS, and other social problems, which strain the traditional system of care based on kinship relations. The generalised view that the traditional system of care has all but collapsed (social rupture thesis) due to the devastation by HIV/AIDS etc, has nonetheless been critiqued (see Abebe & Aase 2007). These argue that the care for orphans within extended family households involves families that are rupturing, transient, adaptive, and capable families. Hence, depending on the situation of the family, the multiple and reciprocal relationships in care-giving and care-receiving practices can be strengthened. However, it is more of rhetoric of kindness and concern about orphaned children, but no one wants to pay the cost of their upbringing (Ennew 2005:128). Orphans nonetheless are not absolutely helpless or passive but are in a number of contexts active actors on their vulnerability. Their involvement in work on account of their own will could be one of the manifestations of how they address their vulnerability (this study).

Existing evidence on child labour studies or models (Ravallion & Wodon 2000; Pinzón-Rondón, Hofferth & Briceño 2008; Hazan & Berdugo 2002; Fafchamps & Wahba 2006; Edmonds 2005; Edmonds & Pavcnik 2005; Walakira et al. 2008) do not give an elaborate account on how children make use of the factors within the extra familial systems to address their vulnerability and more so, how these factors shape their childhoods. Using the theories (see Rodgers & Rowe 1993; Lindzey & Aronsson 1985; Wheeler 1966) including “contagion” theory primarily in light of the power of peer influence and “Competition theories”, we may be able to generate explanations for the nature of childhoods in fishing communities that are largely constitutive of child labour and why children are out of school. The use of Bronfenbrenner’s theory could further provide more light on how children utilise the various systems within their environment and end up in child labour and not at school or vice versa.

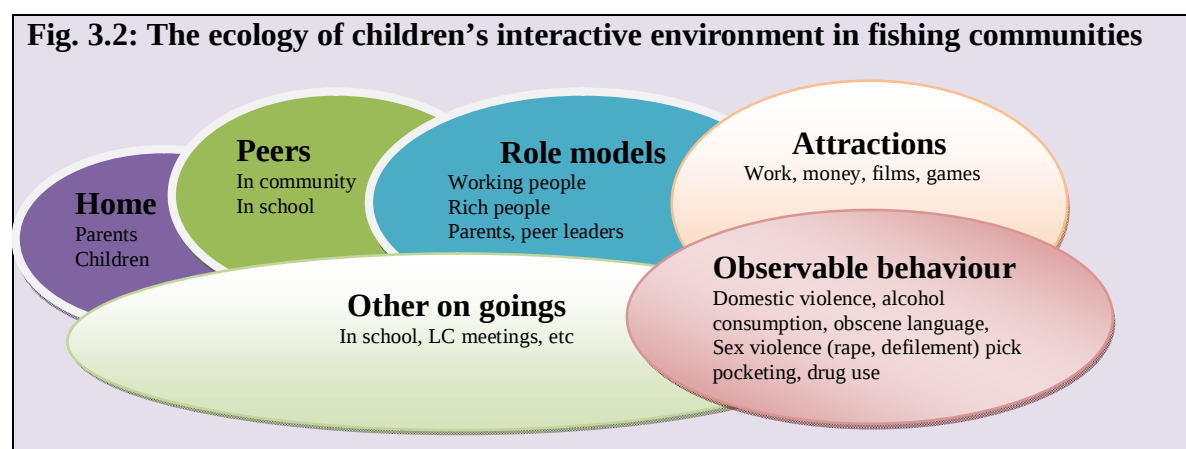
On the basis of this introductory review, this chapter presents an account of how parenting and ecological factors work together to determine children’s experiences in fishing communities, and more so, their involvement in work. The chapter draws on accounts of care givers and children.

3.2 Child upbringing in *open spaces* in fishing communities: A blessing or curse?



By *open spaces* I mean unenclosed places on the landing sites such as open grounds, the lake, shorelines, beaches, open market places and grazing or dumping grounds. Bringing up children in fishing communities takes place largely in these open spaces much more than inside the residences. This is particularly the case for both the very young children and children of school-going age (considered here are children aged 5-14). While bringing up children with more time spent in open spaces, one would ordinarily think this to be more of a

blessing for children as it allows more time for play and exploration; under the circumstances of the fishing communities, it is difficult to suggest that it is more of a blessing than a curse.



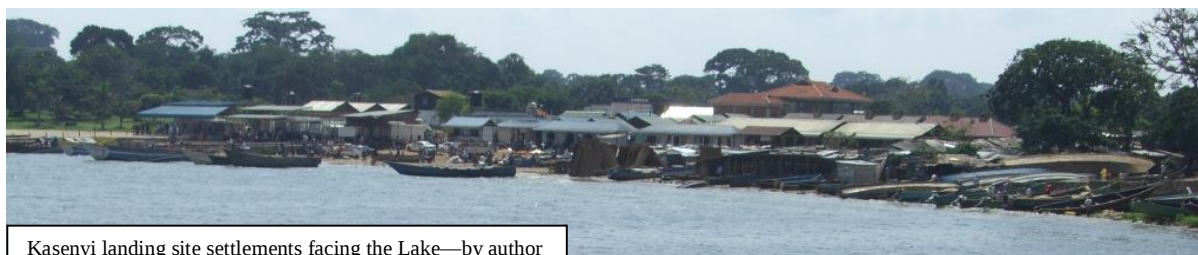
For a start, there are reasons why children tend to spend more time outside the confines of the household and school, and spend more time in the open spaces of the fishing communities. First, many cannot afford to go to private and government schools and therefore spend more time in the open spaces. Second, at the household level there is virtually no space for children to play or move around with freedom. The housing situation in the two fishing communities, which generally characterises other lake side settlements, represents a classic example of highly concentrated slum settlements. Housing units largely constructed with wood and in some cases mud, are closely knit or tied together.



A child looking on from home at Gerenge—by author



Housing settlements at Gerenge facing the lake—by author



Kasenyi landing site settlements facing the Lake—by author

In many cases, they are only separated by small path ways that can hardly accommodate more than two persons at particular meeting points. Often, there is dirty water flowing in the path ways which is a product of bathing and washing. The path ways are also often used as dumping places for both human and other household waste. When it rains, the experience can be appalling. The outbreak of disease such as cholera is simply inevitable. Only one public toilette for example serves over 3000 persons in Kachanga and over 6000 at Gerenge. Using public toilets requires paying Ug. Shs 100. The result is that some people serve themselves outside the toilette. Only a handful of residents on the two islands have personal toilettes (less than one in 10 have a private toilet).

Yet in spite of this, there are more open spaces on these landing sites where children spend time playing and working. These spaces include lake shores or beaches, grazing areas, road ways and open market places. Still, in these areas are pockets of poor sanitation depicting careless disposal of human excreta, garbage, and poor drainage. Efforts of Local Council (LC) leadership towards improving sanitation notwithstanding, the general community is yet to fall in line with concerted efforts of LC leadership and individual actors. Children are growing up in such an environment and are used to it. They often fall sick, but once they survive death, they grow up with signs of enjoying life or finding it more interesting much more than an outsider might think. These open spaces allow early exploration of work opportunities for children.

Having observed the situation of sanitation as well as informally discussing it, we (I and the research assistants) asked children 10-13 years to tell us what makes life problematic for children growing up on the landing sites. Children surprisingly raised concerns which were not only on the issue of diseases which obviously were a result of poor sanitation, but put greater concern on issues of sexuality and sexual abuse. Starting with the issue of health, they explained that “there are many diseases including bilharzia, cholera and diarrhoea”. Their concern was supported by care takers both at Gerenge and Kachanga who explained that their

children regularly got sick with matters being made worse by the absence of adequate medical services. “There are no government health centers in these communities” complained the parents in Kachanga. In Gerenge, the nearest health center was within 4 Kilometers at Bulega. On Kachanga Island, it takes about 40 minutes using a motorised boat to reach a health facility on the main land at Entebbe, or more than 1 and half hours with a canoe. Owing to this “every three children out of ten born in a month die” said the female participants on Kachanga Island.

3.3 Child upbringing in a sexually perverse environment

Sexual violence among young children: While children were concerned about health risks posed by diseases that emerge as a result of poor sanitation, they showed greater concern about the prevailing sexuality and sex abuse on landing sites. To some extent, they are used to poor sanitation or can at least tolerate it. However, concerning sexual activity involving young and adolescent children, and the alleged wide spread sex abuse of minors, they pointed out that this was a major problem they were concerned about:

Sexual harassment or rape of young girls especially by drug users is common [on landing sites]. Some girls wear mini-skirts and go for night discos and films. Some young girls practice prostitution and have unhealthy sexual relations with older men in exchange for money. Some children are working in bars at a tender age. Some of these children gamble [play cards for money], use obscene language, drugs, and have peer groups which are bad. There is use of abusive and obscene language at the landing site (Pupils at Bulega Primary School, 12-13 years).

Here I choose to first deal more exhaustively with the issues associated with sex as raised by the school going children. These expressions were in response to the question on what makes life problematic for children growing up on the landing sites. While we did not ask children why they considered these issues to be problematic, they were quick to mention the problem of HIV/AIDS being associated more with sexual activity. They had received HIV/AIDS education at school, in churches, and in community meetings and were to some extent knowledgeable about its transmission.

The loss of parents to AIDS was a common experience among the participating orphans. Girls were also getting impregnated and dropping out of school. Yet, while children

perceived these as problematic, they became more used to these problems as they grew up and particularly normalised the HIV/AIDS problem (Walakira, Bukuluki & Sengendo 2006).

But children were concerned with their safety as cases of rape and defilement were very common.

Men rape young girls and then they drop out of school, they also use abusive and obscene words like... and even children learn from them. When they're drunk and they find us fetching water, they touch our breasts, bums and say obscene words words such as ... They take *marijuana*, they offer us money so that we can sleep with them, and some men even rape their own daughters (Primary 4 and 5 Pupils at Lake Side Preparatory School Gerenge, 10-11 years)

They further narrated a case where a man at Gerenge landing site had forced sex with a drunkard woman, who sells alcohol from her one room house. The man performed the activity while a child of about 4 years was watching and tried to push the man away from her mother while crying:

“Leave my mother she is tired.” During that time, the woman was too drunk to realise what was going on. After regaining her consciousness, she wondered if her daughter had not been raped. The following day, the girl also tried to practice what she saw the man do to her mother with a young boy in the neighbourhood. The mother was informed about it but did nothing.

The children expected the parent to punish the girl, but she did not do anything to her.

3.4 “Children are too difficult to control in open spaces”: Common parenting styles at use

With a multitude of attractions on the fishing landing sites coupled with lack of enclosed households and the many open spaces, parents are finding it very difficult to restrict the movement of their children and to mould their behaviours. Indeed in one of the FGDs, children had pointed out a number of things that made life pleasurable on the fish landing sites. These pleasurable activities made behavioural control by parents difficult. They were identified as follows:

There is Karaoke, films and video shows and pool games. It is easy to earn money. For example a child can earn around Ug. Shs 2000 [\$1] in an instant by just spreading

nets to dry. A child can enter and leave a home at the landing site at the time she/he wishes. Children can catch fish for sale and home consumption. There is swimming. Some of the things we see on the lake, others (tourists) pay for them. For example we enjoy the lake view, swimming and watching fishermen. There is less parental control at the landing site (FGD with pupils at Bulega primary school).

To enjoy these attractions, children including both boys and girls, of about 11 years and above (some times below 11 years) regularly leave their homes often without the approval of their parents. Some of the parents may be away from home trying to make ends meet. Children take advantage of this to enter video halls and watch movies some of which contain pornographic material. While discussing the challenge of bringing up children on the landing sites, female care takers at Gerenge explained that they try their level best but face many difficulties:

As parents, we try our level best to correct their morals. However, we have so many film halls that are destroying our children. The film hall owners even hide those children so that they can get the Ug. Shs 200 (U\$ 0.1) for watching a movie. We try our best.

You can shout with a child but their colleagues keep distracting them. I have a child in Primary 6. I have tried my best but her peers in this place are spoiling her. She even fought with me. She failed to even finish primary six yet I was willing to take her to primary seven. Sarah has failed me. I get hurt because I have wasted my money on her. I even tried beating her but have failed (this was an elderly care taker in the FGD).

We look after them with strictness. When they go wrong we correct them. I do not give them space to move around aimlessly. Actually, each time they go away without reason they are 'gone'. I can't allow them to go for karaoke. A lot of evil happens at the *Kadongo Kamu* shows (traditional band performances). Why would my child come home at 8 pm? I want to get into the house at 8 pm and find them in the house.'

We try so much—especially me: I ask her where she has been till 9 pm to the extent that people think am very quarrelsome. I tell them to leave me alone. I tell my grandchildren that before I got married I was a descent girl and that my husband got me from my father's house. But then I've fought and struggled with Sarah but have failed (old woman in an FGD with female care takers at Gerenge).

While the efforts of parents in the discussion groups are indeed commendable, it was apparent that there were some parents in their communities who were seen to represent a serious problem to children:

The people we think are parents are destroying our children. They use their money to tempt children. Children love money. It is men and boys [who are the perpetrators]. These people are evil!

People here are not cooperative. When you are too protective of your girl, some people bite back at you. They say '*Kale oyo omwana gwakuuma yatuuka dda naye omukazi oyo alinga yaalimwekwanira*' (The girl she is over protecting is already grown up. It is as if she is the one who will make love with her).

Young girls are getting pregnant here at Gerenge. It is very common. Sexual activity may start as low as seven or below. If a girl gets pregnant, her parents feel envious of parents whose girls are still in schools. Even some mature boys at the site are proud when they impregnate a young girl. ... Sometimes after impregnating a girl, they brag saying, '*Nnamumaze oyo maama we yali yeepanka*' (It is finished with that girl. Her mother thought she could stand in my way) (FGD with female parents at Gerenge).

While one category of parents or adult persons is bent on endangering children to satisfy their motives, another category is simply negligent of its responsibilities for protecting children. On the category of negligent parents, participants remarked:

Some parents openly encourage their children to go for movies by giving them money. Many parents actually do not mind about film problems [pornographic material in films] (FGD with female parents).

Table 3.4: Parenting styles in the fishing communities

Views of care givers in FGDs					
Style	What the parents do or not do for children	Parents using selected parenting style in community (estimation)			
		Majority	About half	Less than half	Very few
Neglectful	☹ Refuse to provide for the basic needs of children ☹ Play sex when children are awake ☹ Consume too much alcohol; ☹ Feel happy when girls in the neighbourhood get pregnant			✓	
Permissive	☹ Do not care when children leave and come back home ☹ Allow children to watch pornographic films ☹ Allow children to decide either to go to school or work ☹ Involve young children in selling alcohol, and or consuming alcohol		✓		
Authoritative	☹ Try to put limits on the movements and interactions of children; ☹ Try their best to see that children attend school; ☹ Try to modify the behaviour of their children as much as possible including the use of sanctions ☹ Reward positive and reprimand negative behaviour			✓	
Authoritarian	☹ Whip children, starve them as a form of punishment, lock them in rooms, refuse to provide them with basic needs, always expect children to comply with their directives			✓	

Some parents are less bothered when you bring to their notice the bad behaviours of their children. Even if they are called a number of times [to come to school] in case their children misbehave, they do not show up. When they come, they can instead beat you up. This is particularly common with parents from the north who are rude towards teachers, unlike the parents from Buganda and Busoga. Most fishermen at Gerenge are Lou [ethnic group from Northern Uganda] and are very rude (FGD with Teachers at Bulega Primary School).

There is parental neglect and lack of guidance to children (Child rights committee Kasenyi).

Some of us parents we just allow our children to work and this way they get spoilt (FGD with female participants Kachanga).

When children are allowed to experience too much freedom or have no positive parental guidance, they always explore the open spaces on the lake as well as enclosed places (video halls, bars etc). In these places they join with peer groups involving working children, those who use drugs, playmates, and sometimes sex workers. This offers them an opportunity to get involved in the activities of the groups. In their adventures in both open and closed places, children always face the irresistible attraction to make money which not only has serious repercussions for their future, but also makes it very difficult for parents to manage them.

3.5 The irresistible attraction to money for young girls and boys on landing sites

Discussions with children revealed that children have a great desire to get money, but the desire is causing them problems. During an FGD with primary school children at Gerenge, they explained that the desire for money by young girls played favourably into the hands of men:

Some [girl] children simply love money and men take advantage of that to use them. For example there is a girl called Mado (*name altered*) studying in primary four. Two days ago they found her having sex with a man after receiving money from him. Her mother also owns a bar so all the obscenities she sees [and hears] there, she also does (FGD with children in Lake side preparatory school)

I have been taking care of a girl at my home [on the landing site] since she was 2 years. She is now aged 14. [Recently] when I was at the shores just about to go fishing, my brother told me that he had seen a man with the girl that night. I checked and she was not at home. I started looking for her all over and by God's grace I found her at around 8.30pm. [But] she was with a man. He had pressed her on the wall and they were having sex there. This man had been lying to her, giving her little money

and seducing her. She showed us the money she had received from the man. It amounted to Ush1200. I was so angry so I got into a fight with the man that I even got hurt ... (in depth interview with male caretaker at Gerenge).

The desire for money was not limited to girls only. For the boys, their desire was more apparent in their involvement in work and in the process, sacrificing school attendance. Young boys were actively involved in work on the landing sites such as hooking fish, offloading fish from boats, loading fish in ice containers, cleaning and drying nets, cleaning fish, and fetching water for money—just to mention a few. Girls also took part in paid work but not as much as boys did. Girls' work was more in food preparation and serving in restaurants, hair dressing in saloons, and unpaid domestic work.

While the motivations for earning money by both girls and boys differ in some ways, there is a common outcome that both experience, that is, the ultimate loss of interest in education and subsequent school dropout. Cases of girls dropping out of school were common. Parents, teachers, and children blamed it on men who lure girls into sex using money. For boys, the more they got involved in making money, the more school and work became incompatible.

3.6 Parents weigh in on sexual expressions and practices that harm young children

Parents (care takers) like children lamented the open and widespread use of vulgar language on all landing sites visited. This is done without consideration of young children. "Children and adults are compared to body parts of both men and women... accompanied with obscene acts [illustrations]" said parents. This is common in bars, film halls, open spaces and places where they play table games. Young children sometimes unaware of the meanings of such talk also use similar words, to the disgust of their parents. The local council at Gerenge passed a bylaw to fine any person who uses vulgar language to the tune of Ug. Shs 30000 (U\$19). While this helped to raise awareness about the problem as well as send a serious warning to the perpetrators, it was also clear that the capacity of the Local Council to enforce it was very limited.

Either as evidence of rampant sexual activity or careless disposal practices, child care takers singled out the issue of littering condoms all over the site which they said had caused problems to young children:

Very young children pick these used condoms to blow them as balloons. Some time back I found two children blowing a condom. I took it away from them [confiscated it] and buried it. People don't mind about the littering of condoms at Gerenge (FGD with parents at Gerenge).

Besides the poor disposal of condoms which was feared to spread diseases to children as well as harming the environment, parents expressed their disgust about the practice of exposing private body parts (sexual organs) to children by adult and young men while bathing in the lake or easing themselves (urinating) in the open. They argued that this was affecting the morals of children:

There is open bathing in the lake even during day and children watch these people openly. The Local Council has tried but enforcing it is difficult. This has destroyed the morals of our children—FGD with parents at Gerenge. I recently met a man urinating and he did not mind whether I was passing or not (An elder Gerenge).

The exposure of private parts was however blamed on the growing diversity of cultures caused by migrants to the landing sites. Participants argued that many migrants particularly in North Eastern Uganda, had cultural backgrounds that did not view exposure of private parts as a problem.

Ba nnamawanga bonoonye abaana baffe. Tebalina nsonyi kubanga omusajja ne bwalaba omwana, ajjaye obusajja bwe n'afuka awatali kuswala. Kibi nnyo! (These non indigenous people (or ethnic migrants) have spoilt the morals of our children. Without shame, a man unleashes his private parts and urinates while children are observing everything. It is too bad) (FGD with Parents at Gerenge).

Table 3.6: Children's role models on landing sites

Behaviour modelled	Models (Persons whose behaviour is modelled)	Estimating child adopters or prevalence of behaviour among children 10-14 years		
		High	moderate	Low
Sexual activity	Parents, prostitutes, working persons	❖		
Child labour/work	Working children, working persons	❖		
Drug use	Youth,			❖
Violence/aggression	Parents, adult males		❖	
School attendance	School going children			❖
Alcohol consumption	Parents, neighbours			❖

Children learn bad behaviours here on the landing site [referring to working children involved in lake activities]. This is because of the diversity in cultures. For example imagine someone bathing from the lake and faces all sides (Laughter). This gives a bad picture to the children (FGD with elders at Gerenge)

To make matters worse, prostitution was identified to be on the increase in both Gerenge and Kachanga. Lodges where prostitutes could easily be found were identified in Gerenge while in Kachanga prostitutes could be identified in certain places. Children were identified to be among prostitutes particularly those who start working as maids in bars.

3.7 Children give their views on how children are generally brought up

The views of children on how children are generally brought up in the fishing communities have close resemblance with those of their parents. Children gave the impression that their peers, particularly those not attending school, were unruly and this owed in part to parents' carelessness:

Children on the fish landing sites grow up with a high degree of indiscipline, disrespectfulness and are not afraid to use profane language. *Bye basaanga bye boogera* (they say anything without restraint). Children have too much freedom; *nga ate tebagambwako* (yet they do not listen to counsel). Some children are disrespectful of their parents. Some children abuse their parents. Some children come and stay on the landing site without parents or as they grow up abandon their parents' home (FGD with children at Bulega Primary school).

They also added that numerous opportunities to earn money distract them from attending school. As to how children should be brought up or how best parents impart positive values, children made a number of recommendations:

[At an early age] children should be taught to respect their seniors. A child should learn to be courteous. A child should be told to avoid bad peers and groups which are likely to have a negative influence on him/her. Counselling and guidance of children as they grow is very important. Children when necessary should be chastised for bad behaviour. *Abaana balina okutangirwa obutagenda mu bintu bya masanyu okugeza* (children should be prevented from going for entertainment activities such as) Karaoke, films or video shows and night clubs to avoid learning bad behaviours (FGD with children at Bulega Primary school).

Concerning the types of punishments that would be appropriate for children, some suggested whipping being used in a limited way, but others opposed it. More emphasis was put on light punishments coupled with counselling and reprimanding:

A child should be canned around three strokes on the buttocks. These are enough to discipline the child.

It is wrong for children to be canned *kubanga kireetera omuze okukula* (because canning causes hardening of heart). Instead children should be counselled and guided on appropriate behaviours. A child should be made to apologize to the person she/he has offended. Children should be given light punishments like cleaning house and utensil as punishment for their offences. Guidance and counselling, a child should be reprimanded and told that what he/she has done is unacceptable and wrong (FGD with Bulega primary school children).

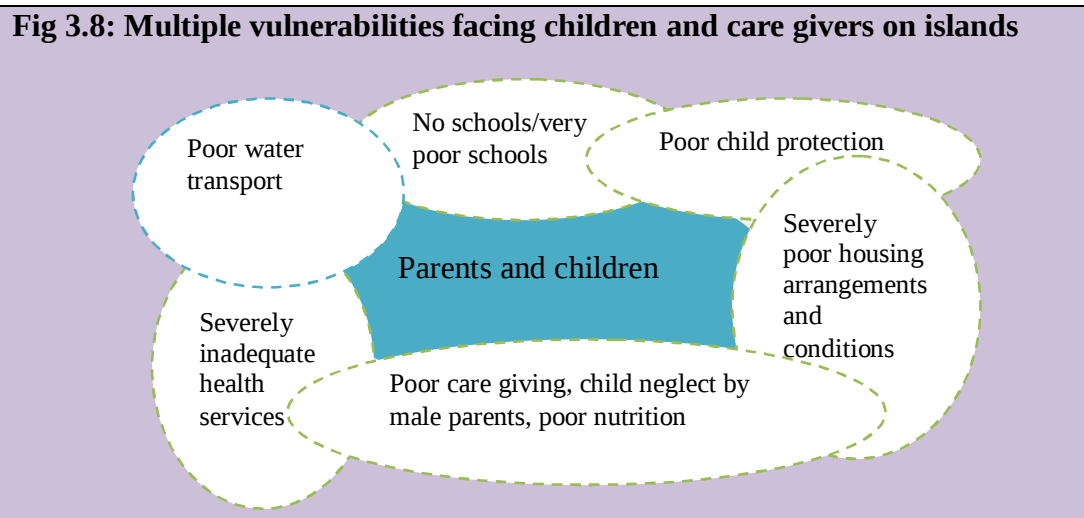
The views of children reflect the ongoing debate on the appropriateness of corporal punishments such as whipping used by parents and teachers. The government has abolished hitting children in the school system as evidenced by the circulars issued in 1997 and circular number 15 issued in 2006 (see Walakira 2007). However, the beatings have not stopped. Within communities, police arrest parents and teachers accused of hitting children. Parents however feel that canning if done responsibly is the most effective way of disciplining children.

3.8 Maternalisation of child care: Burden left by runaway fathers

Providing care and protection to children by the state and parents is an international requirement embedded in several articles of the UNCRC. Article 3 for example places it upon key rights bearers such as the state and parents to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being and best interests. Article 19 mandates states parties to undertake all measures to ensure the protection of the child against any forms of abuse. In the case of Uganda, many of the international provisions are domesticated in the existing local laws such as the Uganda Constitution, 1995, Article 32 and the Children Act Cap 59, 2000, sections 5, 6, 7 and 8 among others. These instruments place the greatest responsibility on child care on the parents (both men and women), guardian, or any other person having the custody of the child (Children Act Section 5). The care givers must ensure that the child has access to education, immunisation, adequate diet, clothing, shelter and medical attention etc.

Statistically, fifty percent of the children in the fishing communities are orphans who have lost either a parent or both (Walakira et al. 2008). Majority of the children who have only one parent are looked after by female care givers.

In the case of the fishing communities in the sites visited, the bulk of child care however, lies almost exclusively on mothers. Existing evidence (see Walakira and Byamugisha 2008) shows that female care givers outnumber their male counterparts by a ratio of 3:1. They are three times more than the male care givers (women-27%, men- 9%) among those who look after orphans (the orphans comprise 50 percent of the population of children aged below 18 years). This implies that men are largely absentee fathers. This agitates women since men are traditionally expected to take the leading role in providing for the necessities of the family.



In their own words, women from Gerenge lamented the difficulties they were experiencing in taking care of children and not receiving the support expected from the fathers of children:

A man loves you and makes you pregnant. Afterwards he abandons you and you remain helpless after childbirth, yet he loved you because you had some source of income.

Care for children from birth involves buying milk, clothes... When the child is sick, it is you to get the [hospital] admission and take care of the child.

We female parents are the only ones who look after our children. Our men here are *bayaye* (con men). What they want is to benefit from us. [Afterwards] they run to the neighbouring landing sites and we can't trace them. (FGD with female care takers at Gerenge)

In their opinion, the runaway husbands are not necessarily poor but nevertheless choose to neglect their families:

You look after the home and children. The man's money is his alone. Please talk to our husbands. They have money but are just negligent. [Imagine] they play cards here and spend up to Ug. Shs 50,000 [US\$ 31] on gambling!

[Pointing at some playing children] you see these children are not attending school. They are only loitering around and learning bad habits. When our children return from school, these children will teach them bad manners. Really I cannot understand why these men do not educate their children (FGD with female care takers at Gerenge).

Our husbands don't care about education and immunization. Imagine they even threaten that if a child is taken for immunization, then it is not his offspring.

Even for education, they claim they do not have much money to take children to [good] schools. They therefore prefer to take them to this school of ours where they pay in instalments of Ug. Shs 1000.

Unfortunately, these men have high libidos. They love to produce children. The men will ask you if you came to his house to eat his food and reduce the size of his mattress (FGD with female care givers at Kachanga).

The complaints concerning the burden of care were also extended to the government's inability to put in place health facilities and the poor attitude of health care providers towards patients:

We even don't have a hospital here. We have two clinics but the services are poor. Imagine they don't even have a microscope. They touch our skin to find out how hot the bodies are. The doctors here are not good. They even ask us to tell them what we are suffering from. It is the sick person to tell the doctor what she is suffering from. It is even surprising! (Female care givers, Kachanga)

They even ridicule you for not undertaking family planning. They ask you if you don't know where other women go for family planning. Unfortunately the injections we get to avoid pregnancy have proved ineffective (Female care givers, Kachanga)

Despite the challenge of looking after children, women find ways of coping. They resort to doing work such as selling smoked fish, operating restaurants, bars, and working in the markets:

We collect firewood and sell it. We even go fishing [hooking]. I have six grandchildren. I awake up in the morning to go to the garden. I was given a hoe by this lady [one seated by her side].

Others still hoping to get support from some "responsible" men, remarry and produce more children:

Children especially the girls can get pregnant and the men who impregnated the girl run away so we parents (mothers) are left to look after the child and her baby. ... So we then decide to get a man to help us look after these children... because my husband may also be dead and I am sweating alone to look after the children. ... I stay with the man to help me look after my children.

Moderator: So the more you have children the more you get married to different men?

Yes sometimes you may get someone who cannot even help you...

Remarrying and separation is almost a continuous or cyclical process for women on the Islands. It is however, not the only means of survival. When they feel too burdened, they send their children to work, who in return give some of their money to parents.

3.9 Discussion

The conditions in the fishing communities provide an opportunity for understanding situations that precipitate children's participation in work at the expense of education. From a normative point of view, the conditions by and large are far from being favourable for proper child upbringing in a traditional or conventional sense. Child neglect by parents, child sexual abuse, and sexual permissiveness are common occurrences. These factors work in unison within children's environments and subsequently affect their upbringing, their inability to attend school, and their eventual participation in work. The daily living practices of parents such as the amount of attention given to the child comprise some of the factors that influence the learning and behaviour of children (see Delemarre van de Waal 1993). Participation in work, child sexual activities, and use of obscene language are some of the behaviour patterns exhibited by children.

Conditions of poverty inhibit child development not only by limiting resources available for child care, but also by creating conditions that undermine the development of children's competencies (Coll & Szalacha 2004:84). Deprivation in the area of nutrition (i.e. malnutrition) adversely affects physical and intellectual development. It results in stunted growth, decreased organ size, mental retardation, and increased susceptibility to infection and other diseases (Yesner 1980). This study did not measure these outcomes. However, parental accounts of child morbidity and mortality point to some of the consequences of poor child care, including poor nutrition.

A more negative outcome of growing up in poor neighbourhoods (as the case with fishing communities) is that children are more likely to engage in anti-social behaviour (Mahoney & Stattin 2000). This has been confirmed by the findings of this study as well (see also section on child labour as a form of abuse), and point to the possibility that children model their harsh parents and other aggressive models within their communities. This could confirm the claims of the social learning theory by Bandura (1977) that underlines the role of models.

To put the role of parents more at the center, it is important to emphasise that, more than any other person, parents are culturally and legally expected to bear responsibility for moulding children's behaviour. Yet in the context of fishing communities, the role of ecological factors far outweighs that of parents in shaping children's behaviour and experiences, more particularly during middle childhood and early adolescence.

In the presentation, there were both neglectful and permissive parents, and these were estimated to be a substantial number although not the majority. There were also authoritative and authoritarian parents. Authoritative parents attempted to control the behaviour of their children in a responsible manner but were overwhelmed by factors beyond their control within the environment, such as peer influence, the role of models, lack of enclosed residences to limit children's interactions, and poverty which limited their abilities to satisfy all the needs of children. Authoritarian parents were identified to be responsible for the widespread violence against children and passed on an aggressive or violent behaviour to their own children. Children's participation in work as a result of home persecution was also blamed on this style of parenting (See section on understanding child labour as a form of abuse). The existence of the various parenting styles support the views of Baumrind (1971 & 1989) and other psychologists (Chen & Kaplan 2001; Mckee et al. 2008) who have researched this subject.

Linking these issues to the ecological perspective as advanced by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and as modified by Dahlberg & Krug (2002) in relation to child violence, one can say that fishing communities represent a classical example of failure in all concentric circles of care. These include the family level (micro care environment), the community or institutional level (meso care environment—which includes schools, churches, health facilities, peers and other

community institutions), and other levels or forces at national and supranational levels such as policies, culture and international influences.

A key aspect of the ecology of children's environments relates to poverty. Studies have put emphasis on poverty, showing that when it increases in households, it increases child participation in work (Edmonds & Pavcnik 2005; Walakira et al. 2005, 2008). In this study however, the factors are more than poverty and one sees a multitude of factors or situations within children's environment which elevate in the minds of parents and children, the importance of work over education. Even when parents and children accumulate enough money from fishing or any other activities sufficient to pay for schooling, their commitment to education tends to be short term.

With less value placed on education, children spend more time at work than school. They are introduced to sex and alcohol consumption at an early age. They experience defilement, rape, and are forced to fend for themselves at a very tender age of 8-10 years. To cope with the extreme hardships, children have devised highly complex survival strategies with or without support from care givers. Some of the survival strategies can be considered positive, such as learning to protect themselves against risks of rape and kidnapping by moving in groups, avoiding moving at night, and screaming loudly in case of attack. Others border on criminality (pick pocketing, selling drugs), externalising behaviour (aggression), and risking of life when they take on fishing (while under age or without protection), and involvement in sex work (usually unprotected).

There are issues of local and international significance that merit special consideration from these realities. First, child survival and development and child protection remain very critical in the local circumstances. These have been well articulated at the international level in the UNCRC. At the local level, they have been provided for by the Uganda Constitution and the Children Act (see chapter 10 on laws and policies). Action against these concerns is nonetheless demonstrated more by rhetoric than action in the fishing communities. It represents a failure of duty bearers at the family, community, national, and international levels—thereby creating conditions for *difficult*, *extreme*, and *working* childhoods, as those manifested in the fishing communities.

Second, the wide spread child sexual abuse within the fish landing sites is exacerbated by conditions created by poverty, poor parenting, and the manifestations of a weak state at the local level. The inability to enforce laws for example, makes perpetrators of sex abuse escape the arm of the law. This and related situations suggest a glaring gap or mismatch between the existence of laws and policies on one hand, and their implementation on the other. The discrepancy between the existence of laws and their implementation continues to raise concerns in developing countries like Uganda (see Walakira 2007), yet no solutions seem to be apparent. The facts established by this study show that fishing communities remain severely underserved with services, to the extent that the presence of government and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) is virtually nonexistent. Hence, when parents and children face neglect, the laws and policies do not restrain them from doing whatever it takes to survive.

Putting aside the issues of poor living conditions and failure in circles of care (and their implications), one realises that children derive a positive meaning in life despite the conditions we outsiders and academics define as horrible. Within these conditions are sources of happiness which give their lives meaning. These include limited control from parents leading to freedom of movement, watching movies, making money through fishing and related work, and making love relationships (linked to contagion factors see Rodgers et al. 1993). These aspects which bring happiness can at the same time be sources of misery as children involved get their morals corrupted while still young, practice unprotected sex (thereby risking contracting HIV/AIDS), and for girls, there is always a risk of getting pregnant and shouldering the burden of care (as young mothers).

It appears, the quest to bring about positive changes in fishing communities with respect to child upbringing and life styles of young people, requires an ever present powerful state and active non state actors. These are required to address concerns of law and order, the provision of basic services including education and health, ameliorating the situation of housing, and sensitising communities about creating conditions that promote and safeguard desirable childhoods.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the role played by parents and ecological factors in shaping the life experiences of children and more particularly, who children are likely to become and

what they end up doing or not doing. More importantly, the study has revealed that while parents play a crucial role in shaping the behaviour of children and their eventual involvement in work, the ecological factors over shadow the role of parents. The role played by poverty, peers, models and other attractions in the fishing communities has been underlined. The section has used accounts of children and parents.

Chapter 4

4 Looking into the work and life styles of working children in fishing communities

The profiles of working children are shaped by poverty, vulnerability, and exclusion. Children—both girls and boys undertake multiple activities on and off the lake, following the traditional division of labour. The context, nature of work, and children's abilities, determine children's tolerable and intolerable work. Children call for a parts-based analysis of work (constituent) approach, rather than generalisation of all work as child labour. Children find happiness and meaning out of work, but also court risk through adoption of risky behaviour. Girls are more vulnerable to abuse through work. There is scope for improving the context of work and identification of abuse through dialogue with children.

4.1 Introduction

When work is defined as hazardous child labour, it implies that it is dangerous or it is performed in unhealthy conditions that could result in a child being killed or injured (often permanently) or made ill (often permanently) as a consequence of poor safety and health standards and working arrangements (see ILO 2002; Nippierd, Gros-Louis & Vandenberg 2007). Work in fishing has been identified among the hazardous activities under Work in Fishing Convention (No. 188), 2007 and the Child Labour Policy (see Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development [MOGLSD] 2006). The implication is that children below 14 years (see the Employment Act 2006) must be prohibited from taking part in this work. Indeed the purpose of the laws and accompanying measures is to protect children.

However, the singular interpretation of all types and aspects of fishing as being hazardous work has left limited room for examination of work in fishing that can be tolerable and that which is intolerable. At the same time it has limited the scope for protection of children involved in fishing and whose livelihood is dependent on this work.

This chapter seeks to examine the work in fishing with a view to identification of activities that are tolerable and those that are intolerable from the perspective of children. Underlining the views of children and making sure they are heard is important for dealing with their marginalisation in research, policy and other interventions (Edward 1996; Kirby and Woodhead 2003; Lansdown 2004; Alderson 1995). The chapter further seeks to examine aspects of children's work environment that require ultimate withdrawal of children and those that can be modified without necessitating withdrawal, to protect children from physical, moral, and social hazards in the fishing work or fishing communities. The chapter concludes by examining the lifestyles of working children and their implications to the safety and health of children.

4.2 Investigating child labour in the fisheries sector

Research on child labour in the fishing sector remains scanty to date in spite of the efforts by the international community to protect children and adults in this sector as early as 1959. The International Labour Conference for example adopted the Minimum Age (Fishermen) Convention (No. 112) 1959, the Medical Examination (Fishermen) Convention (No. 113) 1959; the Fishermen's Articles of Agreement Convention (No. 114) 1959 and the Accommodation of Crews (Fishermen) Convention (No. 126) 1966. More recently, Work in Fishing Convention (No. 188) 2007 was adopted and it defines work in fishing as a hazardous occupation when compared to other occupations.

Despite the progress made with respect to international law and the ballooning interest in children's work across a number of sectors and activities since 1990s, only a handful of studies have been undertaken to understand children's work in the fishing sector. The few studies (c.f. Godoy 2002; Kufogbe, Awadey & Appenteng 2005; Nitiruangjaras, Predkitti & Tantisearanee 1998; Walakira & Byamugisha 2008), which are largely sponsored by the ILO and conducted in partnership with local organisations, have paid attention to the nature of activities children undertake, the hazards they experience and what interventions can be considered in countries like Ghana, El Salvador, Uganda and Thailand. Still, a few other studies related to child labour in fishing have examined aspects of children's wages and productivity in Ghana, Philippines and Uganda (International Programme on Elimination of Child Labour [IPEC] 2007), or general migrant populations in Thailand, Burma, Myanmar,

Cambodia and Laos in which some child labour is briefly considered in fish processing and fisheries (see Caouette, Sciortino, Guest & Fein 2007). These studies which are predominantly rapid assessments by way of design, have generated information that is useful for intervention purposes, but limited in providing children's own interpretation or their construction of work defined as hazardous by its very nature or the conditions under which the work is performed. By paying greater attention to the hazards children experience, the studies have pathologised and problematised the activities in the fisheries and have left limited room for understanding the wider aspects of children's work in such contexts including how it influences their lifestyles and shapes their childhoods.

The understanding of children's work in the fisheries sector has further been overshadowed by the predominant interest placed on sectors that employ the largest number of children, such as agriculture or activities that have been defined as worst forms or hazardous. Agriculture according to estimates by the ILO (2006) employs 70 percent of the estimated 166 million child labourers aged 5-14 years. While agriculture according to the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) of All Economic Activities (Revisions 2—1968 and 3—1989) includes activities in agriculture, hunting, forestry, and fishing, greater attention has been paid to activities in agriculture with limited attention being paid to fisheries, forestry, and hunting. Accordingly, rapid assessment studies commissioned by the ILO have been conducted in key sectors such as cocoa growing in Ghana (IPEC 2007), tobacco and cotton growing in Kazakhstan (IPEC 2006), coffee growing in Uganda and Tanzania among other countries (Kyomuhendo, Ssenabulya, Matovu & Kiwanuka 2004; Sennono 2007; Nchahaga 2002), tea growing in Tanzania (Gonza & Moshi 2002), and general agriculture in Uganda and the Philippines (Sennono 2007; Institute for Labour Studies/IPEC 2004).

Besides agriculture, research on child labour (more particularly in Uganda) has mainly been devoted to activities identified with the worst forms such as commercial and sex exploitation of children, children in armed conflict, child trafficking, and illicit activities (ILO-IPEC and MoGLSD 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, IPEC 2007; Walakira 2002). Other research has examined sectoral activities or thematic areas including child labour in the urban informal sector (ILO-IPEC & MoGLSD 2004d; Rubaga Youth Development Association [RYDA] 2000; Baguma & Matagi 1995); domestic service in Uganda and Philippines (Platform for Labour Action [PLA] 2003; Institute for Labour Studies/IPEC 2004; Rialp 1993); and child labour and

HIV/AIDS (Walakira, Byamugisha, Omona & Nakabugo 2005; ILO-IPEC & MoGLSD 2004e).

The multiple studies while have not shed adequate light on child labour in the fisheries, they have helped to generate a fairly good picture on the general situation of child labour in the country. At present, Uganda has over 3 million children at work. In 2001, there were about 2.7 children at work (Uganda Bureau of Statistics [UBOS] 2001) although the labour force survey estimated a much lower number of 1.5 million (UBOS 2003). The variation owes largely to differences in methodologies and parameters used for defining working children in the two estimates. The estimates however, rarely include children involved in worst forms such as the 20000 estimated to take part in armed conflict serving mainly with Lords' Resistance Army (see UHRC 2004), and those in hidden activities such as commercial sex work (ILO-IPEC 2007; Walakira 2002), and those in illicit activities including illegal trade, cattle rustling, and use of drugs (ILO 2007; World Vision 2007).

Another challenge is linked to difficulties in differentiating working children and child labourers. Not all working children are necessarily in child labour. There is a tendency however, to categorise every child involved in any economic activity below a certain age as a child labourer, even when the activity poses no danger to the child. In addition, challenges remain in drawing boundaries between harmful and non-or less-harmful work. Some work that exposes children to hazards that impact their health and their overall development can easily be distinguished, as in the case of the defined worst forms. However, a lot of other work that children do is subject to varying interpretations among children, their parents etc., on one hand, and among professionals, policy makers, and activists on the other. To this effect, there is often a mix of facts or observations as well as judgements about children's work. While before ordinary people, certain features of children's work are judged to be normal, to professionals or strangers, they are often judged to be abnormal or inappropriate. Hence, the efforts to generate data that distinguishes between working children and child labourers continues to face an obstacle of legitimacy among those most affected and those defining the work. Yet several people continue to point out the conceptual limitations in the mainstream interpretations of child labour (Boyden 1990; Ennew, Myers & Plateau 2005; Nieuwenhuys 1996; Woodhead 1999).

In general, there is still a dearth of data on children's work in the fishing environments and more particularly, how the work is generally understood or interpreted by children within the fishing communities, how it influences their life styles, and its implications on the nature and quality of childhoods and children's future. This chapter uses specific case studies and views generated from FGDs organised among working children in the three fishing communities—Gerenge, Kasenyi and Kachanga on Lake Victoria, Wakiso district. The views are complemented with secondary data sources wherever considered appropriate.

4.3 The growing importance of the fishing sector

The growing economic importance of the fishing sector to Uganda's economy has not been realised without concerns particularly relating to child labour or the involvement of children in work generally categorised as hazardous. The fisheries sector was the second largest earner of foreign exchange (US\$ 124m) after coffee (US\$ 265m) in 2007 (New Vision 2008) and has contributed over 6 percent to GDP over the past few years (Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development [MoFPED] 2004a).

Table 4.3: Exports of Uganda's Fish and its products 2000/01-2003/04 (US \$ million)

Indicator	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2005/6 Q1-Q3	2006/7 Q1-Q3
Fish and its prod.(excl. regional)—Value	83.78	88.82	121.22	147.04	106.291	109.662
Volume ('000 mtons)	24.13	29.14	37.84	38.62	29.173	27.640
Unit value (US \$/kg)	3.47	3.05	3.20	3.81	3.643	3.968
Fish and its prod.(regional exports)—Value	27.65	29.31	48.39	45.77	33.087	32.899
Volume ('000 mtons)	26.54	32.05	40.39	40.07	30.271	27.640
Unit value (US \$/kg)	1.04	0.91	1.20	1.14	1.093	1.190

Source: MoFPED (2007:18) table 2.9.

An estimated 1 million persons are employed in the fisheries activities including support services, and about 2.5 million are dependent on the sector for their livelihood (MAAIF 2003, 2005). The MoFPED (2004b) estimated about 750,000 were employed in the sector. Results from the 2002 Population and Housing Census revealed that 118,786 persons aged 10 years and above were directly involved in the fishing occupation (UBOS 2005). Of those employed in the sector, over half are children below 18 years. The activities children do involve fishing and non-fishing activities. More needs to be explored about these activities involving both

girls and boys and more particularly the work and how it impacts on the children's childhoods. Issues of lifestyles of working children and their implications to the long term health and safety of children also need exploration. In the presentation of the findings under this section, greater attention is paid to these issues using particular case studies, in depth interviews, and focus group discussions with children.

4.4 The general living environment for children in fishing communities

The fishing communities where data were accessed are among the most underserved areas in terms of social services. This situation is also apparent in most of the fishing communities in the country, with the exception of a few like Kasenyi which is privately owned and is well served with basic social services such as security, electricity, and general sanitation. In one of the study sites—Kachanga Kava Enyanja, the general living environment and the situation of social services is dire straits. With a population exceeding 2000 persons, the island has less than 20 persons owing private toilets. There is only one public toilet partitioned into four rooms. To use it, a person is required to pay Ug. Shs 100. However, either for lack of money or other reasons, some residents opt to use the nearby bushes, rather than pay the required fee. This situation is also apparent in other landing sites such as Gerenge. Besides the lack of sanitation facilities, communities on fish landing sites lack many other basic facilities. A summary of existing services on sites visited is indicated in table 4.4 below:

Table 4.4 Services from sites where data was collected

Indicator/service	Kachanga enyanja	Kava	Gerenge	Kasenyi
Est. Population	2500-3000		700-900	400-500
Health facilities	0		0	0*
Electricity	0		✓	✓
Schools	1 (Pr Sch P1-P3)		1 (P 1-P5)	2 (P1-P7)
Public Toilets	1		1	2
Transport	Poor		Fair	Good
Security	Poor		Good	Good
Play grounds	0		1	1
Level of sanitation**	Poor—very poor		Poor—fair	Good

*The site has a bigger drug shop and is near the bigger health facilities

** based on the assessment of the researcher and the perception of community members

Kachanga and Gerenge communities have poor housing facilities. Houses are very close to one another and are built with temporary materials such as mud, wattle, reeds, wood, and polythene. Only a handful of houses are roofed with iron sheets. When it rains, the sanitation

situation gets very bad to the extent that the risk of contracting dysentery is very high. Many residents own or rent one room which they use as a living and sleeping place. Some use the same room for business activities such as selling alcohol and serving food.



Situation of sanitation in the crowded houses of Gerenge—by author

The settlers in the fishing communities are largely migrants and are Baganda. These have been joined by many other ethnic migrants including the Acholi, Lang, Basoga, Banyankole, and Baruli among other communities. Some residents explain that many of the migrants have

criminal backgrounds. The main economic activities for community members are dependent on the lake and these include fishing, trade, and limited agriculture.

4.5 Knowing about the working children on the landing sites

About half of the number of all the working children aged 5-14 years in all the FGDs conducted on the fish landing sites were orphans having lost a father or mother due to illness. Less than half were attending school and the reason for non-school attendance was attributed to lack of money. For some children who were still in school, they were working to support their education. Only a handful completed the primary school cycle. More children were dropping out of school before reaching primary seven. With regard to gender, more boys than girls were engaged in work for pay. Girls mainly helped in household work and family business such as retail work in shops and markets or helping out in a family restaurant.

4.6 Children's work in the fishing communities

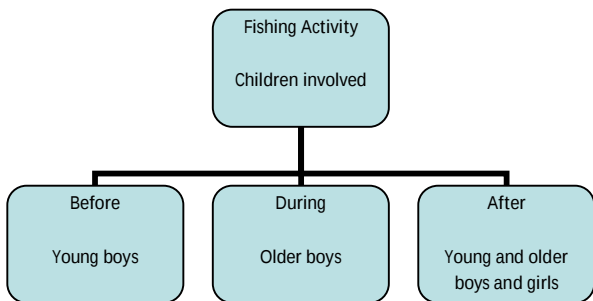
Although children participate in nearly all work undertaken in the fishing communities, a detailed discussion of their work will be limited to fishing, domestic work, and a few other selected activities. In general, children undertake activities including fishing, offer food

services, transport, fetching water for restaurants and home use, provide entertainment services, work in the markets and undertake domestic chores.

4.6.1 Children's work in fishing

Fishing entails activities at three stages as reflected in the matrix below:

Table 4.6.1: Activities embedded in fishing work

Fishing activity	Before	During	After
	Cleaning boats Mending nets Making/repairing canoes/boats Loading boats with fishing equipment (food, lantern, paraffin, plastic bags, anchor, paddle, water emptier, match boxes etc)	Rowing the boat Hooking/spearing fish Swimming with fish Operating a canoe or motorised boat Casting nets Pulling fish out of water Emptying water from the boat while fishing Fish transportation	Offloading fish Ferrying to market place) Sorting fish Scaling fish/cleaning fish Washing nets Picking fish fats Smoking/salting/sun-drying fish Fish bisecting Hawking/vending/selling fish
Age of children	>Young children ≤ 12	>Older children ≥ 14	Young & older children
Sex of children	>boys <girls	>boys>	>Girls and >boys

4.6.1.1 Preparation for fishing



Boys sorting nets –by author

This involves repairing nets and boats, ensuring that they are clean, and loading the boats with all the relevant fishing equipment. Most of this work is done on the shores of the lake mainly by young boys of 12 years and below.

4.6.1.2 Work in actual fishing

The work entailed in actual fishing using a canoe or motorised boat is more demanding and involves older boys aged 14 and above. This work is done during day and night. Older boys often go fishing at night. Young boys aged about 12 are more involved in hooking (catching



These boys have set off for fishing—by author

fish using a hook or spear) during day time. In this case, they have to swim to certain locations off the main landing site and spear or hook the fish. They usually stand on the rocks several meters from the shore line. They swim back with their catch tied on ropes and fitted to their waists or feet. Catching fish using nets or hooking, is considered by children to be the most financially rewarding activity, but also the most dangerous.

4.6.1.3 Work after actual fishing

The work after actual fishing is done by both young and old children, both girls and boys. Girls largely get involved in this work and do activities including fish cleaning, smoking, and vending while boys ferry fish, clean boats, dry nets, and clean fish as well.

4.7 Tolerable and intolerable work for children in fishing

Work before and after fishing was considered appropriate for children with the exception of carrying big bundles of fish *emigeto* (bundle of fish) after fishing which children considered to be often heavy work for children aged below 14 or 15 years. Work in actual fishing (during fishing) was identified by working children to be intolerable for children younger than 14 years. They excluded, however, hooking fish which they said could be done by children aged 12 and above. Hooking fish was considered to be very dangerous for children below 12 years. In both hooking and fishing by use of a boat, children explained that there were challenges or dangers involved that a person could find difficult to contain if he was younger than age 14. For example, children explained with respect to fishing using a boat:

You need to use a lot of energy in rowing the boat using a paddle. This often causes chest pain and makes some children to fall sick. The winds can sometimes be strong and can cause drowning yet we do not use life jackets.

Also because actual fishing often involves working at night, they considered it more straining and it could at times expose them to robbers on the lake. In general, although children identified dangers associated with actual fishing, they were more enthusiastic doing the work because of the financial benefits involved. Talking to them, they were less worried about the challenges involved in work as compared to the difficulties they would experience without work. Although they got money from the actual fishing work, they never considered issues of safety like buying life jackets.

4.8 Views of children on tolerable and intolerable work

Both categories of children were asked to identify the general work that children do on the landing sites, which they considered appropriate or inappropriate for children. They identified activities as listed in table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Tolerable and intolerable work in general within fishing communities

Tolerable work for children on landing sites	Intolerable work for young children on landing sites
Hooking. Children said this was not difficult.	Lifting people and heavy loads from boats
Drying nets but not lifting them from the boats (That it was also easy and one could get some money).	Lifting <i>emigeto</i> (fish bundles- that it is too heavy for children although they want money).
Learning to make boats. (That one can get some regular income because it is a daily job).	Rearing cattle (that there are snakes that bite)
Fetching water (That sometimes children can make like Ug. Shs 200/= for every 25 litre tin sold).	Carrying sand for construction.
Fish scaling (That it is easy although the activity results into some cuts).	Loading and offloading fish and people from boats
Fetching water	Disco dancing
	Stone quarrying
	Prostitution and working in bars
	Sand mining
	Actual fishing (mentioned by non working children)

What the table reveals is that there are both activities considered tolerable and intolerable for children on the fish landing sites. The intolerable activities are largely defined by non-working children, or children who are not involved in them; to these, such activities are perceived to be very heavy or very risky. For working children, they differentiate these activities according to the child's ability or age. For example, they discourage young children (below 14) to do fishing or to carry heavy loads including fresh fish bundles and carrying people (from the boats to the shore line). Yet if children attain 14 years or 15 years, they think that children are able to do these activities. Many activities considered tolerable, are those that they consider less risky or less heavy (light work). In relation to fishing, these activities fit those "before" and "after" work in actual fishing. Yet besides those directly linked to fishing, children still identified activities like sand mining, prostitution, and work in bars etc, to be intolerable.

4.9 The positive and negative influences on children

There are both positive and negative forces that influence the context of children's work on the landing sites. The positive forces include the existing demand for children's labour by boat owners, restaurant operators, fish buyers and sellers and transporters etc. They find the services of children to be cheaper, a fact also confirmed by IPEC (2007). This ensures the survival of children but also limits their interest in education as work increasingly becomes incompatible with education. The free accessibility to the lake to carry out fishing offers children an opportunity to directly get involved in income generation by catching and selling fish (boys) or providing support services (both boys and girls). This enhances their welfare and social standing in a community of adults.

The negative forces are linked to the rampant sexuality in the fishing communities which affects both girls and boys at an early age, sexually oriented abusive talk, sex abuse of children and women, the widespread consumption of alcohol, and the criminality and use of drugs. Details about these practices are discussed in some parts of this chapter and the chapter on child upbringing in fishing communities. Child care takers expressed their frustration about these practices and indicated that if there was an alternative, they would have liked to have their children raised up in other places other than the fish landing sites (see chapter three on child upbringing).

4.10 Looking into the life of a boy involved in fishing

The case study of Safi (name not real) gives a narration of the circumstances that led Safi to get involved into fishing at age 12. It explores the benefits derived from work and the challenges he faces while doing fishing work.

Safi is a male aged 14 years staying at Gerenge. He is a primary five school dropout. “I dropped out because my father died, yet my mother did not have money to pay my school fees. Before I came to this landing site [Kasenye], I was living with my mother in Bwaise [a Kampala city suburb]. When my father died, my mother brought me here at Kasenye to live with my step brother who is a fisherman.” He says that was the first time he was seeing his step brother and the last he saw his mother. His brother was kind to him and supported his education for a year, but stopped when he lost his job. Both of them went through a period of hardship and at times survived on one meal a day.

“As time went by, my brother advised me to always go to the landing site, to make friends and learn how to do fishing. ... I followed the advice.” After not too long, he had made friends who helped him do casual jobs like sorting and cleaning fish, picking fish fats and fetching water. He learnt and mastered swimming which was a critical step before learning how to fish, and often would go with friends to hook and spear fish. Safi is now fully involved in hooking fish and complements this with other activities such as fetching water, ferrying fish and goods to their respective market places and he gets paid. “I go to hook fish in the morning from 7:00am to 11:00am. When I return, I sell the fish to restaurant owners and other people on the landing site.” He usually goes back to the lake for another round of hooking from 5:00pm to 7:00pm.

Hooking fish—Safi gets ready a sisal rope which he ties around his waist. He also gets his hooks and strings of rayon (gauze) and a *kaveera* (polythene bag) where he



This boy is deep inside the lake hooking fish—by author

keeps his baits. He then swims to the small islands about 2 kms from the shore line—deep inside the lake, identifies rocks to stand on. He gets his hooks (firmly tied to gauze) and baits ready and starts hooking and spearing. “I use *nsiringanyi* (earth worms) and *ngonge* (a plant that fish feed on).” The earth worms usually collected from garbage heaps are used while still alive. Their movement in water attracts fish to the hook. “The fish are hooked as they come to feed on the earth worms. I tie every fish I catch to the rope [through its mouth] and after fishing, I tie the catch to one of my legs

and swim to the landing site.” He says he avoids carrying more than six fish as heavy load can lead to drowning. If he carries six they have to be of small size. In case he catches big fish, he has to wait for those who use boats and they give him a ride to the landing site. This nonetheless, is very rare.

Safi says he benefits from this work because once he gets money he buys clothes and other requirements. “Before doing this work, I was sleeping on a mat on the floor. Now I have acquired a one inch mattress, bed sheets and a blanket.” He can afford food on a daily basis and he is happy that he learns more skills each day that passes. He says ever since he started work he has been catering for himself and is no longer dependent on his brother.

The challenges he faces in the fishing work. While the work is beneficial to him, Safi finds it very challenging and sometimes regrets what he goes through while doing it. The problems he mentions include, swimming through the cold water in early morning hours and the risk of falling off the slippery rocks while hooking fish. Falling off can result into serious injury to the head and drowning. He is often injured by fish. “One time I was hooking... the fish I had hooked got off the hook but was held by the strands of rayon to which it was tied. Because the strand was elastic, the fish bounced back and pierced me in the face very close to my eye.” He received treatment for the wound for nearly three weeks without going back in the water. He says that a friend of his was pierced by fish fins in the middle of the eye and he has never gone back to the landing site. Other problems include being trapped by nets while swimming in the lake: “One time, I got trapped in a net. I had to struggle so much to get out of it. I even thought I was going to die as one time it caught a friend of mine and he was found dead the next day.” He says it is really so hard to get out of it, especially if it is the arms that are trapped in the net. “One has to be a good swimmer to get out of the net. At times, when the fishermen realize a net has caught a person, they come to his rescue.”

He mentioned other risks such as fighting for rocks to stand on during hooking, a rope to which fish is tied can tie both of your legs while swimming and it requires a struggle to overcome it, hitting rocks while swimming, getting beaten by poisonous insects and harassment from older people.

4.11 Girls working in restaurants and bars

Working in a restaurant is one of the major activities that girls undertake on landing sites, alongside others like hair dressing in salons, operating pay phones, working in bars, washing and ironing clothes, working in food markets and selling clothes. In one of the FGDs with working girls organised at Gerenge landing site, girls working in restaurants happened to be the majority among the seven girls who participated. While we discussed several issues concerning what goes on at the landing site, I have chosen to focus on a few things they discussed concerning the restaurant work.

The girls explained that they start working around 6am to prepare food and tea mainly for returning fishermen and fish vendors. The food includes different types—*Katogo* (bananas prepared with a mixture of meat, dry fish, groundnut (peanut) paste, beans, etc); fried Irish potatoes (chips) with chicken or meat among other recipes. A plate of chips and fish can cost



These girls work with their mother in a restaurant—by author

cleaning the dining, and removing waste.

Ug. Shs 1500 (US\$ 0.94).

The girls work until evening—about 6pm.

The work in a restaurant entails activities which include the following: *peeling food, wrapping it and cooking, slicing meat and fish, serving food and drinks to customers, fetching water, and washing utensils,*

While the restaurant work keeps the girls busy, none of them seemed to be happy about it as they narrated their experiences:

You have to smile while welcoming visitors and serving them.

There is also sending you monotonously (*okkutumaatuma*) to buy things, bring juice, and soda.

Some customers abuse you

Singling out particular activities such as fetching water, they revealed that it is a job they do with difficulty and they are sometimes forced to spend their own money:

Fetching water is a difficult job for us. Your boss will not spend [Ug. Shs] 100 shillings on water. She will first send you to fetch water on the landing site. What you do is to get your own money and pay a boy to bring the water for you. While she may give you beans and *posho* (mingled maize flour served as food) if you eat beans and

posho, is that real food? If you delay at the landing site, she will quarrel that you have been chatting with men. [Imagine] You can fetch more than six jerry cans a day.

Although each girl is supposed to receive Ug. Shs 1000 per day, there are situations when they receive half pay on accusations from their employers that they have stolen money. Girls complained that their employers at times extend the accusations to the neighbourhoods where they stay, thereby tarnishing their image.

Your boss can accuse you of stealing money. She will go to different neighbours and talk about you. Sometimes customers eat and do not pay immediately. Some time back, the boss of Aisha said she had 'gone out with a boy', yet she had expelled her [terminated her employment]. You face problems and sometimes you feel like staying at home. *Maama!!* They treat us badly.

The purpose of employing the girls is partly to attract men (with sexual desires) to the restaurants. This means that girls do not only have to smile to the men, but also to be receptive to their sexual advances, or at least not to complain when they experience indecent touches from such men:

If you do not smile with customers, it becomes another problem. Some men touch the sensitive parts of your body and if you complain, [those] customers complain to the boss that you are bad behaved and she will terminate your work. They want girls who they will touch without raising any complaint. Sometimes they want to take you as a wife. They praise girls who do not complain about their behaviour.

Owing to the relentless pressure they experience from men who ask for sex and the promise of money, some girls eventually give in to the demands of such men.

If you work in a hotel, they keep trapping you by doing this and that. In the end they want to have you as a lover. [Once you give in] they can take you as a wife [but you are not sure if they won't] starve you. If you do not cooperate, [they mobilise] some boys to gang up against you. One of our friends was abducted at night (9.00pm) and accused her of something she never did. The girl made an alarm and was rescued. Sometimes they are acting under the influence *njaga* (cannabis). Or it is part of their culture because many of them are migrants. They abuse you, 'look at this girl, she does not have manners'. Working in a restaurant is not something easy.

Comparing themselves with girls working in bars, they pointed out that working in bars was even worse:

You are accused of breaking glasses and stealing plates. Plates get lost too much. If one takes alcohol on credit, the boss sends you to go and demand for money. People

can injure you with bottles due to a lot of fighting. They fight for women and throw bottles. They are always in the mood of asking for sex. To work in the bar, you have to be ready for men to touch you all the time. You do not have to complain. If you do, the boss will sack you, because she knows customers will leave.

As it turns out, work in restaurants and bars on fish landing sites is practically a trap for girls to be turned into objects for sexual attraction to male customers. However, the reality is that girls eventually are turned into sex workers in many cases with the inducement by their employers. Despite the challenges, the girls working in the restaurants aspire to start their own hair salons (4 of them), to have retail shops (1), and continue with education (2).

4.12 Looking into the work of a girl in a domestic setting

The daily tracking of activities was done for six days in a household selected from Gerenge fish landing site. The household had both school going and out of school working children. The purpose of the tracking was to document activities that occupy adults and children in the household and the implications this has for the interpretation of child labour. In this section, only the work of one female child is presented showing the average time the girl spends on selected activities during her working time. Work at home is always discounted as not part of work yet it occupies children and adults heavily. In many cases, it also serves as a source of income and shapes the way children are raised.

Joa (name not real due to confidentiality) is aged 14 years and stays with her single mother aged 35 years. The mother is the household head and operates a restaurant at her home. The household has five members including the eldest girl aged 17 and two boys aged 15 and 14 years. The youngest boy of 10 is still attending school while Joa and her elder sister are doing a tailoring course. The older boy of 15 dropped out of school and is currently employed by a businessman as a video operator.

4.13 A typical day for Joa combining domestic work and learning

The activities that Joa performs on a daily basis are summarised below with the average time spent. They comprise work at home (unpaid), vocational training, and entertainment.

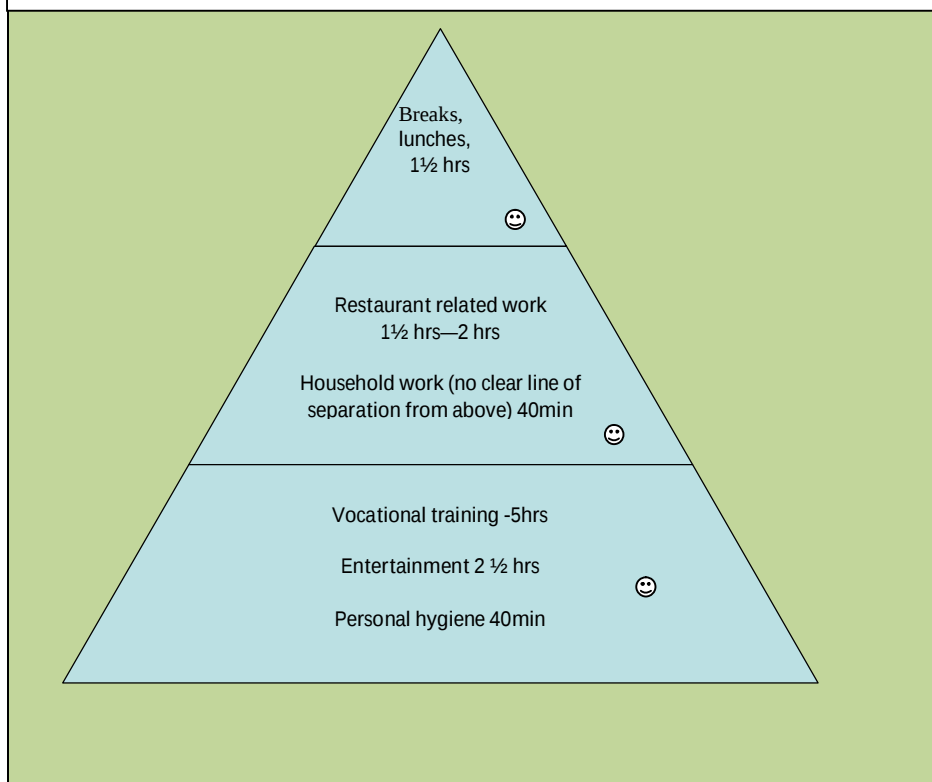
Table 4.13a: Activities representing a typical day for Joa (14)

Activities undertaken	Av. time spent (9 hrs-minus 1hr for rest)	Time ranking R1= largest amount of time spent	% time spent
Cleaning face and body	15	R8	2.7
Fetching water	15min	R8	2.7
Removing household utensils from house	5min	R9	
Washing utensils, drying and taking them back to house	31	R5	5.7
Cleaning house (sweeping, mopping) and surroundings	20	R7	3.7
Preparation for school (dressing, making hair, ironing etc)	30	R6	5.5
Learning tailoring	5hrs	R1	55.5
Eating lunch, refreshments, study breaks	1 ½ hr	R3	
Watching film (with breaks between films)	2 ½ hrs	R2	27.7
Assisting mom in restaurant (serving clients etc)	45min	R4	8.3
Going out with girls (sometimes to unknown places)	10	R9	1.8
Others, washing clothes, shopping, disposal of waste etc	20	R7	3.7

*R= rating

As can be seen from the matrix above, Joa spends most of her time (55%) learning at the vocational training school. Entertainment (film watching) takes up the largest part of her time after vocational training (28%). The rest of her time is spent in restaurant work with her mother, serving clients, washing utensils, cleaning and fetching water, among other activities. These take between 1½ hours to 2 hours (17% to 22%). The restaurant and household work combined, take about 2hrs and 40 minutes which is equivalent to 30 percent of her time. About 41 percent of her time is spent on playing, including watching films and rest.

Fig. 4.13: Joa's work and time allocation between School & household



Going by the international standards, Joa would be classified as a child labourer because she spends more than 2 hours working on a daily basis. She also spends more than two hours on



The girls are learning tailoring —by author

entertainment. She undertakes work at home without pay but the work generates money. It can be defined as domestic work, household work, and business work depending on who defines it.

The activities of Joa tracked for one of the days within the observation week are indicated in table 4.13b.

Table 4.13b: Joa's activities as tracked on Friday 28 September 2007 at Gerenge

Time	Activities undertaken
7:10-7:20am	Wakes up and greets mum and washes her face
7:20-7:25	Fetches water from the lake with two small jerry cans
7:25 -35	She removes things i.e. utensils like saucepans, plates, cups etc from the sitting room and puts them outside on the veranda (<i>olubalaza</i>) for washing
7:45 -8:06	Cleans the utensils (saucepans, plates, cups etc) outside on the veranda
8:06 -8:10	She takes used water to the lake
8:10 -8:15	Cleans the place where utensils have been washed
8:15 -8:20	Fetches water from the lake with two small jerry cans.
8:21 8:33	Goes for bathing with a five litre jerry can.
8: 34 -9:01	Changes the clothes and applies jelly and combs her hair
9:10 -9:15	Leaves for vacation training (tailoring 20 metres from the house, the training takes place near the Chairman's office
9: 15 -9:46	She goes back home and puts the utensils inside the house. Removes fish after sun drying, locks the place, she cleans outside for five minutes.
9: 46 -9:48	Goes back for training
9:49 – 9:54	She cleans the training venue
9:54 – 11:24	Waits for the trainer, who comes with three other trainees (one of them is her sister Nabasite)
11 :24 – 31	She takes breakfast together with other students
11: 40-11:43	Trainer arrives and directs students to put the tailoring machines outside
11: 45-12:08	They start to learn tailoring (<i>okutunga</i>) but Joa's machine was taken away so she uses her course mate's machine. But most of the time she is observing what the trainer is doing
12: 09 –12:25	Joa's friend joins the class and starts to chat with her (girl friend)
12: 25	Joa's friend leaves the place
12: 25 -40	Joa cuts hard paper used for learning by all students
12:40 -1:30	Joa goes outside for refreshment while Nabasite is watching films screened by her brother Kiziva in a video hall on the island
1: 30 4:06	Joa starts tailoring using another student's machine
4: 06 -4:10	She goes back home with Nabste and both greet their mom
4: 10 -5:05	She enters film together with Nabasite
5:05 -5:07	Comes back from film
5: 07 -5:11	Mum tells Joa to go and fetch water from the lake before taking lunch
5: 15-5:21	Takes lunch comprising of mingled bananas (<i>matooke</i>) with groundnut paste and avocados.
5: 21 – 5: 22	Finishes lunch and washes her plate
5: 23-7:00	Watching film screened by her brother in the video hall
7:01-7:04	Comes back from film, goes home
7: 05 – 7:15	Goes to an unknown place
7: 15 – 9:00	Comes back and assists mum with restaurant activities. She serves porridge, cassava chips, coffee and African tea, and fish to people. Hotel serves mostly single men
9.00+	Retires home to sleep

As can be seen from the tracking, Joa is busy the whole day but never mentioned that she gets stressed by the work. She spends her time at the training venue, in the film hall, and at home doing work activities.

4.14 Surviving in a harsh environment: Evolving life styles of young people

Survival for children on all the landing sites where data was accessed was to a considerable extent a matter of “life” and “death”. This experience was revealed through informal interactions, formal discussions, as well as observations. Girls and boys without parents were the major victims. In other cases, children with parents also struggled to have their basic needs provided, if their parents or guardians were unable to provide due to old age, sickness, or limited income sources. For the girls, working with parents in a home business such as selling in the market, helping in a restaurant, bar or saloon and vending smoked fish, was a common survival strategy. When this work was undertaken as part of family business, girls would only receive a tip rather than pay. The tip barely helps girls to meet their pressing needs let alone their desires to look attractive with good clothing, shoes, and fancy hair styles.

To bridge the financial gap, girls often get boyfriends who give them money in exchange for sex. Some do this before they turn 13 years. Others who are older often have boyfriends with whom they have sex, and some engage in sex work. In general, life on the landing sites for girls and boys and adults involves complex relationships that are usually cemented with exchanges involving sex and money between the males and females. This exchange is generally normalised and to some extent popularised through sex talk which some participants referred to as “vulgar language.” Using money to lure young girls into sex, and having sex in both open and closed places (sometimes in the presence of very young children—8 years and below), was a regular occurrence. Contracting HIV was not an issue that generated fear among girls especially those involved in sex work. These chose to charge different rates for using or not using a condom. Both boys and girls believed that it was a question of bad luck to contract HIV. Hence, taking conscious steps to avoid infection was not always considered.

4.14.1 Using drugs as a survival strategy

With girls surviving mainly through participation in family business and getting money through sexual exchanges, boys resort to hard or heavy work and sometimes combine it with use of drugs. Having discussed at length the work that they do, in this section I attempt to shed more light on the use of drugs. I draw from FGD and informal discussions with the working boys (aged 12-14) at Kasenyi who gave deep insights on the use of drugs by young

people as a coping strategy. I also observed the young people in several groups who were using banned substances such as Marijuana, opium and sniffing of petroleum.

According to children, the use of drugs is a common practice on the landing site. The drugs are mainly used by adult men, although children are not excluded. Explaining as to why children use drugs, they said:

Children use drugs because they need extra energy to do the work on the lake. These children do heavy work like actual fishing, rowing the boats, carrying fish and people to the shoreline. Therefore the drugs boost their energy and also reduce sleep which enables them to carry out their work. The drugs also help them to overcome the fear of anything that comes their way on the lake. They develop determination and resilience and therefore can face anything the way it comes.

Using drugs not only enables children overcome fear on the lake and do a lot of heavy work, but it also generates fear among community members where those children live. To the children, this fear is a source of pride as it creates social space for them to do many things as they wish, including acts of aggression. They become known as the “fearless” and “powerful” or “dangerous” boys. While elaborating on the use of drugs, they explained:

Children take drugs *okukola eriiso* (to make their eyes red). With red eyes, they are feared in the community because once they look like that, they can do anything that they want without instructions or orders from anyone.

This helps them to become “untouchables” before the Local Council (LC) officials who tend to accuse them of non-school attendance and use of drugs. In a way, drugs are used as a strategy to shift the balance of power from adults and those who wield political power in the area.

Children continued to identify other reasons for taking drugs citing the desire to obtain happiness:

Happiness pushes them to take the drugs and alcohol. They want to become completely happy while carrying out their work.

The boys in the FGD explained that some children start using drugs at age seven. Some learn by observing their parents while others learn from peer groups or by simply observing those

using drugs on the landing site. At the site (Gerenge), drugs were being sold mainly at night through dealers having connections with suppliers from Kampala, Masaka, Jinja among other areas. At a paltry Ug. Shs 100, children would get some small portions.

4.14.2 Other habits or practices

Working children use their money to enjoy entertainment. Up to forty percent of their time is spent on play or entertainment which involves watching films in video halls and football (see case study above). Sometimes the movies screened involve pornographic material but children are secretly allowed inside as long as they pay. The local authorities in Gerenge and Kasenyi have tried to limit the watching of pornographic movies by children (below 18 years) but with little success. Boys and girls in addition attend Karaoke performances. Boys, particularly those involved in fishing spend a great deal of time playing cards, pool and other games. In general, young children and young people experience happiness on the landing sites. While some boys and girls look forward to becoming successful business persons in the future, or continuing with education, many of them realise that it is very difficult to effectively combine school and work. Also, being preoccupied with short term plans makes it difficult for them to realise long term aspirations.

4.15 Discussion

4.15.1 Childhoods shaped by poverty and children agency

The lives of working children in fishing communities depict childhoods shaped by poverty and children's agency. A multitude of vulnerabilities including orphanhood, lack of school fees, adequate care, support, and guidance explain their involvement in work. Hence, they are forced between a "rock and hard" place having to survive on their own at an early age. Working and managing to meet their basic needs through fishing and related activities reveals certain qualities among children such as determination, innovation, resilience, and use of social capital from peers. By having to work at an early age, it shows the likely consequences any society with inadequate social security systems is likely to experience.

4.15.2 Interpretation of work using a constituent approach

While work in fishing is interpreted by the international law and the local policy instruments as intolerable, working children see only certain parts of this work as intolerable rather than the whole of it. The children's analogy calls for analysis of certain activities with respect to their constituent parts and to identify the acceptable and unacceptable elements of work. This provides an opportunity to avoid the tendency towards problematising all aspects of children's work as pointed out by (Ennew, Myers & Plateau 2005; Nieuwenhuys 1996).

The lack of careful analysis of children's work in fishing has also meant that children including those aged 14 and above have not received guidance in taking precautions for their safety even when they earn income that can help them procure safety gadgets including life savers. Children's awareness of certain kinds of work that they consider inappropriate as per this study provides a justification for their involvement in both research and developing interventions that can help reduce inappropriate or intolerable kinds of work. It confirms that they have abilities that can provide significant input to policy and research (Alderson 1995; Save the Children 2004).

The stories of children who suffer abuse in restaurants, bars and those who experience hazards while fishing continue to confirm the findings by several ILO sponsored rapid assessment studies regarding children's work (Kufogbe, Awadey & Appenteng 2005; Nitiruangjaras, Predkitti & Tantisearanee 1998; Walakira & Byamugisha 2008) and continue to justify the need to intervene to protect such children. Stopping children from working is not necessarily a panacea. It may even exacerbate their already precarious situation which may subject them to even more intolerable forms of work. It is necessary to discuss with children and take their views into consideration on how best to improve their situation. Mobilising, sensitising and having dialogue with employers could also be of help. Children also need to be aware of the need to protect themselves from harm for kinds of work that are tolerable.

4.15.3 Finding happiness and meaning in life in spite of challenges

With work providing means of survival and acting as a source of empowerment to access a wide range of services on the islands, children finally find happiness and meaning in their lives through entertainment and play. Both boys and girls watch films, football, play games,

and make friendships. However, the tendency for young people to normalise certain risks associated with sexuality (Walakira, Bukuluki & James Sengendo 2006; Sengendo, Walakira & Bukuluki 2006) and drug use need to be addressed. Working children face a serious risk that undermines their safety and development when they work without guidance on issues of sexual health, valuing life, physical and spiritual health, and the dangers resulting from drug use.

4.15.4 Shaping childhoods and being shaped

In general, this study demonstrates how working childhoods have been shaped by poverty on one hand and children's agency on the other. Through their agency, children take decisions to negotiate for their social and economic space and make ends meet. Some of the survival strategies they take do not only demonstrate innovation, resilience, and capacity to utilise their talents, but also reveal the dark side of struggling to survive through activities that impact their morality and health. In the long term, they consider their survival and development to be based on luck rather than deliberate actions including careful planning and taking proper care of their lives.

The children, because of their circumstances, are in a contradictory situation where international laws judge them to be in child labour even when they are in self employment and doing work that they feel—despite its dangers—is a blessing much as it is not devoid of harm. However, those who judge them are unable to ameliorate their undesirable situation. Even the laws in place have been unable to improve their conditions in the absence of alternative support systems.

4.16 Conclusion

This chapter has examined aspects of children's work and their lifestyles. It has revealed that children choose to work largely because of the precarious social and economic situations. Work is seen as an opportunity to ensure their survival. Working children interpret tolerable and intolerable work depending on the age and abilities of children, but not much to do with circumstances or dangers involved. Those who are not working or not doing a particular activity are more likely to define the activity in question as intolerable. The discussion has brought to light the need to examine several aspects of a particular activity without

necessarily attributing the whole of it as intolerable. But certain activities such as sex work are defined by all the children interviewed as intolerable. There is scope for addressing the abuses and difficulties children experience while doing work. However, more laws and rhetoric that shows concern will not make much difference. Addressing the conditions that drive children into work should be a major point of entry.

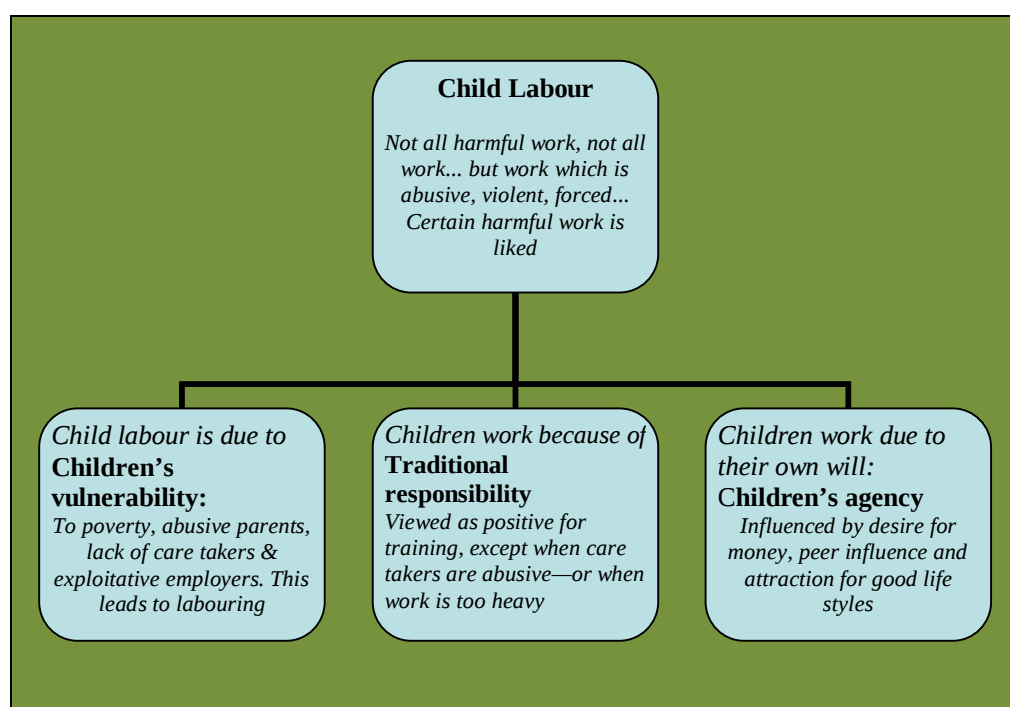
Chapter five

5. Children's interpretation of child labour: Vulnerability, traditional responsibility and children agency discourse

The children's discourse which is three dimensional, frames child labour in the context of vulnerability, traditional responsibility, and children's agency. Child labour to them is not all harmful work, not every kind of work that children do, but only work which is abusive, cruel, violent, and forced on them. Work as part of traditional responsibility is positively viewed except when it becomes abusive. School going children may define as child labour certain activities that non-school going children consider normal. Children's agency symbolises struggle for freedom from abuse and poverty. It also signals an intergenerational conflict between children and adults. Children's analogy can contribute to identification of indicators of abuse that constitute child labour.

The main goal of this study was to interrogate the concept of child labour among those who are directly affected by the official meaning as reflected in international instruments and national laws.

Fig. 5: Children’s construction of child labour



In this chapter, children give their interpretation of what child labour is and what it isn't, culminating into a children's discourse on child labour. The presentation of findings is preceded by a review of literature justifying children's participation through expression of their views.

5.1 Introduction

The case for generating children's interpretation of what constitutes or comprises child labour is a case for their participation as articulated by the UNCRC and the Optional Protocols to the UNCRC like General Comment No. 7 on Early Childhood, among other instruments.

While many studies on child labour have accessed data from children, their main purpose has been or is always to generate evidence on the nature of children's work, reasons for working, and hazards children experience. With the data generated, (we) the "experts" have always analysed it to fit our own pre-determined interpretation of child labour, usually based on guidelines provided by international agencies or the relevant international conventions. From these studies, no attention or very limited attention has been paid to generating an

interpretation of what child labour means or what it comprises, from the perspective of children. Although some studies have generated views on the work of children (See Boyden, Ling & Myers 1998; Save the Children 2001) there is still an apparent lack of a coherent discourse on child labour depicting the perspectives of children and how their views compare with the international perspective.

The purpose of this chapter is to make a contribution towards generating a child labour discourse emanating from the views of children selected from the fishing communities. The emerging discourse from children views child labour as a function of children's vulnerability conditioned by poverty on one hand, and abusive parents on the other. Children have limited control over vulnerability and poverty. Children also interpreted work as a traditional form of responsibility which they like with the exception of that which is abusive. In addition, they interpret their involvement in work as a product of their own choice or free will (agency). This discourse also elucidates the taxonomy of children's environments where they find their rights abused or respected.

5.2 The case for children's participation in interpreting child labour

Pushing a case for children's participation is not without opposition (see Kirby & Woodhead 2003; Ansell 2005; Lansdown 2004), as some (traditionalists) see it as idealistic and harmful rhetoric. Not only is participation (and its initiatives) considered to undermine adults' responsibility, it is perceived to burden children too early thereby robbing them of their childhood. Some see participation and some children's rights as based on a Western construction of childhoods (Boyden 1990; Lancy 2007; Bluebond-Langner & Korbin 2007). This implies that the construction of childhoods, children's rights is culturally variable (Toren 2002). Children's participation if not carefully pursued can result into explicit or implicit questioning of parents' authority. This can lead to contempt of parents and disobedience and family instability.

In the wider participatory development paradigm, it has been noted by Claver (2001:39) that some approaches to participation (projects based) do not necessarily bring the desired technical and social change due to their failure to address issues of power, control of information and resources. Hence, the involvement or participation of children is not a

guarantee to bringing the desired change as existing power structures, professional positions, and knowledge systems are not necessarily transformed.

Despite the opposition to children's participation and some limitations of the participatory



An FGD with children—by author

development approaches, the view of liberationists and other advocates of children's participation is compelling and has gained currency. Participation is viewed not only as a fulfilment of children's rights as provided for in the UNCRC (articles,

12, 13, 14, 17 and 31), but is also viewed as a way to respect and nurture their growing abilities. This means that adults should not problematise and pathologise young people as lacking critical thinking, rationality, objectivity, consistency, and communication abilities; but rather recognise these growing abilities (Lansdown 2004:4; Kirby & Woodhead 2003).

It has been noted that young people and more particularly children remain marginalised in areas of decision making on the basis of age (Ansell 2005 & Edward 1996) with the effect that their views tend to be neglected in policy making. Yet they remain the majority particularly in the developing countries. In relation to research, involving children offers them an opportunity to have their voices heard and their concerns taken seriously. As noted by different authors (Save the Children 2004; Alderson 1995; Worrall 2000; Kirby 1999), involving children and young people in participatory research methodologies helps empower them by increasing their knowledge and skills, makes research view children as active agents in their own lives and not passive victims or research subjects. It also increases the possibility of presenting a picture freer of adult interpretations—which in this case offers a chance to generate their own construction of what child labour means or should comprise. Children's involvement also helps to extend the goals of democracy where all citizens, including the youngest, take part in shaping their lives, their community and wider society (Cutler 2001).

It is against this theoretical frame of reference that the participation of children in generating an interpretation of child labour is conceived and presented. The children from whom data

was accessed were aged 5-14 years from the study sites (see methodology chapter). Besides FGDs and informal discussions, essay writing for school children formed a significant source of data for this section.

5.3 Children's definition of child labour

Children attending school near a fish landing site define child labour as work that is *heavy* for children, involves *mistreatment* or *harassment*, “children are forced to work rather than attend school” and “work that is risky to lives of children.” Using both English and Luganda—a locally spoken language, pupils in classes six and seven at Kigero Primary School defined child labour as follows:

Emirimu ejikozesebwa omwana atanneetuuka (A child made to undertake work beyond his [her] age) ...like lifting heavy loads, fishing among others. Child labour means *embonya bonya yabana* (a way of mistreating children). Child labour involves sending a child to do many activities without rest like fetching water, washing clothes... *Okutuntuza omwana* (harassing that child). *Omwana akola emirimu egimuleetera obuzibu* (a child does work which endangers his/her life). For example, a child can be fishing and then gets bruised/ hurt by a stone. Also a child may be working in a sand mine *ekirombe ne kimubuutikira oba ne kibomoka ne kimubikka* (he is eventually buried inside). A child doing work that bars him/her from attending school.

These children aged 12-13 were asked to write essays that draw a distinction between what is defined as “bad work” (child labour) and “good work” within a home situation. The extracts from the essays are presented in the tables below starting with their understanding of bad work.

Table 5.3a: Children’s understanding of “bad work” (child labour)

Name of pupil		Extracts from essays written by Primary 6 and Primary 7 pupils from Kigero Primary School
Allen (12-Female)		A parent may send you to go and lift people from boats to get some money for buying household items. You may find a parent overworking you at home yet there are other children. This can force you to run away from home.
Francis (14-Male)		Children should not work a lot. Children should not be abused at home. Children should have good care but some parents don’t want to care for their children and children can become houseboys or house girls. Some parents abuse our right to education. You may find some children are labourers when they are below 18 years. Some parents punish children in many ways e.g. some children are burnt, some are sent away from home.
Violet (14-Female)		Some of our parents tell us to do difficult work like digging without eating the whole day. Some parents like step mothers do not like us to go to school. They want us to work like child labourer. Some of our parents can refuse to give us schools fees, this makes us to go and work to get money for school fees.
Hakim (13-Male)		We should not dig too much. We should not be responsible for buying things at home. We should not burn charcoal. We should not collect firewood for sale. Bad work outside home: we should not go fishing, we should not lift heavy things, we should not lift people from boats to the ground and we should not smoke fish.
Ritah (12-Female)		Some parents tell children to go fishing. They cannot allow children to stay at home. Some parents do not send children to school. They make children carry a load of clothes.
Tonny (14-Male)		They make us carry heavy loads. They tell us to go and work. They tell us to go digging in the morning. We should stop walking at night. They tell girls to get men.
Harriet (12-Female)		Bad work at home: not to fetch water ten Jerry cans in one hour, don’t abuse your parents, don’t walk alone when you go to the well, if your mother tells you to go when it is night you tell her that I will fetch it in the morning.

The views of children suggest that bad work assigned by parents is not restricted to the nature of activities that they do, but also the purpose of work. Sending children to make money and give it to parents—who sometimes use it to meet their own needs such as alcohol consumption is complained about. For children, bad work goes hand in hand with the nature of treatment that children receive from their parents. When the treatment is good, children receive appropriate work and the work is equitably distributed among children in the home.

Table 5.3b: Categorisation of “good work” at home

Name of pupil	Extracts from essays written by P.6 and P.7 children in Kigero Primary School
Allen (12-Female)	A parent may give you work such as cleaning the compound and thereafter to read books. Parents encourage their children to study hard so as to have a good future. We have to obey our parents so they can also care to look for schools fees by for example going to dig.
Francis (14-Male)	At home, we learn about good ideas, get good care and get good advice i.e. we don't develop anti-social behaviour.
Samuel (15-Male)	You should be obedient to parents for example by fetching water and digging. To be well disciplined. A child should not be overworked e.g. being beaten so much. Paying attention to what is taught and to be obedient to what parents and teachers say.
Violet (14-Female)	Good thing when you go and work: When you work, you can get money and buy a telephone which is better than those who are at school. Children must listen to their parents so as to get a good future. We should help our parents in doing home work e.g. fetching water, washing clothes etc. Bad habit: When you are still young and go to work, you can get bad habits like joining bad groups e.g. stealing, smoking, drinking alcohol and other habits. When you are a girl and still young and go to work, you can get pregnant and diseases like STDs and HIV/ AIDS that can cause you to die.
Hakim (13-Male)	We have to help our parents in some work like: digging, cooking, fetching water, collecting firewood and others. Good works outside home: we should respect each other and yourself.
Ritah (12-Female)	(did not write on good work)
Tonny (14-Male)	Helping parents on household chores e.g. washing plates, mopping the house, fetching water. Going with parents to gardens.
Harriet (12-Female)	Good work at home: washing dishes, fetching water and respecting parents. Good things outside home: respect other people; don't be with bad peer group, not to abuse everybody you find on the way. You do not need to wear bad clothes. Peer groups are also bad as they can make a child to learn chewing <i>mairungi</i> (cannabis).

From the children's perspective, good work at home involves doing household work in an environment of love and support from parents. For example, parents allocate responsibilities to children but also allow them to read books. Children also see obedience to parents and supporting them in household work as part of their responsibility. In addition, they consider it appropriate to avoid bad groups and bad behaviours as well as being careful about money despite its usefulness.

5.4 Activities children consider inappropriate on fish landing sites

In Bulega Primary school, another school located near the fish landing site, children also had similar views about good work and harmful work at home. Both children at Bulega primary School and Kachanga Island were asked to identify work activities they considered to be

harmful for children of their age (5-14 years) on the fish landing sites. They pointed out the following:

Table 5.4a: Inappropriate activity

Inappropriate activity	Views from Bulega Primary School pupils and Children at Kachanga Landing site
Fishing	<i>Fishing is harmful because children can drown. There is a danger of strong winds on the lakes, which may cause drowning. There is a danger of a hippopotamus overturning the canoe as children are fishing, which may cause drowning and consequent death. [While] fishing, children may meet adults on the lake who want to steal their nets. These people after stealing the nets can drown you in the lake. Fishing (actual fishing)-while hooking children can easily slide off the big stones in the middle of the lake and drown.</i>
Loading and offloading fish and people from boats	<i>Children are likely to get money which may prevent them from going to school (Children Bulega Primary School).</i>
Disco dancing	<i>It is also harmful because children are likely to get excited and engage in unhealthy sexual relationships with the DJs.</i>
Stone quarrying	<i>‘Kiyinza okuletera ekifuba okwekaaka’ (it can cause chest pain).</i>
Prostitution	<i>At the landing site some children exchange sex for money with adult men.</i>
Working in bars	<i>[This] is also bad.</i>
Sand mining	<i>There is a risk for children to be trapped in the sand mine, which may lead to death.</i>

Activities considered inappropriate were those understood to be dangerous to the level of causing death, those that cause serious injury such as chest pain, those that lead to sexual abuse and those that attract children out of school. These views however were expressed mainly by children attending school. Activities such as selling fish, drying nets, fetching water, learning boat making and scaling fish among others were defined as appropriate in as much as they were not performed in an abusive environment.

For working children, activities such as fishing deemed to be very dangerous were considered appropriate despite the risk of causing death. Exception to participation was given to children aged below 14. They explained that activities where children were self employed were appropriate despite the dangers involved. Activities where adults employ them and exploit them were considered to be less appropriate depending on the circumstances of the child.

Indeed, children’s understanding of good and bad work is tied to several experiences within their living environments such as nature of activities assigned, intentions or motives behind allocation of work, how children are treated, how they obey or disobey their parents and whether or not parents give appropriate advice, allow time for reading books; and are

committed to meeting the needs of children. If these factors within their environment are not friendly, they constitute a bad care environment and children define the work involved as bad work.

This leads to consideration of the taxonomy of environments where children spend time and where they can experience violence, abuse or protection (Fig. 5.4b).

Table 5.4b: Taxonomy of children’s environments in fishing communities

Home environment		Environment outside home	
Cat egor ies	Work ☉ washing utensils, digging, scaling and washing fish, smoking fish, fetching water, cooking and selling in a home shop	Cate gorie s	Employers ☉ boat owners, restaurant operators, bar owners, fish vendors, market vendors, transporters –fish, goods etc
	Play ☉ hide and seek games football, jumping		Peer groups ☉ boys, girls, school goers, football viewers, drug users, sex workers etc
	Parental authority ☉ giving instructions, allocation of work, disciplining		Entertainment ☉ films, football, karaoke dances, live shows, ludo etc
	Children ☉ biological children, step children, boys, girls, housemaids etc		Neighbours/surroundings ☉ lake, swamp, congested houses, bars, food market, restaurant, toilet, film hall
	Punishment ☉ canning/chastisement, denial of food, refusal to pay school fees, locking into a room, verbal abuse		School ☉ teachers, pupils, lessons/classes, games, time periods, punishments, etc
	Entertainment ☉ radio, television, storytelling, singing, playing/acting		Work opportunities ☉ fishing—hooking, use of canoe, fetching water, carrying people, luggage, selling fish, working in restaurant, entertainment etc
	Rewards for good behaviour ☉ gifts, praise		Child employees ☉ Casual employees, Regular employees, paid domestic workers, self employed (manage own business), unpaid domestic workers
	Responsibilities for children ☉ obedience, household work, supporting family		
	Duties of parents ☉ give good guidance, payment of school fees, meeting needs of children and family members, security/protection		

This implies that the understanding of work is rooted within a web of experiences, practices, and activities within their environment. More importantly, the treatment by adults in those environments—whether at school, home or work—matters a lot.

5.5 The three dimension discourse on child labour from children’s interpretation

The discourse emerging from children’s views has three sets of ideas with an internal logic namely: i) Children’s vulnerability (to poverty, bad care givers etc); ii) Work as a form of

traditional responsibility; and iii) Children's agency as a reason for working. These are elaborated in the sections which follow.

5.6 Vulnerability as a reason for working

5.6.1 Vulnerability to poverty drives us to work

At the risk of using words like “majority” for a study that does not put premium on numbers and in which no quantitative data was collected; children aged 14 and below craved for education in nearly all the FGDs and case studies organised but had limited opportunities to access it. In this case one could say the “majority”. The interest in education persisted even though the quality was suspect due to factors including absence of teachers and lack of a decent learning environment (see chapter 9). Children both in and out of school explained that their inability to afford the cost of education left them with no option other than to work. Some start working to support their education. However, combining both work and education increasingly becomes difficult hence they drop out of school. Their care takers are either impoverished due to age or sickness and for some children their parents died leaving them as single or double orphans. Here is how they explained their vulnerability to poverty which eventually forces them to work:

Some children work to get money to attend school. This category includes children whose parents have died and are left under the guardianship of their paternal uncles. These uncles are less caring and sometimes have limited means. This forces some children to look for work and fend for themselves. Personally I work to support my father who is sick and also get money for school fees. Some children may work because their families lack adequate incomes to meet their schooling costs and other basic necessities. This way, children work to supplement the money given to them by their parents. Some children work to meet their basic necessities like clothes, especially in instances where parents cannot afford or deliberately refuse to provide. I think some children work because their parents lack money (FGD with children at Bulega Primary school).

Some are involved in fishing because they have lost one or both of their parents and therefore they have no one to pay for their fees or meet their most urgent needs. This forces them to get involved in fishing related work. Some children come from poor households, which cannot afford to pay their fees (FGD with children, Kachanga—both in and out of school).

Children involved in paid work further explained that they were working because they were responsible for the welfare of their siblings. Others are encouraged by parents who advise them to learn to fend for themselves. They explained:

Some of us are working to supplement household income ... because of the [bad] situation at home you have to work in order to survive. When we come to the landing site and do some fishing like using hooks, we come home with fish to eat. For me when I sell my fish, I save my money in a small box. I only open it once in a while to do some shopping. For me I use my savings to buy food and school requirements. There are some children who work to pay their own school fees. We work because we have to take care of ourselves and our younger siblings... once in a while we also go for *karaoke* (music shows) and watching movies. Some parents tell their children to undertake fish vending so that they can also learn how to survive on their own. Edward aged 12 says: For me I stay with my grandmother who is too old to work. So I have to work and when I get money, I take it to her to keep it for me. In case there is no money at home, my grandmother may use part of the money she has kept for me. Some children are working because they are orphans and they have no one to help them, so they have to work in order to be able to take care of themselves. (FGD with working children aged 12-14 years at Gerenge fish landing site).

Poverty and the poor economic status of families force children to work other than going to school. So the parents encourage the children to work to look for something to eat and also help with the survival of the family. That is why some children, given a chance and resources, they can go back to school. Also due to HIV/AIDS, most children stay with their grandparents. The grandparents encourage the grown up children of say above 10 years, to go and work for the survival of the home. This is because the parents [old parents] are unable to engage in productive activities (FGD with working children—boys 12-14 years at Kasenyi fish landing site).

Owing to income poverty therefore, work is seen as a source of provisioning opportunity for children. It is a safety net that ensures both the survival of children and parents under economic and social distress. While working children express bad feelings regarding the failure to attend school because of having to sustain themselves, they do not show regrets for taking part in the work they are doing. The common activities that preoccupy children are presented in Chapter four.

5.6.2 Vulnerability to bad care givers

While children had pointed out poverty as the major factor in their involvement in paid work, they also singled out the role played by bad parents which forces them into abusive work at

home, or away from home. Care takers with bad intentions or who do not appreciate the value of education may send children to work instead of going to school as children explained:

Children are forced to work instead of going to school by their own parents. Parents particularly women who stay at home encourage children to go and work. This is more so where results are good on first attempt. The men are usually very busy and do not have time for their children... (FGD with children aged 12-14 at Kasenyi landing site).

Some children work because they live with their step mothers who sometimes instruct them to work instead of attending school (FGD with children at Bulega primary school).

Some parents however, seem to have difficulties, cultivating interest in education among children. Or the importance they attach to work supersedes the value placed on education.

Children are on the lake instead of going to school because they were not brought up well by the parents or care takers in the early stages. The ignorance of the parents about the importance of education has forced children to look for quick ways of getting money in order to survive (FGD with children at Bulega Primary School).

The views of children here suggest that when children lack proper guidance and appropriate support for their education and other basics, they resort to work.

For reasons that may not be well known, parents simply refuse to pay school fees for children, leaving them with no option other than to work:

My name is Ronald, some children engage in work as a result of deliberate refusal by their parents to pay for them school fees to attend school (FGD with children at Bulega Primary School).

In some cases, refusal to pay school fees may be a form of punishment particularly for children who are considered disobedient by their parents. In the school system however, teachers regularly punish pupils who do not comply with school regulations. Such children are made to do heavy work such as fetching many containers of water and clearing ant-hills among others. The essays written by children in table 5.3a about bad work, continue to illustrate that some care givers force work on children while in other cases, it is the mistreatment of children which makes them run away from homes and take up work.

Much as the work outside home may still encompass challenges, they see it as more liberating than work at home. By working away from home, they are running away from an abusive and uncaring environment. This nonetheless is not always the case as chapter four reveals.

5.7 Work as part of children's traditional responsibility

A boy carrying jerry cans of water for use in restaurant —by author & J. Byamugisha



Children do not view participation in work only as a form of provisioning amidst economic realities or as an escape route from the abusive home environment, but they also view it as a form of

responsibility particularly when undertaken at home as part of the routine domestic activities. It is a kind of work they like doing and view it as important in helping them grow as disciplined and responsible children:

We need to work at home doing all the domestic work so that we become responsible people in the future. We also need to be disciplined so that we can easily study well at school. We like digging food like cassava, pineapples so that we can eat and also sell to get school fees. We like rearing goats, cows, and pigs so that we can sell them and get school fees. We like playing a lot. We play football and netball here at school during break time. This helps us to learn sports activities. We enjoy playing and it makes us happy. Some of the work helps us to get money like fetching water for people and they give us like Ug. Shs 200, we keep the money for school fees, buying clothes and even food stuff at the shops (FGD with children aged 5-10 from Kachanga Junior School).

Another group of children were asked to speak about what pleases their parents. The children aged 10 years and below, were selected from Bright Junior School Wakiso. The things they pointed out suggest that helping parents at home was a very central traditional responsibility:

Being obedient and respecting our parents [is important] so that we get blessings.

[Legitimate duties include]

Washing clothes, mopping the house, and sweeping.
Slashing, fetching water, and washing utensils.
Respecting and listening to our parents.
Greeting people at home and respecting visitors.

Children indicated that these practices please parents who reward them accordingly:

They buy for us clothes like shoes, uniforms, and playing equipment.
They pay our school fees and pray for us to get knowledge and wisdom.
They thank us by giving us money to eat at school—like Ug. Shs. 500 (US\$ 35 cents).
Our parents promise us gifts like motorbikes, playing equipments, and clothes when we perform well in class.

Although they liked doing this work, there were situations when their parents punished them for not doing this work. This suggests that the work is not necessarily a voluntary activity. It is a responsibility which they are expected to perform, and in case of disobedience, they face punishment. This is how they responded when asked *what makes parents angry?*

Refusing to do work at home
Beating our friends
Stealing food and sugar
Burning the house with candles
Disrespecting our parents and disobedience
Not listening to our parents
Stealing from the neighbourhood

Giving examples of punishments applied by parents in case of failure to comply they said:

They whip us like administering twelve strokes of the cane
Some parents burn their children for example, a child in our village stole money and his mother burnt his hands
Some of our relatives tie us upside down and cane us
Another boy stole money (Ug. Shs 1000) and his mother used the liquid material of a burning jerry can (plastic material) and poured it on his body
They also punish us by refusing to give us food before we go to bed or food for eating while at school

Children nonetheless continued to emphasise that the punishments do not make it bad work. They pointed out concerning this work:

Kituyamba okuyiga emirimu (It helps us learn to work)

It helps to prepare us for future responsibilities as adults so that in future we can provide for our families
It trains us to be hard working

In general, children view work as laying a foundation for future independence and building their abilities to cater for themselves.

5.8 Children's agency: When undertaking work is a personal choice

At certain times, children simply make a decision on their own to undertake work for pay outside the homes of their parents. The decision to work does not always receive the backing of parents. This reveals a clash of interests once it happens, and points to a generational conflict. By deciding to work on their own in disregard of the guidance of parents, children could be understood as pursuing their rights. Yet these rights could be in direct conflict with what parents define as the responsibilities of children. Parents perceive children to be disobedient in case they disregard their counsel or directions. In this case, the children involved are chased away or opt to leave the homes of their parents and establish company with peers, or look for potential employers to stay with. Children in the fishing communities pointed out that some children decide to work instead of going to school, even when their parents are willing to pay for their school fees:

Some children stubbornly and deliberately refuse to attend school in favour of working to earn money.

For some children, the allure of making money becomes too strong for them to resist (FGD with children at Kachanga).

... Some children are working and not going to school and it is a result of their choosing rather than the lack of school fees (FGD with working children 12-14 at Gerenge).

.... On the contrary, some children are working and not going to school having decided on their own not to go to school, but to work (FGD with boys 12-14 at Kasenyi).

The exercise of children's agency is buttressed by a number of factors such as **persuasion from friends, the need for money which is seen as a source of empowerment, the general environment** that comprises attractive life styles and friends who are working, and the role of **negligent parents**. Regarding persuasion from friends, and the attraction for money, working children from Kasenyi landing site had this to say:

Children are discouraged from going to school in favour of work, due to influence from their friends who are working. At some point in time these children were attending school, but got nothing other than whipping from teachers. Yet they observed the working children earning money. They opted to take on working so as to get *quick* money.

Not only are children listening to the advice of friends who are working to ignore attending school in preference for work, but they are also observing several things in their environment. One of the observations relates to their admiration of fishermen who have money:

The environment in which the children stay also forces them to work instead of going to school. For example they see fishermen on the islands in possession of money yet they are uneducated. Therefore, they also contemplate leaving school to work, hoping that they can emulate the fishermen in possession of money.

The ability of fishermen and other working people to afford a variety of things that require spending money is a source of great attraction, particularly to school-going children experiencing difficulties due to lack of money. The working girls at Gerenge for example expressed satisfaction on account of being able to afford a variety of things, such as entertainment, and other provisions, using money earned from work:

We spend on entertainment ... we pay for *karaoke* (they define it as the practice of mimicking singers including the singing and dancing) for Ug. Shs 1000 (US\$ 0.62) and for *Kadongo kamu* (traditional guitar performances) for Ug. Shs 3000 (US\$ 1.9) ... the dancing can be strong ... they [actors] sometimes use computers, other times it is individuals who are acting We [also] spend on necklaces, clothes ... we try to sustain ourselves. Sometimes you put money in savings schemes. *Abalenzi bakola ssente kuckyakaza demu mu ndongo* (the boys work to earn money, so as to take out girls for dancing) (FGD with working girls at Gerenge).

The working boys at Gerenge also spend their money on entertainment. Besides spending on food and other basic necessities, they explained that they spend their money on girl friends:

Some of us (older boys of about 13-14) we have girl friends, we have only one each. ... the *karaoke* girls who come at the site are good looking and you can even take one for a night. Sometimes I do that.
We also watch films ... the pornographic films were banned but children still watch them.

Given the opportunity of earning money to escape circumstances of deprivation, girls and boys decide for themselves sometimes with the encouragement from parents, to search and take up work:

Most girls and boys come on their own to ask for jobs in the restaurants though some of these children may be brought to work with their parents especially those who have a belief that for instance their family has been of fishermen from the great grandparents so also the grandchildren are supposed to be fishermen. However, this can also be done by the children going to school who come to work during holidays to look for school fees for the next term (FGD with working children at Kasenyi).

Children's exercise of their agency is not only affected by money or its attractions, it is also influenced by peers and role models who are considered successful because of money. Other factors related to care givers also play a crucial role. For example, the absence of good parents or having negligent parents (those who do not care to give appropriate advice to children) also plays an important part in their decision making regarding whether to stay at school or start working to earn money. This is how children explained their point of view:

Some children lack proper parenting while others do not have parents to guide them. Those without parents have to live on their own with no one to care of them or punish them for bad behaviour. Children of this kind, *bakola kye bagala* (do as they wish). This is because there is no one to counsel or educate them about the importance of education. As a result, they are unable to attend school. Some do work because their parents are negligent or cannot control them (FGD with children at Kachanga).

The failure of parents to guide children notwithstanding, some children simply become too difficult to be guided by their parents. They become disrespectful prompting parents to withhold their support for basic needs. In the absence of support, they search for paid work. Some children however simply break ties with parents in search of freedom from abusive environments:

Children may run away due to *okutuntunza* (harassment or torture) by parents, due to peer pressure, and some are chased away from home because of indiscipline. Some children become uncontrollable and disrespectful to their parents. In response, parents could refuse to pay their school fees. This in turn forces children to abandon their parents' homes and search for work rather than attending school (FGD with pupils at Bulega Primary School).

While children usually respect the authority of their parents, some have limits to which they can tolerate abuse resulting from application of parental authority. Similarly, parents have a

limit to which they can tolerate the contempt or disobedience of children. On account of tradition, religion and other considerations, parents punish non compliant children using methods such as withholding of privileges, using a cane, and rebuke. Some methods are considered socially acceptable even though they inflict physical and psychological pain. Others are viewed as excessive and unacceptable, and regarded as child torture. Torturous work is usually one of these. For the case of children, there is room for making a decision as to whether to leave their parents' homes to engage in work or decide otherwise.

5.9 Discussion

5.9.1 Reflection on the meaning of child labour

Taking into account the views of children as presented above, when people define child labour, they do not differentiate the various activities children do on the basis of vulnerability to poverty or abuse at home; the activities they do which are considered to be part of their responsibility at home; and activities which they undertake (away from home) which are a result of their personal choice. When all these activities are lumped together and given a generic name of child labour with a singular meaning of "harmful work", it gives a distorted interpretation of what child labour means and what it comprises before children.

Children's local equivalent or definition of child labour therefore is: *That work which is abusive, heavier compared to their capacities, and is performed under the control of adults in an environment that is not friendly to them. School going children consider work and money that force children out of school to be part of child labour or inappropriate work. Working children do not view as inappropriate (or child labour), all kinds of work they do that expose them to harm. They also do not consider work undertaken by children (own account employees) aimed at their survival, as child labour. They define child labour as involving adult abuse and exploitation and work in extremely bad or risky activities like sex work.*

What this implies is that many of the definitions of child labour such as "harmful work", "all work children do", and "work for pay" etc represent an *outsider* rather than *insider* view on child labour. They represent the views of *professionals* or *academics*, rather the views of working children who are directly affected by the consequences of any definitions used to

guide interventions. Working children such as those involved in fishing do not define their work as *child labour* in their interpretation of *abusive work*. This however does not apply to work undertaken by children younger than their age abilities. For example, children aged 14-15 years are considered eligible to take on hooking fish which involves swimming away from the shoreline line for a considerable distance inside the lake. Children aged 15/16 and above are considered old enough and able to carry on actual fishing with requirements such as rowing the boat, and working overnight.

The insider and outsider views are also reflected between children involved in paid work on one hand, and on the other, those attending school but not working for pay. School going children designate certain activities on fish landing sites as inappropriate, while their counterparts, who are doing those activities and are out of school, view them as normal. This shows that children's views are not necessarily homogeneous. They depend on the circumstances of the child. Children who are well looked after and are attending school, are more likely to define as child labour, most of the work undertaken on the landing sites.

Generally, there is need for reflexivity in using concepts like *child labour*, *harmful work*, and *work for pay* etc, so that the circumstances of those affected are taken into account when using them and determining courses of action.

5.9.1 Making meaning of children's linkage of child labour to poverty

Children's interpretation of their participation in work as a result of poverty simply re-affirms the existing social economic situations they live in. Uganda like many Sub-Saharan African countries has high rates of poverty. Results from the Uganda National Household Survey conducted in 2005/06 established that 31.1 percent of the population are absolute poor (See UBOS 2006). Absolute poverty measures the level of expenditure needed to secure basic food consumption needs and corresponding level on non food consumption. Those below this level (of usually US\$1 per day) are classified as absolute poor. They comprised 8.4 million persons with children below 18 years accounting for 60 percent of total (5.4million).

Besides income poverty, children are prone to many other forms of deprivation involving health, nutrition, education, and security among others (see UNICEF 2006). All these exacerbate their vulnerability to intolerable kinds of work conditions. The Uganda National

Household Survey further indicates that 65 percent of the children are vulnerable (these include orphans, children with disabilities, those out of school, and those living in poor households etc). Over 2 million (15%) of the children population (15 million) are orphans. In the fishing communities 50 percent of the children are orphans (Walakira et al. 2008). The HIV/AIDS which has claimed over a million persons is blamed for the large number of orphans (UNDP 2002; UBOS 2005).

The fact that many children are working due to poverty and other factors, condemning their work without offering better alternatives serves little or no importance. It could be construed as victimisation, criminalisation, and stigmatisation of children's work in disregard of their circumstances. While there is an emergency that calls for a response to the situation of children, the will and resources available may never march this level of emergency. It is more likely that children will continue to experience working childhoods for many years to come. Efforts aimed at attracting children back to school, strengthening social protection, and addressing poverty in general are some of the avenues that ought to make a difference.

5.9.2 Seeking work as a route to freedom

Unfavourable conditions at home involving abuse or violence against children play a key role in forcing children out of the home. The search for work in this case is seen as a route towards freedom. Several studies confirm the many forms of violence against children including whipping, denial of food, burning, sex abuse, and overworking children (ILO 2007; Save the Children in Uganda 2007; ACPF 2006; Uganda parliamentary Forum for Children [UPFC] 2007; UHRC 2004, Walakira, Okwany & Ochen 2008). Work away from is often sought by children in anticipation of freedom. However, it is rarely devoid of harm and a lot of times, it involves exploitation. This notwithstanding, the affected children tend to find this type of work more liberating and fulfilling because is never forced on them. Children in self employment experience more freedom than those in regular employment.

We are reminded by children's interpretation of child labour that torturous and exploitative work could be cloaked or disguised in traditional responsibility by perpetrators of abuse. The ecological model advanced by Bronfenbrenner (1979) in this case educates us that care givers could be the very source of violence in the home or micro care environment.

5.9.3 Work as an exercise of children's agency

The views of children revealed that involvement into paid work (harmful or less harmful) for

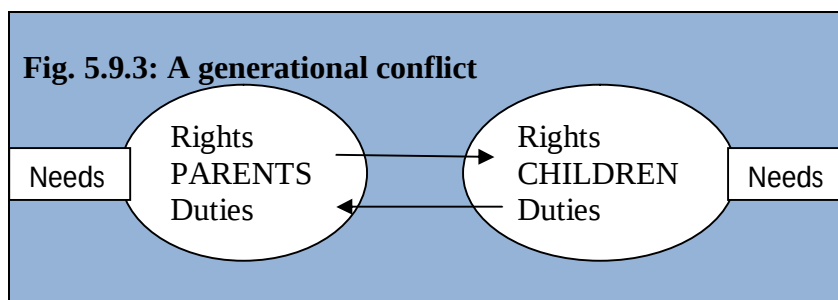


Boys sorting nets in preparation for fishing—by author

some children is out of their personal will. This could be the case even when parents are able and willing to support children's education and other needs. Giddens (1984) in his Structuration theory describes the importance of agency in explaining human actions. Indeed not all actions are intentional as Giddens points out, but the decisions by children to work in

search for freedom, reveals how they are social actors who can influence their environment rather than being passive subjects. Children's agency impacted on the family and community structures through benefits accruing from work or the consequences that impacted negatively both the family and community owing to children's work.

While the exercise of children's agency is emphasised in the existing children instruments such as the UNCRC, and the UN General Comment No.7; the Uganda Constitution and Children Act Cap 59; it is not clear, how far children should be allowed to chart their own courses of action that parents believe are not in the children's best interests. More often, the growing up of children particularly their entry into adolescence sparks off a conflict between children and parents. This conflict is seen in the way parents and children define their rights, needs and duties. (See diagram 5.9.3).



Parents and children perceive themselves to have rights on one hand and responsibilities on the other. How these rights and responsibilities are perceived by each party and the way they negotiated determines whether the two can stay together. With the increased emphasis on the rights of children, rather than their obligations to parents as considered by traditionalists, it is not very clear how far parents can exercise their influence over their children without getting into conflict with the law. Social work services to help build harmonious and productive relationships between parents and children are at most nonexistent in the fishing communities and the country at large.

Children's exercise of agency frees them from abusive parents, but may land them into the hands of abusive employers. In addition, access to money without guidance on saving, its use, and education on sexual health, morals, and safe behaviour results into dangers that endanger the lives of working children. Alcohol consumption, rampant sexuality—largely unprotected sex, and use of drugs represent problematic behaviour for children engaged in paid work. This calls for initiatives that mobilise working children and teach them how they can plan for their future, safeguard their lives, and how they can use the money more productively.

Chapter Six

6 Child labour: a traditional child rearing practice

The traditional human capital development discourse

Children's work in family-based activities is constructed as a traditional form of training or child upbringing. Work for training can be distinguished from that which is abusive and exploitative. There were traditional measures for dealing with child abusers involving family and traditional leaders. Traditional approaches to training include involvement in work, sending children to relatives, punishment for non compliance, and teaching through proverbs and stories. Work is allocated depending on age specific abilities. However, some parents may disguise heavy and abusive work as training especially for non biological children. The effectiveness of the traditional approach is being undermined by formal education, poverty, urbanisation, and the child rights discourse. Beneficial aspects of this training can be incorporated in formal education and in grassroots programmes.

This chapter like the preceding one answers the question that the study sought to explore: How is child labour socially constructed by local adult persons (aged 18 and above)? The chapter presents a second discourse which frames the peoples' reality of child labour as a traditional child rearing practice with a primary purpose of developing the human capital for self, family, and community gain in aspects of life such as economic and social production and reproduction. The discourse distinguishes work meant for training from that which is exploitative and abusive. The latter is what is construed as child labour.

6.1 Introduction

Accounts about children's training through work (excluding formal training and education) have paid greater attention to agricultural and pastoral activities (Hellet & Lamb 2005),

traditional healing work (Reynolds 1996; Walakira 2009), and traditional apprenticeship in established micro and small enterprises where children are placed under master craftsmen for a considerable period of time before they start to work on their own (see Walakira 2003; King 1996; Fluitman 1989; Haan 1994; Harper 1989; Herschbach 1989). Other concerns about children's work have paid attention to exploitation and abuse (International Labour Organisation [ILO] 2002, 2006, 2007; Walakira 2002; World Vision 2007).

The analysis from such scholarly or action oriented research hardly pays attention to the nature and dynamics of the traditional system of training and its linkage to child upbringing. Moreover, contexts in which parents and children are mainly migrants, living in congested settlements, and largely dependent on lake based work as the case of fishing communities demonstrates are yet to be examined. Suffice to say, existing literature does not address how the parents and children interpret work under difficult circumstances like those in the fishing communities, and what role work plays in child upbringing.

This chapter therefore presents peoples' interpretation of *child labour* as a traditional form of child training. While the training provided is intended to prepare children for adult responsibilities, the harsh economic conditions prematurely force children and parents to make use of training for mainly economic purposes. The presentation points out the challenges experienced by the traditional system of training and how it is adjusting or failing to adjust to the challenges.

6.2 Training children through work

Studies among indigenous peoples and other communities have revealed that parents raise their children by involving them in a variety of activities comprising their life routines or patterns. These activities are intended for training in preparation for the future of children to become independent after acquiring practical knowledge, skills, and attitudes consistent with norms and tradition. This makes possible social reproduction—the continuity of society through the transfer of knowledge and practices from the older to the younger generation (see Bass 2004; Reynolds 1996; Kielland & Tovo 2006). The activities are also much about household economy that includes wealth creation (Nieuwenhuys 2005, 1994 & 2007; Ansell 2005; Robson 1996).

Twinning training and household economy, Tucker & Young (2005) show in an ethnographic study how children among the Mikea (a community inhabiting a dense dry tropical forest in South Western Madagascar) take part in tuber foraging and contribute to household food procurement effort. Children as young as four or five allocate their time between leisure and work. Their work which is done according to strength and skill involves household chores and food production. Food production comprises food cultivation, foraging wild dioscorea tubers, and gathering sea food. In Bolivia, Ghana, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe it is a common practice for children to take part in household work as a form of training and participation in household economy (Punch 2003, 2001; Bass 2004; Robson 2004; Reynolds 1991; Oloko 1991). It is a traditional practice in Uganda as is the case with other developing economies, for children to offer auxiliary and direct support to their parents when executing household chores and income generating activities. Some activities are agricultural and largely home-based while others are market oriented (Walakira, Byamugisha & Omona 2005; Ssenono 2007; MoGLSD 2004). Others combine services for home use and market such as traditional healing work involving preparation of herbal remedies (Walakira 2008; 2009) or fishing related (Walakira & Byamugisha 2008).

Although children's work in a domestic setting plays a crucial part in supporting household incomes, it remains invisible because it is rarely reflected in national statistics. Also due to marginalisation, children's and women's work remains invisible. Children are marginalised on the basis of age (Edward 1996; Ansell 2005) while women are regarded as a weaker sex in patriarchal societies. On account of this, domestic work is reserved for women and children, and is not viewed as economically productive. Underneath the invisibility of children's work framed in the language of training, is the exploitation of their labour (Nieuwenhuys 1995; Bass 2004). While this affects both girls and boys, the gendered allocation of work at an early age tends to favour the male gender at the expense of the female gender with respect to future earning opportunities. This disparity is acknowledged and pointed out in this discourse that views child labour as a traditional form of training or child raising practice.

Finally, much as the traditional approach (a form of apprenticeship training) is associated with weaknesses such as training in narrow skills and a lack of theoretical content, it has for many generations remained the most widely practiced form of training in the micro and small enterprise sector (United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO] 1984; UNESCO/International Center for Technical and Vocational Training

[UNEVOC] 1997), with skills and knowledge being transmitted from parents to children. This training is threatened by the advance of formal education and training. Notwithstanding, it retains a lifeline in as much as the cost of the formal training systems (including Technical and Vocation Education (TVET) remains high. Furthermore, TVET and formal education continue to experience an *effectiveness* deficit owing to failure in guarantying employment to trainee graduates (Haan & Serriere 2002; World Bank 1991, 1993). These weaknesses serve as incentives for the continued survival of the traditional approaches to training.

Despite the ongoing rapid social and technical changes brought about by urbanisation, growing industrialisation, and more recently globalisation, parents continue to value and involve children in various work activities as a form of training and/or child rearing. Their interpretation of children's participation in work as a form of training is yet another discourse on child labour. The views presented in this chapter were collected from key informants namely: cultural and opinion leaders, personalities knowledgeable in Luganda language, culture, and traditions, and others who included parents and local leaders from the study communities.

6.3 Work as part of traditional child raising practices

Participants were asked to explain the involvement of children in work. Among the reasons that they enumerated, training, poverty, and orphanhood stood out significantly. In this chapter, the focus is devoted to the linkage of work to training. Other considerations have been addressed in the previous chapters. Participants pointed out that boys and girls in Buganda, just as in several other communities in Uganda, have traditionally participated in work at home considering that work at home offers a practical learning school:

Children have always had work ascribed to them in Buganda. Children especially girls are born with the gift of taking care of babies (child minding). Boys would be considered for heavier responsibilities like splitting fire wood—depending on age. To me this is work and it prepares [trains] them for future responsibilities as parents and adults. Therefore work for children was part of [and continues to be] practical learning. They get to learn the techniques involved in activities such as food preparation in which there is peeling and wrapping food in banana leaves etc. In other words, working was [and is] part of practical education for children (elder and educationist).

The views of this elder were supported by parents in FGDs in both the fishing communities and Wakiso Town Council (Kisimbiri Zone B):

A home is regarded as the first nursery school for children. Children are supposed to learn basic things as well as learning how to work from home. Parents teach their children to wash their clothes, sweep, and digging [while] teachers are supposed to provide knowledge and mould children' behaviour at school (FGD with parents at Gerenge).

Parents revealed that work also characterised their childhoods:

We used to undertake different activities: we would dig, harvest coffee or cotton, sweep compounds, fetch water, and cook. We did almost all household chores. *Ffe twafumba nga mubukebe ku myaka munaana* (We used to play cooking games when we were around eight years.) Children did almost everything in a home. ...Yeah, apart from brewing and selling *waragi* (local spirit).

Emphasising the importance of work in children's lives, parents explained that work allocated with supervision and guidance from adults (parents) enables children to become "patient and



Boy learning on job under the supervision of an adult —by author

trustworthy", "they learn to do things carefully", "they acquire skills for economic survival", "children are prepared to confront hardship", "they learn obedience and become respectful to their parents and elders", and that they learn how to relate with different categories of people including their peers, elders, and parents. Parents expect teachers at school to build further on these attributes. To their surprise, children show little or no improvement when sent to school.

Despite the appreciation of the value of work to children's lives, parents got concerned about the ensuing disappearance of training in traditional activities—especially in urban settings:

Parents used to emphasise digging, barking and taking goats for grazing ... These were very good activities but most of them are disappearing. Activities like barking are completely fading out because people have cut down all the *mituba* trees. Today most children don't know how to dig because they have nowhere to dig. Adults were also much involved in this kind of work: *anti omukulu bw'ataakwaata mu kisibo nga ziffa nagga*. (If an adult does not involve himself in cleaning the animal stead, the animals die from diseases). A well-behaved child does whatever his/her parents do. For example, if a mother holds a knife to peel, a child will do likewise.

A detailed discussion of the factors affecting the continuity of the traditional system of training are discussed in the subsequent sections. The next subsection discusses how allocation of work in view of the child's age is made.

6.4 Work meant for training varied with the age of the child

Parents were quick to point out that work allocated to children during their time was always proportional to their age or abilities. As an illustration, they explained:

Children of 2-3 years were given small hoes to dig. They would be asked to pull up grass as a way of weeding. Those aged 4-5 years accompanied adults to fetch water. There were small buckets and *pailos* (metal containers) that were given to children. The older children followed their parents to the garden *okusoggola emmere* (to harvest food).

Children also had their small gardens and they were very proud of them. That is how they learnt how to dig and be responsible. Their parents would encourage them, '*genda olimeyo omusiri gwo ogwa lumonde oba pamba*' (Go and have your own garden of sweet potatoes or cotton). I remember when I was still young, about 10 years, I was forced to cultivate a garden of sweet potatoes and whenever people saw me digging, they would encourage me. They would say 'she will be very hard working' in her adulthood.' Others said '*omwana oyo ajja kuba mulimi*' (she will be a good farmer). I remember I was seriously whipped for spilling beans while harvesting [After that incident] I had to harvest very carefully.

In table 6.4 and figure 6.4 a list of activities assigned to children according to their age is indicated. The expectations of parents are revealed by the level of responsibility and participation ascribed to the child according to age.

Table 6.4: Activities allocated to children according to age and level of responsibility

Age	Household activity	Level of responsibility expected and participation
3-5 yrs	Washing utensils, clothes, fetching water, child care... (with parents)	Barely no responsibility Fun, play, generating interest and some learning
6-9yrs	Fetching water, digging, picking coffee, washing clothes, child care, washing utensils etc	Limited participation Limited or some responsibility Still learning the basics Keeping close to parents Enjoy participating Children return home earlier than adults
10-13 yrs	Start cooking (girls), splitting firewood (boys), tending animals (boys), fetching water, washing clothes, household utensils, digging and work in coffee plantation; weeding, harvesting crops, hunting (boys), and taking coffee to market for sale (boys) etc	Greater involvement in household work More responsibility or obligation on children Some level of independence at 13 years Still no work for pay but only tips, appreciation or appeasement rewards In very impoverished families, these children can be sent to sell things on streets or work in markets
14-15 yrs	A child participates in all household work at this stage A child considered relatively mature to do some work for pay A child can provide nursing care to bed ridden parent (mainly girls)	Full participation Full responsibility Moving towards independence Children undertake work for pay (mainly in urban areas, largely casual) Can work in markets with or without parents If not attending school, expected to contribute to welfare in poor families
16-17 yrs	All household work Children considered young adults Can work for pay	Almost fully mature Full responsibility Almost independent if not attending school Considered ready to Boys if not attending school considered ready

Figure 6.4 is derived from the views of participants and summarises children's level of participation in household work and the level of responsibility or expectations placed on them.

Fig. 6.4: Extent of child participation in household work

16-17 Years	Full participation, a child is almost an adult
14-15 Years	Full involvement, towards independence
10-13 Years	Greater involvement, more responsibility
6-9 Years	Orientation, encouragement, limited participation
3- Years	Involvement is fun, play

In doing household work or activities that generate family income such as agriculture or family business, children acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes that make them better people as outlined in the next sections.

6.5 Approaches to training in the traditional system

6.5.1 Sending children to stay with traditional chiefs

Traditionally, the *bakopi* (commoners) in Buganda kingdom used to send their children (particularly sons) to *bisaakaate* (homes of traditional chiefs) to be taught morals, culture and leadership. A son entrusted to grow up in the hands of a traditional chief was called *musiige*. The *musiige* was made to undertake all kinds of heavy work, which apparently amounted to child suffering. However, Mr Kirwani (not real name) who is an author of several books on Kiganda traditions and a presenter on one of the radio stations explained that this was meant to train a child to become a better person:

In those days, the *bakopi* would take their children to *kisaakate*, the home of a traditional chief to be taught morals, culture and leadership. *Omusiige* is a child raised in the *kisaakate*. The chief who was a leader appointed by the Kabaka could be of any rank. He could be the head of county, *Owe Ssaza*; sub-county chief, *Ow'eggombolola*; or parish chief, *Ow'omuluka*.

Children in *bisaakate* (several homes of traditional chiefs) suffered *okkuluusanya* (were made to toil by doing a lot of hard work). However, those children identified as brighter than others, were given *obwaami* (leadership positions). For example, if a child in the *kisaakate* of sub-county chief was considered brighter than others, he would be made a parish chief. If not, the sub-county chief would forward his name to the Kabaka, who would appoint him to be *mutongole* (village chief).

Despite the prospect of having their children become future leaders, some parents could not stand the heavy workload that children performed. Hence, by spurning the opportunity of volunteering their own children, they often turned to those of their servants or distant relatives wherever requested by traditional chiefs to send children to *bisaakaate*:

Because children in *bisaakate* were harassed, parents did not want to send their biological off springs there. Wherever chiefs demanded for children, parents offered the children of their servants rather than their own. Work in *bisaakate* was too heavy for the children. People were always coming in big numbers to meet chiefs [and there had to be preparations]. Because of the large number of people in *bisaakate*, children

had to grow a lot of food to ensure that no one went home hungry. They also collected firewood, fetched water etc.

Some participants maintained that in spite of the suffering children experienced, they often turned out to be better persons than those who did not have that experience.

6.5.2 Sending children to stay with relatives

In the past, parents put a premium on sending children to grow up with relatives. Not only would it strengthen the bonds between families, but also served as a form of apprenticeship for the child to learn specialised skills in a particular trade and learning how to relate with adults. One of the key informants explained how this practice was organised and its purpose:

In the past children never grew up in their parents' home. They were instead sent to another's, often a respected person's home. For example, I could decide to send my child to Nteyafande's home so that he could be trained and raised from there. All this was part of apprenticeship training. A parent would say; '*omusajja oyo mukomazi mulungi*' (that man is an expert in making back cloth), let me give him my son to grow up with him so that he can also learn this trade). Another one would say; '*Omukyala oyo amanyi okulima, kkamuwe abaana bange abaayigirize okulima*' (that lady is good at agricultural work. Let me give her my children so that she can teach them the same).

Not only were children sent to learn how to work or become disciplined, but were also expected to go through some suffering to be well prepared for hardships. "They would learn to dig in addition to experiencing hardship. In this way, a child grew up with a resilient spirit, would be hard working..." said one of the study participants.

Although sending children to relatives or trusted friends had considerably reduced over the years, the growing number of orphans due to HIV/AIDS has revived the practice. The number of orphans now estimated at over 1.5 million is catered for by the extended family. It has been documented that some extended families have been overstretched. Hence, some scholars have alluded to the social rupture thesis, suggesting that the traditional system of care is under stress and is failing to cope with the burden of care (Abebe & Aase 2007).

6.5.3 Imparting discipline among children

At the core of the traditional way of training children, was the goal of ensuring that children behaved at all times in a way consistent with the values, traditions, and other socially acceptable behaviour. Hence, parents moulded children's behaviour through counselling and rebuke, allocating work, and punishing them in case of wrong doing. Parents explained during an FGD at Gerenge fish landing site what they experienced as children, and what children may experience even today in case of wrong doing:

We were beaten.... Children were also starved. *Baatutwalanga mu kalantini mu kisenge*. The parents would quarantine us in a room for some time. We would miss lunch and supper until one apologised or did what he/she was supposed to do. In case you were forgiven, you would still be given very little food to keep you wanting more.

One elder participant narrated:

... I remember when I was still young, I was asked to prepare food. I peeled and put the food on fire. I went on to play with my friends and forgot about the food and it burnt. Ohooo, my mother taught me a lesson of my life that I will never forget. She somehow found out that I had "burnt the food." She did not beat me or abuse me in any way. She served supper and I was not given *enningu* (roasted groundnut like sauce mixed with fish). It [the mixture] was very delicious and no one would afford to miss it. She served all my siblings and I was not given. It was very painful.

I also remember there is a time that we over played (played beyond the allowed time). My parents did not call us ... but it so happened that by God's grace we peeped and saw them eating *ayaa*. We were forced to eat without washing our hands yet they were so dirty. We really felt so bad but my grand mum said that it was a good punishment and that it would be the only punishment [for such behaviour] in our home.

In other cases, they would be caned (chastised) and this was a common practice for particularly errant children. They observed that parents nonetheless put much emphasis on **talking to children** explaining the right and wrong things:

Parents would talk to their children showing them both the good and the bad. Girls were taught what to do in order to become responsible women in society. They were taught how to cook. Parents taught their children good manners and this helped to attract families to potential marriage partners. If a family had well behaved children, many people wanted to marry from such a family.

An important aspect of talking to children involved use of proverbs and storytelling which I examine below.

6.5.4 Educating children about work through proverbs and stories

Traditionally, children listened to proverbs and stories from their parents in the evenings while sitting around the fire place (ekyoto). This evening school taught children about many aspects of life including cultural values, traditions, and beliefs. A few of the proverbs used among the Baganda in encouraging their children to work hard, were identified by participants in Kisimbiri Zone B, Wakiso:

Kewerimidde, kakira akawe obuwi (harvesting a small amount of food from your garden is better than the little given by a friend). This encouraged children to work hard. As such, parents went with their children to work in the garden. Children were advised to cultivate their own gardens of sweet potatoes, maize or cassava. They were told that it was much better for them to have what to eat from their gardens than to be fed like [reared] birds.

Ogutatengamya teguzza nvuma (work that is too easy, does not yield big rewards). This means that if someone does not work hard, they do not gain much ...

There were not only proverbs about work, but also those that castigated parents who give children work not commensurate with their abilities.

Atamuzadde amutikka jjinja (a guardian or parent forces a child other than his/her own, to carry a heavy stone. In other words, a parent allocates heavy load to a child other than his own). This means that parents do not mind about their non biological children. They can make them do anything as long as they are not their own. They make them over work and carry very heavy loads because they are either not theirs or they are working for money.

The fact that many parents are looking after children other than their own, the potential for violence against these children is immense. The violence notwithstanding, the traditional practices such as training and learning through work, use of proverbs and sayings continue to be valued. The threat to their continuity emanates from changing social arrangements. These threats are discussed in the following section.

6.6 Factors impacting on the traditional forms of training

While the traditional form of training continues to be instrumental within a constellation of approaches parents use in developing the skills, knowledge, and acceptable behaviour among their children, the approach faces many challenges arising from the growing economic difficulties, urbanisation, and formal education. Additionally, the growing emphasis on children rights implies that some traditional forms of training are a violation of children's rights.

Growing urbanisation has been accompanied with changing means of production and economic activities. The absence of (or the limited) agricultural activities in fishing communities has meant that parents no longer send their children to carry out farming or tend to animals as was done in the past (or continues to be done in rural areas):

There is no land for children to dig: where will they go to take part in digging? So it is the circumstances that keep away our children from learning... (FGD with Parents in Wakiso Town Council)

In urban areas (including fishing settlements which are more like urban slum areas), parents are more involved in fishing and market-based activities in which children offer support services. One significant development is that the training in urbanising contexts has assumed an urgent economic importance to the extent that children are sent out to look for money at an early age:

Nowadays children are more involved in income generating activities instead of domestic work. *Omwana olukulamu nga bamusindika mu Owino kkola sente* (the moment a child gains some capacities ... is sent out to make money in Owino (a huge downtown market in Kampala selling food and non-food items). Yet in the past, children used to work from home ... digging, barking ...

It is mainly the struggle for economic survival for both parents and children. Parents explain that children start to work much earlier because of economic circumstances. Family instability was singled out as a consequence of urbanisation and a struggle for economic survival. This also affected the training of children:

Today children grow up from unstable homes. Parents quarrel all the time and they say all sorts of *dirty* things in the presence of children. Yet in the past, our parents

were calm—our mothers were responsible and respectful to their husbands. They would welcome our fathers very well and kneel down to greet them, which is not the case today (FGD with parents at Gerenge).

Besides urbanisation, parents identified the growing impact of formal education as a key factor affecting the traditional form of training. Children are increasingly spending limited time with parents because they are at school most of the time even during school holidays. During school holidays, they are still required to turn up for classes:

Children nowadays spend a great deal of time in school. They hardly do any form of work at home because they spend most of the time at school. They go to school as early as 6 a.m. and come home at 7 p.m. The only day children are at home is Sunday: Even then, they have only time to wash their uniforms, go to church, and prepare for school the next day. *Omwana emirimu egikolebwa ewaka tafuna budde bugikola. Ekivaamu tebayiga mirimu gya mikono* (children never get time to take part in household work so they never acquire practical skills). Except to some degree for those growing up in the village ... they also spend most of the time at school. [Yet] those who are not attending [going to] school are very unruly. They don't listen or obey their parents ... (Former Buganda Kingdom Minister).

Because of formal education, children undermine certain kinds of work such as fetching water and clearing anthills. They think that such work is performed by *bakozi ba byamboone* (wrong doers) (Kirwani, name altered).

The children rights movement has also limited the training and disciplining of children using traditional means. Work for children has in some cases been defined as a form of abuse:

There has been a lot of advocating for the rights of children by today's leaders which has led children to think that they are not meant to work. Even without harassment, a child at home can refuse to work with the excuse that government forbids children's work as this is a violation of their rights.

Furthermore, the violence and exploitation of children is increasingly being exposed. Those who exploit children under the guise of training are also finding it very difficult to continue with the practice:

Important to note also, is that today there is increased harassment of children whom people [guardians] are not directly linked to [by blood]. Take an example, a house girl who wakes up early in the morning at 5:00 a.m., bathes her master's children, prepares something for children to take to school, walks them to school, washes clothes, cleans utensils, cooks food and irons clothes on a daily basis without her master lifting a finger to assist her. At the end of the month, she gets ten or twenty

thousand [US\$ 6-12], which in most cases is given to her after a long struggle (Author and Radio presenter).

The continued exposure of these forms of abuse and exploitation is attracting growing sympathy for the child victims. Children are also increasingly becoming proactive in contacting police for any perceived rights violations:

... Nowadays there is a law that prohibits *okkangavvula abaana* (chastising or whipping children), which has worsened the situation. By simply caning a child (as a punishment), you are reported to the police *nga bakutwala! Abaana bafuuka ba gavumenti* (they [police] immediately come for you. Children have become a property of government). So parents simply look on as spectators [even as children do what is not acceptable].

For example, there is a man in my village. Though I don't think he was right, this man ordered his children to stay home to help out in the garden. They were required to plant beans after the first rains, instead of going to school. The children disobeyed his order and instead went to school. On coming back, he caned them for disobedience. The children reported their father to police and he was taken into police custody, though he bribed his way out. Whenever he wanted to discipline these children, they would say '*Gezaako otukube onoolaba*' (try to whip us and you will see [we will report you to police]) (Elder and former minister in Buganda Kingdom).

Due to the children's rights movement and urbanisation, the collective responsibility for child upbringing has been undermined:

In the past there was very good cooperation between parents. People living in the same village regarded themselves as relatives. If a person found his neighbour's child in the wrong he/she would never keep silent about it. First of all, he would punish this child and then report him/her misbehaviour to the parents.

With respect to work, children in the village helped a lot ... For example if a person's children were not available to help out him with chores like fetching water, grinding millet, or brewing alcohol, he would conveniently call on his neighbours' children to help. Also people always called on their neighbours' children to help them do heavy work much faster. It is important to note that this work was not given to children with the intention of harassing them. Parents did not complain when neighbours disciplined their children because any child's indiscipline was blamed on the whole village he/she came from (author Luganda books and Radio presenter).

[But] people don't care anymore. They have bad feelings and only care about their own children. The people you would regard to command respect will come across children misbehaving on their way from school—but they will not mind about the children. Instead they will just pass by ... For example a person can find children eating on the way and opts to do nothing, let alone counselling them (FGD with parents at Kisimbiri Zone B).

As collective responsibility for child upbringing continues to be limited to related family members, parents are looking up to schools to help fill the gap. However, the high school dropout rates (see chapter nine) suggest that few children will have the expected guidance from teachers. Parents are blaming increased levels of sexuality, pregnancy, and unemployment on the gaps resulting from the declining role of traditional education and community responsibility.

6.7 Discussion

This discourse has revealed that what is defined as child labour by outsiders is the traditional approach to child training or upbringing. Hence, what constitutes child labour is the usually invisible abuse in the training. A reflection on the traditional approach to training of children through work reveals both strengths and limitations. These have implications for the continuity or discontinuity of the traditional child raising approach.

6.7.1 Implications of the changing traditional training approach

On the basis of narratives, observations and discussions with various study participants, it can be concluded that the traditional system of child training and upbringing has changed over time in a number of ways. Yet it continues to change as it adapts to the changing social and economic circumstances. One of the key elements of this change has been the disappearance of the *evening home school* where parents sat around the *evening fire* to tell stories, proverbs, and other sayings to children. The changing work routines for parents and preoccupation with formal education has left no room for the evening school. Similarly, the traditional approach to training is increasingly being undermined by the absence or limited agriculture in urban areas. Agriculture remains the major foundation for traditional approach to training in a pre-industrial society like Uganda. This implies that many aspects of social reproduction rooted in traditional practices and activities such as agriculture, increasingly face extinction.

A major threat arises when the training of children is meant to achieve an immediate goal of income generation. This being the case particularly in urban areas, is a principle cause of concern among human rights activists who perceive participation of children in paid work as

a form of exploitation. However, it is a coping strategy for both parents and children owing to the harsh economic realities (Walakira & Byamugisha 2008).

6.7.2 Success of traditional training affected by limitations in training contexts

The variations within households on the basis of economic activities, income, localities, gender, competencies of parents and other attributes such as the interests of children, implies that the usefulness of the training to children varies with contexts. For example, a home in which the head operates a fishing business is likely to offer a broad range of technical skills to a child in areas like recruitment of fishermen, management of the fish catch, fish preservation, distribution to buyers, costing and repair of boats etc. For a poor family dependent on an activity that generates limited income, the skills offered to a child may be limited. Hence, experts in training issues have underlined the need for variation of training needs of the very poor and those running small business enterprises so as to maximise outcomes (Haan 1994).

The success of the traditional form of training can therefore be considered more in the area of social reproduction where parents successfully teach their children the language, the values, certain social practices, and basic production skills. The fact that children are increasingly working on their own on account of poverty, it implies that they spend limited time with parents and this affects the social reproduction function of the traditional training approach. Poverty caused by policies such as structural adjustment, failing agriculture, limited spending of government on social services and the failure of the global economy, are partly blamed for increased involvement of children in work (Moser 1993, Save the Children 2002; UNICEF 2006; MoGLSD 2004; UBOS 2003). These failures increase the cost of education thereby affecting enrolment and retention.

In addition, when children drop out of school in preference to practical training through work, it suggests that the conventional education system is lacking with respect to provision of practical skills that children in impoverished families need to ensure their survival.

6.7.3 Invisible child abuse in the traditional approach to child training

While the traditional approach to child training continues to be revered, it is not devoid of abusive work practices that border on exploitation of children and torture. These as pointed out earlier, are exceptions rather than the norm. Abusive work is identified with step parents who overwork boys and girls by using them as sources of unpaid labour. An example of this form of abuse involves trafficking girls from rural to urban areas to work as housemaids. Girls some times aged less than 12 years hardly get paid. If paid, the money could be given directly to relatives instead of the working child. More often, even when the child is directly paid, the amount paid is too low compared to the amount of work performed. Affected children work from dusk to dawn with little rest. They also face risks of sexual abuse in their working environments, whereby the main perpetrators are relatives. The children rarely get opportunities for further education.

In the past, the traditional system of child care had a way of correcting such kinds of bad practices by use of cultural norms and traditional courts. However, over the years, these have become dysfunctional. Hence, the abuse continues although more in a covert form. Tackling abusive work in the traditional system of training through child rights campaign has so far failed to stem out the practice. The abusers exploit the weaknesses in the child rights messages to carry on with the abuses with impunity. For example, the fact that rights initiatives put greater emphasis on children's rights over their responsibilities—this offers ammunition to perpetrators to argue that the *rights campaign is orchestrating a strategy aimed at antagonising the relationship between parents and children*.

6.7.4 Erosion of collective responsibility in child upbringing

The views of study participants point to declining collective responsibility towards child training and/or, upbringing due to urbanisation, increased multiculturalism, individualism, and volatility of populations. The growing concern about children rights has also forced parents to avoid getting involved with issues of children with legal implications. These factors imply that the future of certain traditional values construed as violating children's rights, will be stemmed out. The gap created by their disappearance could tremendously affect social reproduction and harmony between children and parents.

6.7.5 Variation of work according to age is a good practice

Finally, the practice of varying children's training work on the basis of age and abilities is a good practice that needs to be consolidated in the fight against inappropriate work for children.

6.7.6 Conclusion

In general terms, children participation in work is perceived under this discourse as a traditional system of training and upbringing, rather than a case of child labour or child abuse. This training is appreciated and cherished. However, there is growing realisation of abusive practices in the traditional system of training affecting boys and girls. There is also a growing fear that many of the good attributes of this training are disappearing due to factors such as urbanisation, growing poverty, child rights movement, and formal education system. As the system adapts to changing social and economic demands, it has left gaps in child care, which have not been addressed. As a result, children are not well looked after, not well trained, and some are increasingly becoming difficult to train using the traditional methods.

Chapter Seven

7 Child labour as cultural hegemony—a social construct of the West: The non conventional discourse on child labour

Child labour is constructed as a hegemonic concept seeking to serve the interests of the West and professionals. This discourse views as normal and a part of childhood, children's involvement in work including that which generates income. This interpretation however is largely confined to work in a home context. Work for pay is considered a necessary evil to the extent that it is a last resort for under age children (less than 14), owing to conditions of poverty. The discourse challenges language use, the competing discourses in different languages, cultures and social contexts that are not reducible to interpretations in local contexts. It calls for dialogue and inclusiveness in generating meanings of concepts such as child labour, children's rights, responsibilities of parents, and children etc.

This chapter presents the third construct of child labour as generated from the narratives or accounts of adult participants including parents, opinion and cultural leaders. The introduction sets the theoretical ideas that inform the presentation of findings.

7.1 Introduction

The meaning of child labour, albeit with varying interpretations, is rooted in the objectivist and empiricist scientific frameworks and supported with a legalistic appeal on the basis of international and national legal provisions. The meaning of child labour in these frameworks describes a reality (the social world or child labour phenomena) that is pre-determinate and

not subject to any further interpretation. Taylor (1987:75) explains that for the empiricists, the kinds of data that describe social reality are based on overt acts (behaviour) of individuals that can be defined physically or institutionally, while the motivations for these behaviours are based on beliefs, affective states etc. Both kinds of facts are thought to be brute data, or data that are identifiable and verifiable in such a way that they cannot be subject to any further interpretation. For the empiricist, this is a basis to claim the truth, which accounts for human behaviours and the meanings of those behaviours for the agents involved.

Post modernism however rejects any claim to universal truth (see Denzin 1986; 1991; Clough 1992 & Richardson 1991). In the words of Richardson (1994:517-518) “the core of postmodernism is the doubt that any method or theory has a universal or general claim as the right or privileged form of authoritative knowledge.” Without automatically rejecting these conventional methods of knowing and telling as false or archaic, post modernism opens these standard methods to inquiry and introduces new methods, which are also subjected to critique (p. 518). In relation to child labour, there is therefore no basis to claim a universal and pre-determinate meaning of child labour. There are other methods of knowing that can bring diversity to the interpretation. This offers an opportunity to expand the scope for dealing with the intolerable aspects of the phenomena as well as claiming the good in children’s work.

Interpretive theories (see Denzin 1989; 1992; Denzin and Lincoln 1994; 2003; Gergen 1985; Gergen & Gergen 1991; Geertz 1983; Yanow et al. 2006; Hammersley 1992; LeCompte, Preissle & Tesch 1993) which provide a theoretical frame of reference for this study, are greatly influenced by the post modern thinking. Underlining the limitations of conventional methods, interpretivists argue that the empiricists’ picture of social reality omits something most important namely, inter-subjective and common meanings and the “ways of experiencing action in society, which are expressed in the language and descriptions constitutive of institutions and practices” (Taylor 1987:75 [1971]). Given their primary focus on meanings and how they are created, negotiated, sustained, and modified within a specific context, interpretivists present an opportunity for revisiting the interpretation of child labour.

This chapter therefore presents another interpretation of child labour referred to as the “Foreign cultural hegemony discourse.” It is derived from the views of various participants I interacted with and talked to at length. The discourse views child labour as an imported concept rooted in the ideological preferences and contexts of the West or industrialised countries, and misinterprets the social ways and practices of local people particularly in relation to child upbringing. People’s discussion of child labour is interwoven with issues of child rights and they see both as imported Western ideas and cultural values. The views presented here come from several categories of people I met who are knowledgeable in cultures and traditions of the Baganda and the Luganda language. They include elders who

Fig. 7.1: Child labour as perceived under the cultural hegemony discourse

Origin	Foreign	European North American
Intention	Distortion of	Family Cultural tradition Child upbringing
Consequences	Socio-economic	Family break down Economic dependency Child rebellion
Meaning	Foreign	Constructed by professionals And privileged
Transmission Participation of poor	Top down Passive recipients	
Interventions	Selective Co-opting Coercive Generalised	e.g. Worst forms of Child Labour Persuasive Forceful At times—all children’s work is problematised

served in Buganda Kingdom as Ministers (1988-2007), officials from the Association of Luganda language (Kibiina Ky’olulimi Oluganda), radio presenters from Central Broadcasting Services (CBS) and writers of Luganda books. Others include parents, local leaders, and elders in the fishing communities. This chapter does not encompass the voices of children. These are separately considered in a

chapter that describes the children’s discourse on child labour.

7.2 Thoughts held before data collection

Before I embarked on this study, I had all along had a belief that there was some degree of animosity towards the interpretation of child labour. Notwithstanding, I had never anticipated that this animosity could be expressed on a wider scale as witnessed in the numerous in-depth interviews with key informants and through FGDs with study participants. I had for a considerable period of time led teams on child labour studies where we asked questions with predetermined responses. The questions required answers such as “yes” or “no”, “no correct answers given”, and “one out of three answered correctly” just to mention a few. It is possible

that I will ask these questions again, but I will be mindful of their limitations and will aim to limit them. The FGDs we organised in such studies were also oriented towards generating responses that could fit a given frame of thinking. Our interpretations followed a particular line of thinking without giving due regard to the inter-subjective issues and meaning construction. This owed to the designs we applied on account of the requirements of the sponsors. This time however, I opted to be led by the line of thinking emanating from the study participants. When I asked what they felt child labour was, and what their opinions were, I was surprised by the nature of responses. In an outline form, the following represent the conclusions derived from their views:

7.3 Child labour is a cultural construct of the West

I conducted an in depth interview with one of the participants named Mr Tendoti (name altered for confidentiality). He works as a radio presenter for a local radio station in addition to being a marketing director of a local NGO that provides services to vulnerable children. Furthermore, he is a member of *Ekibiina Ky'olulimi Oluganda* (Luganda Language Association). His view is that child labour, as officially propagated, projects a meaning that is out of touch with reality and represents a misinterpretation of the usual ways (in the local contexts) of child training and upbringing. Here is how he responded when asked to give his opinion on what child labour means:

With the little English I know, when one uses the word *child labour*, I simply tell you that we do not have it. We do not have child labour here and we do not believe in child labour. This is because any parent *gyavayenkana* (from whatever background) trains his child to do different kinds of work with the intention of making the child a responsible citizen in this country. Because parents were raised to be responsible, they too strive to raise their children responsibly.

Pointing out the tendency to misinterpret children's participation in work at home and generalising it as child labour—he offered his own interpretation of child labour:

The situation as seen today when children take part in domestic work, has led many people from countries abroad [developed world] to think that we have child labour. The simplest word I can use to explain the term child labour in Luganda language is *kutuntuza* (making the child toil through work or treating a child unfairly). I won't deny the fact that people used to *kutuntuza* children, especially *bakazi ba kitaffe* (step mothers). Step mothers would sometimes *kutuntuza* their step children through giving

them heavy workloads because they did not want their own children to work. This work sometimes injured children's chests and deprived them of their freedom.

However, I want to emphasize the fact that not everyone has such a heart. Baganda aim at one thing that is, *kugunjula mwana* (training to develop the child). You find that those who identified such acts in Buganda, always took the initiative to caution the step mother (or other perpetrator) that based on their experience, they have seen that a step child who is harassed, always turned out to be more successful in future than the children who were pampered.

He linked the concept of child labour to Western ideologies and implied that it was responsible for the growing practice of not imparting traditional skills to children, which is rendering them less productive:

Because of child labour and its notion of child rights, we have so many *bangalo bunani* (children who are idle and doing nothing productive). These days we call them *bikoko bizungu* (non indigenous chicken which are reared and fed in houses) because they do not know how to do any work. *Bazungu* (people from the West) make us think that they are right in everything but they are wrong! For the time I have spent in Buganda, I have been closely following the cultures of the Baganda and I have come to the realisation that there is no child labour among them.

Nonetheless, abusive work could not be ruled out as he already pointed out. He continued to explain that the Western way of thinking has been reproduced through children laws (*I asked, 'the Children Act?'* which he said "Yes". He further observed:

I was once on radio and I requested those who drafted the child labour law to join me to have a dialogue about this law. I wanted them to show me where this law [the Children Act] could be applied because in my opinion, it cannot work anywhere in Uganda. Lawmakers don't take time to think about laws before enacting them.

A person leaves the country as a young child and grows up in a white man's country. Be aware that these countries have their own deeds [practices] which do not work here. When you are drafting a law for a particular country, it is important to look at the cultures of that country. This will help you draft a law that is compatible with the cultures of the people involved. When you look at the people who drafted Uganda's Children's Act, I want to assure you that they are not the kind of people who understand our cultures.

Mr Tendoti's views were not isolated or at the extreme as I had initially thought. In the discussions which followed, I sensed a gap in the interpretation of child labour among those drafting the laws and policies on one hand, and those for whom they are enacted. This difference in interpretation was already generating conflict much as the sensitisation activities

were ongoing. I had also realised from the discussions that child labour as a concept did not have a direct translation in the local language much as it was possible to get it local equivalent. People consistently viewed the official interpretation of child labour as being imposed on them yet they claimed it was a social construct from the West.

After making enquiries about other key informants, I was led to a former Minister of Women and Culture in Buganda Kingdom (Ms Sebugu—name not real for purposes of confidentiality). We sat in her office in Kampala. I introduced my study topic and requested her to give me her opinion on what it means in Buganda traditions for children to work and what in her opinion child labour meant. Her views simply reinforced the views of Mr Tendoti. In her opinion, the concept was not applicable locally because there were remarkable differences in the levels of development between the developed West and a country like Uganda. The differences therefore make it impossible for children in the two contexts (worlds) to be treated alike. She explained:

We are talking about a child here in Buganda and Uganda at large... Generally, there is a big difference between child labour [the way it is understood] here in Buganda compared to countries abroad ... First let me talk about children abroad [West—developed world]. I have never admired the behaviours of the children abroad. I dislike and never at any one time have I admired these behaviours. There was a time when they wanted me to take my daughter abroad but I refused. I said that my child must study and grow up from here. I could not take my child to learn behaviours that I regarded as inhuman ... like children showing disrespect to their parents. ... [the] behaviours were a burden to parents and some of them showed regrets ... about their children's bad behaviour.

Now I want to make a comparison. Children abroad are a responsibility of government. Therefore, if it [government] comes up to say that children be treated in a certain manner, it has that right. To justify this, when a woman abroad gets pregnant, the government takes care of her by paying all her medical bills and other services that she needs right from the time of conception to birth. After birth, government also takes up the responsibility of looking after the child in all ways for example by providing for the child's education, health, and even giving the child [or mother] an allowance ...

As a result, these children ... do not care because they know that the responsibility over them with government but not with their parents. This is why you find such children disrespecting their parents. However, the difference here in Buganda is that we do everything by ourselves. For instance when I get pregnant, I take care of myself and my family by paying hospital bills and buying all my child's necessities. When my child reaches school going age, I am responsible for his/her school fees. In other words, my child [her] himself values the hardships that I go through to bring him [her] up.

Secondly, I cannot bring up my child the way Bazungu do. This is because we do a lot of work by ourselves such as growing food, collecting firewood, and fetching water among many other activities. From these we earn money to pay tuition. So it cannot work out if my child refuses to do any of these tasks well knowing that his/her school fees is derived from such work. Also by involving my child in this work, I will have helped him learn something helpful for his future. This is contrary to the White children who have well set up governments. Therefore, child labour here in Uganda cannot be similar to that of the Bazungu.

As I chipped in a question, I inquired if her response suggested that because our (we people in the developing countries) ways of living were quite different, we needed a different kind of interpretation of child labour. She continued with her explanation by pointing out that:

We are still poor and *banaku* (poor people with a lot of hardships). Do you understand? As I said, we do most things by ourselves in order to get money. This is contrary to the Bazungu who have well set up governments that have the money to take care of all their needs. If I don't have money, my children will not eat, won't go to hospital and government will not come in to help. For example, children under *bonna basome* [Universal Primary Education] cannot study well because they stay hungry. Government cannot afford to pay for the meals of these children. This is why I say we are still poor and *banaku*.

Asked as to whether she meant that child labour was being forced on "us" (the people in poor countries). She said:

Yes, they [Westerners] have forced something on us that is not practical. They have adopted laws of the already wealthy countries and have forced them on us the poor (*banaku*). We go through a lot to get money. Take an example: a man wakes up early in the morning to push a cart (*kigaali*) so that he can cater for his children's needs. But if government bars the parent from having a say on a child, [they say], 'do not do this, do not chastise [using a cane to discipline] a child who is disobedient ...' this is not only wrong but also malicious. As if they want to spoil our children. A child has to understand the hardships the parent goes through to raise him so that he does not take for granted the things done for him.

For White children however, government freely provides for all their needs because the child fully belongs to it. Have you understood me?
Therefore, we have taken up something...

That is not practical in our daily lives?' I asked:

Yes, it is not practical in our everyday lives. It looks like they [Bazungu] are malicious, want to spoil our children ... because we are still poor and our children cannot be like theirs. Yet, they have inculcated [instilled] in our children the attitude that 'it is my right.'

You tell a child [in the West] ‘go wash utensils’, and he responds ‘do it yourself, don’t you have hands?’ Therefore, if my child shouts at me, I cannot provide for his school fees because I also go through a lot to raise it. Children abroad are a responsibility of government. A parent may request her child to wash clothes or clean utensils and this child will refuse. The child knows the government will provide money to take care of his [her] needs. It is not the same here. A parent abroad has limited rights on these children. The government meets their needs.

As the discussion descended into issues of child rights, it became apparent that the values, traditions and other social-cultural issues perceived to be traditionally good had been challenged by the way child labour had been constructed. Taking this into account, I inquired further to know how she compared our values to those of the West in relation to raising children. She commented:

Culturally, with respect to our values and norms, we were brought up with [strong focus on] respect for our elders and parents. You have to give respect to your parents. They feel good and honoured when respected. As a matter of fact, Bazungu admire our behaviours [values and traditions] a lot. We have old children abroad whose behaviours have been admired by Bazungu. This is because we trained them to be polite and have respect for people, which is not the case with children abroad.

.... Out there, it is all about equality. We have to do whatever it takes to ensure that we conserve our rich culture because anyone who does not have a culture is a *kisassalala* (nuisance). We have a culture that we are proud of and have to protect. ...anyone without a culture is nothing!!!! We train our children to have *empisa* (culture, values) that we are proud of and those abroad admire. However, if they bring in their behaviours (values), they automatically spoil our behaviours. ... our behaviours will get spoilt and our children will become *bisassalala* (nuisances) just like theirs. We want our children to take on behaviours that are humane. You find tourists always coming back to Uganda because we have a culture that is so rich. Also, there is peculiar respect we give to people which they can never find anywhere else. This is what we call *buntu bulamu* (cultured or treating people respectfully). For example, the girl child has to kneel down when greeting her parents because it is a sign of respect and there is nothing she loses. Also, a girl has to learn to prepare traditional food because *emmere yo mu mazzi* (boiling bananas in plain water instead of the traditional way of wrapping them in banana leaves before cooking) is not nutritious [leads to loss of nutrients]. All this portrays our rich culture.

Turning our focus back to child labour, she rejected the idea that government should stop (or discourage) children from doing certain kinds of work (mainly at home). She said: “That is very wrong! Who will work for this child?” She also indicated that the government is in the process of promoting its ideas on child labour because it has not consulted with the ordinary

people. I asked: *Is it that government has not consulted with ordinary people?* She responded:

Exactly!! Who will work for this child? With our presently poor country, a child has to learn all kinds of chores like digging, cooking food, and washing clothes. *Ago ge maka* (that is what makes a home solid). Also as this country develops, our children will [most likely] neither be able to find nor afford housekeepers (*abakozi b'awaka*) as is the case abroad. Housemaids have started venturing in their own work like trading in the markets because they find a lot of liberty in being self employed. Therefore, if a parent does not train a child to work, how will this child run his future home? Parents should therefore train their children right from the grassroots so that in future, they can ably look after their homes.

Although she put emphasis on the need for children to work, she pointed out that some parents abuse their children by mistreating them through work to fulfil their ill conceived goals. She nonetheless pointed out that the government and other campaigners had not distinguished between children's freedom and child labour:

This is the problem we have with our government. It has not differentiated between children's freedom and child labour. Government should clearly identify and set aside the work which children are supposed to do and that which they regard as a form of torture to the child. For example in schools especially the privately owned, teachers no longer punish children for fear that children will accuse them of abuse, which could force parents to look for other schools. This is wrong because it does not help the weak pupils to learn, if punishment is the answer.

I have endeavoured to treat child labour as a form of abuse in the next chapter. This is what has been constructed as the local equivalent of child labour and constitutes a discourse on its own.

7.4 Child labour a ploy to make “us” dependent on the developed world

Before I concluded the interview which had now transformed into a free flowing and interesting conversation (coupled with points of laughter), we were joined by another person who I considered after the discussion, a very knowledgeable person in Kiganda ways of life and also very knowledgeable on contemporary as well as on political issues. Mr Ssewa (name not real for confidentiality) was also a serving Minister in Buganda Kingdom. He expressed willingness to participate in the discussion. At this point, we were about five persons (me and

the research assistant, Mr Nteyafande (name not real for purposes of confidentiality) an elder and a point of contact, Mr Ssewa and Ms Sebugi).

Mr Ssewa's views were in agreement with the views expressed earlier by the informants. Those who were contributing during the discussion were also in agreement with his views. His point of departure was that the people in the West were deliberately pushing ideologies such as child labour to achieve their agenda. This agenda was aimed at weakening our society and making it dependent, so as to exploit it to their economic benefit. In his own words he explained:

Those who bring child labour policies have intentionally made us believe that they are helping us, yet in actual sense they are not. Though we have transformed into a modern world, super power countries still exploit labour in order to bail their economies. They intentionally employ migrants whom they pay very little money. We tend to think that such people have gone *kukuba kyeyo* (make money by doing blue collar jobs abroad) yet in actual sense they have gone for their rights to be trampled over.

(Laughs, laughs—sarcastically) They have never tackled the issue of taking people as slaves. They disguise slavery to make us think that it is no longer there. Long ago slaves used to grow sugarcane and tea, but today's slavery has come in another form. Therefore, they still use ways such as those to make themselves rich.

(Laughs, laughs) *Bagya nebakuteelawo embera egamba nti, 'tokuluusanya mwana! Ddembe lyamukazi okwoonona!* (They introduce the policies and laws saying, 'Do not make a child toil! It is a woman's freedom to do whatever she likes [irrespective of man's rights...]' [For the case of child labour] this has resulted into homes having people without responsibility because no one is willing to work, e.g. a parent cannot order his child to cut down a tree because if he does, it will be considered as harassment. Homes [families] have therefore come to a standstill.

Long ago in Buganda, no one would work for his neighbour because everyone had to strive on his own. There were certain crucial things ... aimed at building strong families. The reason as to why Hitler killed all short men in Germany was because he feared they would lead to a weak country and this would hinder it from overcoming its problems. He figured out that short men would produce weak children and lead to a weak Germany.

Bwebatuuka wano ku element y'okukola, nga bagamba nti 'tukuluusanya abantu...', *kakati nga abakazi batandika kubaleetera bizigo, bakeera kwesaaba!* (When they [Bazungu] come here to talk about work, they say, 'we are making people to labour...' In the case of women, they bring them jerry [lotions] so that [what they have to do] is only to smear their bodies [and look attractive, without doing any work] ...they (women) come from the villages to towns only to do nothing... This has resulted in a

weak and poorly educated society... we have selfish governments which don't mind whether people go astray or not.

You mean laws on child labour have been introduced to weaken us? I asked

Ah ha! They are introduced to weaken us. For example America has succeeded in weakening other countries through policies like family planning. Today, the police is harassing us we cannot defend ourselves because we are few, we are under populated. In the long run, you will find some countries engulfing others. *Mukulyangana kati okwomulembe bakugamba tolina kukola bwoti!* (The modern way of annihilating you is for you to be told that 'do not do this, do not produce many children.' They are weakening our society one step at a time.

The training that children get through work is what you refer to as *kkulusanya* (child labour). This training enabled them to take care of their homes in the absence of their parents. For example, if a parent got a snake bite on an errand and was admitted in hospital, he would have no worries because his children would ably take care of themselves. On the other hand, children today just sit and parents have to hire a house girl/boy to take care of all the household chores. In other words, you bear the risk of bringing a stranger into your home to render you a service, because your children can't take care of themselves, can't wash their own clothes, can't iron their own clothes and can't bathe themselves. Worse still, you have to look after the person you've brought to render this service by giving her a place to sleep, plus paying him/her salary.

Nowadays I hear many companies advertising that they have well trained house girls.

One participant completes the sentence:

Gyebagenda ate gyebabatulugunyiza (while employed, they get abused).

Yes that's true.

Nolweekyo, waaliwo engeri engenderere, owulidde? (Therefore there is a malicious intention here, you get me?)

You need to know that even if a child is still of tender age, he/she should not have all the freedom she wants. Those who advocate for the children's freedom want the world to come to an end. Jesus came to the world to preach the gospel and that is why he was called the son of God. However, what you have to know about him is that he worked when he was young. His father trained him in carpentry until he started his ministry. This is why we are told that Jesus was a carpenter. Today, they take away our children (government owning them) without them having acquired any training.

The discussion became intricately linked to children's rights more and more as participants gave their opinions.

7.5 The challenge on children rights

In a serious attack on the notion of children rights, discussants explained that the notion of children rights was lopsided and had no place in the local ways of living:

This issue of rights is lopsided and cannot work here. I read about a student of Makerere who stabbed another with a knife and killed him instantly, while they were watching football. Two others were injured.

What kind of thing is that?

What will the parents of those children do? Three... children! *Omupiira obupiira!* (Simply because of a mere football game). All this is because of giving children [too much or] unnecessary freedom.

This thing of children rights cannot work here. *Tekisoboka! Tekisobokera ddala oba werimba bwerimbi!* (Impossible, completely impossible, it is self deception).

God created tribes and he gave each tribe work to do e.g. some are herdsmen, others are cultivators and others do other occupations. Therefore, the responsibility of working as a cultivator or as a herdsman is inborn. If a child refused to wash the plates, he would not eat food. In addition, if a neighbour gave food to such a child being punished, the parents of the child would complain to their neighbour accusing him of instilling indiscipline in their child.

Yenga nga bakukkiriza okulya mukyalo! Haaaaaaaaa! (Would parents even allow you to eat from the neighbourhood!!). Children knew that they could neither be given food at home nor eat it elsewhere after refusing to work. This kind of good upbringing resulted into a nation with useful citizens. The presidents we've had over time did not study much, but they ably led the country because of good upbringing. However today, you can tell a university student to do some work and he fails because the foundation on which he was raised is poor.

... Therefore, a person that has no culture cannot become anything in this world. Someone can identify your tribe from your culture. For example, different tribes have different ways of preparing meals because of cultural differences. Culture is very important because it is like a flag of a nation. Also, you can identify a person's culture from the way he/she dresses.

Linking the issue of culture to children's work, Mr Ssewa made this observation:

Before you come to the conclusion that the work given to a child is harassing, first look at the benefits the child will get by doing it.

In other words those who advocate for child labour don't look at how work benefits the children? I asked. The three participants agreed entirely. One of them pointed out:

Ah ha! If I tell my child to dig in the garden, I will be inculcating a sense of responsibility in her. They [Bazungu] do not view cultural practices such plucking out the front tooth for identification an ethnic group, using hot iron to mark parts of their body ... these are not targeted as abusive practices. How come that they are able to point out that children taking part in work, is a form of harassment?

Another participant added:

Abantu kubanga babalumya, abaana babalumya nyo nyo nyo!!!

(People suffer serious pain because of these practices—genital mutilation, removing tooth, use of hot iron for body marking etc). Children suffer too much, too much...). Such cultures are the ones I regard as tormenting the lives of children.

How can someone consider an activity like fetching water as a form of harassing a child, eh! If a child's parents are full time farmers, would it make sense for them to leave the farm and fetch water when the child is just seated at home? Bazungu themselves [some] have done despicable things such as turning children into homosexuals... This is sexual harassment but to my surprise, Bazungu look at it as a right. This is why you find so many states legalizing marriage of homosexuals.

(Laughter ...) To my dismay, Bazungu don't look at it as *kutulugunya*. Such issues need to be seriously tackled. ...children growing up abroad have become a nuisance.

You need to tackle this issue in your PhD research so that in future, people appreciate your efforts (there was total agreement).

It is important to point out that contrary to the assertions of some study participants policy makers do not necessarily reject the participation of children in domestic work. It appears however, the general discussion of child labour and children rights in sensitisation activities does not clearly bring out the distinction between tolerable and intolerable work within homes. Alternatively, the intervention activities in some cases tend to generalise children's work leading to confusion. In these discussions and conversations, I had largely interacted with the elite, especially in regard to levels of education and those who were more aware of cultural and contemporary issues. Their views reflected a convergence of opinion that child labour and the notion of children rights had a common denominator that they perceived to work against their cherished values, norms, and other traditions. They felt that their views were representative of people in many other parts of the country.

7.6 Views of participants from fishing communities

The participants in fishing communities paid greater attention during the discussions, on the problems parents faced in raising children and why children were at work. I present most of these views in chapters that focus on child labour as a product of poverty. Under this section however, I am concentrating on the views of participants who linked child labour to the controversial subject of human rights.

In FGDs with parents majority of whom were women from Gerenge fish landing site and Wakiso town Council (Kisimbiri B parish), it was explained that there was confusion in the understanding of child labour because of its linkage to children rights:

What confuses people is the link between child labour and children rights. Many people don't understand children rights very well. They tend to confuse the two.

[They say] *maama nze gende nkube omwana bansibe!* (To discipline my child and then I am locked up in prison!). So they end up not disciplining their children. Others refuse their children to work for fear of being sent to prison.

Other participants showing agreement added:

Many people misunderstand the freedom of children. They think that children should not be punished or even guided. They actually fear to punish their children because in case they do, children report them to police and they are jailed.

Maama maama leka. Okube omwana osibwe!! (Oh oh, forget it. You chastise a child and you are in (prison). Even teachers also stopped beating children at school for fear of being imprisoned [but many still punish children violently].

It is bad to say that children should never be punished (beaten)—indeed children should really be punished. I think it is okay to punish a child as long as it is not done brutally or in a way that causes serious harm.

One woman wondered:

What beats my understanding is when a child misbehaves and is not supposed to be punished. Even when he refuses to go to school! Yet it is something we must enforce through punishment.

There was something positive though on this subject of children rights:

On the other hand, it has reduced child neglect and cruel acts or punishments against children. The police have helped to sensitize people about these issues. This is really good (Voice of a woman leader)

But many people in Uganda are still confused and ignorant about what children's rights entail and what they don't (voice of a male FGD participant).

This was also emphasised in several discussions on the main land.

7.7 Views of the elderly about child labour and children's rights

Elders aged between 57-90 years at Gerenge fish landing site on Lake Victoria, also complained about the notion of children rights during an FGD:

Everything is now linked to children's rights *tetukyalina bwogerero* (we no long have a say). If you don't take a child to school, it is violation of a child's right, if you also force a child to go to school, say you punish them that is also violation of his/her rights. So we don't know what to do.

The elderly pointed out that while the rights of children are emphasised, their points of view are ignored even when they present their complaints to the local authorities:

Most people [on the islands] are young 15, 17, 18, 20 years. When you try to advise a 14 year old, people start abusing you that you are old and you don't know what you are doing. People don't recognize us as elders when you advise or guide them in the right way, every one turns against you and there is no way you can defend yourself because, they are the majority. Even if you take the matter to the LCs [Local Council], those who will escort and support the wrong doer to the LCs are the majority. They may for example be like 30 in number and you really can't defend yourself from such a group.

Some even ask you whether that child is the first one to do wrong, they even tell you to leave the child alone. '*Omwana muleke. Yasoose okkola ekyo?*' They claim that children have their rights.

Attributing the confusion between child labour and child rights they pointed out:

Most people are ignorant about government policies and laws in relation to child protection. People don't know those things. Government policies have gaps and people don't know—they are ignorant about these laws. When the chairman organises

sensitisation meetings people ask: ‘*Obaletedeyo ki? Mubaletedde buyambi?*’ (What have you brought for the people, any kind of [material] support?).

Supporting the view that abuse of children through work exists, elders and parents of children pointed out that there were cases where parents made lives of children very difficult through work or other situations. They considered this to be a form of maltreatment and I have decided to treat it separately under the ‘child abuse’ discourse. Furthermore, they isolated activities which in their view constitute abusive work. I have also considered this under the local equivalent of child labour, where child labour has been isolated as part of child abuse.

7.8 Reflection on the emerging views and conclusions

On the basis of the findings in this section, child labour as a concept does not communicate a meaning that resonates with the understanding of the people talked to. Instead, it is perceived as a campaign to stop children from working, yet working particularly at home is part and parcel of the ways of raising children. By implication, there is a lack of shared understanding of the *child labour* concept, including its associate—*child rights*. This lack of shared understanding suggests that the voices of those who are affected by the definition of child labour have been shut out in the process of generating the meaning. It appears that a top down approach of defining child labour has taken precedence over the bottom up approach.

Authors like Robert Chambers (1997:188) have challenged the ‘positivist, reductionist and mechanistic, standardised-package and top-down models and development blue prints. Within these prints, it can be argued that the understanding of child labour was conceived by the professionals. By focussing on people’s involvement, he suggests the relevance of a paradigm in which *multiple, local* and *individual* realities are recognised, accepted, and enhanced and celebrated. Hence, the lack of involvement of local people has not helped in reducing the communication gap on issues of child labour. It suggests that professionals’ and power holders’ efforts to deal with the undesirable aspects of the phenomenon, may not gain full support from the grassroots peoples, who perceive the meaning of child labour as foreign and undesirable.

By linking the concept of child labour to that of child rights, it also suggests that there are elements about children’s rights that arouse controversy and require dialogue with

communities. One of the approaches to resolving these controversies involves use of Community Dialogue (CD) approach, which has been defined as a continuous mutual exchange of views, ideas and opinions between people or groups of people aimed at developing mutual understanding and seeking a solution (see Canadian Rural Partnerships 2002). Using this approach can help in generating a shared understanding of child labour and child rights concepts.

Another important aspect emerging from the findings relates to the absence or difficulty of communicating the intended meaning of the concepts developed at the international level and translating into the local languages. The concepts of child labour and child rights appear to be affected by this failure. Richardson (1994:518) notes that “Different languages and different discourses within a given language divide up the world and give it meaning in ways that are not reducible to one another.” The concepts of child labour and child rights are introduced in the English language and translated locally, for example in Luganda. More often, the translations involve competing discourses (professional views, cultural views, political views etc) as well as subjectivities of the translators. The outcome is a description of a reality (child labour, child rights etc) with competing meanings over which there is no consensus. This therefore, calls for community involvement and dialogue.

A reflection on people’s reasoning suggests that there is need to use alternative words or concepts to communicate the intended meaning of child labour. For child labour, alternative concepts such as *emirimu egikuluusanya abaana* (abusive work for children, work that makes children toil’ etc) should instead be used. Tying this with the concept of children rights, there was further indication that, use of the concept *children rights (eddembe lya abaana)* did not fit within the traditions and ways of bringing up children. Instead, alternative terms such as *okuyisa abaana obulungi, endabirira y’abaana ennungi* (raising children appropriately, giving appropriate care to children) should be used. Putting emphasis on alternative terms or revising the existing ones was emphasised as it would help protect children, without necessarily causing antagonism between children and their parents. For example, it was emphasised that child labour and child rights efforts needed to emphasise the rights and responsibilities of both parents and children, and clearly articulate the scope for exercise of these rights and responsibilities. Ansell (2005) has argued that rights in some communities are more collective, rather than exclusive as implied in the international conventions.

Responsibilities of children and parents for example, are articulated by the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children article 32.

The lessons from the views of participants suggest there is great room for exploration and learning when people are involved in generating meanings of the concepts such as child labour and others like child rights. Their involvement is not to justify the objective truth, but rather to allow multiple voices to be part of defining problems and solving them.

Chapter Eight

8 Child abuse discourse: Child labour is abusive and violent work

“Abusive work’ only a part of child maltreatment...”

The child abuse discourse brings to fore the local equivalent of child labour. *Child labour* is work forced on children and involves cruelty, torture, and is heavier than children's capacities. The work is given with bad intentions by adults. Abusive work is viewed as being only a part of wide ranging abusive practices children face. Hence, the selective consideration of abuse in work by actors is viewed with suspicion. Under this discourse, children should under normal circumstances not work for money except until they reach age 14 or 15. That money exerts a negative influence on children resulting into problem behaviour like stealing, risky sexual activities and loss of interest in education. The discourse views as a necessary evil for children to work as a means of survival. At the same time it recognises the benefits of work to children. It calls for identification of abuse in work situations and an assessment of work in relation to age and capacities of children.

This is the fourth and last construct of child labour which cuts across all the previous discourses presented. Given the emphasis placed on abuse in both work and non work situations, an elaborate account on the nature and contexts of abuse, as well as the broader meaning of abuse which goes beyond work is presented. The presentation of the findings is preceded by a discussion of existing international instruments aimed at protecting children against abuse, conceptual clarity of violence or abuse and its measurement, and an analysis of the situation of violence against children in Uganda.

8.1 Introduction

Efforts at both international and national levels aimed at stemming violence against children whether experienced through work or other situations, are invariably driven by the

commitment to protect children's rights to survival (provision), development, protection, and participation as spelt out by the UNCRC. Article 19 of the UNCRC states:

States parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has the care of the child

This and other provisions stem from earlier instruments including the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (article 5); the 1966 Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the 1953 Convention on Political Rights of Women; the 1981 African (Banjul) Charter on Human and People's Rights; and the 1932 Convention No. 29 on Forced Labour—just to mention a few. More recently, these concerns have further been reflected in the convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (No.182) 1999; the 2000 Optional Protocols to the UNCRC on the involvement of Children in Armed Conflict; and the one on Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

While the concern to protect children remains a key goal within these instruments, interventions to eliminate inappropriate work or child labour have often treated the problem as disjunctive or separated from other multiple forms of violence children experience. This is reflected in the numerous programmes that target abolition of children's work deemed to be hazardous, but which hardly focus on other forms of abuse children experience. As a consequence, local people may view with suspicion some of the initiatives claimed to target inappropriate work. In the academia there are numerous voices that question the notions underlying the child labour interpretation (Nieuwenhuys 1996, 2007; Kielland & Tovo 2006; Boyden 1990; Lancy 2007; Ennew, Myers & Plateau 2005), while others have pleaded with key actors to listen to what children are saying with respect to child labour (see Woodhead 1999; Bass 2004). Hence, there is a risk that initiatives related to children's involvement in work could be interpreted as a ploy to disenfranchise children and their families from utilising children's labour for individual and family gain. The suspicions are fuelled by the absence of efforts to generate local interpretations or insider views on what child labour is and creating room for dialogue before pursuing the interventions.

The purpose of this chapter is to present a local equivalent of what child labour means or should mean, based on local peoples' interpretations. The emerging view defines child labour as a form of violence against children and that it should not be treated separately from the broader abuses that children experience both at work and outside work. By placing emphasis on child abuse or abusive work, the discourse places the right of the child to protection, at the centre of the debate of children's work and offers an opportunity for generating consensus on abusive work from a rights perspective. Furthermore, it offers a chance to examine the social and economic relations between children, parents and employers in a work environment.

8.2 Renewed efforts to deal with child violence

Violence and abuse are concepts that are more often used interchangeably particularly with regard to children. According to the World Health Organisation ([WHO] 1996) violence is defined as:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation.

This definition bears greater similarity with the one on child abuse by the WHO (1999):

Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and, or emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship, trust or power.

These definitions are important in specifying and designating work as a form of violence in as much as it has an intention to harm the child. They point out violent acts that result from a power relationship between children and those who abuse them through work or other situations. They also designate as violence all those acts whether by commission or omission, which may include child neglect and all types of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. The definitions associate intentionality with committing the act itself irrespective of the outcome (see Dahlberg & Krug 2002). The problem emerges however when some definitions focus on the behaviours or actions of adults, while others consider abuse to take place if there is harm or threat of harm to the child (see Straus 1979; 1995; Straus & Hamby 1997).

Fig. 8.2: What to consider in defining abuse in a work situation

1	2	3
Behaviour/Actions (Parents and employers)	Intent	Outcome
How should child labour be defined?		
Either: a) 1+2+3? = Abusive work (when harm is intended; and not otherwise)		
Or: b) 1+3? = Abuse (as long as there is harm whether intended or not)		

Source: Author

As Runyan et al. (2002:59) point out, the distinction between behaviour, regardless of the outcome and its impact is a potentially confusing one if parental intent forms part of the definition of child abuse (violence). This is very critical to generating an understanding of child labour owing to the fact that some experts appear to consider children as abused even though they have been inadvertently harmed through the actions of a parent with good intentions (such as involving children in work). Other experts require that harm to the child be intended for the act to be defined as abuse. Another problem arises as regards how to assess the intent putting into consideration that it is rare for a person to admit ill intent to the child.

Despite the possible challenge in determining or defining what constitutes violence in some situations, there are renewed international efforts to address the problem of abuse in its multifaceted forms. These include physical violence, sexual, psychological, child neglect or deprivation among others. The UN Secretary General's study on Violence Against Children (2006) provides statistics on violence based on submissions from various sources as part of the preparation for the report. It shows at least:

- 53,000 of children deaths in 2002 were homicides
- 20 – 65 percent of school aged children are verbally or physically bullied in the school system in developing countries
- 150 million girls and 73 million boys have experienced forced sexual intercourse

Other acts of violence have been defined [based on ILO reports 2002, 2004] as child labour involving 218 million children in 2004, of whom 126 million were considered to be in hazardous work. These estimates can be contested if there is no agreement on the definition of child labour. It is for example argued that such estimates are based on methodologies that tend to mix observations or facts on working children with negative value judgements. In

essence, the concept is not an objective, technical description of a single observable set of human relations (Ennew, Myers & Plateau 2005:28). Hence, it is very difficult to provide a factual justification for the indicators. Some of these limitations are examined in this study.

Notwithstanding, there are children in internationally defined WFCL over which there is no controversy. ILO estimates from 2000 indicate that 5.7 million children were in forced labour, 1.8 million in prostitution and pornography, and 1.2 million were victims of trafficking (ILO 2002).

In Uganda, violence is manifested in all forms including exploitative labour, physical, sexual, emotional and child neglect. Of the cases reported to police stations in four districts (Apac, Lira, Bundibugyo and Kasese) with a history of war between 2003 and 2005, child neglect registered the majority of cases totalling 1412, followed by forced (or exploitative) sexual intercourse (Walakira & Opio 2006). At the national level, sexual violence against children accounts for 82 percent of the cases reported to Criminal Investigation Departments of the Uganda Police (Government of Uganda Report to the CRC 2006). Cases of child prostitution, trafficking, involvement of children in armed conflict are also documented (ILO 2007; Walakira 2006; African Network for Prevention and Protection Against child Abuse and Neglect [ANPPCAN] 2006; African Child Policy Forum [ACPF] 2006; Dipak 2006). On involvement in armed conflict, between 1990 and 2001 an estimated 20000 children were estimated to have been abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Northern Uganda with boys recruited as child soldiers and girls as sex slaves (Human Rights Commission 2004; Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development [MoGLSD] 2004). Other most pronounced forms of violence against children include hitting, whipping or battering, starvation, burning, child sacrifice, verbal abuse and emotional violence. People who perpetrate most of the violence against children are those who are part of the children's immediate environment rather than strangers.

The ecological model developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) helps to shed light on how a combination of factors including the individual's characteristics, personal history, his or her family environment, the immediate social context (community factors) and the characteristics of the larger society help to perpetuate violence or protect against it. This model in combination with interpretive approaches will guide the interpretation of violence against children in relation to work.

This discussion on violence against children sets the contextual background for the discussion of people's interpretation of what constitutes abusive work or violence in a work situation. This chapter therefore examines the local equivalent of child labour or intolerable work for children.

8.3 The local equivalent of child labour: Abusive—cruel—violent work

Table 8.3: Child labour interpreted as child torture

Intention	Characterisation	Perpetrators	Identified WFCL in their areas
	Heavy work		Child sex work
	Un proportional allocation of household work		Working in bars
Humiliate child	Abusive language against child	Stepmothers	Children taking part in war
Exploit child	Denial of basic provisions	Stepfathers	Using children in robbery
Harass child	Unfriendly environment for child	Employers	Using children to sell drugs
Torture child	Limited or no pay for child by employers	Uncles	
	Denial of food to child		
	Denial of rest to child		

Study participants gave their interpretation of child labour which is closely tied to child abuse or violence against children:

Rather than help children learn as part of informal training, some people decide to *okuchiya* (torture) children. For example, if you have ever been in a poultry farm, you will realise that a chick leaves all other chicks and picks on one chick. It pricks it continuously following it wherever it goes. *N'ekabojja, nekadda eno n'ekanoonyayo neddamu n'ekabojja* (it runs after it pricking it wherever it goes).

In respect to work, a mother picks on one child and gives her [him] more tasks than other children. She tells the girl to go back to the spring for more water, fetching it more times than her peers. Meanwhile, the other children will be left to play.

In other words a mistreated child is given more work than her counterparts. Work in this case is not distributed fairly among children. The tortured child is given harder or complicated work. When the child is done, she will be told to undertake other tasks without rest. *Kino kiba kivude mukutendekebwa nga kifuse kutuntuza* (such treatment to the child is no longer training but has turned into torture or mistreatment). *Kino kiretera omwana obwenyamivu* (this mistreatment causes misery and psychological torture to the child) (Cultural elder).

Further elaborating on abuse of children, participants explained that abuse involves not only heavy work with bad motives, but is also accompanied with other abusive practices. Nonetheless, not all practices including forms of punishment are regarded as abuse:

I cannot rule out the fact that children are harassed. However, what I regard as harassing of a child is burning a child or recklessly beating a child when she does wrong, making a child carry loads that exceed her ability and denying a child food after she has done work and other things of this sort. However, it is healthy to punish children when they do wrong. For example, a child getting three to four canes after she has done wrong is very right. Children have to learn to work as long as we don't harass them (Former Woman Minister in Buganda Kingdom).

Further giving their own understanding of child labour, participants pointed to the practice of giving children work which is beyond their age limit.

For me I understand child labour as making children to do work beyond their age abilities. I do not consider a child working at home, say fetching water as child labour ... Child labour involves a parent [guardian] giving a child heavy work with a bad intention of making the child suffer. This is what we call *okkulusanya omwana* (making the child toil through work). This reminds me of a proverb: *Atamuzadde, amutikka jinja* (a parent gives heavy load to a child other than her own). Even in Buganda there were instances of child torture among stepmothers and maternal uncles. In the distant past, maternal uncles would ask their sisters to take their children to them. They would do this to use the children as sources of labour. In the process, they would give them a lot of work and make them suffer. For this purpose, that proverb was coined. The Baganda of those days decided to introduce a norm whereby each time such children performed any work, the uncles had to give them a reward. If they worked, say in the animal shed, they had to be given a calf or a kid. If they cleaned the courtyard you had to give them money. If they cleaned the poultry shed, you had to give them a hen or cock. They introduced a saying that if they worked and were given nothing, the animals or birds would die. This was meant to protect these children (Author of Luganda books and radio presenter).

8.4 Traditional means of addressing abuse

There were however other *traditional means of addressing forms of abuse* manifested through hard work, beating and other forms of violence. It was explained that there were traditional courts (*ebigango*) starting at the household level. If the case was not resolved, it was forwarded to higher levels as indicated below:

Children court—headed by eldest child in household

House hold court (Kigango)—headed by Katikiro of house (woman head)

Arbitrator at household—father

Head of family court—**Omukulu w'oluggya** (leader of households linked to one father)

Ow'olunyiri—head of family heads (grand parents) linked to one father

Ow'omutuba/

Owessiga—Head of clan (Kooti wakisekwa)

Katikkiro— administers the kingdom on behalf of the Kabaka (King)

Kabaka—Overall leader

These were the cultural or traditional courts used to resolve cases. However, there were administrative courts as well for resolving cases. The courts outlined below also handled cases of child abuse.

Omutongole—village chief

Owomuluka—Parish chief

Oweggombolola—Sub County Chief

Owessaza—County Chief

Each of the cultural and administrative courts would handle a case depending on its complexity and the parties involved. Abuse in relation to work was inexcusable as parents or guardians were expected to be well conversant with the abilities of their children and therefore, were not to give them work beyond their abilities. This brings me to another attribute participants attached to the label of child labour. That is, *work for pay*, within the broader discourse of child abuse.

8.5 Working for money corrupts morals of young children

The popular view among participants in this study comprising key informants at the grass roots, local leaders, opinion leaders, parents, and children was that work involving pay for children who have not attained a certain age (common age suggested was 14) or level of independence from their parents, should be defined as child labour:

I take child labour to mean *okkozesa omwana attaneetuuka nga ate akolera sente* (making an underage child work for money). Traditionally, children used to work alongside their parents. Parents would teach their children by working with them. I come from Buddu. As a boy we would wake up very early in the morning *netukwatilako ba taata ensamo n'ebiso netugenda okumuyamba ko okiyimbula omutuba* (we would carry the harmer (or chisel), pangas and knives, and together with our uncles we would set out to go and debark the *mutuba* tree. Thereafter, we would take the stem bark to the processing place (*kkomagiro*), where our father would proceed to make bark clothes out of it. The rest of us would go home to do other tasks such as herding goats, sun drying coffee, and beans or go to fetch water from the well. But we were not working for pay. Our only payment was in form of *kasiimo* (appreciation). *Mzee* (father) would simply buy for us shirts or shorts just like any parent would care for his child (Opinion leader and former Buganda Kingdom Minister).

Working for money while under age was blamed for corrupting behaviours of children in FGDs organised with parents at Gerenge, Kasenyi, and Wakiso:

It gets bad when children start to work for money because they lose interest in attending school in addition to learning bad behaviours like stealing. We have cases of children who steal fish here and hide it in sand for sale. Those children grow up with such habits. That is why many of our children taste prison.

For some boys—after earning money, they use it to lure young girls. They give them money and gifts. The girls in return have [unprotected] sex with them. As a consequence, they become pregnant and in turn drop out of school. Because of the financial earnings by peers who are not attending school, those attending school are persuaded to drop out. They are easily lured by their peers who do fish-related work.

It was further blamed for loss of interest in education by parents at Kachanga Kavenyanja islands as well:

It is alright for children to help their parents, but a problem arises when the child gets money and does not go back to school again.

Some children deliberately drop out of school to earn an income from activities related to fishing. This is because there is readily available work and money in settlements around the lake. As such, some children prefer to work than go to school.

Table 8.5: “Child labour is making underage children undertake work for pay”

Parents: Working for money exerts bad influences on underage children (≤14<15) years	Children: Money needed but changes attitude of children (affected≤14)
Loss of interest in education Learning bad behaviour like stealing Engagement in sexual activity (sex is hardly protected, performed hurriedly) Boys make girls pregnant leading to drop out of school Working children are exploited Makes earning money the only and most important goal in the lives of children Children get too tired Children become rebellious at home Children at that age need a token of appreciation, not payment	Children will never offer to work for free Money is needed for survival Children need to work with guidance from parents—if left on their own, they go astray Money stops boys from attending school Money contributes to family survival Working for money for children without care takers is inevitable

While all parents in Kachanga Islands were in agreement that work for pay is not good for children, a young girl aged around 15 disagreed:

Everyone survives to get money so it is not bad to work for money.

A woman in her late 30s or early 40s immediately responded:

It is bad because the children can start stealing.

The young girl in trying to defend her position further argued that, if the problem was learning to steal, parents had the obligation to teach them not to steal:

... Then you should teach them not steal.

Other participants (older women) stared at the girl and wondered in disapproval before breaking into whispers.

Thinking that the views of parents living on the mainland (over 40 kms away from the lake) would probably be different about children working for money, an FGD was organised involving parents in Kisimbiri B zone (Village) in Wakiso Town Council. During the discussion parents still considered not as a good thing, for children to start working for money before attaining age 14. In some cases, they suggested 18 years as an appropriate age for participation in work for pay:

Working for money is very problematic and I don't support it.

If work involves helping parents it is good. If it involves working for money—it is very bad. Children tend to become unruly.

If the child is in a candidate class like primary seven (P.7) or senior four (S.4)—even working in a family business [shop] becomes problematic when entirely left to the child. It does not allow the child to concentrate.

8.5.1 Views of children on working for pay

Children like other participants explained that work for pay for young children has a negative side. However, it depends on circumstances:

There are boys who are not going to school and instead do work at the landing site to earn an income. Some children—depending on the family they're coming from, do

work at the landing site to earn money. Some do it to contribute to family survival, while others do it because their parents are negligent or cannot control them (FGD with children at Kachanga).

The interest in working also matters and the child is free to get any amount of money depending on the amount and kind of work done. The child should also work under the supervision or guidance of the elders so as not to be on his own (FGD with boy children at Kasenyi aged 12-14).

Some children felt that doing work without parental supervision results in the problem behaviour among children such as stealing, alcohol consumption, and indulgence in unprotected sex.

8.6 Activities that characterise child labour (abusive work)

The views of participants suggest that the context or the working environment and the nature of work determine whether work is abusive or not. The activities that parents considered to constitute child labour are discussed below.

8.6.1 Working in markets

This was singled out as one of those activities that spoil the morals of children. In a discussion with a former Buganda Kingdom Minister and an elder they had this to say:

These days, you find a six year old in the market selling polythene bags. Some of these “kids” help you when you go to the market to carry some of your purchases [goods] to your car and ask for money in return. You ask them ‘for what?’ and they reply: ‘because I have helped you carry your purchases to your car.’ *Kweggamba omwana n’akula nga akakaalukana*’ (as such a child grows up striving). With time such children become conmen (pick pockets and thieves) *nga bw’okawa ebintu byo tekabiteekayo mu mmotoka, kakuyisawo buyisi...* laughter ... (when you tell him to help take your purchases to the car, he will simply disappear with them) (Former Buganda Kingdom Minister).

Even in the market place such children get to listen to *embooji z’abakulu* (adult conversations that involve mainly sex and related issues). The same thing is common in garages. Children also learn obscene words *ogenda okuwulira nga kakubyewo eggambo* (you get surprised to hear such a child utter an incredible obscenity) (educationist and elder).

Besides work in the markets, domestic service (working as housemaid) was also singled out as child labour and it is discussed below.

8.6.2 Working as house girls (housemaids)

Young girls in urban areas, in the fishing communities and Uganda in generally, those aged 12 to 17 take up work as housemaids (house girls). House girls do a range of activities at home including child minding, food preparation, house-cleaning, washing of household utensils, clothes, and doing market routines. While the work offers accommodation, food, and a small pay, it makes girls overworked and subjects them to sex abuse (MoGLD & ILO 2004). Hence, during an FGD with elders at Gerenge fish landing site, they were of the opinion that this work should be seen as abusive work or child labour:

It is bad when girls are sent to work as house girls in people's homes in order to raise school fees ... The head of the household who is usually a man may develop funny feelings towards that young girl and could end up defiling her. Most of the men who rape the young girls return home while drunk.

Some participants nonetheless felt that working as a house girl can be described as good work if the parents for whom the child is working are caring:

... Domestic service can be good for house girls, but this depends: *nga abantu b'akolera bategeera* (if the girl works for understanding people). Because it is similar to work that was traditionally in a home setting. If the family she is working for is *cultured* (well behaved), they can nurture and take care of her as one of their children. But if you find a bad family, this kind of work is even worse (Opinion leader and former Minister Buganda Kingdom).

Moving away from the discussion of domestic service involving mainly girls, participants turned to work in the fisheries comprising child labour (abusive work).

8.6.3 Children's work on the fish landing sites—largely inappropriate work

The work on fish landing sites was considered abusive largely because of the environment under which it was performed. This was more so for children below 14 years. One of the aspects that make the work problematic is the criminality among the actors:

Fish landing sites are usually dominated by people who have committed crimes. The criminals always come to the fish landing sites to hide from law enforcement agencies. For this reason, you find all sorts of people from all different walks of life

coming to the lake. ... We have people who use drugs, who rape girls, and those who do all kinds of things. ...

In their opinion, the criminality was responsible for widespread lawlessness involving child rape, battering, and children involvement in sex for money in addition to use of drugs. The resulting multiculturalism was also blamed for problem behaviour:

Because of the diversity in cultures, children learn a lot of bad behaviours. For example, a grown up person bathes openly in the lake and faces all sides while naked ... laughter ... this gives a bad picture to the children.

I recently met a man urinating and he did not mind whether I was passing or not. This landing site has all sorts of bad behaved people. People have very bad behavioural backgrounds. You may find one with a history of involvement in rape, having come straight from the prison to this place. Surprisingly people do not enquire about the backgrounds of such people before they give them a chance to work. Such people have done a lot in spoiling our children (FGD with elders at Gerenge).

Not only is work considered to result into problem behaviour, but was also considered to endanger the lives of children. Here is a brief narrative on how the discussion ensued with participants at Kachanga. The discussion has been ongoing for nearly an hour in a wooden shelter (which serves as an entertainment and drinking place). A woman in her mid 30s abruptly joins the group. The number of women taking part in the dialogue now exceeds 15. There is no way to limit their involvement as everyone is interested in the discussion. It is also approaching 3.30 pm. The research team (I and six research assistants) have to sail back to the mainland before it is dark. The distance could take us over two hours. The woman says:

Embeera yaffe wano ku bizinga mbi nnyo era nkyaaamu (Our living conditions here on the islands are too bad and harmful for raising children).

Moderator: *Tewali mwana ayinza giyitamu?* (no child can grow up from such conditions?)

She replies: "No"

Moderator asks 'why'?

She says:

Because there are no schools and when they come on the islands they are attracted to stay because of money.

Another participant interjects:

... So like some of us parents, we just have to allow our children to work and this way they get spoilt. ... (Some participants seem to be embarrassed by this suggestion).

Another participant adds:

... During holidays they [children] come here and work and when they go back to school, they don't concentrate. They are very eager to come back and get money instead. So if there is a law that forces children to go back to school, then this would reduce children's involvement in work. The fact that the lake is free, they keep coming. ...

One participant intervenes and says:

But still even on the mainland they work.

Explaining that work on the islands was very dangerous to children, participants had this to say:

On the lake many children die because of drowning while fishing and all I can say is that fishing is very delicate and therefore unfit for young girls and boys.

Another participant adds:

Girls of less than 18 years work in bars and restaurants around, yet they should not work there. ...

Responding to a question as to whether there were many bars on the island they said:

We don't know because the bars are in our own homes so our children automatically get involved. Those who come to drink see our girls and touch them provocatively. ...they [girls] are repeatedly touched especially if you are behind the curtain trying to get more drinks...you cannot see them. The same house or room where they serve drinks is also used as the sleeping place. When the bar is closed sometimes late in the night, they convert the room into a bedroom.

Another participant adds:

... if you have children who are big and not working with you, they can go out when you are not aware and come back pregnant (some prolonged laughter among participants).

The discussion continued to explore other research issues.

8.7 Views concerning inappropriate work for children

Participants comprising adults and children identified other work which they considered heavy for children. Elders at Gerenge fish landing site described carrying a bunch of fish and goods as heavy work for children:

Lifting *emigeto* (bundles of fish) and heavy loads

Fishing from small boats...

I think all the lake activities are bad, they're harmful. For example, spreading nets is also bad because people spreading them tend to use vulgar language.

Table 8.7: Work considered inappropriate for children below 14 years

Work in the markets	Vulgar language Learning other vices like stealing and pick pocketing
Work in bars	Children sexually abused
Work in restaurants	“ “ “
Actual fishing –using canoes, hooking ...	Children die in water Slide off the rocks while hooking and die Heavy work i.e. rowing the boat
Carrying fish bundles	Heavy work
Other work on fish landing site	Bad because the environment is bad, corrupt behaviour, use of vulgar language, interacting with criminals, loss of cultural identity
Nursing sick persons in hospital/home	Exposes private parts of patients to a child which is shameful Risk of catching sicknesses
Any night work	Robs children of sleep, children risk accidents and disease, could be criminal work, sexual abuse, limited or no protection at all for children
Prostitution	Considered immoral, has many healthy risks, destroys the future of girls through pregnancy and disease
Working for money	Takes away children's interest in education, encourages bad vices such as rebellion, stealing, use of drugs etc
Any work in an abusive, unhealthy and morally corrupting environment	Risk of rape, use of vulgar language, exposure to dangerous substances like acids, dust in coffee hullers, maize mills etc; little rest for children
Work in quarries	Heavy

Other work such as involving children in war was considered adult work and not fit for children. Provision of nursing care for a patient was considered inappropriate for young children.

Some participants however explained that when children undertake certain forms of work at home that are heavy or challenging, they develop resilience and are able to confront hard life

as they grow up. The activities nonetheless “should not be extremely heavy for children”, they pointed out.

8.8 Efforts against child labour misinterpret ‘normal work’

The views of participants show a disagreement on the way they interpret child labour compared to how it is understood officially. In their opinion, the messages against child labour targeted work that children do at home yet they considered this normal work:

It is necessary that those people talking about child labour classify or distinguish between activities. It is not proper to lump together all activities. Some activities can be heavy for children who have not attained a certain age. If there is a distinction in games i.e. light and heavy weight for boxing... even activities should be distinguished. I always have this saying. ‘In the world, there is nothing bad or good. Everything depends on three things: a) measurement or appropriateness, in this case the amount of work. How much is done? b) Effort required or heaviness. How heavy is the work? c) The way work is done, how complicated is it? How is it done? All these have to be considered to ensure that a child is given what she/he can manage ... instead of generalising (cultural leader and elder).

The thinking of participants therefore suggests that government and other actors need to take into account their point of view so that they can work together to eliminate what is defined as abusive and inappropriate work for children.

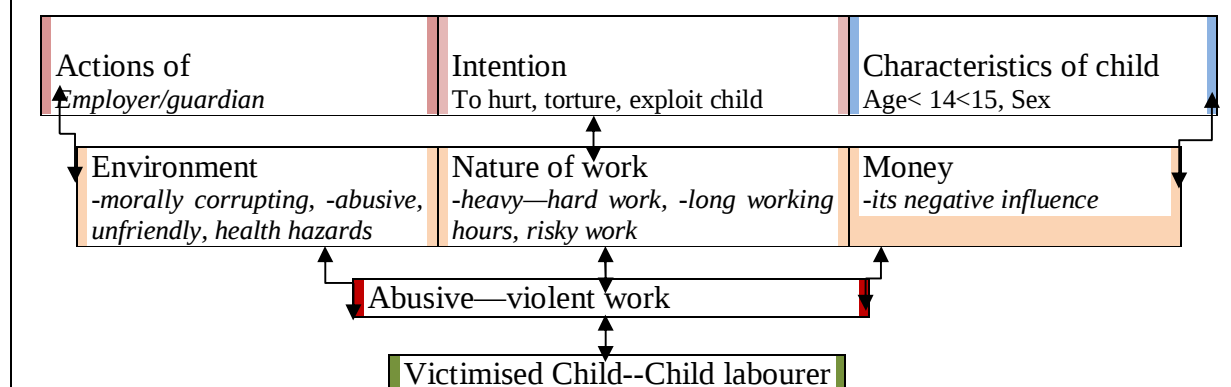
8.9 Discussion of findings

Study participants viewed child labour as a form of violent work and that it is only part and parcel of many forms of abuse that children experience. This form of abuse involves giving children work in excess of their age specific capacities with an intention of hurting or exploiting them. This discourse that constructs child labour as a form of violent work when further analysed, reveals distinct sources of abuse which characterise ‘abusive work’. The sources of abuse include:

- a) The person—guardian or employer (bad actions and intentions)
- b) Characteristics of the child (age, sex, skills, knowledge—when they do not match the requirements of the work)
- c) The environment in which work is undertaken (unhealthy, morally corrupting etc)

- d) The work itself as a source of abuse (nature of work)
- e) Money as a source of moral abuse (with its corrupting influence)

Fig. 8.9: The ecology of violent (abusive) work



The various narratives and expressions of study participants show that it is persons in the child's immediate environment who intentionally abuse children by forcing heavy or inappropriate work on children. Within the home environment, stepmothers and fathers, maternal uncles and aunts are responsible. Not only do they intend to hurt children, but also exploit them as sources of cheap labour. Employers also abuse children through exploitation of their labour in return for meagre pay. Outside of the home, there are children peers who teach children alcohol consumption and discouraging them from attending school. There are also those who teach them drug use or use of vulgar language among others. Places such as bars and video halls, just to cite a few, expose children to sexual abuse.

In addition, money for underage children lures children out of school and drives them into sexual unprotected sex activities resulting into contraction of sexually transmitted infections. Girls suffer pregnancy leading to school dropout. Money was however considered a necessity for children without caregivers or those with negligent parents. Work itself was seen to be a source of abuse if it was risky and heavy for the child. Finally, the characteristics of the child related to age (≤ 14) and sex, played a crucial role in determining abuse. Girls were more susceptible to sexual abuse through domestic work, bar and restaurant work.

These factors that lead to violence or abuse through work situations are identified by the Ecological Model as developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and later adopted by Dahlberg &

Krug (2002) in analysing violence in general. The model singles out personal, community and societal factors within a child's environment that affect a child. In relation to violent work, the above factors need to be targeted for change in eliminating violent work.

8.9.1 Areas of convergence with international view on child labour

The age of admission to work set at 14 by the Minimum age Convention was similar with age limits suggested by parents and children. Some of the activities considered as very bad for children such as prostitution, involvement in drug use, armed conflict among others; are also part of the unconditional Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) as delineated by the WFCL Convention (No.182) 1999. Parents and children argue for the need to focus on the nature of work children do and age capacities— also provided for in the international laws.

However, the call for analysis of the intention of children's participation sets another dimension that needs careful attention from the view of parents and children. It means that work with bad intentions to hurt the child can be distinguished from that with positive intentions. Furthermore, the view that abuse can be identified in a work situation, implies that it can also be eliminated hence, a departure from requiring total abolition of children's work as some campaigners tend to recommend. For some activities however, children need total withdraw. From the analysis, it is clear that exploitation of children will remain as long as parents and governments are unable to meet the needs of children. This remains a key challenge facing efforts aimed at fighting violent and abusive work among children.

8.9.2 Conclusion

This section has examined the discourse which defines child labour as a form of child abuse. The sources of abuse have been identified to include; the person, the environment where work is undertaken, money as a source of abuse and work itself. The discourse has considered child labour to be only a part of the several abuses that children experience and therefore, the need to consider it in this broad framework rather than treating it separately. The discourse presents some form of agreement with international conventions on some actions of perpetrators that constitute abuse, the age of admission to work etc. The point of departure however rests on generalisation of children's work as child labour including those working to survive and who like their work. The positive intention for involvement of

children is overlooked in such generalisations. The discourse points to the possibility of eliminating abuses rather than calling for total abolition for work that is tolerable.

Chapter Nine

9 “We want practical learning”: Children’s views about school and work

Children’s aspirations for attending school are frustrated by manifold inadequacies in the school system manifested in the inadequate curriculum and poor learning conditions. These factors undermine the quality of education and deflate children’s interest in attending school. Children crave for practical learning to acquire traditional and modern skills, but the school is unable to meet their expectations. The hidden costs of education force children out of school. Distractions outside the school such as work and mistreatment also affect school attendance. The environment in the fishing communities makes school attendance difficult. Paid work and education are generally not compatible with effective school attendance.

This chapter examines children’s views on work and education, pointing out compatibilities and incompatibilities. It answers the research question that sought to generate children’s views on work and education. The introductory section reviews contemporary arguments for and against children’s involvement in work in favour of education. It also presents some statistical data on the situation of education in fishing communities before presentation of findings.

9.1 Introduction

A global solution for elimination of child labour in the words of Nieuwenhuys (1996:242) is based on the sanctity of the nuclear family on the one hand and the school on the other, as the only legitimate spaces for growing up. Children growing up working and not attending school manifest distorted childhoods as they deviate from childhoods of the industrialised West or childhoods experienced by children of middle class families (see Boyden 1990; Zeliser 1994; De Mause 1976). Indeed, the official discourse on child labour and education as articulated in international law recognises children’s rights to education than their rights to work. Children’s right to basic primary and secondary education is marked out in Article 28 of the UNCRC. The intersection between children’s work and education is viewed negatively.

Hence, Article 32 of the UNCRC calls for protection of children against any form of work that interferes with their education. Furthermore, the Minimum Age Convention (No. 138), 1973, emphasises the need for children to complete the primary school cycle before joining paid work at 14 years (for the case of developing countries). Children however, can undertake light work at age 12.

It is necessary to examine children's views regarding work and education particularly in the fishing communities in Uganda. In these communities, school attendance is very low (MoES 2004). This enables an understanding of interests and categories of children best served by the official discourse on child labour and those who are not. It also makes it possible to examine the interests of children not best served by the official interpretation of child labour.

9.2 Protecting childhood? Rejecting children's involvement in work in favour of education

In general, there is a rejection of children's involvement in work in preference to school attendance. Some of the reasons advanced by this school of thought include: the negative effect of child labour on achievement of Education for All (EFA); its effect on human capital formation, which lowers enrolment ratio and literacy levels; school attendance, poor performance at school and its disproportional effect on career tracks of girls and boys as girls tend to be over represented in non economic activities (Allias & Hagemann 2008). Other factors are related to health, protection of children against exploitation and the effects of work on their physical and social development (ILO 2002, 2006).

While the reasons against children's participation in work are compelling, they are largely based on the premise that work is the primary factor for children's non school attendance. Existing evidence however contradicts this premise and reveals that children's non school attendance owes largely to the high cost of education and the poor quality of education (which includes inefficient use of instructional time, lack of sufficient text books and other learning materials, un secure, crowded and poorly maintained schools, poor sanitation and inadequate content etc) and factors related to sickness, distance, hunger, and so forth (UNESCO 2004, 2005 & 2007; UBOS 2006; Sengendo & Walakira 2004). While the effect of children's work cannot be discounted regarding school attendance, it accounts for only 4-5 percent of children in paid work and about 12-15 percent among those involved in domestic

(home based) activities (MoES 2004; Walakira et al. 2005). In other surveys, the effect of domestic work and paid work on school attendance is just above 20 percent (Klees, Haweley, Byamazima & Kyeyune 2002; Walakira & Byamugisha 2008). The children are nonetheless primarily drawn into work in search for school fees before the work becomes a barrier to their school attendance.

Notwithstanding, the view that school attendance is the most effective antidote against child labour has gained currency and fits squarely in the UNESCO's EFA campaign that aims to ensure educational access to every child of school going age by the year 2015 (see UNESCO 1990). It also fits the Millennium Development Goal 2 on Universal access to primary education and goal 3 on elimination of gender disparity in primary, secondary, and all other levels of education (see United Nations 2000, 2001). With more resources committed towards increasing enrolment in schools, the world net enrolment ratio rose from 83 to 87 percent between 1999 and 2005 (UNESCO 2007). Participation levels have increased most rapidly in sub-Saharan Africa (23%) and South and West Asia (11%). The number of out-of-school children has dropped by 24 million to 72 million between 1999 and 2005. Survival rates nonetheless continue to be low. Countries like Uganda have had only 25 percent of children able to complete the primary school cycle by 2004 (UNESCO 2007). Disparities between countries, rural urban differences, gender, and poverty levels in relation to children, continue to be major challenges (see UNESCO 2006, 2004, 2007). Indeed, there is still a long way to go in providing an education that works for children in relation to: "learning to know", "learning to do", "learning to be" and "learning to live together" (UNESCO 2004:30, 1996).

9.3 Situation of education in Uganda: Increased enrolment, lower survival rates and achievement levels

Uganda still has more work to do to improve the educational indicators for the general population. The Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS) undertaken in 2005/6 (see UBOS 2006) shows that 20 percent of the population aged 15 years and above have had no formal education. Persons aged 10 years and above who can read with understanding and also write meaningfully, comprise 69 percent of the population. These have only increased slightly from 65 percent between 1999/00 and 2005/06. There are still gender variations in the literacy rates, with female literacy estimated at 63 percent compared to the male literacy at 76 percent. Adult literacy for persons aged 18 years and above is estimated at 69 percent.

The educational indicators ought to have looked better given the introduction of UPE over a decade ago. Indeed, the major achievement of UPE since its inception in 1997 has been more of quantitative rather than qualitative educational outcomes. Quantitatively, primary school enrolment has tremendously expanded from around 3 million pupils in 1997 to about 7.5 million in 2003 and over 7.6 million in 2005/06 (UBOS 2006:14). Overall, primary school enrollment for children aged 6-12 years relative to the total number of children in the same age range in the population (net enrolment ratio) is estimated at 84 percent. Despite these achievements, the qualitative outcomes are not pleasant. Less than half of the pupils completing primary school have attained proficient skills (being able to read and write with understanding). Citing Uganda Nation's Examinations Board, the UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring report of 2008 (See UNESCO 2007) shows that half of the pupils in grade 3 and 6 reached defined competency levels in English literacy. Achievement levels in numeracy have however, declined.

Table 9.3a: Percentage of grade 3 and 6 pupils in Uganda reaching defined competency levels by subject, 1996 to 2006

	English literacy (% of pupils)					Numeracy (% of pupils)				
	1999	2003	2004	2005	2006	1999	2003	2004	2005	2006
Grade 3	18	34	-	38	46	39	43	--	41	43
Grade 6	13	20	28	30	34	42	21	38	33	31

Source: UNESCO 2007:69, Table 2.16, based on Uganda National Examinations Board 2006 report.

The poor achievement levels point to the quality challenges facing the UPE. In essence, the rapid expansion of enrollment levels has not matched the pace of the initiatives aimed at improving the quality of the learning environment. Notwithstanding, the government already took note of these challenges and has been working to improve efficiency indicators which give a picture on the learning and teaching classroom environment in terms overcrowding, pupil- teacher contact, and availability of learning/teaching materials. These indicators include, Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR), Pupil Classroom Ratio (PCR), and Pupil Textbook Ratio (PBR). Between 2000 and 2004 these indicators have shown a decrease which implies an improvement in the efficiency of the education system.

Table 9.3b: Efficiency indicators between 2000 and 2004

Indicator	Target by 2004	Realised by 2004
Pupil teacher ratio (Primary Government Schools)	52	53 (all schools 50)
Pupil to Classroom Ratio (Government schools)	90	84 (all schools 79)
Pupil to textbook ratio	-	-

Source: MoES (2004) Uganda education statistical abstract, pp. xxi-xxii

The improvement in the two efficiency indicators above has not corresponded with achievement levels particularly in mathematics where indicators in upper classes show a declining trend (see table 9.3a on competency levels above). This implies that other factors critical to improvement of the quality of learning are yet to be effectively addressed. These include inefficient use of instructional time due to teacher absenteeism, lack of instructional materials such as text books, security within schools, the content of learning and the physical state of school structures among others. UNESCO (2005:73), for example, identifies Uganda as one of those countries (including Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania, Mozambique, and Malawi) where half of the grade 6 pupils reported learning in classrooms that did not have a single text book. Citing evidence from Bonnet (2007) the UNESCO 2008 EFA Global Monitoring report shows that within these and other African countries, between 25 percent and 40 percent of teachers reported that they did not possess a book or guide in the subjects they taught.

The above factors affect the learning environment and partly account for the high levels of school dropout. UBOS (2006) survey shows that less than two thirds (38%) of the pupils enrolled in primary 1 complete grade 7. Only 685000 pupils managed to reach grade 7 in 2006 among those who enrolled in grade 1 in 2000. Less than 50 percent of children are able to make a transition from primary to secondary education with the numbers gradually reducing. The cost of education remains the most common reason for dropping out of school. While UPE is considered free, it involves hidden costs such as uniforms, stationery, transportation, and boarding which tend to exceed financial means of parents and pupils. Other factors like distance, hunger, work, civil unrest, and a general poor learning environment have been identified (MoES 2004; KURET 2007; Walakira 2007).

9.4 Education status of children in fishing communities

Data from the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) based on the Annual School Census of 2004 shows that districts with large water fishing bodies such as Kalangala and those affected by cattle rustling such as Kotido have the lowest levels of primary school enrolment, retention and achievement levels (see MoES 2004). The data however does not identify the interests of children in the education system.

Table 9.4: Education indicators among working children in fishing communities

	5-11 yrs	12-14 yrs	15-17 yrs	Male	Female	Total
School attendance & enrolment	%	%	%	%	%	%
Currently enrolled	75.8	48.3	22.1	38.4	52.2	41.6
Dropped out	19.4	47.2	72.9	57.6	40.3	53.6
Never enrolled	4.8	4.5	5.0	4.0	7.5	4.8
Total	62	89	140	224	67	291
Highest level of education						
None	4.8	4.5	5.0	4.0	7.5	4.8
Non formal education	3.2	0.0	0.0	0.4	1.5	0.7
Lower Primary	80.6	49.4	16.4	38.8	44.8	40.2
Upper Primary	9.7	42.7	58.6	45.1	37.3	43.3
O'Level	0.0	3.4	20.0	11.2	9.0	10.7
Others	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.3
Total	62	89	140	224	67	291
School day attended						
0 Days	0.0	0.0	9.7	3.5	0.0	2.5
1 day	6.4	2.3	6.5	4.7	5.7	5.0
2 - 3 days	12.8	11.6	6.5	9.3	14.3	10.7
4 days	2.1	9.3	9.7	9.3	0.0	6.6
5 Days	78.7	76.7	67.7	73.3	80.0	75.2
Total	47	43	31	86	35	121
Ever repeated a classes						
Yes	36.5	43.8	64.3	54.3	40.0	51.1
No	63.5	56.2	35.7	45.7	60.0	48.9
Total	52	73	98	173	50	223
Main reason for repeating						
Poor grades in school	42.1	43.8	60.3	54.3	45.0	52.6
Missed exams	15.8	31.3	12.7	17.0	25.0	18.4
Parents changed residence	10.5	0.0	1.6	2.1	5.0	2.6
Joined new school	10.5	9.4	6.3	7.4	10.0	7.9
Missed Sch. due to work	0.0	9.4	3.2	5.3	0.0	4.4
Missed Sch. due to sickness/injury	5.3	0.0	7.9	5.3	5.0	5.3
Worked more days than attended school	5.3	0.0	4.8	3.2	5.0	3.5
Lost parents	5.3	3.1	0.0	1.1	5.0	1.8
Could not afford school fees	5.3	3.1	3.2	4.3	0.0	3.5
Total	19	32	63	94	20	114

Source: Walakira & Byamugisha (2008), Table 5.1, pp 31

A study commissioned by the ILO also shows that educational indicators among working children in fishing communities selected in Uganda's four districts comprising Kalangala, Kamuli, Wakiso, and Kasese, are among the poorest (see Walakira & Byamugisha 2008). The study shows that majority of the working children (58%) aged 5-17 years were not attending school. Over half (53.6%) reported that they had dropped out of school, while 4.8 percent had never enrolled in school. Only 11 percent studied beyond primary school while 51 percent have ever repeated class. The reasons given by children for non school attendance were lack of school fees (78%), other school requirements (45%), sickness (33%), parent's lack of interest in education (32%), and work (27%). Poor grades and missing exams were the main reasons given for repetition. As can be seen, the educational indicators for working children in fishing communities are deplorably low compared to the national indicators.

Findings

9.5 Children's views on education and work

In the sections which follow, children's views about their inspiration for attending school, their expectations and experiences are presented. The data presented was mainly accessed from school going children who in most cases combine domestic and paid work with school attendance. Children provide an insider perspective about the factors within and outside the school system, which affect their learning and the decisions for abandoning school in favour of work. The views of teachers and parents are also presented to offer insight into the situation of education in the fishing communities from a variety of perspectives.

9.6 Inside the school: How children feel about education and the subjects they study

Studies about children and work have attempted to give a clear picture of why children drop out of school. The studies however, rarely explore the views of children on why they attend school, their opinions about what they study and how it might affect their interest in attending school. In a dialogue meeting comprising 21 pupils selected from primary six and seven in Bulega Primary school (close to a landing site) children gave their views about education. They indicated that their main motivation for studying was to get good employment (all the 21 pupils), starting own business (17 out of 21), and wanting to become literate (4 out of 21). These figures while not intended to be generalised to all children, give a picture on how

compatible school curriculum may be with the interests of such children, whether it gives a clear path for fulfilling their aspirations or not.

Children in Bulega and Kigero primary schools gave individual reasons as to why they were attending school and not working:

To be able to read and write
 Such that I am able to sustain myself in future by getting employed
 To acquire knowledge that I can use for my future work
 I want to learn a profession like engineering in future
 Such that I can get a job and sustain my self when I grow older
 To be literate
 To be able to effectively communicate with people, for example a person may send you a letter to go to Greece, but you fail to go because you cannot read and communicate.
 To be enlightened and become an expert who can even be consulted by other countries.
 I am studying such that I become a nurse.
 I am studying so that I am able to establish my own business in future.

Table 9.6a: Jobs that children want to do in future (Bulega Pr School)

Desired job/occupation	Those mentioning
Nurse	(Mentioned by 3/21)
Pilot	(Mentioned by 2/21)
Catering	(Mentioned by 3/21)
Nun	(Mentioned by 1/21)
Doctor	(Mentioned by 1/21)
Driver	(Mentioned by 2/21)
Engineer	(Mentioned by 4/21)
Agriculturalist	(Mentioned by 1/21)
Builder	(Mentioned by 1/21)
Judge	(Mentioned by 1/21)
Politician	(Mentioned by 2/21)

Looking at the aspirations of children, one is prompted to ask, Does the school offer opportunities for children to achieve these goals? The answer is “yes” but only to a limited extent and “no” to a large extent. Taking the example of literacy, it is one of the aspirations of children which the school can help realise by the time children reach upper primary.

However, a sizable number of children reported that they could not read and write in English. This was confirmed in a dialogue meeting with children in Bulega primary school. Out of the 21 who attended the meeting from P.6 and P.7, 12 raised their hands saying they could not effectively read and write. Five of the twelve were in P.7.

Children further aspire to pass with good grades in primary seven and hope to join good-performing secondary schools. The hope of getting enrolled into well -performing schools raises the possibility that they can make it to the university or at least have better prospects for doing courses at tertiary level—promising better career prospects. Looking at the performance of pupils in Kigero primary school, the conclusion is that few of them pass with grades good enough to continue with higher education. Hence, the dream of higher education is unlikely to be fulfilled.

Table 9.6b: Performance of Kigero Primary school pupils in P.7 final national examinations

Year	1 st Grade*	2 nd Grade	3 rd Grade	4 th Grade	No Grade
2001	0	33	10	6	1
2004	11	73	15	15	29
2005	0	41	16	5	1
2006	5	41	19	9	1

Compiled from school records *1st Grade=A; 2nd Grade=B etc

From the numbers generated, it can be clearly seen that pupils who succeed to sit for their primary seven exams predominantly pass with 2nd grade results. Only few pass with first grade results. In 2005 there was no pupil passing with 1st grade result. The factors that affect the performance of pupils as explained by both teachers and children relate to the unavailability of teachers, lack of instructional materials, poor facilities, and the lack of commitment from teachers and children.

9.7 Children craving for modern and traditional skills

Pupils' aspirations or expectation in the education system are further undermined by the gaps they see in the existing curriculum. Children perceive that there are certain things that need to

be strengthened or introduced in the curriculum to make their learning at school not only attractive but also more meaningful and relevant.

At our school, they should strengthen the games and sports component. Games and sports should include football, music, dance, and drama. We also need debates, netball, and quiz. Computer studies should be part of the curriculum. They should introduce associations and clubs such as the scouts and guides and debating club ... They should introduce training arts in areas like technical drawing, painting, and crafts. We should be taught how to make mats, brooms, *ebibbo* (baskets) as well as pottery and painting. Painting and drawing is lacking. We are not taught arts and crafts, yet they are very important. I think it is because they are not on the curriculum. Cookery skills: We want to learn catering skills such that we can use those skills in future to get employment (Dialogue with pupils from Bulega Primary School).

What is striking about the issues that the pupils raised for inclusion or strengthening in the curriculum is the nature of practicality associated with the subjects or activities. While these children were attending school in an urban locality, they raised both modern and traditional learning activities that bring out the issue of practical learning very clearly. Their interest in strengthening sports, music, and drama also points to the career prospects attached to these learning activities. With regard to sports, there is a burgeoning interest in games like football where boys particularly see a possibility of making it both locally (in the national football team) and internationally (particularly in Europe). The pupils see many African players at the international stage and are greatly inspired. They believe that they can have a chance to play football and reach that stage if at all the school can offer the opportunities for more training. Both girls and boys see enormous career opportunities in music and drama, which has promoted many local singers and actors (e.g. Chameleon, Bebe Cool, Judith Babirye and actors like Abby Mukiibi among others) at the international stage.

Pupils further want to have computer training, and are aware that it provides great access to information through internet. The information can enable them to have knowledge and skills for self or wage-based employment. Computers also fulfil a right to play when pupils use them for games.

Besides sports and music, dance and drama, children were interested in acquiring other skills in activities like catering. They hoped to get employed in the hospitality industry or to have their own restaurants some time later. Making art crafts, drawing and painting were also considered crucial. Unfortunately, the schools did not offer these learning opportunities for

lack of teachers and failure to include these learning opportunities in the school curriculum. Additional resources though unavailable, are also necessary for the school to buy the necessary equipment.

9.8 The desire for practical learning from subjects taught at school

Children identified some subjects taught at school as very critical for their practical learning. Although mathematics is a subject that is usually hated, pupils in Bulega Primary School singled it out as one of the subjects that are important in their daily lives (for daily living and doing small business) as well as in helping them to pursue careers such as banking or engineering in future:

You cannot go anywhere without math [mathematics]. Math is needed in almost every aspect of life and in every work.

This notwithstanding, they still expressed their dislike for some aspects of the subject and the lack of instruments needed under certain topics:

In mathematics, topics on angles and geometry should be done away with, because they are hard and sometimes pupils who lack instruments (a geometry set) are chased out of class.

Children in Kigero primary School unlike their peers in Bulega Primary School, they indicated their dislike for mathematics with the explanation that it was very hard: “The teachers do not teach well, but bring very hard questions” they observed. Their preference however, pointed to science on the basis that it was more practical and relevant:

We like science because it is practical. If you are studying for example, about the head, you can see it. Science tackles daily life problems such as avoiding diseases such as HIV/AIDS and about other health-related issues such as sanitation.

The importance of practicality in learning was further extended to the English subject. Indeed students in both schools liked English very much despite the lack of teachers:

We need English for effective communication. Most countries use English and without knowing it you cannot communicate [with people who can only communicate with you in English]. Every aspect of work requires interaction with people. Interaction with [educated] people requires fluency in English. It is important in

communicating with people from different tribal backgrounds (FGD with Pupils, Kigero Primary School).

In the two schools, pupils emphasised the need for greater practice of English language in day today communication, in debates and in other avenues, because it helps them gain fluency:

In English, the component of *conversation* should be strengthened because it helps us understand English better and it is more applicable (FGD with Pupils, Bulega Primary School).

English speaking should be practised. ... It is not compulsory to speak English here as is the case in some other schools (FGD with Pupils, Kigero Primary School).

Practical learning however, is appreciated by students only to the extent that it is not given as a form of punishment, which makes them labour inside the school. This is particularly the case when it comes to children's involvement in gardening as a form of learning on one hand, and as a form of punishment on the other.

9.9 Pupils' experiences at school that discourage school attendance

Pupils go to school with a lot of enthusiasm expecting to learn and achieve their dreams such as getting good employment in future, starting their own business and attaining good life. One of the discouragements they experience is the inability to have continuous learning at school either because of teachers' absenteeism or lack of enough teachers:

The turn up of teachers in class is not good. We can have around two lessons a day and then we are advised to read our books or sent to the school garden (In depth interview with pupil in one of the primary schools).



Children under UPE classrooms —by author

At the time of data collection in December 2007, Kigero and Bulega primary schools had 13 and 8 teachers respectively. The teacher pupil ratio for Bulega was 1:65 while that of Kigero was 1:39. The ratio for Bulega is above the one recommended by the Ministry of Education and Sports (1:52). While the ratio for Kigero looks good, it only shows that there are fewer pupils attending school. This implies that there are low levels of enrolment and retention. This paints a grim picture about enrolment and attendance in schools close to fishing landing sites. In both schools, the lack of teachers to handle children's preferred subjects was

Table: 9.9: Number of pupils in Bulega Primary School

Class	Boys	Girls	Total
P1	30	22	52
P2	37	32	69
P3	41	36	77

evidently a source of agitation, given their expectation of gaining practical skills from these subjects.

In an interview with the Deputy Head Teacher of Bulega Primary school, she pointed out the inability of the school to

teach some subjects owing to lack of teachers:

We offer the four major subjects namely, Social Studies (SST), Mathematics, Science and English for classes from P3 up to P7. For P1 and P2 we are supposed to teach 9 subjects which include Reading and Writing, Luganda, Agriculture, Religious Education (RE), SST, Mathematics, Science, English, and Physical Education (PE). However, we are not teaching PE, Agriculture, and RE due to lack of manpower (Deputy Head Mistress).

Besides teaching, teachers also provide counselling services to girls on management of menstruation, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy. The absence of teachers to take on the role of 'senior women' undermines the provision of these services:

The school doesn't have a senior woman teacher with whom girls in particular can share their problems. They either tell their friends or keep quiet. The only source of important information we (girls) need at school about personal hygiene, HIV/AIDS, sex, and menstruation is given during the official assembly every Wednesday and Friday. It is the individual responsibility of every girl to get herself pads to use during menstruation if their parents don't give them ... (in depth interview with girl prefect).

Besides the problem of inadequate teachers, children explained that they lack adequate books and experience hunger. In Kigero Primary School, children pointed out that they were overburdened with course work and having to report to school very early daily at 7.00am and leaving late after 5 pm.

Another issue that pupils in both schools singled out as a big problem was the punishments administered by teachers:

The teachers beat us a lot. Sometimes they line up with sticks so that you have to go through the line being whipped by about four teachers. If not whipped, they give us big portions of grown up bushes for slashing and digging, as a punishment. We don't like this (in depth interview with P7 pupil).

Teachers make children lift heavy loads such as logs as punishment for offences committed. They also force you to go around classes on your knees and you end up getting bruises (FGDs with P6 and P 7 pupils).

While the punishments seem to cause fear among pupils and sometimes lead to compliance, they also result into a negative association of punishment with learning subjects. This is the case with a subject like agriculture, which at times is given as a form of punishment and other times, as a form of learning:

We have gardening on the time-table, but you see giving us digging punishments makes digging lessons unpopular. We don't get the difference between normal gardening and gardening as a punishment. [And] both are frequent [given regularly] (In depth interview with pupil)

When asked about the punishments that should be allowed they pointed out:

Light punishments like sweeping, fetching water—a maximum of two jerry cans of water weighing 10 litres, slashing or digging a small area

In their opinion, the harsh punishments cause some children to drop out of school. But none of the working children gave punishment as a reason for dropping out of school.

9.10 Distractions outside school: Mistreatment at home

The punishments that discourage children from attending school take place not only inside the school, but also outside of it. School going children explained that some parents and care takers at home give very harsh punishments that force children to run away from their care takers' homes. Those who run away take up work and rarely continue attending school.

Some children face a lot of mistreatment at home and they can't stand it. This forces them to drop out of school. What I mean by mistreatment is being flogged by either your parent or another caretaker and being forced to do straining work like lifting heavy jerry cans of water, fetching very many rounds of water, and collecting fire wood from isolated forests where someone can even rape you. ... Our parents are cruel, we even fear to tell them that they are mistreating us. In fact you can be flogged if they know that you told the teachers and besides, some teachers are friends with these cruel parents *asirise asinga* (one is better off keeping quiet) (In depth interview with P7 pupil).

Punishments at home and inside the school played a key role in affecting school attendance. However, the cost of education was identified by children as playing a far greater role than punishments, absence of teachers or any other factors.

9.11 The hidden costs of education that force children out of school

The Uganda government introduced UPE in 1997. Since then, enrolment has increased drastically as already indicated. Although UPE is presumably free for all children, parents are expected to support the education of their children by buying uniforms and writing notebooks and pens, providing lunches, and other relevant materials. Some schools may also determine charges including examination fees, printing paper, and toilette rolls just to mention a few. These are required on a term basis. All these represent the hidden costs of UPE which force children from poor families to work and support their education or drop out straight away:

Some pupils drop out of school for lack of school fees. Even those who have it lack the basic necessities to use both at school and at home. They therefore go to work to get some pocket money for survival (In depth interview with P7 pupil).

In a meeting with school teachers in one of the urban schools visited in Wakiso district (identity not revealed because of confidentiality), it was explained that the school requires pupils to meet certain costs in order to attend. This being an urban school, the government allows the school to make limited charges on the basis of its unique circumstances. The charges made on a term basis are outlined in table 9.11. In addition, children are required to report with three rolls of toilet paper and two brooms each term. In other schools, children

add payment for building and road maintenance.

Table 9.11: Type of costs under UPE in a selected school in Wakiso district

Cost	Ush. (1 U\$= 1680)
Upkeep for teachers	
P1-P2	5000
P3-P5	7000
P6-P7	10000
Porridge (P1-P7)	4000
School uniform (P1-P7)	
Girls	9000
Boys	8500

Source: This study

9.12 Compatibility and incompatibility of children's work with school

A sizable proportion of children (23%-27%) on the fish landing sites, combine school and work (Walakira & Byamugisha 2008). Taking this into consideration, I

asked children to give their opinion on whether it was necessary to have an education system or arrangement that allows children to work and at the same time attend school. For example, children could work in the morning and then attend school in the afternoon.

The popular view was not to combine education with work. Those who opposed twinning education and work argued that it affects children's concentration and increases absenteeism. They further explained that children were more likely to fail if they combined school and work:

It is not necessary because some children won't pay adequate attention to studies as a result of work. *Abaana abamu tebaggya kuteekayo mwoyo ku bye basoma kubanga beesigulira kw'ebyo bye bakola* (Some pupils will not care about education because their hope will be vested in work).

Kibi kubanga omwana bayinza omugamba nti akole amale agende kusomero, naye omulimu bwe gumunyumira n'agaana oggenda (A child may be told to combine work and school but may end up being more interested in the job and therefore refuses to attend school).

I imagine that a child who is working will have his mind elsewhere, even after coming to school. Working may increase absenteeism and a child may be too tired to attend school after working.

That kind of education system is not necessary because it may impede a child's learning process. Such a child is likely to perform poorly in school (FGD with pupils from Kigero and Bulega Primary schools).

Despite the perceived limitations of combining school and work, some children supported it arguing that it was necessary as it helps children to raise money for school fees and their upkeep:

It is good because children can work and obtain school fees to attend school. It is necessary because a boy, for example, cannot live without any money.

Moderator asked: Why is it that only a boy can't live without money?

One pupil (a girl) said:

... Because boys have more opportunities to work compared to us girls. It is good because it would teach children to work and thus, prepare them for future responsibilities as adults.

Teachers also opposed the idea that children should work for half a day and then attend school for another part of the day. They revealed that there were children who were attending school and at the same time working particularly in the upper age bracket mainly to support their education:

There are quite a number of children in this school, especially in the upper age bracket (P6-P7), who are involved in *child labour* as way of raising school fees. Some children work so that they are able to meet their basic necessities such as clothes, shoes, and others to lure girls.

These observations notwithstanding, teachers explained that it was not necessary to have an arrangement that allows children to combine school and work arguing that it affects school performance, accelerates school drop outs, and causes misbehaviour among children.

The arrangement allowing for school and work is not necessary because teachers may get problems of completing the syllabus, especially where time is divided between school and work. Children may fail to concentrate. Their minds will be divided between work and school. In the end, pupils may not take their education seriously, which may lead to drop out and poor performance.

Education and business (work) are not compatible. For example, there is a case of a child who is working while at the same time attending school. This child bought a phone and started behaving like a teacher. He became very undisciplined and unruly in school. He became insolent to teachers given the fact that some of them never owned phones. With this kind of system, absenteeism, escapism and drop out are likely to be high. Some children may fail to attend school because of the thought and feeling that they could lose a lot of money in case they are away from their work (FGD with teachers from Bulega Primary School).

Linking the working children with poor discipline, teachers revealed that cases of indiscipline are likely to increase with an increase in the number of working children attending school.

Some children especially in the upper primary level after selling fish they come here and start bragging. Pupils who are working tend to behave contrary to school rules and regulations *because they have money*. They often act as though they are above the school rules and this distracts them from their education. Some [of these children] are brought up very well, but the majority are poorly behaved, rude and ill mannered and when you inform the parents about their children's behaviour, they don't respond positively (teachers Bulega Primary School).

They also explained that working boys attending school were more responsible for cases of girls dropping out of school due to pregnancy. “Some boys use the money earned to lure girls into sexual relationships. Some of these girls drop out on getting pregnant.”

9.13 “Take children away from fishing communities for them to study”

The view of a parent on one of the landing sites that children need to be taken away from the landing sites if one wanted them to study is practically not feasible. However, it offers a deeper insight about the challenges of supporting children’s education on the landings sites amidst the distractions that they face. This parent who also doubles as a Local Council Chairman at Gerenge has himself decided to educate his children in schools outside the landing sites. He has four school going children all currently enrolled in schools in Kampala, Rakai and Masaka districts. He explained that the reason for not enrolling his children in schools on the landing sites is not only because of the poor quality of the schools (lacking qualified teachers and having few classes (P1 to P7), but also because he did not want his children to interact with children on the landing sites:

I do not want my children to associate with children from the site. The children from the [fish landing] site have bad behaviours. They are [always] uttering vulgar words. Also their hygiene is not good and can spread infectious diseases like measles.

With regard to the school here [Lake Side preparatory school], it has only five classes. The school doesn’t have enough space like playground and compound. The pupils are fed poorly. They only take porridge for lunch moreover without sugar.

He explained that for him he has capacity to take his children to boarding schools away from the landing site. Asked on how he avoids his children from associating with the children on the site when they are back for holidays, he revealed that he tries to be very strict and keeps them inside his enclosed house:

I am very strict with my children. They are not supposed to play with other children. They are not supposed to visit or receive visitors. I have put the necessary entertainment for them in the house including television, radio, and video games. These keep them inside and stop them from loitering in the village. I don’t even allow my children to fetch water from the lake because they can easily associate with undisciplined children.

This parent by local standards is a rich man. He is the chairman of the Beach Management Committee (BMC) and is also responsible for revenue collection from fish harvested by fishermen. He went to school up to senior six and feels strongly about children attaining education. His opinion is that children on the landing sites rarely concentrate on their studies, a view that was evident among both parents and school going children. He said:

The children here do not go to school, but instead, they only think about fishing activities to get money. They think about fetching a jerrycan of water for Ug. Shs 100 and cleaning fish... which activities earn them money. So they cannot concentrate on studying. Most of the people on the site are undisciplined so they sow the seeds of bad behaviour like use of obscene words, prostitution, use of intoxicants, and smoking tubes (*emmind*) which are done during broad day light.

For these reasons, he does not like his children to grow up on the landing site. He also explained that he feels bad when he meets other people who call him a fishmonger, because many people [men] on the site are notorious criminals who committed big crimes like killing and raping, hence they hide at the site. By calling him a fishmonger, he feels he is categorised among those fishmongers and criminals. His assessment of bad behaviour environment on fish landing sites was supported by parents on every site where data was collected.

9.14 Parents view the lack of schools as the biggest concern

“Even the schools we have are of no good use”



Although fishing and other work undertaken on the fish landing sites play a big role in affecting children's school attendance, parents in several FGDs pointed out that the lack of schools particularly on the Islands of Lake Victoria such as Kachanga Kavenyanja was the greatest factor

affecting school attendance.

On this village [Island] we are about 2000 persons. We do not have Universal Primary Schools (Government schools where children do not pay). We have only one school with a nursery and three classes P1-P3. The school is private and is owned by the teacher. Imagine in our school, there is only one teacher who sits all the children in one class room! He even goes to fish and leaves the children in class as he goes to work.

The fact that the school offers education to children up to primary three, it implies that parents have to take their children to schools on the mainland if they want them to continue beyond primary three. Owing to the long distance and lack of transportation means, the children would have to be in boarding schools or stay with relatives if they are to have an education from the mainland. On this village which has over 2000 persons, it means that only a handful of school age children will attend school beyond primary three. Lack of schools is moreover not limited to this village alone. Several other neighbouring villages (Islands) face a similar situation. The Islands in total have over 10,000 persons.

Given that all children study from one class (on this particular island) at the same time, it is hard to imagine how they can learn meaningfully without each group distracting the other. One parent claimed that her child of 2 years keeps saying the word 'science' yet science is not taught to children in nursery.

Do children in nursery study science? My daughter in nursery keeps asking, 'what is science?' It is because she studies in the same room with children in primary.

While the parents take the children to the school, they do not see children learn meaningfully or benefit from the education because of the peculiar circumstances under which learning takes place, including the poor conditions of learning. In the end, their only goal is to simply keep children away from the community for some time:

Actually the only use of this school is to keep the children out of this harsh environment. Or else, they would roam about this place and cause trouble.

However, the absence of buildings still forces children to stay in the community for a considerable time during the rainy season:

When it rains, the children do not go to school. This is because their classroom is roofed with a 'kaveera' [polythene cover], which leaks whenever it rains. Another thing is that the children always return home for food because they don't have food at school.

When the parents perceive the schools to be of limited value to children, they reluctantly send their children to school and are hesitant to pay the teacher for the teaching services. The teacher in return commits part of his time doing other chores, sometimes leaving children alone at school. Some parents nonetheless opted not to blame the teacher, but instead blamed their failure to pay the teacher. "As for me, I do not blame him because even after demanding Ug. Shs 8,000 (U\$5) for fees, the parents here find it hard to pay up that money even by the time the term ends."

As it turns out, it is not only the children who lose in these circumstances, but also the parents and the teacher.

9.15 Discussion

While the school is a place understood by children to obtain success or laying a foundation for realising their aspirations, the school frustrates the aspirations of children because of the multitude of inadequacies it manifests in its curriculum and other conditions in the learning environment. The limited practical learning combining both traditional and modern skills is a great point of concern. Pupils desire a form of education that imparts skills before completion of the primary school cycle. Computer skills, football, singing and dancing, catering and handcrafts are some of the key skills they require. Much as the need for practical learning is recognised by government and multilateral funding organisations (see World Bank 1991; Levine & Byaruhanga 2002; Republic of Uganda 1992), it remains a problem because of the inability to come up with a feasible and resource manageable intervention by both schools and the government.

Paid work and education are considered by children, teachers, and parents to be largely incompatible. Work particularly takes away children's interest in education as it provides answers to some of their aspirations such as gaining access to money and enjoying a 'good' life, much earlier than anticipated. Yet, combining work and school is understood by parents,

children and teachers as affecting children's performance. This confirms the conclusions of several studies undertaken (see Guarcello, Lyon & Rosati 2005; Klees, Haweley, Byamazima & Kyeyune 2002; UBOS 2006) on the linkage between work and school.

The views of study participants continue to point to the key issues that force children to drop out of school and end up working. The issues identified imply that the major cause of drop out is much more from within the school than outside of it. The high cost of education involving hidden costs under the free UPE and USE and the lack of practical learning, the absence of good learning conditions characterised by inadequate teachers, absenteeism, lack of balanced curriculum, food, and learning materials as well as the poor physical state of buildings. These factors are validated by evidence (see UNESCO 2007; Walakira, Byamugisha, Omona & Nakabugo 2005; Klees, Haweley, Byamazima & Kyeyune 2002). The factors outside of the school environment such as mistreatment of children, the attraction for money through work on landing sites and the poor attitude by parents towards education largely play a catalytic role. Notwithstanding, negative attitude towards education implies that some parents on landing sites place limited value on the existing form of education since it does not contribute substantially to the improvement of family welfare in the short term. In other words, the training does not impart skills that increase the usefulness of children at the household level. The report by MoES (2004)—shows that 46 percent of children abandoned school due to lack of interest. In the fishing communities, both children and parents who lose interest in education cite its poor quality as a major cause.

When children feel burdened by excessive coursework, by punishments involving hard labour alongside chastisement etc; it suggests that the inside of the school is not as free and safe, as always projected. The view presented in the international discourse presents the school and the home as safe places to grow up. While they are usually safer, there are pupils who experience unprecedented levels of violence in school and home (Mirembe & Davies 2001; ACPF 2006; OCHA 2006; Save the Children 2007; Walakira & Opio 2006). While the school is indeed safer for children in comparison with working, the fact that some children opt to work than attend school could imply a search for freedom away from school. This is also the case when children opt to run away from homes where conditions are perceived to be abusive. In these circumstances, children are exercising their agency to attain some degree of freedom.

The view presented by some parents that the only way for children to continue with education beyond primary should be to take them away from the distractive environment on the fish landing sites needs revisiting. This view could imply a certain degree of powerlessness some parents experience with respect to child upbringing and supporting their education, which is conditioned by the environment. The environment on the landing sites is not only less supportive of children's education, but also spoils their morals. This suggests that existing social protection structures for children in such communities including the household or family, the local leadership and law enforcement agencies are failing. For this reason, cases of rape, beatings and other forms of physical and emotional abuse were reportedly common in the fishing communities.

In the final analysis, the continuation of children in school requires addressing factors in the school environments as a priority. These include lowering the hidden costs of education; working towards integrating the interests and aspirations of children in the curriculum; improving the general conditions of learning; attending to the interests of teachers; addressing the requirements for practical learning taking into account traditional and modern skills requirements and focussing on factors outside of the school environments. The school, local communities and government have a role to play.

Chapter Ten

10 Interpreting child labour in light of existing laws and policies: Local peoples' perspectives

Parents agree to some provisions on child labour reflected in policies and laws for example the start up age for paid work of 14, the elimination of the defined WFCL, the incompatibility of work and education, and the view that certain conditions of work and nature of work, seriously affect the growth and development of children. The areas of disagreement relate to what they see as assumptions in written and unwritten policies, for example that children do not like working or that work is the major reason behind children's failure to attend school. They view as unrealistic, the disregard of the positive aspects of work and the consideration that work beyond two hours per day for every child aged 6-12 constitutes abuse. There is need for dialogue on written and unwritten policy in addressing work situations that jeopardise the future of children.

The last objective of this study was to undertake a discourse analysis on child labour in the existing policies and assess it against people's opinions on child labour. Hence, this chapter presents the outcomes of this discourse analysis. The introduction sets the background for presentation of findings. It involves a review of provisions on child labour in the local and international laws, a review of discourses on children's rights and childhoods and there afterwards, the presentation of findings is made.

10.1 Introduction

Several existing international and national provisions on children rights, including abolition of children's involvement in work are blamed for representing a Western view of childhoods. According to Boyden (1990:184) the notion that children should be raised in a "safe, happy and protected childhood" is based on the norms and values that are culturally and historically bound to the social pre-occupations and priorities of the capitalist countries of Europe and the United states. This construction of childhood according to Qvortrup (1990), Young (1990), James, Jenks & Prout (1998) and Cunningham (1995), presents children as innocent,

vulnerable, passive and dependent on adults. They are perceived as becoming rather than beings. Lancy (2007:273) warns against a whole sale exportation of a culture-specific child rearing practice(s) that espouses the views of the upper strata of modern society (West). Singling out child-mother play, he explains that such a child rearing strategy may be incongruent with native belief and practice.

Several researchers (Qvortrup 1987; Toren 2002; Ennew, Myers & Plateau 2005; O'Neil 2000 & Lancy 2007) hold the view that the interpretation of childhoods is culturally and socially variable. Hence, there are different ways of perceiving, understanding, interpreting and raising children. What it means to be a child or the experience of being a child differs among or within societies due to variations in social, cultural and economic contexts. Consequently, the laws both international and local, that condemn certain child rearing practices including those that castigate children's participation in work (whatever the definition of work) and those considered to stigmatise and even criminalise the poor people's ways of bringing up children (Cunningham 1991; Nieuwenhuys 1996; Boyden 1990) are critiqued.

Yet, despite the variations in interpretations of childhoods, there is some consensus in every society that children at various stages of development have both abilities and limitations. The limitations subject them to a certain level of vulnerability, hence, the need for some form of protection. The international and national (Uganda) laws concerning children rights, and child labour in certain, were developed with the aim of protecting children. However, the laws in specific circumstances punish those they are meant to protect, affecting their livelihoods and disregarding their best interests. They also criminalise the actions of parents or guardians undertaken in the best interests of children.

In this chapter, a discourse analysis of child labour is made with a view to generating the local interpretation of the concept in light of the international and national laws and policies and any other manifest practices by government and civil society agencies. The analysis is informed by the views of local people in the fishing communities and policy makers and implementers at national level. The views presented illustrate the meanings these social actors attach to the concept of child labour and how this is translated into subsequent intervention actions. In the first sections, I discuss the various provisions in the laws

concerning rights of children in relation to work. Afterwards, I present the local peoples' and policy makers' interpretations.

10.1.1 Children as complete human beings but with limited rights

Both the international and Uganda laws define children as complete human beings with full rights. Children nonetheless do not really have full rights like adults in many respects. The rights ascribed to all human beings including children are contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). These rights include social, cultural and economic rights, or civil and political rights. For example, the UDHR by the United Nations in 1948 provides in Article 21 and 23:

Article 21

(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. (2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country. (3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will, shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 23

(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Children's rights in the two articles above as will be discussed are restricted. Notwithstanding, the UNCRC and the ACRWC also guarantee the rights of children concerning provisions for basic needs, protection and participation. The right to be protected from work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development (see UNCRC Article 32 (1) and ACRWC Article 15 (1)). Protection from hazardous work including its worst forms is further well articulated by the ILO Convention (No. 182), 1999. The Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) include Child Pornography and Prostitution; Child Slavery, Bonded Labour and involving children in Armed Conflict; Child Trafficking; and any other work that is likely to be hazardous to the child.

While the rights to provision, protection from harm and exploitation, and participation come out strongly, children's rights in the political and economic aspects are restricted making them less equal to adults. For example, children's political rights are restricted. In Uganda as is the case in many countries, children below 18 years are not allowed to take part in elections through voting. This is reflected in the Constitution of Republic of Uganda Article 59 (1-2). Their rights to join trade unions are restricted in Uganda's Labour Unions Act (No. 7) 2007.

Children are also not allowed to found families like adults. This is reflected in the UDHR article 16. The Uganda Constitution Article 31 only allows a man and woman to found a family only after attaining 18 years.

Article 16—UDHR

(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 16 (1)).

Article 31—Constitution of Republic of Uganda 1995

A man and woman are only entitled to marry only if they are each of the age of 18 years and above and are entitled at that age; (a) to found a family; (b) to equal rights at and in marriage, during marriage, and at its dissolution

Owing to vulnerability linked to age, children's rights to work are limited by the ILO Minimum Age Convention (No. 38) 1973. The minimum age for admission into employment is set at 14 years for developing countries and 15 years for the developed economies. The limitation on children's rights to work according to age is also contained in the UNCRC 32 (2-a). The ACRWC however does not provide for the age limitation, but instead provides for determination of minimum wages for all workers without excluding children. It also calls for regulation of working hours and other conditions of employment (ACRWC 15 (2) a, b).

Article 15 [ACRWC 1999]

2. States Parties to the present Charter take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures to ensure the full implementation of this Article which covers both the formal and informal sectors of employment and having regard to the relevant provisions of the International Labour Organization's instruments relating to children, States Parties shall in particular: (a) provide through legislation, minimum wages for admission to every employment; (b) provide for appropriate regulation of hours and conditions of employment; (c) provide for appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure the effective enforcement of this Article; ...

Unlike the UDHR and UNCRC that place responsibilities only on adults (provision, protection etc), the ACRWC allocates responsibilities not only to adults, but also to children:

Article 31: Responsibility of the Child

(a) to work for the cohesion of the family, to respect his parents, superiors and elders at all times and to assist them in case of need; (b) to serve his national community by placing his physical and intellectual abilities at its service;

Clause b of this Article appears to suggest that children may be obliged to work in the quest to serve their national community.

Generally however, the international provisions do not treat children the same way like adults particularly when it comes to economic and political rights.

10.1.2 Reasons for limiting children's economic and other rights

The major reason for limiting children's rights is linked to their mental and physical inadequacies, which is both a biological fact and a social construction of childhoods across cultures. Their perceived inadequacies or incapacities (see Wyness, Harrison & Buchanan 2004) suggest that children are in a state of *becoming* rather than (fully grown up) *beings*. Their state of becoming implies that they are maturing, reaching a particular end state as per the Piaget's model of cognitive development (see Piaget 1955, Piaget & Inhelder 1962). While it shows their developing abilities, it also implies that they have limitations that subject them to vulnerabilities and hence, need protection. In relation to work, they need protection from work that affects their development spanning social, physical, spiritual and moral aspects. Accidents and diseases, extreme heat and cold, exhaustion and deaths, psychological trauma, and exploitation are some of the effects of harmful work. However, their growing capacities need nurturing so that they can grow and develop fully and enjoy their full rights. For this reason, the laws require them to spend more time at school rather than at work.

The antipathy towards any measures that limit children's rights in relation to work is based on the argument that the measures (laws or policies) seek to serve the interests of adults. By keeping children away from the labour market, it limits children's competition for employment with adults. The importance of work in contributing to children's development is not taken into account.

10.2 Child labour in light of international and national laws

The Uganda government generally appreciates the provisions within international instruments concerning child labour or children's rights. As a result, the Uganda government has ratified many of instruments as indicated in the table below:

Table 10.2: Selected conventions ratified by Uganda to protect children's rights

ILO Convention No. 29 on Forced Labour, 1932 (Ratified 04/06/63)
ILO Convention No. 5 on Minimum Age (Industry), 1919 (Ratified 04/06/63)
ILO Convention No. 59 on Minimum Age (Industry) Revised, 1937 (Denounced on 25/03/2003)—working on ratification
ILO Convention No. 105 on the Abolition of Forced Labour, 1957 (Ratified on 04 /06/63)
ILO Convention No. 123 on Minimum Age (Underground Work), 1965 (Ratified on 23/06/67)
ILO Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age of Employment, 1973 (Ratified on 25/03/2003)
ILO Convention No. 182 on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour 1999 (Ratified 19/10/2000)
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (Ratified 17/08/1990)
UN Optional Protocol to the CRC (CRC-OP-AC) on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (Ratified 6/05/2002)
UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979 (Ratified on 22 July 1985)
UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966 (Ratified on 21 June 1995)
UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 (Ratified on 21 June 1995)
UN Convention on the Political Rights of Women, 1953 (Ratified on 10/12/1974)
African [Banjul] Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981, (Ratified on 10/05/1986)

Many of the provisions of international conventions have been domesticated through the enactment of local legislation which includes the Uganda Constitution of 1995, the Children Act (Cap 59) 2000; the Penal Code Act (cap 120) 2007; the Magistrates Courts Act 2007 and Police Act (cap 303) 2000, among others. The Uganda Constitution which is the supreme law provides for protection of all the rights of children, among which is their right to be protected from harmful work:

Uganda Constitution [as amended by] 2006

Article 34 (4) Children are entitled to be protected from social or economic exploitation and shall not be employed in or required to perform work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with their education or to be harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development

(5) For the purposes of clause (4) of this article, children shall be persons under the age of 16 years.

Article 25 protects all persons including children from slavery, servitude, and forced labour. (1) No person shall be held in slavery or servitude. (2) No person shall be required to perform forced labour (except if required as a consequence of a sentence or order of court, for requirements of hygiene where a person is detained, cases of

emergency or communal service). This nonetheless would exclude the very young children below 14 years.

The provisions of the constitution are further elaborated by the most comprehensive children's law ever put in place—the Children Act, Cap 59 of 2000 (amended 1997), section 8; and the Employment Act of 2006, section 32:

Children Act cap 59 2000

Section 8: No child shall be employed or engaged in any activity that may be harmful to his or her health, education or mental, physical or moral development.

Employment Act No. 6 2006

Section 32: (1) A child under the age of 12 years shall not be employed in any business, undertaking or work place. (2) Any child under the age of 14 years shall not be employed in any business, undertaking or work place, except for light work carried out under supervision of an adult aged over 18 years, and which does not affect the child's education. ... (4) A child shall not be employed in any employment or work which is injurious to his or her health, dangerous or hazardous or otherwise unsuitable... (5) A child shall not be employed between the hours 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.

There are more similarities than differences between the provisions in international and national laws. Local laws, like international laws, interpret child labour as work which is harmful to the physical, social and moral development of children, one that interferes with education, and one whereby children are exploited.

The age for admission into paid work is 14 years under the Uganda Employment Act. This is in conformity with Article 7 (1-4) of the International Labour Office (ILO) Minimum Age Convention for admission to employment (No. 138) 1973. Employment of children aged 12-14 in light work is allowed in both the Minimum Age Convention and Uganda's Employment Act. In Uganda, light work can also be performed by children under 12 years at home and this is defined as child work and is not meant for pay, but for training. Light work is defined by the Employment Act as that which is not "physically, mentally, and socially injurious to the child." An additional indicator of light work is the number of hours a child spends working (See ILO/International Programme on Elimination of Child Labour [IPEC] 2002:32, ILO 2006:4). The hours must not exceed two per day (Max 14 per week) for children aged 12-14 and must not exceed 42 for children aged 15-17 years. In Uganda, the hour limits are only specified for adults in the Employment Act, Section 53 (1-8), that is 48 hours or 56 hours under certain conditions. However, the hour limits (a maximum of two and six hours

for children aged 12-14 and 15-17 respectively) have been used in the measurement of child labour in several studies undertaken by the government in collaboration with international agencies.

10.3 Gaps in relation to legal provisions on child labour

Within both international and national laws, focus on child labour is largely placed on formal and contractual employment or at least, work where there is an employment relationship between the child and the employer. Many working children have an employment situation that shifts between self employment, casual or regular employee (see ILO & MoGLSD 2004:57; Walakira et al. 2005; Walakira et al. 2008). When a child is self employed, it means that she/he is the employee and employer. Self employment is rarely considered by the national laws, except if it fits categories defined as intolerable work such as sex work and drug trafficking. In such cases, children are simply apprehended.

Law makers and policy makers appear to have realised that most of the working children have an employment situation shifting between self employment and being employed on a short term basis (casual employment). They also seem to have realised that majority of the working children are toiling simply to meet their basic needs owing to lack of provision from parents and the state. Consequently, there are no prescribed penalties in the Penal Code Act (Cap 120) amended 2007, regarding child labour.

The positive aspects of work are not recognised except if children work under adult supervision within a home, which is mainly domestic work. Work however, contributes enormously to children's survival and development. As the findings in chapters 5-7 of this study reveal, parents and children appreciate the contribution of work to skills acquisition and survival. This appreciation however, counts little when priority is put only on formal education through the conventional school system, as the source of authentic training and learning. Evidence nonetheless shows that the existing formal system right from primary to advanced level, is riddled with weaknesses more so in the area of practical training (see chapter 9).

The case of children attending school instead of working is defended with sound reasons, for example, that the school is safer and the fact that work is usually incompatible with schooling. Notwithstanding, it is relevant to explore the circumstances where working children successfully support their education and also to examine situations when they can become more productive compared to their counterparts who acquire education, but cannot sustain themselves in the absence of formal employment.

10.4 Child labour in light of national policies and programmes

Uganda does not yet have an employment policy. What is in place is a draft developed in 2003 and revised in 2006. The key policy guide is therefore, the Child Labour policy formally adopted in 2006. The policy's definition of child labour is similar to the one contained in relevant international instruments:

It is work that is mentally, physically, socially and morally dangerous and harmful to children; and also interferes with children's school attendance. It is also [any] hazardous work, which by its nature or the circumstances under which it is performed; jeopardizes the health, safety and morals of a child.

Activities singled out as constituting child labour besides the known unconditional worst forms include fishing, domestic service, work in commercial agriculture, construction and working in quarries or stone crashing.

While the policy makes a strong case for dealing with work that is harmful to children, its translation into practice faces difficulties owing to contradictions in isolating situations of child labour that do not necessarily involve the known unconditional worst forms of child labour. This contradiction emanates from the definitions whose boundaries are contestable (Ansell 2005; Ennew et al. 2005) and the subsequent measurement of child labour using these definitions.

10.5 The challenge of distinguishing between working children and child labourers

The guidelines for measurement of child labour as developed by the responsible international agencies, for example, the Manual on Child Labour Rapid Assessment Methodology (See ILO/UNICEF 2005) make a distinction between working children and child labourers. The

distinction has indeed served the purpose of generating estimates of working children and child labourers. Notwithstanding, in several cases it has yielded results which can be contested.

Working children: These undertake work for pay or engage in work defined as economically productive. The work yields goods or products with market value. In a home situation, activities defined as economically productive could involve working in a family business such as a carpentry workshop. The non-working children are those who undertake what is defined as “non productive” work, which is domestic work. This work includes fetching water, house cleaning, taking care of children, nursing the sick, cooking, washing clothes, kitchen utensils, going to the market to buy things, among others. If the non productive work is performed for pay, then it is considered productive work. Critics have argued that this work is discounted because it is mainly performed by women and children (Ansell 2005).

Child labourers: If children aged 14 years and below (5-14 years) undertake any of the above work, both productive and unproductive in excess of two hours per day (above 14 hours a week) they are categorised as child labourers. By implication, child labour at that level has incorporated what is defined as “work” on one hand, and what is not defined as “work” on the other.

Similar activities in a home situation (whether productive or not) can also be designated as *light work* or *child labour* in different circumstances depending on whether the child was injured or not, went to school or not, was paid or not. The outcome is a general picture (bringing together all household data) that shows that in at least every activity at home and outside home, there is child labour, or at least in every situation of work, there is child labour.

This slowly but progressively leads to the inevitable but unintended: The generalisation that ‘all the work children do’ involves child labour.

In the eyes of ordinary local people however, given the conditions of raising children, such categorisation is seen as a misjudgement of children’s work. It is seen as an imposition of a foreign understanding of child labour (see chapter seven on Child Labour as Foreign Cultural Hegemony, this volume). Local participants are nevertheless aware that in many work situations both in and outside of the home, there are activities that can harm children in one

way or the other. However, in their opinion, this should not necessarily imply that the work is intentionally meant to harm children. On the contrary, in several cases, it is meant for the good of children.

The child labour policy makes an observation that:

There is a lack of understanding regarding the difference between child work and exploitative labour. In many settings, child labour is considered “normal” even if it poses risks to the health and development of the child (ROU 2006, Child Labour Policy, Sect 2.7, p.6)

This observation illustrates the difference in opinion between those who define child labour on one hand and those affected by it, including children and parents. One possible explanation for this normalisation of work, which outsiders define as child labour is related to the unexamined assumptions underlying the outsiders’ definition of harmful work (see section on views of policy makers below). To deal with the misunderstanding, the child labour policy makes a clear distinction between child work or light work, and child labour:

The term *light work* refers to non-hazardous activities done by children within their homes under observation and supervision by their families in an environment free of exploitation. Light work can enable children to learn the roles that they are expected to take on during adulthood. Household activities if done in moderation and in consideration of the capacity and age of the child are acceptable as a process of learning and exercising responsibility within the household, to the extent that such activities do not constitute a threat to the well-being of children or prevent attendance in educational programs (Section 1.1.4, Child Labour Policy, p.3.).

To avoid controversy, government interventions implemented through Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) with support from ILO/IPEC have largely targeted the known worst forms or hazardous activities focussing on prevention from entry by children in certain activities, withdrawal and rehabilitation and sending children back to school. This has been the hall mark of *direct action interventions*. Activities targeted have included commercial sex work and withdrawal from illicit activities. Other activities defined as hazardous work include domestic service and work in the urban informal sector work (See ILO/IPEC 2005, 2004). Focus on the known worst forms has received support from children and parents. For other activities including work in the informal sector, there is some degree of suspicion regarding the intentions of actors.

Despite the carefully planned interventions and the clarifications between child labour and child work or light work, there are some interventions supported or allowed by government and implemented by CSOs that tend to generate controversy or at least show a tendency towards generalisation of all children's work as a form of child labour. The interventions are designed on the basis of evidence, but as noted earlier, the results seem to be challenged by people's reactions. Some of the programmes introduced, for example, have aimed at eliminating child labour in commercial agriculture including coffee, rice, sugarcane growing, and domestic work. In the case of large commercial plantation farms, children get exposed to agricultural chemicals. They are at times overworked and paid little. Generally the conditions may not be favourable for children. However, for many small holder commercial growers (household producers), they are suspicious of the tendency to categorise their involvement of children in work as part of child labour. They reason that children take part in work as a part of traditional household responsibility, to raise school fees, and also to sustain the families. Yet, they are also aware of certain situations where parents or guardians may abuse and exploit children through this kind of work. Their problem is to generalise the abuse across all work within households.

In general, when children are seen working, irrespective of their unique circumstances, both the exploited and the non exploited are categorised as child labourers by outsiders. The work is interpreted as a hindrance to education, even when it is meant to support it. Hence, some parents in some intervention areas complained about the intention to stop their children from helping on the families' small coffee farms (FUE Evaluation Report 2008). This was an expression of discomfort in defining the involvement of their children as a form of child labourer. Similar expressions have been made by parents and children in this study. Informed opinion in Uganda, Kenya, and Zambia sees child labour in export agriculture, but not in small scale agriculture (Bhalotra 2003).

10.6 Interpretation of child labour by policy makers and implementers

Some officials in government agencies such as the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD) and CSOs show a profound depth of understanding of child labour synonymous with international child labour conventions as well as existing national laws. To some extent, they try to moderate the international understanding with their own experiences or knowledge of local contexts. They identify child labour as involving the unconditional

worst forms (sex exploitation, child trafficking, bonded labour and participation in armed conflict etc). They also single out the commonly identified features such as exploitation, potential to cause injury, and heavy work relative to the age of children. One official pointed out that child labour involves invisible forms as well:

There is invisible child labour. Many of us go to the villages to get children who in fact may be our relatives. While other children are going to school, these children are behind doors working and not going to school. But this problem is not openly seen. If a girl child is working for a male adult or when there are boys at home, they may exploit her sexually. In such cases, there are verbal abuses and humiliation and the child will not access her relative may be until Christmas, Easter or any other important day. Children have no time for leave or rest and they experience physical and psychological fatigue (Head of Child Labour Unit, MoGLSD).

These officials are particularly responsible for generating and drafting a number of policies addressing children issues including child labour. To this effect, they take both the praise for the good aspects and the blame for any weakness in the policies. For example, the policies they have developed on child labour present a strong case for protection of children who suffer exploitation, abuse and injuries among other risks, while doing work in commercial agriculture, informal sector, and domestic work among others. They have advocated for awareness-raising and sending back children to school, as well as seeking to prevent the vulnerable children entering child labour.

Notwithstanding, these social actors advance within the policies the case for children with the assumption that there is always someone employing them as pointed out earlier. Yet, evidence shows that many children move between self employment and being employed on a short term on a daily basis. When children are self employed, the laws and policies are difficult to apply to them since there is no employer to hold them accountable. The exception to this is in the pronounced cases of unconditional worst forms such as child prostitution. In this case, the child is prosecuted according the Penal Code Act Section 139.

Another assumption underlying the views of policy makers and actors as reflected in the policies is that children do not like the work defined as child labour, are aggrieved about their work situation, and are always willing to work with social-actors including government and CSOs, to prevent child labour. On the basis of this and any other assumption, sensitisation programmes are developed to target children and the employers. Many of these programmes,

while helping to increase awareness about the official version of child labour; they also arouse suspicion and sometimes resistance in the communities (see chapter on child labour as cultural hegemony). Children like most of the work they do, which however, many of us ‘outsiders’ define as hazardous work. They are also not likely to cooperate if there are no alternatives to work that supports their livelihoods and education.

Hence, with the exception of very attractive interventions for children, which tend to be very few, many children view the involvement of social actors as a form of interference or an inconvenience. This is one of the reasons why it was so difficult to get children to discuss openly issues concerning their work as they viewed me and my research assistants as government spies. The reason they perceive involvement of social actors as a form of interference owes much to their economic situation, which could be exacerbated with their withdrawal from work. For this reason, children who are supported to go back to school under child labour programmes, often drop out when the funding stops (Sengendo et al. 2004).

10.7 Comparing the interpretation in policies and laws with views of ordinary persons

Table 10.7: Views of local people [including children] on legal and policy positions that define child labour

Parameter for defining child labour	Policy and legislative provisions & practices	Views of ordinary persons and children 14 years and below (From FGDs and KIIs)
Working hours	Maximum 2 hours per day for 12-14 year olds Maximum 6 hours for 15-17 year olds per day	Not practical, fetching water alone can take more than 2 hours Moderation is important but depends on heaviness of activity Parents know how much and how long children can handle, except the bad ones or employers
Entry into paid work	For children aged 12-14 years, paid work should be only light work For those aged 14+, it is acceptable as long as it is non hazardous work	14 years and above is reasonable for paid work Below 14 should only be allowed for children without care takers Work for money generally affects children's interest to attend school; spoils children
Unacceptable work	Work that interferes with schooling	Yes, but it is the inability to pay school fees that forces children to work than vice versa Depends, if it is for the survival of the child it becomes inevitable Depends, if it is a decision of the child
	Parents/employers over working children	Yes, it is unacceptable, it is a form of abuse
	Work that affects the health, morals and social development of children	Unacceptable, in the home, many people care and love their children except in a few cases where parents mistreat their non biological children through hard work This is harmful work and can take place where a child works for pay like domestic service, some employers do not care
Worst forms of child labour	Sex work, forced labour, work in armed forces, trafficking Fishing and work informal sector	Yes, these are very bad activities that should be forbidden Some activities in fishing are positive, tolerable or acceptable while others are very dangerous and intolerable for the very young children
Other bad work	Commercial agriculture	If in plantations it generally problematic, but at home it is okay. It is part of our tradition.
	Fishing... (Construction, Hawking, Quarry work)	[In fishing communities] Fishing is bad for young children (below 14); Hooking is viewed as acceptable for older children. Work defined as unacceptable includes work in bars, video halls, markets (for young below 14), lifting heavy loads and people, work in restaurants [if not home business] and sand mining
Acceptable work	Domestic work under parental supervision and performed under moderation	Yes, domestic work, helping a parent in a shop, carpentry workshop, and any other family business—as long as work is not given as a form of punishment to the child; done with good intentions

Continued

Parameter for defining child labour	Policy or legal position	Views of ordinary persons and children 14 years and below (From FGDs and KIIs)
Best place to keep a child safe	Home	-Yes, home is a safer place—except in places like islands [or slums etc] where it is difficult to control the movement of children—many criminals, use of vulgar language, defilement of children etc
	School	Yes, school is a safer place; but there can be canning, hunger and redundancy of children when teachers do not turn up. Also working for teachers.
	Work not a good place to keep child	Depends, if work is performed away from home, it is not a good place to keep the child. If at home, it is a source of learning—especially if a parent is not ill intentioned.
Assumption about children's work	Work is generally bad for children	Work is very important for children training and family survival. If undertaken for pay, for young children of 14 years and below, it spoils them.
	Children do not like all the work defined as child labour	children do not like work when they are forced to do it against their will many children actually like the work they are doing even when it exposes risks to them work for most children is a source of their survival and livelihood for their families children do some work which they do not like but have no alternatives
	Parents are to blame when children are working and not attending school	Many children are not attending school, because of the high cost of education or the poor quality of education. There however some parents, but these are not the majority, who may intentionally make it difficult for children to attend school and spend their time working
Work and school	Work interferes with school performance	Yes, work and school are not compatible
	Children are out of school because of neglectful parents	Children are out of school largely because of high cost and poor quality of education
Abolition of child labour	All child labour/harmful work should be abolished	It is not always the work itself which is bad, but the way it is done; or the way the child is treated. Certain forms of work should be abolished, but in other cases, conditions can be improved for children.

As can be seen from table 10.7 there are both points of convergence and divergence regarding the issue of child labour. Children and parents agree generally to policy and law positions regarding the protection of children from harmful work. They underline the fact that some parents and employers abuse children and subject them to heavy work or tasks which are injurious. They like interventions that support children's education and agree that the home and school are safer places for bringing up children. They also agree with the view that work and school are incompatible.

They nonetheless do not agree with the assumption that wherever children are seen to be working, it is work which has prevented them from school. Instead, they mention that it is the lack of school requirements which prevents them from attending school. They do not agree with the view that children are always aggrieved about their work. In most cases, children like to work and use work to support themselves and the family. They also point out that certain forms of work help in child development if done with moderation, taking into account the age and abilities of children. They argue that children below 14 years are *spoiled* (acquire problem behaviour, lose interest in school etc) if they start to work for pay. They reveal that money changes their attitude towards education and that working away from home is usually bad for young children (see also chapter five on children's discourse on child labour). They nonetheless acknowledge that the prevailing circumstances condition children to work. These include the high numbers of orphans, children without care, and the difficult economic situations. They emphasise their point of view that for most of the work children do, it is simply poverty which is the cause and the one that needs to be addressed.

10.8 Conclusions

This chapter has revealed that involving children in work has cultural and economic imperatives according to children and parents. However, the laws and policies both at local and internal levels problematise work. Of critical importance is the confusion in the policies that on one hand define domestic work as non productive, and on another, as productive when undertaken for pay. It is discounted in the categorisation of working

children, but included in the measurement of child labour. While the policies view hazardous work as broad-sectoral activities such as fishing activity, the children and care givers view both acceptable or tolerable work on one hand, and intolerable work on the other, even in broad sectoral activities defined as hazardous and condemned by the law. Parents and children are not comfortable with the generalisation of their work as child labour such as subsistence farming, although they do not rule out forms of abuse in this work, particularly in situations that constitute forced work or work as a form of torture. They however reject generalisation. There are assumptions in the categorisation of children's work in the policies, which parents and children find to be half true. For example, working children are not necessarily working under a certain employer as the policies seem to suggest, but rather are self employed or keep swinging between temporary, regular employee and self employed categories.

There appears however, to be points of convergence in the views of parents and those expressed in the international and national laws and policies. For example, accessing children to education makes them safer than keeping them at work. Worst forms of child labour defined by the WFCL Convention are also considered intolerable. Both children and parents believe that when young children start to earn money, they lose interest in education. In essence, work and education are incompatible. The designated age 14 that allows children to undertake paid work is considered fair by parents.

In the final analysis, parents and children feel the laws and policies do not accurately represent the realities they are facing. They transfer the blame for the phenomenon of child labour on parents when it is in most of the cases driven by economic and other factors beyond their own control. Some interventions against child labour appear to condemn acceptable and gainful ways of raising children.

Chapter Eleven

11 Conclusions: Implications of findings to theory and practice

11.1 Introduction

This study examined the context of child upbringing in the fishing communities, the nature of selected work activities undertaken by boys and girls, how generally child labour is constructed by children and adults, children's views on work and education, and an interpretation of child labour in light of existing laws and policies. Generally, the study sought to interrogate the concept of child labour as constructed by children and other local people so as to better define and generate the local equivalent of this concept. This should hopefully create avenues for developing a shared understanding on child labour and other concepts such as children's rights and childhoods for both theoretical and practical considerations. This study envisions social space for expression and consideration of alternative views of children and local peoples wherever possible, who are directly affected by the public policies and programmes enacted on child labour.

In this chapter, a presentation of conclusions and their implications to theory and practice is made. The presentation follows the chronological arrangement of chapters comprising findings.

11.2 The context of child upbringing in fishing communities

This study has established the domineering influence of ecological factors over parenting factors in shaping working childhoods in the fishing communities. The study shows that parents in most circumstances have limited or no control over these factors that shape the

nature of childhoods. The factors include income poverty, neighbourhoods, and the role of open spaces consisting of activities that present possibilities for modelling positive and problem behaviour. There is also multiculturalism that emerges from urbanisation and its associated problem of youth identity groups. Other factors in the environment include indifferent attitudes towards education and the importance or desire for money by children.

For theoretical considerations, how work is eventually interpreted is informed by the social context, including social practices and lived experiences (Richardson 1991; Hacking 1999; LeCompte & Schensul 1999). The constructed reality about this work keeps evolving as contexts keep changing with some activities considered acceptable while others are deemed unacceptable.

Moreover, the predominance of ecological factors in shaping working childhoods over the role of parenting brings us back to the ecological theory as advanced by Bronfenbrenner (1979). The complex layers of relationships within a child's environment and the factors operating in these circles of care deserve attention. The circles of care comprise the home (micro context), community (meso), national (exo-system), and macro (international context). At each level there are forces that draw children into work. The theory points to the failure in the concentric circles of care which results into undesirable working childhoods. These factors shape the profiles of children making them susceptible to different kinds of work including tolerable and intolerable work.

Ultimately, the conditions of poverty in the micro system and failure to address them within the meso, exo and macro systems, makes working childhoods inevitable. These findings have practical implications for policy makers seeking to shape desirable childhoods. The point of entry is not only to focus on the failures or gaps in the concentric circles of care in the ecology of care, but also to engineer changes that influence fundamentally, the social and structural elements that shape the living contexts of the poor peoples and children in the fishing communities.

11.3 Nature of children's work and lifestyles

Children's work in the fishing communities involves a wide variety of activities on and off the lake. They include work in fishing (before, during and after), restaurant work, domestic work, transport, trade, entertainment, repair services and carpentry among others. The profiles of working children in fishing communities are shaped by poverty, vulnerability, and social exclusion. This finding confirms the view of the social responsibility perspective (Myers 2001; Ennew et al. 2005) that sees children who in the context of social and economic development, have been separated from mechanisms of social protection, participation, and opportunity.

The work that children do varies considerably with respect to conditions where it is undertaken. Over all, the conditions are generally dirty and involve people of diverse backgrounds whose behaviour and language use borders on moral and physical abuse of children. The work that children do is some times light (like washing plates, fetching water etc) while other work is heavy (such as fishing, working in restaurants, and carrying goods). Children characterise work as appropriate or inappropriate, acceptable or unacceptable depending on the age abilities of children, the nature of work, and to some extent the context in which it is performed. Emphasis nonetheless is put on the first two parameters—age abilities and the nature of work. Exception to this comprises work in restaurants, bars, and entertainment. Children view the context in which these activities are undertaken as compromising their morals and safety. Children's construction of child labour therefore bears some similarity with the ILO Convention No 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour with respect to article 3 sections a-d. The convention nonetheless calls for identification of the hazardous activities by social partners (employers, workers and government) thereby excluding children.

Notwithstanding, children call for a considerable assessment of their work (excluding the known WFCL) without necessarily generalising every activity they do as hazardous. For example, while work in fishing is designated as hazardous, children prefer to examine it at three levels: i) work before actual fishing, ii) actual fishing and, iii) work after fishing. Work before and after fishing is viewed as tolerable for children of less than 14 years.

However, work in actual fishing is viewed as inappropriate for this category of children. Only children aged 14 years and above are considered ready to undertake work in actual fishing. Children's views call for use of a *constituent approach* in assessing work that falls outside the intolerables, rather than generalising as hazardous, all work in fishing (see Walakira 2008). By implication, there is scope for modifying or improving the contexts within which certain forms of tolerable work are performed without pursuing a strategy of total withdrawal.

Girls are more vulnerable to abuse in work situations because they are more into wage rather than self employment. The conditions of work in restaurants and bars make them objects of sexual abuse and exploitation. Work in bars is viewed by children (school going children) as intolerable.

Children find happiness and meaning in life using proceeds from work despite the challenges they experience while working. Both boys and girls allocate time for a variety of entertainment, sports, body care, buying a variety of wear (which point to culture of consumerism see Rabello Castro 2006) and also take part in making relationships and sexual activities. However, their tendency to ignore or normalise the dangers associated with HIV transmission through unprotected sex makes them a high-risk group for HIV infection. The dangerous behaviour is further accelerated by the emergent youth sub cultures (See Shildrick 2006) that specialises in courting risk (Dobson, Brudalen & Tobiassen 2006; Maurer 2007)—involving sex experimentation, alcohol consumption, and drug use.

Policy implications from the study findings point towards the need for measures to ensure children's safety in both work and non work related activities. Dialogue with children can lead to measures that pre-empt some dangers and risks children experience while at work. For example work in actual fishing (excluding hooking—where children do not need to swim off the lake shoreline) was described by children involved in fishing, to be acceptable for children aged 14 and above. The findings further point to the need for measures that can improve the context where work is undertaken particularly for girls

who face serious abuse. The findings further call for involvement of children in defining aspects and contexts of work that are considered tolerable and those which are not.

The emerging discourses on child labour

11.4 Children's discourse on child labour

The children's discourse constructs child labour in three categories: Vulnerability, Traditional Responsibility, and Children's Agency. These categories do not necessarily explain what child labour is, but why there is child labour. Hence, their construction of what child labour is and what it isn't is summed up in their narratives:

Child Labour is that work which is abusive because it overloads children's capacities and is performed under the control of adults in an environment that is not friendly to children. Work undertaken by children (own account employees) aimed at their survival is not viewed as child labour. Activities such as sex work are defined as child labour.

Hence child labour is not all work children do, not all harmful work, but that which is abusive, forced on children, and/or heavier than their capacities.

Reflecting on the children's discourse, when people define child labour, they do not differentiate the various activities that children do on the basis of vulnerability *to poverty* or abuse at home, the activities they do which are considered to be part of their traditional responsibility at home, or the activities which they undertake (away from home) which are a result of their personal choice. When all these activities are lumped together and given a generic name of child labour with a singular meaning of "harmful work", it gives a distorted interpretation of what child labour means and what it comprises. Hence, the conventional interpretation of child labour with terms such as, "all paid work", "harmful work" etc, represents an *outsider* rather than *insider* perspective. Therefore, the *emic* (popular) view of child labour comes out more prominently in the children's discourse.

Notwithstanding, children's views are not entirely homogenous. For example school going children may characterise as child labour, certain activities that working children consider normal. The varying interpretation of certain activities such as fishing, work in bars for girl children etc, demonstrates the heterogeneity of children, their complexities, as well as varying contexts in which they grow up.

Turning to the construction of child labour as vulnerability, this in part points to the needs based perspective on child labour which is essentially a deficit model of the child in terms of his or her neglect by adults (Wyness, Harrison & Buchanan 2004:89). Yet beyond vulnerability framed in poverty, abuse is also singled out both in paid and domestic work. For domestic work, its meaning as traditional responsibility changes when children detect abuse. Child labour as a product of children's agency underlines the sociological theories of structure and agency (Giddens 1984). Children are seen as social agents who can influence change (in institutions such as family, community etc, consciously or unconsciously) and/or determine their course of action. However, their agency (self determination) could serve to stifle actions done in their best interests such as being forced to attend school instead of working. This can be interpreted as a generational conflict. Thus Reynolds, Nieuwenhuys & Hanson (2006) have suggested that concepts of children's rights in certain cases represent a paradox where the application of notions of children rights such as their *best interests* entrenched in the CRC clashes with priorities that children themselves set (p. 291).

The fact that children's interpretation of child labour is building into an autonomous discourse on child labour is a testimony that they can express themselves as argued by the UNCRC. It is also a confirmation that their growing abilities can be exploited for policy and programme issues. Here is the potential reflected in their ideas, to contribute to the identification of indicators of abuse in a work situation from their own perspective.

11.5 Child labour as a traditional child rearing practice discourse

A traditional approach to human capital development

This discourse on child labour asserts the authority of the traditional, historical, and intergenerational approach to child upbringing which comprises training for social and economic reproduction. The discourse nonetheless does not rule out abuse in the traditional child rearing approach. Feintuch (1997) has pointed out the value and authority attached to tradition:

Tradition is a category that individuals and societies ascribe to expressions, beliefs and behaviours in the present to add value to the future. Always referring to the past, this categorising adds weight and momentum to what it names, symbolically designating something as tradition implies meaning and value (p. 470).

The discourse in essence projects *child labour* as an outsider's construction that views all children's work in a home context as abusive work; yet in the local peoples' opinion, it is work conditioned by contexts and traditional values and lived experiences. This view is validated by Kielland & Tovo (2006), Tucker & Young (2005) and Bass (2004) who give accounts of children's involvement in work at home as a form of apprenticeship or socialisation. Peoples' views on child labour project an essentialist and normative view of children's participation in work. The abuse, exploitation, and actions driven by bad intentions for children are what they characterise as child labour. The discourse singles out a corrective system in the traditional child upbringing and training approach for dealing with abusers. The challenge is that this traditional approach is increasingly being challenged by social and structural changes that limit its effectiveness particularly in urbanising situations.

The discourses on children's rights, urbanisation, and formal education etc. have for example undermined parental collective responsibility in child upbringing, have challenged traditional conceptions in raising children, and have contributed to the breakdown of the cultural institutions that used to address the abuse in the training.

The implication of the discourse to theory is that the values, approaches, and assumptions in the traditional child raising practices while continue to be valued—are being contested, challenged, and interrogated in several ways by modernisation discourses and outcomes of social structural changes. New values and traditions are therefore likely to emerge out of these processes, while those deemed essential will survive the testing and continue into the future.

For practical purposes, useful or beneficial indigenous resources including traditional values and practices need to be incorporated into formal training, particularly those that address abuse of children through a variety of ways, and those that promote safe and productive childhoods. Organisations including government departments and organisations implementing grass roots activities need to explore the indigenous resources and practices and integrate them into their activities.

11.6 Child labour as cultural hegemony of the West discourse

The discourse out rightly rejects as foreign and hegemonic the concept of child labour and alludes to the view that those imposing the Western view of childhoods, framed in the rights discourse, aim to serve their interests at the expense of local people and the poor peoples of the developing nations. The views in this discourse correlate with those that suggest that child labour (and the associated concepts of children's rights in some respects) fit more favourably within the Western than local contexts (Boyden 1990, Lancy 2007 & Woodhead 1999).

The discourse highlights methodological issues that involve a mix of observations about children's work and judgements about the same (see Ennew et al. 2005) and shows that the emerging mainstream interpretation is more of a social construct which ideally should vary with local contexts, yet is universalised. It is presented as a natural phenomenon with a tangible referent yet it is a social construct.

The discourse calls to attention the need to respect local opinion and the need for dialogue with those for whom the concept of child labour is enacted. Dialogue more particularly on the local meanings in the local languages is critical. Richardson (1994:518) notes that “Different languages and different discourses within a given language divide up the world and give it meaning in ways that are not reducible to one another.” Hence, it is necessary to re-examine concepts such as child rights, child labour, childhoods etc, in order to determine what meanings they project in the local languages. This also goes hand in hand with isolation of activities that people feel are not appropriate for children at particular ages. The call agrees with the opinion of Chambers (1997:188) who calls for inclusiveness of local opinions in development practice, including generation of shared understanding of concepts being applied. Hence, he puts emphasis on a paradigm in which multiple, local, and individual realities are recognised, accepted, enhanced and celebrated.

Finally, it is important to underline the view that entirely discarding the mainstream interpretation of child labour as hegemonic may serve the interests of those who hide under the pretext of tradition to exploit children.

11.7 Child abuse discourse: Child labour as abusive, violent and forced work

The discourse views child labour as work that is abusive, violent, and involves cruelty, torture and is too heavy for the capacity of the child. The discourse shows that abusive work is only a part of the broader abuses that children experience. By implication, these abuses need to be considered together with abusive work. The selective focus on child labour makes parents suspicious of the intentions of the abolition campaign.

The discourse presents a child with a certain level of vulnerability to adult abuse including authoritarian parents whose parenting styles are responsible for children’s externalising behaviour (see Mckee et al. 2008) and at times child labour. The characteristics of the child, the environment in which work is undertaken, work itself, and money are some of the factors that perpetuate abuse against the child.

The discourse presents a convergence of opinion on some of the provisions within international and local instruments on issues like age of entry into paid work (14 years) (Minimum Age Convention, No 38, 1973) and protection from abuse and exploitation among others (WFCL Convention No. 182, 1999). The discourse calls for examination of the work intentions so as to identify work which is intended for abuse and that which is not. However, there is a complication of defining or determining intentions especially for work where children are not self employed. Notwithstanding, individuals and communities in general can generate a considered opinion about kinds of work and situations where children are being abused. The discourse further encourages the identification of those factors that increase children's vulnerability in work situations so that they can be addressed.

Where parents limit the access to money by children, it may imply that they are exploiting children's labour to their benefit. It could also be that it is the best way to protect children against losing interest in education in favour of work.

Views on school and work, child labour in relation to public policy ...

11.8 Children's views about school and work

The schools in the fishing communities frustrate the aspirations of children because of the manifold inadequacies they manifest both in the curriculum and the conditions in the learning environment. As a result, both parents and children, while showing interest in education, make conscious choices that favour work at the expense of education. The absence of teachers, the lack of practical learning, hunger, and the lack of text books undermine the quality of education and deflate children's interest in attending school. Other factors affecting school attendance relate to poor structures and harsh punishment. Owing to these factors, about 43 percent of children drop out of school due to lack of interest (MoES 2004). The situation is exacerbated by the high costs of education that

ordinarily should not be charged under the UPE programme. These comprise examination fees, tuition, construction and charges for stationery just to mention but a few. As a result, 55 percent of the children do not attend school.

Taking the school as a system, the findings reveal that it is more of the factors inside the school system that discourage school attendance than those factors outside. But work outside the school also draws children away from school. Children claim that while work may be inevitable for some due to poverty it is generally incompatible with effective school attendance. This is validated by researchers (see Allias & Hagemann 2008; Klees, Hawley, Byabamazima & Kyeyune 2002).

Children's pre-occupation with practical learning—craving for both traditional skills (various sports, music dance and drama, catering, making art crafts, carpentry etc) and modern skills (computer science, fluency in English...)—presents an enormous challenge to education planners as it requires introduction of new subjects or strengthening of existing ones, yet the available resources may not permit this. At the same time, it requires teachers with requisite practical training and skills to teach the subjects. Practical learning would create an avenue for children to fulfil their aspirations such as seeking paid or enter self-employment. In the absence of practical learning, children and parents choose work as the best available option.

In the final analysis, the continuation of children in school requires prioritising and addressing factors in the school environments that act as barriers to their education. These include lowering the hidden costs of education, working towards integrating the interests and aspirations of children in the curriculum, improving the general learning conditions, and attending to the interests of teachers. Further more, addressing the requirements for effective practical learning should take into account the integration within the curriculum both traditional and modern skills. Factors outside of the school environment that distract children's attention away from school also deserve attention. The school, local communities and government need to work together with children in solving these challenges.

11.9 Local people's interpretation of child labour in light of public policy

There are areas of convergence and divergence in people's opinions about child labour in relation to provisions in existing laws and policies. The areas of convergence include the shared view that the defined WFCL need to be eliminated as provided for under Convention (No. 182). Children involved in the defined WFCL were however not involved in this study and therefore their views are not contained in this shared view. There is also agreement that children should enter paid work after attaining age 14. Parents agree that work and education are incompatible, they point out that exposure of young children to money affects their interest in education. Finally, there is general agreement that certain conditions of work may not be conducive to early childhood development.

The areas of disagreement include what they see as the assumptions underlying the introduction of policies and laws: For example policies and laws are made with the assumption that work is mainly responsible for children's non school attendance; yet they see the cost of education and poverty as the major factors. They disagree with the assumption that children do not like the work that they are doing. Their narratives argue that many children consciously look for work to meet pressing needs. They castigate the tendency to overlook the positive aspects of work. They reject the tendency to categorise all work children do as child labour and cite the failure of law makers to designate acceptable and unacceptable types of work (excluding WFCL). They reject that work beyond two hours per day for middle age childhood (6-11) constitutes abusive work. They point out that law makers appear to appreciate the view that children are working due to poverty hence there are no penalties in the Uganda Penal Code Act for cases linked to child labour. While many of these disagreements are not in reaction to what is written in the policies and laws, considerable disagreement is generated by what officials say about these policies and laws.

The fact that there are some areas of convergence, it suggests that the view of child labour in international instruments is not wholly or totally hegemonic as normally assumed. Hence, there is a general agreement regarding the negative effect of certain contexts or activities on the health and development of children. Nonetheless, children and other ordinary local people reject the many assumptions which underlie the public policies. In this they critique the intentions which they claim are not meant to serve the interests of the poor. This serves to caution the policy makers to be well versed with the views, contexts, and perceived realities of the poor people. This would pre-empt the assumption that they are pushing a hegemonic agenda of the West.

For practical implications, there is need for dialogue on written and unwritten policy in addressing work situations that jeopardise the future of children. The dialogue should involve the people at the grassroots including children, policy makers, and implementers.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Profile of author



Eddy Joshua Walakira,

Mr Walakira is a Lecturer at Makerere University, Faculty of Social Sciences (SWSA Dept). He holds a Masters in Development Studies (Human resources and Employment) and a Post Graduate Diploma in Children and Youth—from the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University, Rotterdam, Netherlands. He completed his Bachelors Degree in Social Work and Social Administration at Makerere University. He started his academic journey from a rural setting at Nsambwe Primary School before joining Kasaka Secondary School for his Ordinary Level studies and Kibuli Senior Secondary School for his Advanced Level

Studies.

Mr Walakira is now a distinguished researcher on issues of children and youth. He has offered advisory services to several international organisations and local NGOs working with or on issues of children in countries including Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Kenya.

A few of his publications are listed below:

- Walakira, E.J. (2009) 'Constructing child labour: Perspectives of traditional health workers [healers] and their working children', in Kutalek, R. & A. Prinz (eds) *Essays in Medical Anthropology. The Austrian Ethnomedical Society after 30 years*, pp. 159-177. Wien/Berlin/London: Lit Verlag,
- Reflective learning in action research: A case of micro-interventions for HIV prevention among the youth in Kakira-Kabembe, Jinja-Uganda (Forthcoming online in August 2009, in print, March 2010 in *Journal of Action Research*, Sage publications)
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- ***author of over 10 research reports on issues of children, youth, child labour, HIV/AIDS, services for children and youth etc.

Annex 2: Statistical picture of child labour in fishing communities

Annexes for Chapter 4

Annex 4.5a: Age distribution of respondents

Age distribution of respondents

Age category	Male		Female		Overall	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
5 - 9	18	8.0	17	25.4	35	12.0
10 - 11	18	8.0	6	9.0	24	8.2
12 - 15	103	46.0	31	46.3	134	46.0
16 - 17	85	37.9	13	19.4	98	33.7
Total children	224	100.0	67	100.0	291	100.0
Head of household						
< 18	4	2.8	0	0.0	4	1.8
18 - 25	17	11.8	4	5.1	21	9.5
26 - 35	45	31.3	24	30.8	69	31.1
36 - 45	42	29.2	28	35.9	70	31.5
46 - 55	27	18.8	13	16.7	40	18.0
56 - 65	7	4.9	4	5.1	11	5.0
66 +	2	1.4	5	6.4	7	3.2
Total heads of households	144	100.0	78	100.0	222	100.0

Source: Walakira & Byamugisha (2008) Table 3.2 pp. 16

Annex 4.5b: Social economic characteristics of the sampled children

Social economic characteristics of the sampled children

Marital status	Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Single	217	96.9	65	97.0	282	96.9
Married (Single spouse)	5	2.2	2	3.0	7	2.4
Married (Polygamous)	2	0.9	0	0.0	2	0.7
Total	224	100.0	67	100.0	291	100.0
Highest level of education						
None	8	3.6	4	6.0	12	4.1
Lower Primary (P1 - P4)	93	41.5	31	46.3	124	42.6
Upper Primary (P5 - P7)	95	42.4	26	38.8	121	41.6
O - Level	27	12.1	6	9.0	33	11.3
Others	1	0.4	0	0.0	1	0.3
Total	224	100.0	67	100.0	291	100.0
Orphan hood status						
Both parents alive	108	48.2	36	53.7	144	49.5
Only mother alive	58	25.9	19	28.4	77	26.5
Only father alive	20	8.9	7	10.4	27	9.3
None is alive	36	16.1	5	7.5	41	14.1
Don't know their whereabouts	2	0.9	0	0.0	2	0.7
Total	224	100.0	67	100.0	291	100.0
Place/area where the child resides						

At the landing site	144	64.3	51	76.1	195	67.0
Near the landing site(<3km)	67	29.9	15	22.4	82	28.2
Far from landing site(>3km)	13	5.8	1	1.5	14	4.8
Total	224	100.0	67	100.0	291	100.0

Source: Walakira & Byamugisha (2008) Table 3.3, pp 17

Annex 4.6: Work done by children on landing sites

Work done by children on landing sites

Activities done by children	5-11 Years	12-14 Years	15-17 Years	Male	Female	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Water transportation	7.4	11.1	6.6	10.3	0.0	8.1
Washing/cleaning fish	18.5	28.4	27.7	26.8	23.7	26.1
Washing nets	18.5	14.8	19.7	21.1	6.8	18.0
Sorting fish	14.8	17.3	25.5	26.3	1.7	21.0
Scaling fish	24.1	40.7	35.8	37.6	25.4	34.9
Sand mining	0.0	3.7	0.7	1.9	0.0	1.5
Salt mining	0.0	2.5	2.2	2.3	0.0	1.8
Rowing the boat	1.9	16.0	12.4	13.6	3.4	11.4
Riding motorized boats	1.9	2.5	2.9	3.3	0.0	2.6
Picking fish fats	7.4	9.9	10.9	9.9	10.2	9.9
Mending nets	3.7	4.9	11.7	10.3	0.0	8.1
Making/repairing canoes/boats	0.0	4.9	10.2	8.5	0.0	6.6
Loading/offloading good/fish from boats/ship	1.9	16.0	14.6	16.0	0.0	12.5
Hotel/bar/entertainment services	1.9	9.9	13.9	4.2	32.2	10.3
Hooking/spearing fish	7.4	11.1	8.8	11.7	0.0	9.2
Hawking/vending/selling fish	13.0	11.1	18.2	17.8	5.1	15.1
Fish vending	18.5	17.3	27.7	25.4	13.6	22.8
Fish transportation	5.6	6.2	14.6	12.7	1.7	10.3
Fish smoking/salting/sun drying	20.4	18.5	21.2	22.1	13.6	20.2
Fish bisecting	7.4	13.6	23.4	20.2	6.8	17.3
Fetching water for sale	11.1	2.5	0.0	2.3	5.1	2.9
Collecting firewood	29.6	22.2	16.1	18.3	28.8	20.6
Ferrying fish	5.6	8.6	3.6	7.0	0.0	5.5
Emptying water from the boat while fishing	5.6	22.2	16.1	18.3	6.8	15.8
Construction, maintenance of building	0.0	1.2	1.5	5.6	0.0	1.1
Cleaning boats	9.3	18.5	21.2	21.6	5.1	18.0
Catch/gather sea food (Actual fishing)	13.0	34.6	45.3	44.1	5.1	35.7
Casting nets	5.6	16.0	26.3	23.9	1.7	19.1
Others	20.4	8.6	3.6	5.2	20.3	8.5
Total (No)	54	81	137	213	59	272

Source: Walakira & Byamugisha (2008:22) Table 4.3